

MRS HUMPHRY WARD'S *ELEANOR*: A LATE-VICTORIAN PORTRAIT OF CHATEAUBRIAND AND PAULINE DE BEAUMONT.

In one of the chapters of her autobiography, *A Writer's Recollections*, written near the end of her life, Mrs Humphry Ward looks back to that time at the end of the nineteenth century when *Eleanor* was being written. There she hints at the novel's source: "It was in the summer of 1898, that some suggestions gathered from the love-story of Chateaubriand and Madame de Beaumont, and jotted down on a sheet of notepaper, led to The writing of 'Eleanor.'" ¹ By 1917, of course, that time must have seemed far away; Mrs Ward's most recent visits to France had been to the British Military Zone. In reality, though, her indebtedness to the literature documenting the celebrated liaison between Chateaubriand and Pauline de Beaumont is infinitely greater than this casual reference might lead one to believe.

The occasion of Mrs Ward's interest in Chateaubriand in the summer of 1898 was the preparation and translation by her friend, Katharine Lyttelton, of some of Joseph Joubert's *Pensées* ² for publication. Mrs Ward had been asked to provide a preface for the volume – the kind of task she often undertook in these years – though it seems that she helped with the translating too. Indeed, one of her earliest successes had been a translation of Amiel's *Journal Intime* which appeared in 1885. A contemporary letter gives a more arduous and a more characteristic impression than that of the *Recollections*: "Katharine & I are doing Joubert 6 hours a day and there is no room for anything else". ³ In one sense, too, it is fitting that Mrs Ward should have been led to think of the life of Chateaubriand, for her work at this time parallels his, as she was doubtless aware. In 1838, he had written a preface for a small volume of Joubert's thoughts which was circulated privately.

Another letter, written to Mandell Creighton, an intimate friend and one of her ablest critics, reveals the influence of the Chateaubriand history in more precise detail. It was written four months before the book's publication: ⁴

Eleanor is really Pauline de Beaumont. It was from the history of Pauline's love for Chateaubriand, their work together on the "Génie du Christianisme," his desertion of her for Madame de Custine, & her pathetic death in Rome, that I took the original idea of the story. It was of Pauline that Joubert said she was "good to consult about ideas." Her journal at Mont Dore a few weeks before her death, suggested Eleanor's; it was she who said – "I cough less – but only that I may make less noise in dying". And it was beside her tomb put up to her in S. Luigi dei Francesi by Chateaubriand that the conception of Eleanor grew plain to me. Pauline had lost her faith because of the horrors she had suffered in the Revolution, & Chateaubriand persuaded her in dying to see a priest. I need not say that in working it out Eleanor became only Pauline's spiritual sister, a totally distinct being; & that much feeling & observation of my own have gone into her little as I may have been

able to make them tell. The tragedy of Pauline's life was accomplished in her failure to hold Chateaubriand after the book was done; & of that failure she died. There was the germ of Eleanor & Manisty.

The novel was formulated, it seems, as the result of a combination of emotions and experiences. The "literary" account of the Chateaubriand-Pauline de Beaumont relationship was the primary source of interest, the framework for possible fictional treatment; but reinforcing and transforming it was that moment of more intimate significance in S Luigi dei Francesci: there we may feel free to locate the "particular sharp impression or concussion"⁵ which brought the work into being.

A guide to Mrs Ward's "jottings" is to be found in the Joubert preface. She recommends, as well as the Joubert *Pensées* and *Correspondance*, Paul de Raynal's *Les Correspondants de Joubert*, Sainte-Beuve's *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire*, Agénor Bardoux's *Pauline de Beaumont*, and Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*.⁶ Two of these works, the Chateaubriand *Mémoires* and Sainte-Beuve's *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire*, are of especial significance as sources for *Eleanor*, though other references will be made. They are of considerable interest, however, for we find that Mrs Ward modelled not only the broad outline of her novel on the historical liaison, but that much incidental detail is derived from these French sources.

It was not until the spring of the year following the work on Joubert, that is 1899, that *Eleanor* was begun. During the intervening winter, however, Mrs Ward had continued to read much of Chateaubriand and Pauline de Beaumont,⁷ and the power of this interest suggested a return to her beloved Italy, and, more specifically, to Rome: "why should she not migrate to Rome and there, in the ancient scene, weave anew the old tale of the conquest of 'outworn, buried age' by the forces of youth?"⁸ Present and past could be conveniently united in such a place, as Mrs Ward recognized when planning the novel, and, in the light of its models, Rome would figure as the perfect setting: "Madame de Beaumont's melancholy life came to an end in Rome, and the Roman setting imposed itself, so to speak, at once".⁹

The structure of the novel is simple and characteristic: Edward Manisty is engaged in writing a book on modern Italy with the inspired help of a friend and kinswoman, Eleanor Burgoyne. Work is interrupted by the arrival of a young American girl, Lucy Foster. The book, meanwhile, is criticized by another friend, Manisty becomes disenchanted, and begins to depend less on Eleanor's guidance and encouragement. At this decisive point Eleanor realizes that Lucy is unconsciously winning Manisty's affection, and she induces her to hide away in the hills near Orvieto with her. They escape, though finally Manisty finds them and Eleanor is compelled, after much anguish, to relinquish any claims she

may have had. The heroine is rewarded for this sacrifice by a tranquillity which allows her to bless Manisty's marriage with Lucy and to accept her own imminent death.

In certain physical respects, Manisty resembles his model, François-René de Chateaubriand; someone comments upon him that he has 'the head of a god attached to a rather awkward and clumsy body', and one recalls Sainte-Beuve's note on Chateaubriand "qui n'avait de beau que la tête, mais qui l'avait si belle".¹⁰ Manisty, when agitated, tends to chew grass; this foible is derived from Chateaubriand who used to chew his handkerchief when under stress.¹¹

Chateaubriand's intense consciousness of physical inadequacy and a corresponding ingenuity in concealing it were noted by Lamartine, and Sainte-Beuve quotes one of the poet's anecdotes:

"Au-dessous du tableau de Corinne figurait, comme un Oswald vieilli, M. de Chateaubriand; cette place dissimulait, derrière les paravents et les fauteuils des femmes, la disgrâce de ses épaules inégales, de sa taille courte, de ses jambes grêles; on n'entrevoit que le buste viril et la tête olympienne." (II, p. 388).

The scene in *Eleanor* is transferred to the garden, and the spectator who sees through the ploy is the heroine. The insight reveals the nature of her feeling towards Manisty and accentuates the personal vanities of great men:

Manisty had placed himself behind an old stone table . . . Round it grew up grasses and tall vetches. . . . Nothing, therefore, could be seen of the talker as he leant carelessly across the table but the magnificent head, and the shoulders on which it was so freely and proudly carried.

Anybody noticing the effect – for it was an effect – would have thought it a mere happy accident. Eleanor Burgoyne alone knew that it was conscious. She had seen the same pose, the same concealment practised too often to be mistaken. (Ch. iv).

The range and diversity of Chateaubriand's interests and talents made him an ideal model for Mrs Ward. His career as a writer or man of letters was matched by an equally important career in politics; his substantial work, *Le Génie du Christianisme*, "the most superb rainbow that ever rose in a storm-beaten sky" John Morley called it,¹² sketched out a method for religious belief which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. A thinker who influenced the lives and events of his time, a man who restored a nation to religious orthodoxy, and who introduced a new expressiveness into the language¹³ – these formulae, however *simpliste*, would have constituted a life full of possibilities for Mrs Ward's special imaginative interests. In the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, Chateaubriand looks back to the time of the *Génie's* complete publication, and, though unaware (apparently) of the elements of religious unorthodoxy in the book, wonders at the enormity of the self-imposed task:

quelle espérance pouvais-je avoir, moi sans nom et sans prôneurs, de détruire l'influence de Voltaire, dominante depuis plus d'un demi-siècle, de Voltaire qui avait élevé l'énorme édifice achevé par les encyclopédistes et consolide par tous les hommes célèbres en Europe? ... Pouvais-je jamais gagner une cause que n'avaient pu sauver Rome armée de ses foudres, le clergé de sa puissance ... ? N'était-il pas aussi ridicule que téméraire à un homme obscur, de s'opposer à un mouvement philosophique tellement irrésistible qu'il avait produit la Révolution?¹⁴

It is precisely these links between religion and the state, and the influence of one strong man upon them, which would have appealed to Dr Arnold's granddaughter. One recalls the fate of her most famous hero, Robert Elsmere – who not only achieved a personal adjustment to unorthodoxy, but out of it wrought a social and moral doctrine to enlighten and alleviate the lives of the working classes in London's East End. The "New Brotherhood" is the creation of one man, but it projects itself deep into the secular society of the time.

The political dimension of Manisty's life is sketched briefly in *Eleanor*, only in enough detail to suggest the excitement of a personality, or of the significance of a book he might publish, "written by a man whose history and antecedents, independently of his literary ability, made his work certain of readers and of vogue" (Ch. ii). Early in the novel Manisty quotes from one of Chateaubriand's letters, and the technique of casual allusion¹⁵ nicely invokes the model who is in reality at the novel's centre. Eleanor's reply is appropriately magnificent.

"... 'As to my career – I have gone from shipwreck to shipwreck.' What if I am merely bound on the same charming voyage?"

"I accept the comparison," she said with vivacity. "End as he did in re-creating a church, and regenerating a literature – and see who will count the shipwrecks!" (Ch. i).

For all this, Chateaubriand, during the last months of Mme de Beaumont's life, when he was secretary to the French ambassador to Rome, had intended to resign his appointment, so disenchanted had he become with diplomacy.¹⁶ Manisty has, indeed, already given up politics and a promising career in London, though, it is hinted, he will eventually return and succeed. Mrs Ward had Chateaubriand in mind, as she says in a letter: "One must emphasise the fact that he is really a politician in a moment of sulks – as Chateaubriand was at various periods of his career".¹⁷

Chateaubriand's political philosophy, at least as it is represented by Sainte-Beuve, interprets current events in the perspective of recent history, consciously called up, for practical rather than sentimental reasons:

M de Chateaubriand ... toujours l'image de Rome dans le fond, se mit à nous exhorter, nous plus jeunes, à ne pas nous perdre dans l'action journalière, dévorante, inutile; que le meilleur moyen d'aider l'avenir en des moments de transition et de décomposition ou recomposition sociale intermédiaire comme aujourd'hui, c'était de s'appliquer au passé non encore aboli, à l'histoire sous ses diverses formes, de s'attacher à reproduire, à peindre ce dont la mémoire autrement s'évanouirait bientôt. (Sainte-Beuve, I, 407).

One of the strands of controversy in *Eleanor* rises from the contemporary political unrest in Italy – the conflict between the conservative forces of the Catholic church and the highly patriotic motives of the *Risorgimento*, checked by the recent tragedy of the Abyssinian expedition. These would be the topics under discussion at the Roman *salons* frequented by Mrs Ward during her stay at the Villa Barberini. In what he will finally concede to be a reactionary position, Manisty condemns 'private judgement – private aims' and embraces the Roman Catholic's 'notion of human life, which after all has weathered 1900 years, and is as strong and prevailing as it ever was' (Ch. v). This is the thesis, based on intellectual preconception rather than empirical evidence which his book is to vindicate.

An element of irony attaches to Manisty's role as protector of Catholic orthodoxy, and it clearly relates to Chateaubriand's position as advocate of traditional Catholicism. Saint-Beuve points out Chateaubriand's intellectual and emotional sophistication, doubting that faith may be contained in such complexity:

Et le chrétien! où est-il, et sommes-nous bien sûrs de l'avoir rencontré en M. de Chateaubriand, et de le tenir? ... Le plus souvent en effet ... on retrouve en M. de Chateaubriand tantôt une imagination sombre et sinistre comme celle d'Hamlet, et qui porte le doute, la désolation autour d'elle, tantôt une imagination épicurienne et toute grecque, qui se complait aux plus voluptueux tableaux, et qui ira, en vieillissant, jusqu' à mêler les images de Taglioni avec les austérités de Rancé.¹⁸

Chateaubriand's identifying of himself as a reformer of a part of Europe's religious faith, his private and less simple spiritual tendencies, his understanding of religion as a potential political expedient – all these facets of intellectual consciousness would have appealed to Mrs Ward. At any rate, she highlights a similar ironic discrepancy between personal belief and public statement in Manisty. Eleanor ponders his current work:

this impassioned defence of tradition, of Catholicism and the Papacy, as the imperishable, indestructible things – "chastened and not killed – dying, and behold they live" – let the puny sons of modern Italy rage and struggle as they may. He – one of the most thorough sceptics of the day... – she, a woman who had at one time ceased to believe because of an intolerable anguish, and was now only creeping slowly back to faith, to hope, because – because – (Ch. ii).

To turn to Sainte-Beuve's *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire* is to find that Eleanor's spiritual uncertainty at this point of the novel corresponds to Pauline's unconcealed scepticism. Saint-Beuve refers to the *Génie du Christianisme*: "cette aimable femme l'y aidait de son mieux; singulier collaborateur, toutefois, en matière d'orthodoxie!" (I, 304).

Manisty's earlier work, *Letters from Palestine*, which has won over the young American girl, Lucy Foster, may well have been intended to suggest Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* which came out in 1811. Mrs Ward takes care that we should be aware of Manisty's style: he

reads out several pages of his book, a vivid re-dramatization of a classical legend. The intelligent Eleanor ponders the characteristics of his prose and concludes that it belongs to an earlier world, indeed, to the Romantic period. In 1884 Mrs Ward had referred to the attractions of Chateaubriand's writing – "the rolling artificial harmonies, the mingled beauty and falsity of one of the most wonderful of styles",¹⁹ and Manisty belongs to the same school:

He had a natural tendency towards colour and exuberance in writing; he loved to be leisurely, and a little sonorous; there was something old-fashioned and Byronic in his style and taste. His sentences, perhaps, were short; but his manner was not brief. The elliptical fashion of the day was not his. He liked to wander through his subject, dreaming, poetising, discussing at his will. It was like a return to *vetturino* after the summary haste of the railway. (Ch. ii).

According to Sainte-Beuve, Chateaubriand has a similarly masterful yet quixotic manner, and a taste for the colourful and expansive: "Une imagination puissante, souvent aimable, naturellement grandiose, se complique de bizarre et de gigantesque . . . Une imagination *trop forte* . . . Ce trop de saillant des images, M. de Chateaubriand le corrigera bien souvent . . . par l'harmonie des sons, par les effets merveilleux et vagues qu'il excelle à en tirer" (Saint-Beuve, I, 214-15). Like Manisty, Chateaubriand was often compared to Byron, though this could not have given him much pleasure; everywhere he stresses that the Englishman merely imitated his style and mannerisms.

If Chateaubriand and Manisty are engaging as writers, each behaves altogether less impressively in private life. Mrs Ward's hero is subject to moods and silences, to ruthless egotism, arising partly from his consciousness that he belongs to a larger, more active, sphere. He has "a vision of the club writing-room – of well-known men coming in and going out – discussing the news of the morning, the gossip of the House – he saw himself accosted as one of the inner circle, – he was sensible again of those short-lived pleasures of power and office" (Ch. iii). The mingled contempt and desire with which he views this world savours of Chateaubriand's attitude, epitomized in one of Sainte-Beuve's anecdotes: "«Vous ne savez pas? disait-on jour; M. de Chateaubriand veut décidément se retirer du monde; il va vivre en solitaire dans un ermitage.» – «Oui, répondit quelqu'un qui le connaissait bien . . ., M. de Chateaubriand veut une cellule, mais c'est *une cellule sur un théâtre.*»" (Sainte-Beuve, II, 220n.).

Manisty's variety – this temperamental unreliability, his obvious shows of boredom in certain company, his magical conversational powers when roused, must all have been derived from the detail of the portraits of Chateaubriand consulted by Mrs Ward. He is protected from intruders by his aunt and by Eleanor who are compelled by the "wilfulness – extravagance – for one might call it by any of these names – that

breathed from the man before them" (Ch. i). Luncheon- and tea-parties all depend for their success on his mood, the state of his work, his relations with the guests; Lucy frequently notices "the petulant selfishness of his character" (Ch. vi.). Saint-Beuve draws attention to similar flaws in his subject: "Ses hautes qualités de *talent*, proprement dit, ne sauraient assez s'admirer . . . mais quelle *manière* gâtait tout cela! comme il arrivait vite à se guinder! Et puis il redevenait enfant, naïf, par moments; et puis tout aussitôt il s'apercevait qu'il l'était, et il affectait de l'être" (Sainte-Beuve, II, 395). Yet a winning charm, at least in his work, must have redeemed these failings: Joubert writes in a letter to Chénédollé, "On adore *ce bon garçon* en le lisant" (*ibid.*, II, 257). Chateaubriand seems to have called forth this response in Joubert especially, as the Abbé Condamine points out in his *Essai sur les Pensées et la Correspondance de J. Joubert*: "Il n'est question dans ses lettres que de «bon garçon», de ce «pauvre garçon», et autres qualificatifs du même genre".²⁰ This somewhat paternal warmth is repeated in one of Manisty's friends: "Isn't he *bon enfant*? Mr. Neal said . . . with a sudden accent of affection and emotion" (Ch. vi).

Chateaubriand, it seems, invited such solicitude from certain of his friends: mixed with his egotism was an habitual susceptibility to the criticism of his close circle on literary matters. He would read aloud the latest work and await their advice: Sainte-Beuve recalls the tale of his reading of *les Martyrs* in 1808. The group was not happy, and each criticized:

puis il répondit; il essaya longtemps de résister et d'opposer ses raisons. Cependant une larme roulait dans ses yeux: il dit qu'il essaierait de remanier, de refaire, – de faire mieux, mais qu'il ne l'espérait pas.

A week later they meet again

pour entendre cette même *Velléda*, et l'épisode, tel que nous l'avons, était accueilli d'eux avec un ravissement, avec un applaudissement sans mélange. (Sainte-Beuve, II, 41-2).

Manisty also makes a practice of reading his work aloud to the company for judgment to be given. His response, as he admits, is uncertain: "When a man begins to criticise my work, I first hate him – then I'm all of his opinion – only more so" (Ch. ix). The mixture of pride and humility is clearly based on Chateaubriand's temperament: a session with his friend, Vanbrugh Neal, a Cambridge don, reveals the pattern of behaviour:

He would defend his point of view with obstinacy, with offensiveness even, for an afternoon, and then give way, with absolute suddenness. . . . He would make a hard fight for his own way; but in the end he was determined that what he wrote should please his friends, and please a certain public. At bottom he was a rhetorician writing for this public – the slave of praise, and eager for fame, which made his complete indifference as to what people thought of his actions all the more remarkable. He lived to please himself; he wrote to be read . . . (Ch. vi).

This insight is a paraphrase of one of Joubert's letters. Written to another friend, M Molé, it analyzes at great length and with disarming clarity, Chateaubriand's nature:

Il parle aux autres, c'est pour eux seuls et non pas pour lui qu'il écrit; aussi c'est leur suffrage plus que le sien qu'il ambitionne . . .

Sa vie est autre chose. Il la compose, ou, pour mieux dire, il la laisse s'arranger d'une tout autre manière. Il n'écrit que pour les autres, et ne vit que pour lui. Il ne songe point à être approuvé, mais à se contenter. Il ignore même profondément ce qui est approuvé dans le monde ou ce qui ne l'est pas.²¹

Mr Neal, whose advice is instrumental in bringing about Manisty's disillusionment with his book, may be described as an amalgam of two of Chateaubriand's friends, Joubert and Fontanes. In one of his *causeries*, Sainte-Beuve groups them together as mutual influences on Chateaubriand:

On n'a ordinairement qu'un ange gardien, il en eut deux alors; l'un tout à fait gardien, Fontanes, le contenant en particulier, le défendant au besoin devant tous, le couvrant du bouclier dans la mêlée; l'autre, plutôt excitant et inspirateur, M. Joubert, celui-ci l'enhardissant à demi-voix, ou lui murmurant de doux avis dans une contradiction pleine de grâce.²²

Neal embodies the virtues and the vagaries of these two protectors, despite his English exterior. Sainte-Beuve characterizes Fontanes, one of Chateaubriand's oldest friends, as "le critique classique pur" (Saint-Beuve, I, 264): Neal's "temper was academic, his life solitary; rhetoric left him unmoved, and violence of statement caused him to shiver" (Ch. vi). On the other hand, Neal has weaknesses,

the failings, that is to say, of a man who had lived much alone, and found himself driven to an old-maidish care of health and nerves, if a delicate physique was to do its work. He had fads; and his fads were often unexpected and disconcerting. One day he would not walk; another day he would not eat; driving was out of the question, and the sun must be avoided like the plague. Then again it was the turn of exercise, cold baths, and hearty fare. (*ibid.*)

The amusing eccentricities of Joubert, captured by Chateaubriand, immediately spring to mind:

Afin de retrouver ses forces, il se croyait souvent obligé de fermer les yeux et de ne point parler pendant des heures entières . . . M. Joubert changeait à chaque moment de diète et de régime, vivant un jour de lait, un autre jour de viande hachée, se faisant cahoter au grand trot sur les chemins les plus rudes, ou traîner au petit pas dans les allées les plus unies. (*Mémoires*, xxix, pp. 18-9).

The society represented in *Eleanor* is highly sophisticated, articulate, concerned with the intellectual and political controversies of the day. When puritan Miss Foster arrives and shows some compunction about attending the Papal anniversary celebrations, Miss Manisty hopes, pri-

vately, and with something of the ruthlessness of those belonging to an exclusive set, that she will not be 'a great bore' (Ch. ii). They are all members, as Eleanor feels, of "this old, old Europe, with its complexities, its manifold currents and impulses, every human being an embodied contradiction – no simplicity, no wholeness anywhere – non possible" (ibid.). Though Manisty's habit of reading out his work to friends is never as dogged as Mme de Stael's working method (Sainte-Beuve (I, 69) describes amusingly her practice of discussing a subject one day and then writing the chapter on it the next), the sense of shared values, of intimacy mixed with intellectual detachment, of conversational dexterity which characterizes so much of *Eleanor* suggests the French *salon* rather than anything English.

The days spent by Chateaubriand at Savigny-sur-Orge as the guest of Mme de Beaumont, the conversations enjoyed with Joubert, Fontanes, Molé, Chênedollé, Bonald, Mme de Vintimille, all described fully by Sainte-Beuve, may well have stimulated Mrs Ward in a broad sense when she created the *milieu* for *Eleanor*. The relations between Chateaubriand and Pauline de Beaumont, however, interested her most, and the novel's indebtedness here is considerable. In one respect, their intimacy (Mrs Ward banishes any hint of indecorum between Manisty and Eleanor as a matter of course) coincides with her own understanding of the relations possible between men and women. She had an unflinching belief in woman's ability to inspire husband, or friend, to the sublimest acts of humanity and generosity. Marcella Boyce, the heroine of two of the books which precede *Eleanor*, *Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady*, is an Egeria-like figure who leads her husband to the ideals of industrial democracy, and her friend, Sir George Tressady, to regenerate a barren personal life through service to society. Such a woman has no political power, of course, nor much intellectual doggedness even. It is enough that she inspire the man to act. Mrs Ward's Joubert preface makes a cryptic reference to Lebrun's advice to women: "Voulez-vous ressembler aux Muses?/Inspirez, mais n'écrivez pas".²³

The conviction must have found reinforcement in Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. The author looks back to his stay at Savigny and to its fruits, the *Génie du Christianisme*: "Cette noble femme m'a offert un asile lorsque je n'en avais pas: sans la paix qu'elle m'a donnée, je n'aurais peut-être jamais fini un ouvrage que je n'avais pu achever pendant mes malheurs" (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 30) Mrs Ward herself itemizes Pauline's helpfulness in the Joubert preface; her practice of "listening, inspiring, criticising, copying for him in the morning, walking with him in the afternoon, writing letters to Joubert and others in quest of the books he wanted".²⁴ A similar *régime* operates at the opening of *Eleanor* as the heroine looks back to the part she has played in Manisty's work: "the good, long, brain-filling, heart-filling, talks, the break-down of reserves – the mans's whole mind, its remorse, ambitions, misgivings, poured at her

feet – ending in the growth of that sweet daily habit of common work – side by side, head close to head. . . . He had said to her once, quoting some Frenchman, that she was ‘good to consult about ideas.’” (Ch. ii).

A certain desire for self-sacrifice on the part of each of these women corresponds to a natural egocentricity in the objects of their devotion. Yet neither is unworldly or inexperienced. Both have endured unhappy marriages (though Eleanor’s husband is now dead), but they belong to society and are without the primness of the blue-stocking. Chateaubriand stresses Pauline’s natural environment: “Ame élevée, courage grand, elle était née pour le monde d’où son esprit s’était retiré par choix et malheur” (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 17). Eleanor possesses a fashionable elegance and gracefulness, can transform Lucy’s plain hairstyle in a moment, and, as Lucy herself discovers, is “at least as good to consult about a skirt as an idea” (Ch. v). But Eleanor is no conventional beauty, and hints of her premature death are contained in an early description:

The eyes were, indeed, beautiful; so was the forehead But the rest of the face was too long; and its pallor, the singularly dark circles round the eyes, the great thinness of the temples and cheeks, together with the emaciation of the whole delicate frame, made a rather painful impression on a stranger. (Ch. i).

Chateaubriand’s recollection of Pauline’s features in the *Mémoires* has been, if only partially, influential; it seems that Mrs Ward was altogether less inclined to derive physical detail from these real figures (Manisty himself has only Chateaubriand’s magnificent head and unkempt hair):

Madame de Beaumont, plutôt mal que bien de figure, est fort ressemblante dans un portrait fait par madame Lebrun. Son visage était amaigri et pale; ses yeux, coupés en amande, auraient peut-être jeté trop d’éclat, si une suavité extraordinaire n’eût éteint à demi ses regards en les faisant briller languissamment, comme un rayon de lumière s’adoucit en traversant le cristal de l’eau. (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 16).

When assembling her portrait of Eleanor, it seems likely that Mrs Ward turned her attention momentarily from Pauline de Beaumont to Mme Récamier. An insight of Sainte-Beuve’s provides the source for one of Eleanor’s most significant characteristics:

Non, elle n’a jamais aimé, aimé de passion et de flamme; mais cet immense besoin d’aimer que porte en elle tout âme tendre se changeait pour elle en un infini besoin de plaire, ou mieux d’être aimée, et en une volonté active, en un fervent désir de payer tout cela en bonté.²⁵

Mrs Ward takes this hint of personality to use it dramatically as an element of Eleanor’s charm and an unconscious mannerism. Manisty watches her set off for church one Sunday morning, sees her accosted by begging children, and, finally, giving in: “by herself, she could not refuse – she could not bear to be scowled on – even for a moment. She must yield – must give herself the luxury of being liked” (Ch. iii). Sainte-Beuve

suggests the seductiveness of this weakness in Mme Récamier: "elle garda toujours son désir de conquête et sa douce adresse à gagner les cœurs, disons le mot, sa coquetterie; mais (que les docteurs orthodoxes me pardonnent l'expression) c'était une coquetterie angélique"²⁶. An important strand in the novel follows the process by which Eleanor wins over the gauche Miss Foster. The growth of this intimacy is seen, essentially, as an exercise in wooing by the heroine, indeed it forms one of the central ironies of the work since it is through Eleanor's expertise that the girl's beauty is most powerfully displayed. The activity is natural to Eleanor, a form of self-indulgence:

she must needs allow herself the luxury of charming the quiet girl, like all the rest – the dogs, the servants or the village children. There was a perpetual hunger for love in Eleanor's nature which expressed itself in a thousand small and piteous ways. She could never help throwing out tendrils, and it was rarely that she ventured them in vain. (Ch. v).

For the novel's broad structure of events, it is clear that Mrs Ward remained with the life of Pauline de Beaumont. The period of her collaboration with Chateaubriand on the *Génie du Christianisme* at Savigny, his forsaking of her for Mme de Custine, and the consoling reconciliation before her death – these phases are all reflected in the novel's action. Even minor hints for a pattern of behaviour are noted and reworked. For instance, a note of Joubert's, "12 juillet [1803]... Sur Mme de Bt: Les sens en dehors. Rien de retiré en soi: trop nue."²⁷ is expanded and fitted into a luncheon-party scene. Lucy has recently heard Eleanor's hopeless admission of love for Manisty, and when the conversation turns frivolously to the subject of Englishmen's reluctance to marry, she glances anxiously towards Eleanor:

The girl's young mind was captured by a sudden ghastly sense of the human realities underlying the gay aspects and talk of the luncheon-table.... It seemed to her that Mrs. Burgoyne's suffering must reveal itself to all the world, and the girl had moments of hot shame, as though for herself. To her eyes, the change in aspect and expression, visible through all the elegance and care of dress, was already terrible. (Ch. xiii).

Eleanor's diary, portions of which are interspersed through the novel, contain phrases and feelings from Pauline's journal; both are shot through with a premonition of death. Pauline's bleakly ironic comment in one of the letters (to M de Chênedollé, 8 August 1803), "Je tousse moins; mais il me semble que c'est pour mourir sans bruit, tant je souffre d'ailleurs, tant je suis anéantie. Il vaudrait autant être morte" (Sainte-Beuve, II, pp. 218-19, is transferred directly into Eleanor's consciousness: "I cough less? she thought. 'Why? – for I get worse every day. That I may make less noise in dying? Well! one would like to go without ugliness and fuss. I might as well be dead now, I am so broken – so full of suffering'" (Ch. xx).

The fragments written by Pauline during her stays in Paris, at Mont

d'Or, and Rome, and reproduced in Chateaubriand's *Mémoires* reveal the uncertain, contradictory nature of her fatal consumptive illness. A desire for death, or at least escape, conflicts with the fascinations of the world and a hope to live:

"puis-je donc désirer de vivre? Ma vie passée a été une suite de malheurs, ma vie actuelle est pleine d'agitations et de troubles; le repos de l'âme m'a fui pour jamais . . . Oh! pourquoi n'ai-je pas le courage de mourir? Cette maladie, que j'avais presque la faiblesse de craindre, s'est arrêtée, et peut-être suis-je condamnée a vivre longtemps: il me semble cependant que je mourrais avec joie . . ." (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 153).

We find, once more, that the literary source coincides with, and reinforces, a characteristic feature of Mrs Ward's own moral vision. In all her novels the prospect of death and mortality operates as a powerful agent, both in the narrative focus and in the protagonists' understanding of human relations and personal fate. Thoughts of death recur in Eleanor's consciousness and in her diary:

"Why am I still alive? How often have I asked myself that! Where is my place? – who needs me?... The doctors deceived me. They made me think it could not be long. And now I am better – much better. If I were happy I should be quite well." (Ch. vi).

Her arrival in Rome, as she confesses to Lucy, saw a transformation: "I came to Rome in a strange state – as one looks at things and loves them, for the last time, before a journey. And then – well, then it all began! – new life for me, new health" (Ch. xii). One finds a precise parallel in Chateaubriand: "Le mieux que l'air de Rome avait fait éprouver à madame de Beaumont, ne dura pas: les signes d'une destruction immédiate disparurent, il est vrai; mais il semble que le dernier moment s'arrête toujours pour nous tromper" (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 179). So close are the correspondences (needlessly so perhaps) between the two women, the Roman setting, and the ironic circumstances surrounding their final days, that one is tempted to suppose that the fate of the woman before whose tomb Mrs Ward had stood, represented something intensely felt and identified at a level too private to be unravelled now. It is as if the novel's action represents some intimate response to a forgotten destiny, a desire to commemorate a life, through a freshly conceived medium whose connections with the original only its creator might fully perceive and understand.

Certainly the novel's action extends the ironies implicit in the ups-and-downs of the consumptive's life. Pauline's journal is a collection of such uncertainties, and Mrs Ward shapes the material and dramatizes it. On the morning of Manisty's discovery of the two women at Torre Amiata, Eleanor finds herself with unexpected strength, and we witness the laborious activity of dressing and *coiffure*, the tricks of clothing to conceal her emaciation. The painful re-creation of former elegance misleads the angry Manisty: he sees her

dressed, in these wilds, with a dainty care which would have done honour to London or Paris, with a bright colour in her cheeks, and the quiver of a smile on her lips.... Eleanor had thrown herself sideways on the chair he had brought her; her arms resting on the back of it, her delicate hands hanging down. It was a graceful and characteristic attitude, and it seemed to him affectation – a piece of her fine-ladyism. (Ch. xxiii).

We have moved momentarily free from the source, but the incident indicates the nature of Mrs Ward's creativeness – her facility in taking original motives and reactions, and her manner of re-grouping and highlighting them.

The extent to which direct quotations and imitations from the Chateaubriand-Pauline de Beaumont material diminish in the novel's final section might suggest that the narrative has developed an independent pattern of relations and activity. The supposition would only be partly true, however: correspondences, though more subtle, remain. At the opening of the work, it is made clear that Eleanor has saved herself, after the death of husband and child, by devotion to intellectual pursuits:

she thought of those bygone hours in which she had asked herself – "what remains?" Religious faith? – No! – Life was too horrible! Could such things have happened to her in a world ruled by a God? – that was her question, day and night for years. But books, facts, ideas – all the riddle of this various nature – *that* one might still amuse oneself with a little, till one's own light went out in the same darkness that had already engulfed mother – husband – child. (Ch. ii).

But there is no lasting satisfaction here. Ultimate spiritual consolation may only be achieved through a religious process: the suppression of all selfish desires, and an embracing of the world as the symbol of immortality. She is compelled to stand aside, to allow Manisty and Lucy to recognize their mutual love, and then actively to further it and to overcome Lucy's overriding guilt at having displaced her older friend. Only then, when she has taken thought for those who are to continue, may Eleanor look on to her coming death with equanimity: "Eleanor's being was flooded with the strangest, most ecstatic sense of deliverance. She had been her own executioner; and this was not death – but life!" (Ch. xxiii). The transformation, an awakening to life's beauty, is interpreted in a specifically religious light, though the symbols are earthly:

"But what are 'grace' and 'nature' more than words? there is a Life, – which our life perpetually touches and guesses at – like a child fingering a closed room in the dark . . . Ah!" – her voice leapt – "what *is* true – is the 'dying to live' of Christianity. One moment, you have the weight of the world upon you; the next, as it were, you dispose of the world and all in it" (Ch. xxv).

As she lies dying, Pauline de Beaumont, well-known for her scepticism, is persuaded by Chateaubriand to confess to a Catholic priest; she goes to her grave a Christian as he remarks in a letter (Sainte-Beuve, II, p. 359). Eleanor is given a longer period in which to enjoy the final state of consolation, but the moment of initial release is based upon this act of

Pauline's. It figures influentially in the Joubert preface. The closeness of death places both women beyond awkward demand, for neither man reciprocates wholly their affection:

During her last hours he seems to have given her full assurance of a devotion which could no longer embarrass either himself or her; and her poor heart was comforted. "As she listened to me," he says, "she seemed to die *désespérée et ravie*." The phrase must have satisfied the artist; it still haunts the reader.²⁸

After her capitulation to Manisty's desires, Eleanor experiences a similar release and a similar confusion of emotions; she feels an "extraordinary sense of happiness and lightness! She shrank from it in a kind of terror." (Ch. xxiii). It is clear that during this process of enlightenment, Mrs Ward had Pauline's final moments distinctly in mind. To Father Benecke, the liberal Catholic priest, Eleanor asserts the conscious, decisive nature of her act of sacrifice – an individual acceptance of Christ:

"My dear friend," said the priest tenderly – "He offers us *Himself*."

"She smiled, most brightly.

"Don't quarrel with me – with my poor words. He is there – *there!*" – she said under her breath.

And he saw the motion of her white fingers towards her breast. (Ch. xxv).

The scene reworks Chateaubriand's description of Pauline's final acts, clarifying the dying woman's enigmatic assertion:

Tout à coup, elle rejeta sa couverture, me tendit une main, serra la mienne avec contraction; ses yeux s'égarèrent. De la main qui lui restait libre, elle faisait des signes à quelqu'un qu'elle voyait au pied de son lit; puis reportant cette main sur sa poitrine, elle disait: «*C'est là!*» (*Mémoires*, xxix, pp. 186-7).

Mrs Ward ends her novel rapidly: the protagonists separate – Lucy and Manisty set off for America, and Eleanor returns home. But as if wishing to complete the set of correspondences between the dying women, the novelist brings her heroine back to the South and to Rome for the autumn:

Eleanor drove out once more towards the Alban hills; she looked once more on the slopes of Marinata and the white crown of Monte Cavo; the Roman sunshine shed round her once more its rich incomparable light. In December Manisty and Lucy were expected; but a week before they came she died. (Ch. xxv).

It was in November 1803 that Pauline de Beaumont died in Rome.

Almost precisely within the year Chateaubriand had further cause for mourning: his sister, Mme Lucile de Caud, died on November 10, 1804. His most intimate childhood companion at Combourg, she figures in the *Mémoires*, for all her brother's affection, as a strange, unhappy creature,

touched, it must be said, with madness: "Le cœur de Lucile ne pouvait battre que dans un air fait exprès pour elle, et qui n'avait point été respiré" (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 36).

The scene of madness in *Eleanor*, in which Lucy is visited in the night by the murderous, unbalanced Alice Manisty has been thought to be derived from Charlotte Brontë. W. S. Peterson, in *Victorian Heretic: Mrs Humphry Ward's Robert Elsmere*, comments that "There is . . . in *Eleanor* an entire scene – the nocturnal visit of Manisty's demented sister to Lucy's bedroom – taken virtually intact from *Jane Eyre*".²⁹ Apart from the night and the madness, however, there seems no reason to suppose this. Alice Manisty's lengthy recounting of her insane motives, full of apparent reasonableness, has little to do with the silent Mrs Rochester. The model for Alice is to be found, not at Thornfield Hall, but at the Château de Combourg. Alice has been created from Chateaubriand's portrait of Lucile de Caud.

Alice arrives at the villa with tales of persecution. Manisty tells of her 'wild fancies' 'for girls much younger than herself A girl is first fascinated – and then terrified. She begins by listening, and pitying – then Alice pursues her, swears her to secrecy, talks to her of enemies and persecutors, of persons who wish her death, who open her letters, and dog her footsteps' (Ch. ix). The symptoms are those of Lucile as her brother records them:

Elle s'attachait ensuite à madame de Chateaubriand, ma femme, et prit sur elle un empire qui devint pénible, car Lucile était violente, impérieuse, déraisonnable . . . elle se croyait en butte à des ennemis secrets: elle donnait à madame de Beaumont, à M. Joubert, à moi, de fausses adresses pour lui écrire; elle examinait les cachets, cherchait à découvrir s'ils n'avaient point été rompus; elle errait de domicile en domicile, ne pouvait rester ni chez mes soeurs, ni avec ma femme . . . (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 34).

Alice too is a perpetual and solitary wanderer across Europe, though she and her brother had once been 'great friends' (Ch. ix) during their lonely childhood. Lucile also recalls those distant times for Chateaubriand: "En la contemplant, je croyais apercevoir dans Lucile toute mon enfance, qui me regardait derrière ses yeux un peu égarés" (*Mémoires*, xxix, p. 37).

Lucile was also magnificent. Chênedollé, the melancholy poet in the Chateaubriand circle, refers to her 'visage céleste, si noble et si beau' (*Sainte-Beuve*, II, 274). Alice, too, possesses a "tragic splendour" (Ch. ix), despite her madness. Chênedollé, indeed, was in love with Mme de Caud; Sainte-Beuve transcribes their letters, though he professes his inability to explain the relationship: "Le lien qui s'était noué alors entre eux, je ne le saurais dire dans sa vraie nuance; c'était quelque chose de vague, de tremblant, d'inachevé" (II, p.230). The poet never married the young widow,³⁰ though she pledged him "une demi-promesse, – promesse sinon de l'épouser, au moins de n'en jamais épouser un autre" (*ibid.*). This gloomy man – he nicknamed himself "le Corbeau" – was saddened fur-

ther by the premature death of Lucile, invested as it was with hints of suicide.

The detail of this liaison is adapted by Mrs Ward to give plausibility to the life of Alice Manisty which passes fleetingly through *Eleanor*. She too has suicidal tendencies, and has formed a friendship with a poet – “a French artist she came across in Venice. He is melancholy and lonely like herself” (Ch. ix). The same conditions are attached to this relationship with “Monsieur Octave Vacherot, to whom, as she calmly avowed, her affections were indissolubly attached, though she did not ever intend to marry him, nor indeed to see much of him in the future. ‘I shall never do him the disservice of becoming his wife’ – she announced, with her melancholy eyes full upon her brother” (Ch. x).

This is the extent of Mary Ward’s “borrowing” from the lives of Chateaubriand and his group. A pedestrian study like this of sources and correspondences is bound to suggest that she has been derivative. To a certain extent the impression is true, though most of the detail has been assimilated into the novel’s texture and shape. This has been possible, one suspects, because so much of the source material, in its moral emphases and in its understanding of human relations, would have been not only congenial to Mrs Ward but would have confirmed her dearly-held convictions.

The Roman setting which is associated most strongly with Pauline de Beaumont’s last days is one of the most powerful of these connections between the novelist and her sources. Rome, which embodies the conflicting cultures and practices of pagan-classical civilization and the rise of Christianity, forms only one of numerous images of historical irony in the novel, and would clearly have intensified Mrs Ward’s undeviating interest in the evolution of faith, religious practices, and their relations to man’s needs. Her letters written from Castel Gandolfo are full of enthusiasm for the artefacts of ancient civilizations which surround her.

Chateaubriand’s celebrated letter on Rome, written in 1804 to his friend, Fontanes, exercises historical imaginativeness of a similar character. The man who has wearied of life or feels few remaining ties will find comfort in Rome:

La pierre qu’il foulera aux pieds lui parlera, la poussière que le vent élèvera sous ses pas renfermera quelque grandeur humaine. S’il est malheureux, s’il a mêlé les cendres de ceux qu’il aime à tant de cendres illustres, avec quel charme ne passera-t-il pas du sépulcre des Scipions au dernier asile d’un ami vertueux. . . . S’il est chrétien, ah! comment pourrait-il alors s’arracher de cette terre qui est devenue sa patrie, de cette terre qui a vu naître un second Empire, plus saint dans son berceau, plus grand dans sa puissance que celui l’a précédé. . . (Saint-Beuve, I, pp. 396-7).

Such sentiments are, of course, exclusive neither to Chateaubriand, nor to Mrs Ward. But that the novelist’s responsiveness to landscapes redolent of antiquity has become sharpened specifically by Chateaubriand emerges more decisively when we discover that both invoke the same

radiant passage in praise of Italy from Virgil's *Georgics*. In a letter written on January 10, 1804 to Fontanes,³¹ Chateaubriand praises "les Campagnes romaines":

on est toujours prêt, en les regardant, à s'écrier avec Virgile:
 Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus, Magna virum!
 ... L'aspect d'un champ de blé ou d'un coteau de vigne ne vous donnerait pas d'aussi fortes émotions que la vue de cette terre dont la culture moderne n'a pas rajeuni le sol, qui est demeurée antique comme les ruines qui la couvrent.³²

Manisty looks across the plain from "Torre Amiata" to Orvieto, the distant towns "pale" jewels on the purple robe of rock and wood":

"So Virgil saw them. So the latest sons of time shall see them – the homes of a race that we chatter about without understanding – the most laborious race in the wide world."
 And again he rolled out under his breath, for the sheer joy of the verse:
 Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
 Magna virum. (Ch. xxi).

The activity of imitation, prodigious as it is, must be interpreted as a process of recognition and confirmation as much as any more derivative exploitation of neglected sources. *Eleanor* appears, in its best light, as an act of piety and affection at the end of the century to those who prospered and suffered at its beginning.

Teddington.

PETER COLLISTER

Notes

1. (London, 1918), p. 323.
2. *Joubert: A Selection from his Thoughts*, trans. by Katharine Lyttelton with a preface by Mrs Humphry Ward (London, Duckworth, 1898). Mrs Ward had long been interested in Chateaubriand, however. She mentions a projected article in the early eighties and the help she received (though it was never written) from Lord Acton (*Recollections*, pp. 220-1).
3. MW to her son Arnold Sandwith Ward, MS letter, 17 August 1898, Pusey House, Oxford. I am grateful to Mrs Mary Moorman and to the Governors of Pusey House for allowing me to quote from this material.
4. MS letter, 4 July 1900, Pusey House, Oxford.
5. Henry James, Preface to *The Tragic Muse*, rpt. in *The Art of the Novel*, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York, Scribner's, 1935), p. 79.
6. Her own reading would, of course, have gone beyond these limits: she writes, for instance, to her brother from the Villa Barberini, when *Eleanor* was begun, "Many thanks for the two Chateaubriand articles. I had seen the later one, and was glad to have the first" (MW to William T. Arnold, MS letter, 21 April 1899, Pusey House, Oxford).
7. See Mrs G. M. Trevelyan, *The Life of Mrs. Humphry Ward* (London, Constable, 1923), p. 156.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Recollections*, p. 323.
10. *Eleanor* (London, Smith, Elder, 1900), ch. xviii; C.-A. Sainte-Beuve, *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire sous L'Empire*, first published in two volumes in 1861 (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, n.d., two volumes), I, p. 104n. Future references to both these works will be given in parentheses in the text.

11. This point is commented upon by Jill Colaco in "Henry James and Mrs Humphry Ward: A Misunderstanding", *Notes and Queries*, n.s. xxiii (September 1976), 408-10. Miss Colaco demonstrates that an entire scene in the novel, in which Manisty becomes exasperated with a minor but self-regarding poet, is taken from an incident recounted in *Chateaubriand et son Groupe Littéraire*.
12. "John, Viscount Morley, *Recollections* (London, Macmillan, 1917), I, 186.
13. "M. de Vogüé has just said that henceforward any one well acquainted with French literature, and picking up a book without name and without date, will always be able to say: 'This was written before or after Chateaubriand'." (Preface to *Joubert: A Selection from his Thoughts*, p. ix).
14. *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* par M. le Vicomte de Chateaubriand (Paris, Eugène et Victor Penaud, 1849), in 37 volumes, xxix, p. 46. All future references will be included in the text.
15. Compare *Fenwick's Career* and the references to Romney there.
16. See Sainte-Beuve, II, p. 218.
17. MW to her father, Thomas Arnold, MS letter, 25 May 1899, Pusey House, Oxford.
18. "*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*", 18 mars 1850, *Causeries du Lundi* (nouvelle édition, Paris, Garnier, n.d.), i, pp. 444-5.
19. *Miss Bretherton* (London, Macmillan, 1884), ch. vi.
20. (Paris, Didier, 1877), p. 218.
21. *Pensées de Joseph Joubert précédées de sa correspondance d'une notice sur sa vie, son caractère et ses travaux* par M. Paul de Raynal (Paris, Didier, 1862), in 2 volumes, II, p. 108. This is the third edition, "revue et augmentée", of a work which first appeared in 1842 (when Chateaubriand was still alive). Even in 1862 the editor hesitated whether or not to publish this letter – "une appréciation affectueuse, mais sans illusions" as he says in a note (I. p. 106), and it appears for the first time in this third edition.
22. "*Pensées, Essais, Maximes et Correspondances* de M. Joubert", 10 décembre 1849, *Causeries du Lundi* (fifth edition "revue et corrigée", Paris, Garnier, n.d.), i, p. 163.
23. p.x.
24. pp. xxxi-xxxii.
25. "Madame Récamier", 26 novembre 1849, *Causeries du Lundi* (fifth edition), i, pp. 125-6.
26. "Madame Récamier", p. 126.
27. *Les Carnets de Joseph Joubert*, ed. André Beaunier (Paris, Gallimard, 1938), in 2 volumes, I, p. 338.
28. p. xxxiii.
29. (Leicester, University Press, 1976), p. 104.
30. André Maurois in *Chateaubriand* (trans. Vera Fraser (London, Cape, 1938), p. 145), points out that Chênedollé already had a wife and had married her when exiled in Hamburg; that because he was an *émigré* at that time, the marriage might be considered null and void. Lucile, it seems, had been informed of this.
31. Sainte-Beuve (I, p. 404) gives part of this letter; it had been published in the *Mercur de France*, 3 mars 1804 (12 ventôse an xii).
32. *Correspondance Générale de Chateaubriand*, ed. Louis Thomas (Paris, Champion, 1912), i. pp. 156-7.