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THIS SPECIAL ISSUE COMMEMORATES THE 200th BIRTH  
ANNIVERSARY [2012] OF CHARLES DICKENS

“George Orwell Charges Charles Dickens with Plagiarism:  
Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged”

by

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George Orwell charged plagiarism (unconscious or otherwise) against Charles Dickens. Orwell identified a story recited by Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* character Sam Weller, and alleged that its source was an ancient Greek author. Orwell reconstructs from his schooldays-memory this unnamed Greek's prior version. These two items do share a resemblance. But Orwell's tale derived from a Greek composition text by Arthur Sidgwick. The Sidgwick work having been published following the death of Dickens, Dickens is exonerated of the Orwell accusation. Sidgwick synopsised Weller's story for students of Greek to translate. Orwell's misindictment recalls a parallel to Sidgwick's exploitation of Dickens's Weller. For this text, presumably from Orwell's own schooldays, included a summarization of Mark Twain's *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. Not later than 1900, Twain knew himself to be a source exploited by Sidgwick. Yet Twain never cried plagiarism.

Ironically, Orwell himself was to implant into *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both a story-scenario and multiple details found in a novel by Roger Peyrefitte, *Les Amitiés Particulières*. Literate in French, Orwell definitely drew upon other French material in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Peyrefitte's novel had been published in 1943 and 1945. Peyrefitte's book was reviewed in *Horizon* during July 1946 by Orwell's onetime-mistress and future-wife, Sonia Brownell. Editorially assisted by Sonia was *Horizon's* lifelong friend Cyril Connolly. *Horizon*, Brownell and Connolly in July 1946 all tend to associate Orwell with Peyrefitte's book. Orwell began *Nineteen Eighty-Four* around August 1946.

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It is not uncommon for young writers to be tough critics as a way of making an impression. They are at the same time boasting or making a wager with the future that they won't make the mistakes they are grilling their elders for.<sup>1</sup>

## I. INTRODUCTION

The following pages assess the charge of plagiarism (unconscious or otherwise) leveled at Charles Dickens by George Orwell in a famous essay of 1939. The latter isolated a story spun by Dickens's well-known character Sam Weller, and alleged its source to have been an ancient Greek author. Orwell rebuilds from memory this unnamed Greek's prior telling, but declines to display the Weller passage. That Weller passage at issue is presented herein. Indeed do these items share a resemblance. That resemblance, so some might speculate, fairly raises the question of plagiarism.

Ostentatiously had Orwell signaled his acquaintance with Greek literature, an acquaintance dating from George's boarding-school boyhood in England. And it will be seen that the Orwellian tale traces to a Greek composition text from the England of George's youth. That text by Arthur Sidgwick encompasses a kind of fable paralleling in substance, and overlapping in its vocabulary, the Orwellian summarization from memory in 1939. (Nevertheless, Sidgwick wrote his account in English. Conspicuously, then, was no fluency in Greek suggested at all in the recollection thereof.) Had Dickens plagiarized Sidgwick?

The Sidgwick work initially having been published following the death of Dickens, Charles Dickens stands acquitted of the Orwell accusation. Nor did Sidgwick, a borrower of stories to be capsulized for his boys studying Greek to translate, himself claim to be the originator of such fictions. Sidgwick's student-readers might themselves have recognized widely-circulated stories of the sort Sidgwick synopsised. So the investigation triggered by Orwell's literarily-lurid language transmutes into a celebration of innocence. This vindication of Dickens via twenty-first century detective-work was no thanks to George Orwell. That 1939 critic noised his bill of indictment against his literary-kingpin target, Dickens, who was deceased and unable to defend himself. Never did Orwell return to the scene of Dickens's alleged crime, to adduce for the literary world his evidence substantiating the guilt of Charles Dickens.

Orwell failed to delve into Dickens's supposed delict notwithstanding an interesting parallel to the Sidgwick exploitation of Dickens's Sam Weller. For in the very text recalled by George Orwell, presumably from George's own schooldays, nestled a second, literarily high-profile Sidgwick synopsis of a widely-known modern author's tale. It had been public knowledge, since before the year of George's birth in 1903, that Sidgwick's text summarized a beloved short story by Mark Twain. That American novelist-essayist was the source harnessed by Arthur Sidgwick: yet Twain himself, unlike the English novelist-essayist during 1939, kindly never conjured the poisonous, plagiarism-specter.

It transpires that George Orwell—Dickens's accuser—himself was to infuse into Orwell's novel of 1949, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, both a story-skeleton and multiple details found in a French-language novel by France's Roger Peyrefitte. Literate in French, George definitely drew upon other French-language material nourishing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Peyrefitte's novel had been published in Toulouse during 1943 and republished in Paris during 1945. Thereupon, George published a prominent essay in *Horizon* in April 1946. Then, at some length was Peyrefitte's book passionately reviewed in *Horizon* during July 1946. The reviewer was Orwell's once-horizontal bedmate and future-wife Sonia Brownell, of the *Horizon* staff. Thereby did Brownell limn precisely the Peyrefitte scenario to be emplaced in the heart of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Editorially assisted by Sonia was *Horizon*'s captain, George's lifelong friend Cyril Connolly. The *Horizon*, Brownell and Connolly of July 1946 all tend to associate Orwell with the Peyrefitte work before August 1946. And Orwell began writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* around August 1946. Counseled critic Jesus of Nazareth: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Darryl Pinkney, Book Review, *New York Review of Books*, November 25, 2010 (referencing a James Baldwin review of Maxim Gorky), 49, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 7:1 (King James). "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:...." Luke 6:37 (King James).

## II. ORWELL'S CHARGE AGAINST CHARLES DICKENS

### A. *Dickens in the Dock*

In George Orwell's renowned essay on Charles Dickens,<sup>3</sup> Orwell emphatically put his finger on a pair of earmarks of the Dickensian style. First: "The thing that cannot be imitated is his fertility of invention, which is invention not so much of characters, still less of 'situations', as of turns of phrase and concrete details. The outstanding, unmistakable mark of Dickens's writing is the *unnecessary detail*."<sup>4</sup> In 2012, Dickens (who had been paid by the word) endures as a role model for authors stretching a four-word sentence into forty.<sup>5</sup> Nor does Orwell necessarily condemn this Dickensian predilection: "Everything is piled up and up, detail on detail, embroidery on embroidery. It is futile to object that this kind of thing is rococo—one might as well make the same objection to a wedding-cake. Either you like it or you do not like it."<sup>6</sup>

And a second, related characteristic of Dickens's style Orwell exemplifies with language somewhat lurid professionally, because emerging from one novelist judging another:

The other thing one would notice here is that Dickens's way of telling a story takes a long time. An interesting example, too long to quote, is Sam Weller's story of the obstinate patient in Chapter XLIV of *The Pickwick Papers*. As it happens, we have a standard of comparison here, because Dickens is plagiarizing, consciously or unconsciously. The story is also told by some ancient Greek writer. I cannot now find the passage, but I read it years ago as a boy at school, and it runs more or less like this:

A certain Thracian, renowned for his obstinacy, was warned by his physician that if he drank a flagon of wine it would kill him. The Thracian thereupon drank the flagon of wine and immediately jumped off the house-top and perished. "For", said he, "in this way I shall prove that the wine did not kill me."

As the Greek tells it, that is the whole story—about six lines. As Sam Weller tells it, it takes round about a thousand words.<sup>7</sup>

Observe that Orwell's reconstruction of this Thracian yarn totals some 57 words. Among these he herds "Thracian," "obstinacy," "immediately," and "prove."

The more remote the double-version, side-by-side parallels, the less manifest the plagiarism committed by Dickens as he stands accused by Orwell. That said, any fair-minded critic must appreciate how closely Dickens's Sam Weller account actually does track this Orwell reconstruction:

### B. *The Pickwick Passage*

One night he was took very ill; sends for a doctor; doctor comes in a green fly, with a kind o' Robinson Crusoe set o' steps, as he could let down wen he got out, and pull up arter him wen he got in, to perwent the necessity o' the coachman's gettin' down, and thereby undeceivin' the public by lettin' 'em see that it wos only a livery coat as he'd got on, and not the trousers to match. "Wot's

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Burton, *George Orwell and the Classics*, 25 *Classical and Mod. Lit.*, no. 1, 2005, (<http://eprints.utas.edu.au/3014/1/George.pdf>), 53, 60.

<sup>4</sup> *Charles Dickens*, in 1 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968) (Orwell's emphasis), 412, 450. Alert to "Victorian Thing Culture", Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 139 et seq., Freedgood acknowledges how "...the surfeit of objects, the objectifying of subjects, and the animating of objects in the Dickens novels have long caused critical discomfort." *Ibid.*, 140. But Freedgood herself can share an entire chapter discerning the significance of such a Dickens object-detail as Negro head tobacco in his *Great Expectations*. *Ibid.*, 81 et seq. (ch. 3).

<sup>5</sup> Ed Dante (pseud.), *The Shadow Scholar: The Man Who Writes Your Students' Papers Tells His Story*, *The Chronicle Review*, November 19, 2010, B6, B9.

<sup>6</sup> *Charles Dickens*, 452.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

the matter?” says the doctor. “Wery ill,” says the patient. “Wot have you been a eatin’ on?” says the doctor. “Roast weal,” says the patient. “Wot’s the last thing you dewoured?” says the doctor. “Crumpets,” says the patient. “That’s it!” says the doctor. “I’ll send you a box of pills directly, and don’t you never take no more of ‘em,” he says. “No more o’ wot?” says the patient – “Pills?” “No; crumpets,” says the doctor. “Wy?” says the patient, starting up in bed; “I’ve eat four crumpets, ev’ry night for fifteen year, on principle.” “Well, then, you’d better leave ‘em off, on principle,” says the doctor. “Crumpets is wholesome, sir,” says the patient. “Crumpets is *not* wholesome, sir,” says the doctor, wery fierce. “But they’re so cheap,” says the patient, comin’ down a little, “and so wery fillin’ at the price.” “They’d be dear to you, at any price; dear if you wos paid to eat ‘em,” says the doctor. “Four crumpets a night,” he says, “vill do your business in six months!” The patient looks him full in the face, and turns it over in his mind for a long time, and at last he says, “Are you sure o’ that ‘ere, sir?” “I’ll stake my professional reputation on it,” says the doctor. “How many crumpets, at a sittin’, do you think ‘ud kill me off at once?” says the patient. “I don’t know,” says the doctor. “Do you think half-a-crown’s wurth ‘ud do it?” says the patient. “I think it might,” says the doctor. “Crumpets is wholesome, sir,” says the patient. “Three shillins’ wurth ‘ud be sure to do it, I s’pose?” says the patient. “Certainly,” says the doctor. “Wery good,” says the patient; “good-night.” Next mornin’ he gets up, has a fire lit, orders in three shillins’ wurth o’ crumpets, toasts ‘em all, eats ‘em all, and blows his brains out.’

‘What did he do that for?’ inquired Mr. Pickwick abruptly; for he was considerably startled by this tragical termination of the narrative.

‘Wot did he do it for, Sir?’ reiterated Sam. ‘Wy in support of his great principle that crumpets wos wholesome, and to show that he wouldn’t be put out of his way for nobody!’<sup>8</sup>

Verily do these two recountings of the obstinate patient resemble (albeit not mirror) one another. Any sober-minded critic could with some plausibility suspect that one author has plagiarized the other.

### C. *Orwell as Student of Ancient Greek*

Detection of a plagiarism from a dead language across a gap of two millennia well might impress Orwell’s reader. (Robust nowadays remains the influence of the classical tradition.<sup>9</sup>) As University of Tasmania Professor Paul Burton in 2005 recognized, here “Orwell ostentatiously displays his own (albeit imperfectly remembered) knowledge of Greek literature in identifying an anecdote Dickens has plagiarized....”<sup>10</sup> Obscure seemed George’s ancient source. For even Burton, an internationally-regarded Professor in his University’s School of History and Classics, acknowledges of the origin of the Thracian patient’s bid to outmatch his physician: “I must confess I have been unable to find it either.”<sup>11</sup>

Whence can derive so conspicuous an Orwellian command of the classics? It appears to exceed such command even of Burton, the professional scholar. Burton explains that George began learning Greek at the age of ten in his boarding-school, St. Cyprian’s.<sup>12</sup> Therefore had Orwell studied Greek for six hours weekly over several long years at Eton.<sup>13</sup> Orwell sourly recalled St. Cyprian’s in his post-World War II memoir of his sojourn there. Burton quotes<sup>14</sup> from these lines therein:

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<sup>8</sup> The Works of Charles Dickens: *Pickwick Papers*, Parts One and Two, vol. 2, chap. 44 (New York: Bigelow, Brown and Co., 1868), 279-81.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *The Classical Tradition*, eds. C. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Burton, *George Orwell*, 69.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69 n. 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61, 68.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Latin and Greek, the main scholarship subjects, were what counted, but even these were deliberately taught in a flashy, unsound way. We never, for example, read right through even a single book of a Greek or Latin author: we merely read short passages which were picked out because they were the kind of thing likely to be set as an “unseen translation.”<sup>15</sup>

Burton posits that George’s ancient Greek writer’s Thracian doctor-housecall could have been one element of these abbreviated extracts from classical authors at St. Cyprian’s.<sup>16</sup> Yet why might George’s original have slipped George’s mind? Opines Burton: “Slipshod pedagogy may indeed account for Orwell’s imperfect recall here....”<sup>17</sup> Yes, jurors: The lacuna in Orwell’s indictment of Dickens (viz., Orwell’s omission of the Weller tale’s source) was someone else’s fault. Blame St. Cyprian’s.

#### D. *The Sidgwick Spinoff*

However, a counsel for defendant in the dock-Dickens could expound evidence for the defense. Defense counsel could expound: When George Orwell was born in Motihari, Bengal, India, on July 25, 1903,<sup>18</sup> Arthur Sidgwick (1840-1920) was Reader in Greek at Oxford.<sup>19</sup> And Arthur authored this educational gem:

#### OBSTINACY

The Thracians are said to be so hard and obstinate in their disposition, that it is nearly impossible to persuade them of anything, even if one speaks most cleverly. And there was a Thracian, who lived alone without relations, and passed his time so unchangingly that the people in the city said in jest that not even if an earthquake took place would he do anything contrary to his custom, or change his mind about anything.

And once when he was ill, and did not know what was the matter, he sent for the doctor. And when he came, he asked (the better to discover his complaint) what he had eaten the day before: and the Thracian replied, twelve lampreys. And the doctor laughed, and said it was no wonder he was ill in his stomach after eating so many; for had he but eaten twenty he would have died. But the Thracian persisted it was not owing to the lampreys that he was ill: for he usually dined so. And when the doctor was gone he went out and bought twenty lampreys, and boiled and ate them: then immediately went to the top of the house and threw himself down, and was killed. Thus he clearly proved it was possible to eat twenty lampreys and not to die of them.<sup>20</sup>

Sidgwick offered his readers that mite in Sidgwick’s 1907, thirteenth edition of his *Introduction to Greek Prose Composition with Exercises*. Observe the title of Professor Sidgwick’s fable. His thus-denominated exposition consequently includes the words “Thracian,” “obstinacy,” “immediately,” and “proved.” So the four words (Sidgwick “proved,” Orwell “prove”) which were noted hereinabove, from Orwell’s 57-word, abrupt reconstruction, all previously had appeared in Sidgwick’s laconic *Obstinacy*. Nor had Orwell’s memory, in resurrecting the Thracian story, been contaminated regarding this vocabulary by Sam Weller’s anecdote. For the Weller/Dickens passage exploits not one word among those four. Orwell had recollected no Greek, but Sidgwick’s plain English.

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<sup>15</sup> *Such, Such Were the Joys*, in 4 *The Collective Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 330, 336-37.

<sup>16</sup> Burton, *George Orwell*, 69.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> T.R. Fyvel, *George Orwell: A Personal Memoir* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1982), 17.

<sup>19</sup> John Venn, *Sidgwick, Arthur*, in Joseph Foster, 5 *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886* (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1888-1892).

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Sidgwick, *Introduction to Greek Prose Composition, with Exercises* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1908) (13<sup>th</sup> ed., 1907) (<http://books.google.com/books?id=gdE9AAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22art...>), 121-22.

Friendly Professor Burton could prove excessively lavish in saluting Orwell's rank as amateur classicist-historian: "Despite his evidently shoddy training in history at St. Cyprian's, at Eton Orwell specialized, at least for a time, in ancient history."<sup>21</sup> Burton supposes that the impression of this experience on George might be reflected in, *inter alia*, this fact: "He was also familiar with Cato's *De Agricultura*, for he mentions in Down and Out in Paris and London Cato's rule that 'a slave should be working when he is not sleeping' because work is good for a slave."<sup>22</sup> However, in Herbert George Wells's 1920 *The Outline of History*,<sup>23</sup> Wells declares of Marcus Portius Cato: "One of his maxims was that when a slave was not sleeping he should be working."<sup>24</sup> The George born in 1903 recollected Wells as one of the four favorite authors of his boyhood.<sup>25</sup> George in 1945 remained sufficiently conversant in the 1920 first edition of the Wells book to cite its extravagant praise for the United States.<sup>26</sup> (In 1941, Orwell identified Napoleon as Wells's principal villain in his *History*.<sup>27</sup>) After Wells's 1946 death, Orwell posited: "If he had stopped writing in 1920 his reputation would stand quite as high as it does...."<sup>28</sup> Had George recollected not Greek, but Wells's plain English?

And did Dickens plagiarize Sidgwick in *Pickwick*?

### III. PICKWICK IN SIDGWICK

#### A. *Sidgwick's Confession*

Sidgwick's text was initially published in 1876.<sup>29</sup> His exercises (like Sidgwick's Exercise XXX, *Obstinacy*) ran unrevised<sup>30</sup> in thirteen editions.<sup>31</sup> In fact, his text remains in print.<sup>32</sup> In his *Preface to the First Edition* lay Sidgwick's emphatic apologia:

A few words must be said about the Exercises. It is sometimes the practice to teach composition in the earlier stages entirely by short sentences illustrating special constructions. There is a note on the special construction, an example or two, and then an exercise upon it. Then you pass on to another construction similarly illustrated. This is very systematic; and it seems as though when the learner has been through a course of such exercises, he ought to know a good deal about the language.

The great objection to this plan is that it is *dull*. No interest in *composing* can possibly be inspired in the learner who has detached clauses to translate about 'the Christian duty of shearing sheep rather than flaying them,' or 'the lion eating the gardener and the gardener's aunt.' On the other hand, a connected tale need not be any harder than detached sentences; it may illustrate Greek constructions quite as fully and clearly, and with far more variety; and it is certain to be more lively. And every schoolmaster knows—what, indeed, is only common sense—that in teaching, dullness of method is a more serious obstacle to progress than all others put together. On this system, moreover, the boy gets to feel at once, what he never can feel about sentences, that he is really composing,

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<sup>21</sup> Burton, *George Orwell*, 72.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind* (Garden City, NY: Garden City, 1920) (<http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/sherwood/Wells-Outline/Text/Part-I.htm>).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, § 26.5.

<sup>25</sup> *Charles Dickens*, 344.

<sup>26</sup> *Notes on Nationalism*, in 3 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Brownell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 361, 368.

<sup>27</sup> *Wells, Hitler and the World State*, in 2 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968) 139, 142.

<sup>28</sup> *Charles Dickens*, in 4 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, 251, 253.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Sidgwick, *Introduction to Greek Prose Composition, with Exercises* (Waterloo Place, London: Rivington's, 1876).

<sup>30</sup> Sidgwick, Note to Thirteenth Edition, Greek Prose, ix.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Arthur Sidgwick, *Introduction to Greek Prose Composition, with Exercises* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010).

writing something, and that it is within his power, if he takes pains, to do really good work, in which he may take pride and pleasure; it is not a task to be done, but a chance for the exercise of a faculty. And when this idea gets hold of him, progress is certain.

I have therefore given the exercises from the first in the form of separate tales, complete in themselves.<sup>33</sup>

Sidgwick adds: “Many of the stories are not new, but I have endeavored to put them into a more or less lively shape, and yet one adapted for turning into Greek. The first two parts consist entirely of tales thus written, . . .”<sup>34</sup> (*Obstinacy* lies within Sigwick’s Part I.)

Hence just six years past the June 9, 1870, death of Charles Dickens, Sidgwick in 1876 advertised that his exercises were not necessarily original to Sidgwick. Why could Sidgwick in 1876 have supposed that this capsulization of Sam Weller’s anecdote would be broadly-recognized as a product of Dickens? Interestingly, Orwell in the very essay wherein he charged Charles Dickens with plagiarism, recognized:

A music-hall comedian can (or at any rate could quite recently) go on the stage and impersonate Micawber or Mrs. Gamp with a fair certainty of being understood, although not one in twenty of the audience had ever read a book of Dickens’s right through. Even people who affect to despise him quote him unconsciously.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, when Orwell states “until quite recently,” he means into this own days at St. Cyprian’s. They elapsed in the era when Professor Sidgwick’s text, internationally,<sup>36</sup> was being read. George’s testimony tends to acquit Sidgwick the Greek professor of plagiarism, just as the 1876 date of Sidgwick’s text exonerated the then-six years-dead Dickens the English novelist from Orwell’s indictment.

## B. *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*

### i. Beauclerk’s Buttered Muffin Story

Moreover, there rises precedent to the *Pickwick* passage actually suggestive of the originality of Dickens. For on April 16, 1779, Topham Beauclerk and Samuel Johnson discussed whether James Hackman (who had been sentenced by Mr. Justice William Blackstone to be hanged for murder) had intended suicide only. A sexually jealous Hackman, using first a pistol, had shot dead a woman and then unsuccessfully attempted suicide with a second pistol:

In talking of Hackman, Johnson argued, as Judge Blackstone had done, that his being furnished with two pistols was a proof that he meant to shoot two persons. Mr. Beauclerk said, ‘No; for that every wise man who intended to shoot himself, took two pistols, that he might be sure of doing it at once. . . Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself; and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled by indigestion: *he* had two charged pistols; one was found lying charged upon the table by him, after he had shot himself with the other.’<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Sidgwick, Preface to the First Edition, Greek Prose, v-vi.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface to the First Edition, vi.

<sup>35</sup> *Charles Dickens*, 450.

<sup>36</sup> As early as August 1879, the American editor of Sidgwick’s *Iliad and Homer*, Robert P. Keep of Williston Seminary, in Easthampton, Massachusetts, praised Arthur Sidgwick: “He is the author of *An Introduction to Greek Prose Composition*, London, 1876, a most suggestive and helpful book, by no means unknown on this side of the Atlantic.” Robert P. Keep, Preface, in Arthur Sidgwick and Robert P. Keep, *The Iliad of Homer*. Books I, II, III (Boston: John Allyn Publisher, 1879).

<sup>37</sup> James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), (rev. ed.), 1018 (emphasis on Boswell).

ii. Beauclerk Was Right

In this grim passage, from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, the muffin eater is wholly rational. Beauclerk's point is to exemplify the common sense behind the spare pistol ("be sure of doing it"). This good sense the suicide exercised. For enjoying the muffins had come at no cost to Beauclerk's man who "resolved to shoot himself" and *then* ate his muffins in secure knowledge of immunity from indigestion.

Beauclerk ("be sure of doing it") was right. On January 30, 1835, unemployed housepainter Richard Lawrence intercepted President Andrew Jackson at the Capitol. Lawrence was armed with two pistols. Within ten feet of Jackson, Lawrence fired his first gun. Its cap exploded but its powder failed to light the powder necessary to discharge a bullet. Jackson charged Lawrence, who fired his spare pistol at point-blank range. The second pistol's cap also exploded yet failed to light its powder.<sup>38</sup>

Dickens, contrariwise, has the Weller patient elicit the condescending smile of the reader: For the Weller patient irrationally sacrificed so much greater good for the pettier good of showing "he wouldn't be put out of his way for nobody!". Thereby, Beauclerk's somber lesson of practicality in the rational execution of murder (as well as of suicide) Dickens transmuted into a comic caricature of false pride. It proved memorable to both Sidgwick and Orwell. (Nonetheless, in 1972 Robert L. Patten fancied Beauclerk's 42-word, one-sentence, grisly muffin account "[a] similar story"<sup>39</sup> to Weller's creatively-farcical verbosity.)

Furthermore, there also obtained a longstanding literarily-obtrusive precedent to Orwell's 1939 plagiarism charge against Charles Dickens, to alert the sophisticated Anglo-American literator to the Pickwick-Sidgwick connection.

#### IV. ARTHUR SIDGWICK AND MARK TWAIN

##### A. *The Sidgwick Spinoff*

For Sidgwick's Introduction to Greek Prose Composition with Exercises constituted a treasure-chest already in controversy beyond the seas. That previous controversy had touched a novelist of stature and popularity to duplicate or exceed the stature and popularity of Dickens himself. Another of Sidgwick's Exercises in the same textbook touched a tale even more renowned than that of Sam Weller's medical housecall:

##### THE ATHENIAN AND THE FROG

An Athenian once fell in with a Boeotian who was sitting by the roadside, looking at a frog. Seeing the other approach, the Boeotian said his was a remarkable frog, and asked if he would agree to start a contest of frogs, on condition that he whose frog jumped furthest should receive a large sum of money. The Athenian replied that he would if the other would fetch him a frog, for the lake was near. To this he agreed: and when he was gone, the Athenian took the frog, and opening its mouth, poured some stones into its stomach, so that it did not indeed seem larger than before, but could not jump. The Boeotian soon returned with the other frog and the contest began. The second frog first was pinched, and jumped moderately: then they pinched the Boeotian frog. And he gathered himself as though for a leap, and used the utmost effort, but could not move his body the least. So the Athenian departed with the money. When he was gone the Boeotian, wondering what was the matter with the frog, lifted him and examined him. And being turned upside down, he opened his mouth and vomited out the stones.<sup>40</sup>

This Boeotian's small story triggered another, more elaborate story all its own.

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<sup>38</sup> John Meacham, *American Law: Andrew Jackson in the White House*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Random House, Incorporated, 2008), 298.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, no. 2, ed. Robert L. Patten (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Limited, 1972), 950.

<sup>40</sup> Sidgwick, *Greek Prose*, 116.

B. *The Twain Tall Tale*

For circa October 16-18, 1865,<sup>41</sup> had Mark Twain produced his short story of California,<sup>42</sup> to become known as<sup>43</sup> *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*.<sup>44</sup> Subsequently would Twain be informed by Professor Henry Van Dyke,<sup>45</sup> of Princeton, that the adventures of the frontier frog had repeated an ancient Greek story,<sup>46</sup> as relayed in English by Professor Sidgwick.<sup>47</sup> Twain consequently, in an essay entitled *Private History of the "Jumping Frog" Story*,<sup>48</sup> presented to Twain's readers, as a translation from ancient Greek, the Sidgwick Exercise about the Boeotian frog.<sup>49</sup> For his readers' comparison, Twain then presented this excerpt from his own work:

FROM "THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY"

Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kep' him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as fur as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, 'Flies, Dan'l, flies!' and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was,

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<sup>41</sup> The Works of Mark Twain: *Early Tales and Sketches 1864-1865*, vol.2, eds. Edgar Marquess Branch and Robert H. Hirst (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 262, 269.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 166.

<sup>43</sup> Henry Clapp published Twain's Jumping Frog story in *The Saturday Press*, Clapp's literary journal:

When Artemus Ward passed through California on a lecturing tour in 1865 or '66, I told him the "Jumping Frog" story in San Francisco and he asked me to write it out and send it to his publisher, Carleton, in New York, to be used in padding out a small book which Artemus had prepared for the press and which needed some more stuffing to make it big enough for the price which was to be charged for it.

Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "It was soon reprinted in newspapers and comic periodicals throughout the nation, was pirated by Beadle's Dime Books, and was later collected with a new title in *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches*." W. Craig Turner, "Celebrated Jumping of Calaveras County, The" (1865), in the *Mark Twain Encyclopedia*, eds. J.R. LeMaster and James D. Wilson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 133. The collection of Twain's sketches was published by Charles H. Webb, whom Twain had known in San Francisco and who had suggested Twain publish a volume of sketches. Twain, *Autobiography*, 165-66.

He brought it out in blue and gold and made a very pretty little book of it. I think he named it *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, price \$1.25. He made the plates and printed and bound the book through a job-printing house and published it through the American News Company.

Ibid., 167.

<sup>45</sup> Roger Penn Cuff, *Mark Twain's Use of California Folklore in His Jumping Frog Story*, 65. *J. Am. Folklore*, no. 256, April-June 1952 (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/536886>), 155.

<sup>46</sup> *Private History of the "Jumping Frog" Story*, in Mark Twain, *In Defense of Harriet Shelley*, ed. American Artists (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925) (The Complete Works of Mark Twain, vol. 16), 100.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 102 n 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 100-10.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 102-03.

for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

“Well, Smiley kep’ the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down-town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come acrost him with his box, and says:

“What might it be that you’ve got in the box?”

“And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, ‘It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain’t—it’s only just a frog.’

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, “H’m—so ‘tis. Well, what’s *he* good for?”

“Well,” Smiley says, easy and careless, “he’s good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County.”

“The feller took the box again, and took another long, partiular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, “Well,” he says, “I don’t see no p’int about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

“Maybe you don’t,” Smiley says. “Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don’t understand ‘em; maybe you’ve had experience, and maybe you ain’t only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I’ve got *my* opinion, and I’ll resk forty dollars the he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County.”

“And the feller studies a minute, and then says, kinder sad-like, “Well, I’m only a stranger here, and I ain’t got no frog; but if I had a frog, I’d bet you.”

“And then Smiley says, ‘That’s all right—that’s all right if you’ll hold my box a minute, I’ll go and get you a frog.’ ‘And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley’s, and set down to wait.

“So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail-shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller and says:

“Now, if you’re ready, set him alongside of Dan’l, with his fore paws just even with Dan’l’s, and I’ll give the word.” Then he says, “One-two- three—*gil*” and him and the feller touches up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively but Dan’l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it warn’t no use—he couldn’t budge; he was planted as solid as a church, and he couldn’t no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn’t have no idea what the matter was, of course.

“The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder—so—at Dan’l, and says again, very deliberate: “Well,” he says, “I don’t see no p’int about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

“Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan’l a long time, and at last he says, “I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw’d off for—I wonder if there ain’t something the matter with him—he ‘pears to look mighty baggy, somehow.” And he ketched Dan’l by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, “Why blame my cats if he don’t weigh five pound!” and turned

him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him.<sup>50</sup>

But in July 1900, Twain appended to this essay his later information that there had been no Greek kernel of Twain's yarn. Only the young and innocent would be so easily beguiled through their own ignorance and simplicity<sup>51</sup> as had been Van Dyke and Twain:

As it turns out, now, it was not claimed that the story had been translated from the Greek. It had its place among other uncredited stories, and was there to be turned into Greek by students of that language. 'Greek Prose Composition'—that title is what made the confusion. It seemed to mean that the originals were Greek. It was not well chosen, for it was pretty sure to mislead. Thus vanishes the Greek Frog, and I am sorry: for he loomed fine and grand across the sweep of the ages, and I took a great pride in him.<sup>52</sup>

And Twain during November 1903 additionally would note:

By-and-by, in England, after a few years, I learned that there hadn't been any Greek frog in the business, and no Greek story about his adventures. Professor Sidgwick had not claimed that it was a Greek tale; he had merely synopsised the Calaveras tale and transferred the incident to classic Greece; but as he did not state that it was the same old frog, the English papers reproved him for the omission. He told me this in England in 1899 or 1900, and was much troubled about that censure, for his act had been innocent, he believing that the story's origin was so well known as to render formal mention of it unnecessary.<sup>53</sup>

Observe the great-heartedness of the Missouri native's apprehension of the Sidgwick exploitation of the Calaveras tale. By sharp contrast with the Bengal native, Twain in 1903 opts for no mean-spirited accusation of plagiarism against Sidgwick. In adjudging the title of Professor Sidgwick's book to have been "pretty sure to mislead," Twain in 1900 reassured his public that Sidgwick had *not* claimed Sidgwick's own authorship. To reiterate: "It seemed to mean that the originals were Greek." But then, the elderly celebrity Twain was (unlike the thirty-six year-old Orwell indicting Dickens) not a young writer uncommonly tough as a literary critic. Twain neither boasted, nor laid a wager with the future, that Twain would not make mistakes he grilled others for. Nonetheless, the then little-known Orwell of 1939 had dared such a bet. And did Orwell fall, in turn, into the sin of plagiarism?

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 102-03 (emphasis in original). Yes, that stranger-feller filled Dan'l Webster pretty nearly to Dan'l's chin. Has *your* frog any chin at all?

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 103-05

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. "If Greece ever possessed a native anecdote of a contest between frogs, no one has yet submitted a copy of the attention of present-day students," Cuff, *Use of California Folklore*, 155.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Twain, *The Jumping Frog: In English, Then in French, and Then Clawed Back into a Civilized Language* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1903)

([http://books.google.com/books?id=C5gdAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+jumping+frog+in+english&hl=en&ei=KBL9TKeEBMSt8AaAxaXmCg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=JCCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=C5gdAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+jumping+frog+in+english&hl=en&ei=KBL9TKeEBMSt8AaAxaXmCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=JCCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)), 65-66. .

Orwell became well-aware of Twain.

Orwell rhapsodizes of Twain's *Roughing It*, *The Innocents at Home*, and *Life on the Mississippi* as sharing "a central theme which could perhaps be put into these words: 'This is how human beings behave when they are not frightened of the sack.' In writing these books, Mark Twain is not consciously writing a hymn to liberty...." Mark Twain—"The Licensed Jester," in 3 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 325. In that America "The State hardly existed, the churches were weak and spoke with many voices, and land was to be had for the taking." Hence, "The 'log cabin to Write House' myth was true while the free land lasted. In a way, it was for this that the Paris mob had stormed the Bastille, and when one reads Mark Twain,....it is hard to feel that their effort was wasted." Ibid., 326. Was the thing behind Twain's hymned-liberty "the free land" or laissez faire ("the State hardly existed"). Both vanished from America circa 1890.

V. GEORGE ORWELL AND ROGER PEYREFITTE

A. *Orwell, Brownell, Connolly, and Horizon*

Sonia Brownell was from October 13, 1949, the wife of George Orwell, who died on January 21, 1950. Sonia was formed permanently by the nine years she spent at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton.<sup>54</sup> Exactly a week after her sixth birthday had these begun.<sup>55</sup> The result of the morbid, repressed routine of the convent was that Sonia determined to revolt against it in all ways possible. She repudiated Catholicism totally as soon as she departed that convent. In subsequent years, Sonia made a point of spitting on the pavement anytime she noticed a nun.<sup>56</sup>

Brownell was a faithful managerial presence at the English literary journal *Horizon*.<sup>57</sup> Sonia cut a formidable figure there, and made her own views felt.<sup>58</sup> She was Cyril Connolly's assistant.<sup>59</sup> Cyril's personal taste ran to submissive women, of intelligence.<sup>60</sup> Connolly edited *Horizon*.<sup>61</sup> In the 1940s he became, nearly accidentally, the figure of foremost influence in English writing.<sup>62</sup> Connolly contributed an air of snobbery, upper-class refinement, and of somewhat wearied vice.<sup>63</sup> (Observe the contrast between Connolly and Orwell.) Cyril as a boy had been a schoolmate of Orwell's at St. Cyprian's, their boarding-school.<sup>64</sup> Sonia first had met George in 1940 or 1941.<sup>65</sup> When they encountered one another once more following World War II, Orwell was a widower.<sup>66</sup> George in late 1945<sup>67</sup> unsuccessfully proposed marriage.<sup>68</sup> Sonia permitted Orwell to sleep with her.<sup>69</sup> In *Horizon*'s April 1946 issue, Orwell published *Politics and the English Language*.<sup>70</sup> His essay is recognized as a backdrop to the novel.<sup>71</sup> Particularly relevant is it to the Appendix of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, entitled "The Principles of Newspeak."<sup>72</sup> Orwell started *Nineteen Eighty-Four* about August 1946.<sup>73</sup> And George worked on *Such, Such Were the Joys*,<sup>74</sup> an unforgiving memoir of St. Cyprian's, while in his opening stage of penning *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.<sup>75</sup>

B. *Orwell, Brownell, Connolly, and Peyrefitte*

Meanwhile, Sonia in the July 1946 *Horizon* reviewed<sup>76</sup> Roger Peyrefitte's French novel, *Les Amitiés Particulières*.<sup>77</sup> Republished in Paris in 1945, it initially had been published in a limited edition at Toulouse in 1943.<sup>78</sup> Peyrefitte's novel

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<sup>54</sup> G. S. Swan, "George Orwell Follows Sonia Brownell to Catholic School: Roger Peyrefitte's Proximate Source of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*," Erfurt Electronic Studies in English 1/2011, (ISSN 1430-6905) (<http://webdoc.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/eese.html>), 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> *Connolly's World*, in Frank Kermode, *The Uses of Error* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 334, 339.

<sup>61</sup> Swan, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Kermode, 339.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. "Connolly was a very clever man....He was obviously clever because as Britain's second ugliest man he managed to marry one of Britain's most beautiful women, Barbara Skelton, once a mistress of King Farouk." David Tang, *Lady Gaga and the Gaggling Girl*, Fin. Times, June 11/12, 2011, 8 (House & Home). Was Britain's homeliest man George Orwell?

<sup>64</sup> Swan, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Why buy the cow if you can get the milk for free?

<sup>70</sup> "Politics and the English Language," 127.

<sup>71</sup> See the inclusion thereof in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four: Text Sources Criticism*, ed. Irving Howe, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1963), 248.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>73</sup> Swan, 4.

<sup>74</sup> *Charles Dickens*, 330.

<sup>75</sup> Swan, 4.

<sup>76</sup> Sonia Brownell, *Les Amitiés Particulières*, 14 *Horizon* 64, no. 79, July 1946.

<sup>77</sup> Roger Peyrefitte, *Les Amitiés Particulières* (Paris: Jean Vigneau, 1945).

focuses on a particular friendship between a couple of boys in a Catholic boarding school. These lads' impulses for one another (like hero Winston's feelings for heroine Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) signify subversion.<sup>79</sup> At the precise juncture when George embarked upon writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George's ex-mistress framed, on the printed page, exactly that scenario which was to develop into the nucleus of his plot.<sup>80</sup>

By one line of hypothesizing, Peyrefitte reignites Sonia's revulsion against her Catholic boarding-school. Likewise is George a memoirist regurgitating his own disgust, then, at Orwell's own boarding-school. At the intersection of this pair lies Connolly: For Cyril is George's publisher and Sonia's employer. Also, Cyril was himself repulsed by St. Cyprian's. You can imagine the first of the two lovers to discover Peyrefitte (Sonia) reading from Peyrefitte to George. Her rendition inclines Orwell to install Peyrefitte at center-stage in his own futuristic product.

Or by an alternative interpretation, George already had read Peyrefitte's novel during 1945. On February 24, 1945, Orwell wrote of revisiting Parisian bookstalls.<sup>81</sup> He could have hunted out *Les Amitiés Particulières*, since the tale had snatched for Peyrefitte the Prix Théophraste-Renaudot (or Prix Renaudot) in 1944.<sup>82</sup> The English Orwell credibly could feed Peyrefitte's French-language source into his English dystopian novel. Approximately in February 1944 George had read Evgenii Zamyatin's dystopian Russian novel *We*. And *We* is widely-acknowledged to be another source of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. George read *We* in French.<sup>83</sup>

At Orwell's re-acquaintance with Brownell during December 1945, George shared the Peyrefitte French work with her. George's infectious enthusiasm, one can speculate, was nourished by George's long-lived contempt for St. Cyprian's. Orwell was yet the more aplee to show Peyrefitte's novel to Sonia as a story reminiscent of the boarding-school which George had endured with Cyril, her paymaster. In 1946, Brownell discovered that the novel delineated Sonia's common ground with Connolly and Orwell (given her stretch at the Convent of the Sacred Heart). Under this reconstruction, George evokes Sonia's July 1946 review for Connolly. By either interpretation, *Les Amitiés Particulières* constitutes the proximate source underlying *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. *A Seventy-Three Year-Old Mystery Solved*

The preceding discussion has reexamined the finger of blame for plagiarism (conscious or not) pointed by George Orwell in a classic essay published during 1939. The charge identified a story related by Dickens's famous figure Sam Weller.<sup>84</sup> Orwell's indictment alleged that the true source of Weller's recounting was an ancient Greek author. Orwell purported to resurrect from his boyhood's schooldays-memories this unnamed Greek's original account. Yet Orwell declined to himself deliver his critical Weller passage. After seventy-three years (1939-2012), that crucial passage in dispute has been afforded herein to the reader. These items certainly do resemble to one another. Doubtless are there some who might posit that their mutual resemblance generates, in justice, a question of plagiarism.

Flashily does Orwell imply an acquaintance with the literature of ancient Greece. His acquaintance dated from Orwell's English boarding-school childhood. It has been revealed that, in truth, George's tale can be tracked to a Greek

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<sup>78</sup> Roger Peyrefitte, *Les Amitiés Particulières* (Marseille: Jean Vigneau, 1943) (Toulouse: Impr. régionale).

<sup>79</sup> Swan, 4-5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>84</sup> The plagiarism allegation in English literature boasts a lengthy history. See, e.g., Richard Terry, *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Before 1700, "plagiarism" meant the unauthorized presentation of one author's work under the name of another: it was a sin of attribution, not of composition. In the eighteenth century, under pressure of actual usage, the word was gradually redefined by lexiconographers to mean the copying of ideas and expressions.

Ibid., p. 23.

composition textbook dating from the England of Orwell's youth. That Greek composition textbook by Arthur Sidgwick contains a sort of fable. That fable parallels in substance, and it overlaps in its vocabulary with, the summarization by Orwell from memory of 1939. However, bear in mind that Sidgwick wrote this account in English. Hence, no fluency in Greek whatsoever ought to be inferred from Orwell's recollection thereof. So: Had Dickens actually proved to be the plagiarizer of Sidgwick (who actually is George's "ancient Greek writer")?

Charles Dickens is acquitted, before the bar of history, of Orwell's charge. For Sidgwick's textbook first was published only subsequent to Dickens's death. Nor did Sidgwick, who was the collector of stories synopsisized for students of Greek to translate, aver himself to be the originator of them. Those Anglophone student-readers of Sidgwick's textbook well could have recognized stories that had been as widely-circulated as were those of the type Sidgwick selected (i.e., from Dickens's popular *Pickwick*, or Twain's career-making *Jumping Frog*). Consequently does an investigation evoked by Orwell's grim complaint finally convoke a festival of the innocent.

Charles Dickens was vindicated by means of twenty-first century detective-work. It was of no thanks to George Orwell. That critic posted his bill of indictment against his prosecutee, Dickens, whom Orwell understood to be dead and by consequence impotent to defend himself. At no juncture would Orwell more profoundly research Dickens's alleged larceny from his Greek victim, whereby Orwell could lay before the literati all evidence substantiating the guilt of defendant Dickens. And Orwell thus failed to dig into Dickens's supposed purloining despite the publicization, long preceding Orwell's charge, of a high-profile parallel to the Sidgwick utilization of Dickens's Sam Weller: In the selfsame text remembered by Orwell, Professor Arthur Sidgwick had planted another literarily attention-grabbing capsulization of a widely-celebrated contemporary author's fiction. From years before the 1903 date of Orwell's nativity had it been of literarily-salient, public knowledge that the Sidgwick textbook synopsisized a much-loved short story of Mark Twain's. Yes, that American novelist-essayist was himself a source whose product had been set to labor in the textbook-vineyard of Professor Sidgwick. Nevertheless, Hannibal's Mark Twain, by vivid contrast with the British novelist-essayist of 1939, passed in sweet silence over the plagiarism point.

A decade after Orwell made his charge of plagiarism, Orwell himself was to insert into Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a story-outline plus multiple details which already were to be found within a novel in French by France's Roger Peyrefitte. Long-literate in French, Orwell to a certainty drew on other French-language roots sustaining his own *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The Peyrefitte novel had been published in France in 1943 and again in 1945. In April 1946, Orwell published an essay in *Horizon*. In July 1946, Peyrefitte's book attracted a fiery review in *Horizon*. Peyrefitte's reviewer was Sonia Brownell, of the *Horizon* staff. Sonia was George's 1945 bedfellow and 1949 wife. In her review, Brownell formulated with precision a Peyrefitte scenario to be deployed at the hub of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Brownell was editorial assistant at *Horizon* to Cyril Connolly, Orwell's lifelong friend. Before August 1946, Orwell tends to be connected with Sonia's Peyrefitte review via the *Horizon*, Brownell, and Connolly of July 1946. Approximately in August 1946, George Orwell started to write *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

#### B. *A Bonus Insight*

Too, Orwell presented "a standard of comparison" (Sidgwick's synopsisization of Weller in *Obstinacy*) with "Sam Weller's story of the obstinate patient," which in Dickens "takes a long time." The capsule-synopsis of Twain's *Jumping Frog* story, Sidgwick's *The Athenian and the Frog*, likewise affords a standard of comparison with a popularly-beloved and critically-respected author's (Twain's) version of the same events. Have readers or critics wept that Twain's version "takes a long time"? It is *supposed* to take a long time.

For the narrator has been inveigled by his distant friend to call on "garrulous"<sup>85</sup> Simon Wheeler, to inquire after that pal's own friend, Leonidas W. Smiley. Wheeler instead unleashes an "interminable narrative"<sup>86</sup> about Jim (not Leonidas W.) Smiley totaling almost twice the length of its frog segment quoted hereinabove: "I let him go on in his own way, and never

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<sup>85</sup> *The Jumping Frog*, in Mark Twain, *Sketches New and Old*, ed. American Artists (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1917) (The Complete Works of Mark Twain, vol. 19), 15, 17.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

interrupted him once.”<sup>87</sup> Twain formulated the verbosity of elderly Simon Wheeler to elicit a smile from the reader complicit with her narrator. Opined W. Craig Turner: “...the master stroke with which Twain concludes the story is to have the distracted Wheeler buttonhole the frame narrator attempting to escape and begin anew with a story of Smiley’s one-eyed stump-tailed cow. The narrator, however, has reached his limit and takes his leave, thus depriving himself—and Twain’s readers—of what hints at being the best Smiley story yet.”<sup>88</sup>



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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Turner, “Celebrated Jumping Frog,” 134-35. But how well-acquainted with Twain became Orwell?

He held of Twain’s abandonment of “the Southern side” in the Civil War that it is “clear enough” Twain “changed sides because he saw that the North was going to win.” Orwell, “Mark Twain—the Licensed Jester,” 327. Actually, Twain abandoned his role in the Missouri State Guard to go West before August 1861, far prior to the Confederacy’s fall in April 1865. Too, Spanish Civil War combat veteran and former policeman Orwell thought Twain’s America encompassed “The desperado who stalked through the streets of the mining settlement, with a Derringer pistol in his waistcoat pocket and twenty corpses to his credit...” Ibid., 326. Actual frontier miners would not suppose a Derringer-pocketing, waist-coated man a desperado at all, because so improbably having any corpses to his credit. Henry Derringer’s pocket pistol produced from 1852 to 1868 was a single-shot muzzleloader popular for self-defense. Derringer, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derringer>).

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## George Steven Swan

George Steven Swan is an Associate Professor at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. He is a member of several state bars, including Louisiana. He holds the LL.M. and S.J.D. degrees from the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. Dr. Swan evidenced Robert Graves's "inside joke" in Graves's novel, *Homer's Daughter*. The narrator-protagonist thereof was modeled upon a friend and renowned Graves-biographer. George Steven Swan, "Who Was Home's Daughter?: Robert Graves and T. E. Lawrence," 2 *Focus on Robert Graves and His Contemporaries*, no. 2, 1994, 17.



### ~ \* UPDATED ASEBL EDITORIAL POLICY \* ~



*ASEBL Journal* is not directed at any highly-specialized audience. The articles, while academic in nature (grounded in scholarship), are written for an audience generally in tune with and sensitive to the notions of ethics and literature. ASEBL can be Ethical Behavior or Evolutionary Biology: broadly conceived, any treatment of the convergence among ethics, biology, and literature: personal responsibility, moral identity, social emotions, human nature, consciousness and conscience. While the genesis of the journal is humanistic, that originating intent does not rule out readings that include science (though it does rule out post-modernist, deconstructive readings).

In line with the aims and scope of the journal, we are particularly interested in readings that analyze the so-called biology of morality (as manifested in literature). This re-focusing is effective as of October 2011. We continue to welcome ethical readings in a more traditionally humanistic vein (though that does not include religious ideologies or politically-conservative opinions). We are hopeful that, at some point, we can publish articles only on the convergence of ethics/biology. What makes us believe morality derives from a heavenly cloud or a theoretical Form or an abstract imperative? In great part the evolution of our social emotions is responsible for many of our behavioral codes. And yet there is something distinctive about human morality not found in other highly-developed primates.

If you wish to have a submission peer-reviewed, please so indicate and such arrangements can be made. At any rate, please query before submitting anything. Contact the editor, Gregory F. Tague. Please include ASEBL in the subject line. Submissions are to be in MLA or APA format: brief in-text cites followed by a works cited page and endnotes (no footnotes); endnotes need to be set up without using embedded footnoting programs. If you cite online sources, it is your responsibility to make certain that the links are live and active. Documents should not have any headers or footers. Articles can range (approximately) from one thousand to two thousand words.

We hope to use the blog ([www.asebl.blogspot.com](http://www.asebl.blogspot.com)) as a forum for guests to comment on the connections (consilience) among philosophy, science, and literature. While blog entries need not be scholarly, there should be some commitment to academic discourse. Please query.

To provide some context and grounding, the following have done some writing in the areas relating biology (emotions, consciousness, evolutionary psychology, etc.) and morality – (a highly-selective list): Charles Darwin; Maxwell Bennett; Paul Bloom; Joseph Carroll; Patricia Churchland; Leda Cosmides; Antonio Damasio; Richard Dawkins; Daniel Dennett; Michael Gazzaniga; Joshua Greene; Jonathan Haidt; Peter M.S. Hacker; Marc Hauser; David Hume; Jerome Kagan; Joseph Le Doux; Martha C. Nussbaum; Steven Pinker; Adam Smith; John Tooby; Frans B.M. de Waal; E.O. Wilson; Lisa Zunshine.

