How do We Read?
Paratext, Poetry and Ouida's A Dog of Flanders

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What are we doing today

1. Who was Ouida?
2. Why Ouida today?
3. How do we read?
   1. Reading or using? Reading through use?
   2. The paratext/epitext
   3. Editions of A Dog of Flanders
4. How might we read?
5. Why Ouida then?
Who was Ouida?

• Louise Ramé
  — (NB NOT “Louise de la Ramee”)
• Born Bury St Edmund’s 1839
  — Father French teacher, mother daughter of small business man
• Moved to London 1857
  — Started writing for journals aged 18 to support mother and grandmother
  — On tour of Europe 1871-2 (via Belgium) decided to remain in Florence
• Died Viareggio, Italy, 1908
• Wrote 40 novels + lots of articles and short stories

Who was Ouida?

• Transnational success
  [Representative publishers and countries only]
  — UK – Chatto & Windus
  — English-speaking continent – Tauchnitz
  — US – Lippincott
  — France – Hachette
  — Italy – Treves
  & (unauthorised) trans in German, Polish, Spanish, Russian, Czech...

Who was Ouida?

• Transclass success
  — Bentley’s Miscellany, New Monthly, Lippincott’s, Graphic, Illustrated London News, Contemporary Review, Times...
  — Weekly Times; The Newcastle Weekly Courant; Western Mail; Glasgow Weekly Herald; Nottinghamshire Guardian
  — 3 volume form
  — 1 volume form (hardback – art printing and “normal”)
  — 2 shilling yellowbacks
  — 6d paperbacks

Why Ouida?

“Reviled by some critics and adored by her readers, Ouida has much to teach us of the vexed class and gender politics of her period, just as her reception in recent years teaches us about our own contradictory investment in a literary form considered inherently bourgeois and conservative and reveals the ways we simultaneously demand innovation within and resistance to bourgeois ideals.”

Pamela Gilbert, “Ouida and the Canon” in Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture, Ashgate, 2013: 38

Ouida’s status

Insultata da alcuni critici e adorata dai suoi lettori. Ouida ha molto da insegnarci della politica delle classi e del genere del suo periodo, proprio come la sua lettura in questi ultimi anni ci insegna del nostro investimento contraddittorio in una forma letteraria considerata intrinsecamente borghese e conservatore, e rivela i modi in cui contemporaneamente richiediamo l’innovazione e resistenza agli ideali borghesi.

Pamela Gilbert, “Ouida and the Canon” in Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture, Ashgate, 2013: 38

Why Ouida?

I remember Ruskin and Cardinal Manning routing [= rooting?] on their knees amongst some books to find *The Dog of Flanders* which they loved; getting covered with dust and searching with enthusiasm...

In late 1890s artist Burne-Jones writes letter to Frances Horner (published in her *Time Remembered*, William Heinemann, 1933, pp. 183-4)
Ricordo Ruskin e Cardinale Manning cercando in ginocchio tra alcuni libri alla ricerca di “The Dog of Flanders” che amavano, coperti di polvere cercandolo con entusiasmo ...

In late 1890s artist Burne-Jones writes letter to Frances Horner (published in her Time Remembered, William Heinemann, 1933, pp. 183-4)

Love among the Ruins, by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, 1884
Wightwick Manor, West Midlands

Ruskin in 1884
Cardinal Manning

“A Dog of Flanders”

Film – and computer game – versions (based on Wikipedia)

1. A Dog of Flanders (1914), directed by Howell Hansel.
2. A Boy of Flanders (1924), directed by Victor Schertzinger and starring Jackie Coogan as Nello.
3. A Dog of Flanders (1935), directed by Edward Sloman.
4. A Dog of Flanders (1960), directed by James B. Clark.
7. The Dog of Flanders (Japan, 1997), directed by Yoshio Kuroda, remake of the 1975 TV series.
8. A Dog of Flanders (1999), directed by Kevin Brodie.
10. Patrasche, a Dog of Flanders - Made in Japan (Belgium, 2007), documentary directed by Didier Volckaert and An van Dienderen.
11. Snow Prince (Japan, 2009), directed by Isao Matsuoka.
12. A Dog of Flanders, 2011, Minoto Studios (computer game – link is to video screen capture of a child playing it)

More specific links

- [https://www.facebook.com/NelloEnPatrasche](https://www.facebook.com/NelloEnPatrasche)
- 1997 Japanese anime (last 11 minutes [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1234567890)
- 1992 Japanese anime series ([last episode](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1234567890))
- 1980 Japanese anime ([last episode](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1234567890))
How to read “A Dog of Flanders”?  

• Reading or using?  
• Reading through usage?

The paratextual apparatus  
The paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers, and more generally, to the public. More than a boundary or a sealed border the paratext is, rather, a threshold... ‘unidentified zone...’ ‘a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text’  
pp. 1-2, quoting Philippe Lejeune, Le Pacte autobiographique (Seuil, 1975), p. 45

The paratextual apparatus  
Il paratesto è ciò che permette un testo di diventare un libro e di offrirsi come tale ai lettori, e più in generale, al pubblico. Più di un confine o un bordo chiuso il paratesto è, invece, una soglia... ‘una zona non identificata...’ ‘una frangia del testo stampato che in realtà controlla tutta la nostra lettura del testo’  
pp. 1-2, citando Philippe Lejeune, Le Pacte autobiographique (Seuil, 1975), p. 45

Publisher’s “peritext”  
• Cover  
• title page  
• Frontispiece  
• Publisher’s series  
• Accompanying texts  
• Adverts  
• Format (3 volume? Yellow back? Paperback?)  
• Paper  
• Price marker  
• Bar code  
• Typesetting  
• Typographical devices  
• Page turns

Epitextual apparatus  
• Adverts  
• Reviews  
• Critical Studies  
• TV & Radio chat shows  
• Lectures  
• Seminars  
• Discussions  
• Adaptations (cinematic, TV, online)

Today...  
Social media  
Twitter  
Facebook...  
Computer games

donohue, hennberry and co, chicago, (1893)
Homewood Pub Co circa 1905, Chicago, 1905

The Saalfield Publishing Co., New York, 1926

Rand McNally, 1938; black and white illustrations by Angus MacDonnell and Hugo D. Rahul; colour cover by Milo Winter.

Junior Book no 266

Dell Comics

Tallent 1900

Lippincott, 1909
Bimbi: Stories for Children. (Chatto & Windus.) 1882.
1 vol. (Philadelphia, Lippincott) 1882
1 vol. (Leipzig: Tauchnitz), 1882


A Dog of Flanders, A Provence Rose, A Leaf in the Storm, and A Branch of Lilac. Glossy frontispiece + internal glossy plates.

Limited Edition: 110 copies.

Handmade paper Binding probably by Louis Herman Kinder. Internals printed on Japan Vellum.

Nims and Knight, 1891

Grosset and Dunlap New York [1935]
Help Please

- General popular
- Children animals
- Bourgeois – refined mark of status

HOW MIGHT WE READ?

“A Dog of Flanders” in Context

- Originally in *Lippincott’s Magazine, 9, January 1872: 79-98*
- Preceded by
  - “A Leaf in a Storm” 7, March 1871: 249-265
  - “A Provence Rose” 7, June 1871: 561-572; 8, July 1871: 27-36
  - “A Branch of Lilac” 8, November 1871: 440-456; December 1871: 602-618

In Volume form – 1st editions

- *A Dog of Flanders and Other Stories.* (Chapman & Hall.) with illustrations by Enrico Mazzanti 1872 (new editions 1889/ 1893 – no illustrations)
- *A Leaf in the Storm, and Other Stories* (Philadelphia, Lippincott) 1872
- *A Leaf in the Storm; A Dog of Flanders; and other stories* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz) 1872 (Collection of British Authors, 1236)

Sono un comediante. Mia madre ne era uno pure. Mio padre – o-ta-ta-ta! Quello è un altro lusso per i ricchi!
Un giovane uomo povero da Marsiglia arriva a Parigi dopo la morte di suoi genitori a fare la sua fortuna. Vive in condizioni terribili e decide di suicidarsi. Improvvisamente la governante della vicina di case bussa alla sua porta: egli sposerà la sua padrona, che è incinta di un altro uomo? C'è una condizione: la moglie deve essere così solo nome. Disperato, è d'accordo. Successivamente sostenuto dal suo suocero ricco e potente, Nantas ottiene un gran successo e alla fine diventa Ministro delle Finanze. Cede anche in amore con la moglie, ma il suo sentimento non è ricambiato. Ancora una volta disperato, decide di suicidarsi. Improvvisamente la moglie irrompe nella stanza e grida “Ti amo perché sei forte!”

Help Please!

- Nantas
- Dog of Flanders

Ouida’s conflicted position today

- 3 battles for humanities academics
  1) justify subject of study (e.g. an author) as an ancestor
  2) Justify an author/topic as important (“aesthetic innovation” “filiation”)
  3) Find a mode of reading that respects the complexities – the otherness - of the subject

Victorian “popular modes”

- Melodramatic oppositions
- Episodic set pieces
- Stark contrasts
- Pleasures of contemporary (and fleeting) references
- Emotional responses in the moment

WHY OUIDA THEN?

- Nantas
- Dog of Flanders
Sentimental tradition

- Aims to generate sympathy
  - Confession key tactic
  - Political purpose
    - Protect the vulnerable
  - Commercial purpose
    - Organise audiences
      - Fellow feeling with or channelled through a “star”

- Stress on typical not unique
  - Inc use of commonly used words and phrases and oppositions – (“cliches”)
  - Use of diminutives (e.g. little, just a, only a)
- Non-linear
  - Circular, agglutinative
  - Use of “poetic”/“lyric” techniques
    - Alliteration
    - Attention to rhythm
    - Oppositions organised in elaborate patterning
    - The “sententia” (“bon mot”)
    - Strong single images

The representative indefinite article

From 1909 Lippincott edition pp. 22-3

The familiar (the banal?)

pp. 208-9 di Nello e Patrasche
The agglutinative conjunction

The "poetic"

The "poetic"

The aesthetic

Influence of Keats, Shelley and the poetry of bodily sensation (Spasmodics)?


Influence of Keats, Shelley and the poetry of bodily sensation (Spasmodics)?

What is the role of "art" in the story?

What is the role of "art" in the story?

Battle between 2 kinds of art – commercial and "pure"

Poverty & wealth

Individual v society

Art v death

Animal v human

Transhuman v human

Honesty v deceit

Country v town
Why do We Read?

Paratext, Poetry and Ouida's A Dog of Flanders

Luciano Berio, Sinfonia, 3rd movement (1968)
- demands made on art after Romanticism

[l'arte] non può fermare le guerre, non può ringiovanire il vecchio o abbassare il prezzo del pane, non può cancellare la solitudine o calmare i passi fuori dalla porta ...

E domani si legge che [ scegliere un'opera d'arte ] ha fatto crescere i tulipani nel mio giardino e ha alterato il flusso delle correnti oceaniche.

Dobbiamo credere che sia vero.
Ci deve essere qualcos'altro.
Altrimenti sarebbe del tutto senza speranza.
Ma è del tutto senza speranza ...
Berio, *Sinfonia, 3rd movement* (1968)
- demands made on art after Romanticism

[art] can’t stop the wars, can’t make the old younger or lower the price of bread, can’t erase solitude or dull the tread outside the door...
And tomorrow we’ll read that [choose an art work] made tulips grow in my garden and altered the flow of the ocean currents.
We *must* believe it’s true.
There *must* be something else.
Otherwise it would be quite hopeless.
But it *is* quite hopeless...