William Kirby's "Taint of Swedenborgianism": The Doctrines of Conjugial Love and Charity in *Le Chien d'or*

Thomas Hodd

The impact of the writings of eighteenth-century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg on nineteenth-century American culture is well known. Primary evidence, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson's chapter on Swedenborg in *Representative Men* (1850), as well as Walt Whitman's 1858 piece on Swedenborg for the *Brooklyn Daily Times* (Brigger Kruger), help illustrate how his work informed American Transcendentalist thought. Likewise, scholars Josephine Donovan and Jane Williams-Hogan have recently articulated some of the ways in which Swedenborg influenced the work of Sarah Orne Jewett and Harriet Beecher Stowe, as well as nineteenth-century American art more broadly. Indeed, as Amanda Claybaugh reminds us, "F.O. Matthiessen long ago said that [the] history of nineteenth-century U.S. literature could be written . . . in two volumes: *The Age of Swedenborg*, about literature and religion; and *The Age of Fourier*, about literature and reform" (32).

Given the many cross-border pollinations identified by literary critics over the past several decades, one would expect to find a similar body of scholarly work regarding Swedenborg's influence in Canada. Yet few critics to date have investigated what impact, if any, Swedenborg's writings had on nineteenth-century Canadian literature, a surprising scholarly gap when even a cursory search reveals that several Canadian authors born during this period were familiar with the mystic's work, notably Alexander McLachlan, Bliss Carman, and Richard Maurice Bucke.[1] In fact, the only Canadian writer to have received any meaningful scholarly consideration regarding Swedenborg is William Kirby (1817-1906). But even here the critical treatment is sparse and general in scope; what's more, in the case of Kirby's historical romance *Le Chien d'or* (1877) scholars have downplayed the significance of explicit refer-

ences to Swedenborg and his ideas in Chapter XXXIX of the novel's first edition. This essay, then, will examine more closely the mystic's cross-border influence by investigating some of the ways in which Kirby incorporated elements of Swedenborg's teachings into *Le Chien d'or*. In so doing, I hope to illustrate that the moral didacticism operating in the narrative, particularly as it pertains to notions of charity and marriage, is more heterodox in nature than previously considered by scholars.

* * *

Much of the biographical groundwork regarding Kirby's life-long affection for Swedenborg and his teachings already exists. Margot Northey declares that "[a]lthough Kirby never swerved from his Anglican faith, his admiration for Swedenborg was enduring" (Northey, "William" 80). Similarly, Mary Jane Edwards notes that while studying in Ohio in the 1830s, Kirby "acquired a lifelong interest in the philosophical and religious principles of Emanuel Swedenborg" ("Occupying" 17). Both scholars likely arrived at their conclusions via Lorne Pierce, arguably the first critic to highlight Kirby's exposure to, and admiration for, Swedenborg. He mentions that while in Cincinnati, Kirby was a student of Alexander Kinmot, a Scottish-born devotee of Swedenborg's writings who periodically taught at the meetings of the First New Jerusalem Society of Cincinnati (26), part of a larger trans-Atlantic society that embraced the teachings of Swedenborg. Pierce mentions that in 1837 "Kirby signed The Documents of the Second New Jerusalem Society of Cincinnati . . . along with his mentor" (29). He also notes that Kirby "owned everything by Swedenbourg [sic]" (375) and that "[h]is note books contain frequent quotations from the founder and exponents of this faith" (29). Not surprisingly, Pierce concludes that the "Low Church [was] broad enough to accept the taint of Swedenborgianism [Kirby] imbibed" and that "he never ceased to hold in affectionate remembrance the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg" (3, 29). In fact, just eight years before his death, Kirby is careful to remember in his remarks for the 50th Anniversary of the Town of Niagara Library (1898) that he had given a public lecture at the library on "The New Philosophy of Swedenborg."

Despite such biographical evidence, few critics have investigated Kirby's works for Swedenborgian elements, choosing instead to focus their discussions on issues of copyright and piracy, Kirby's play with

history, or possible literary models for the text.[2] Only D.M.R. Bentley has attempted to offer any in-depth examination of Swedenborg's influence on Kirby, arguing convincingly in his *Mimic Fires: Accounts of Early Long Poems on Canada* (1994) that Kirby's vision of Canada in his epic poem, *The U.E.* (1859), is a "unique amalgam of Swedenborg, agrarian idealism, Scandinavian mythology, and neo-Loyalism" (312), and that several elements in the poem offer proof of Kirby's incorporation of Swedenborgian teachings into the narrative.[3] As for *Le Chien d'or*, despite Kirby's inclusion of a substantial Swedenborgian interlude mid-way through the romance, scholars have minimized or rejected outright any part the Swedish mystic may have played in Kirby's narrative vision. Northey, for instance, acknowledges there is a "distillation of Swedenborg's views in a chapter of *The Golden Dog*" ("William" 80), yet offers no textual analysis or context for their inclusion, while John Robert Sorfleet merely hints at Swedenborg's influence on Kirby in an endnote related to historical determinism as it pertains to the novel (146). Comparatively, Desmond Pacey declares outright that Kirby's philosophy is "not Swedenborgianism" (76) and that "sometimes [he] is annoyingly didactic" (77), although Pacey, like Sorfleet and Northey, offers little justification for his comments.

But if Kirby possessed the kind of lifelong affection for Swedenborg that Lorne Pierce and others have suggested, and if elements of Swedenborg's teachings form part of the moral superstructure of *The U.E.*, as Bentley demonstrates, then there is reason to believe that the Swedenborgian interlude in *Le Chien d'or* is much more than "an after-dinner conversation which ranges from the mists of Swedenborgian idealism to the diluvian reaches of Atlantis" (Duffy 39). Instead, Swedenborg's teachings may lie closer to the heart of Kirby's romance rather than along its thematic periphery. Early review notices of *Le Chien d'or*, however, paid little attention to the book's Swedenborgian references. More typically, if there was mention of him at all it pertained either to Kirby's attention to historical details or, more critically, to weaknesses in the novel. One case in point is William Henry Withrow's April 1877 review in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, which begins by declaring it a "remarkable book" (378) and then praises Kirby's "amount of recondite learning" and "the extreme beauty of the literary style" (378, 379). But then Withrow offers as a counterpoint the chapter in which Swedenborg is mentioned, calling it "rather discursive and digres-

sive at times" (379), noting that such a chapter will be "to the delight of the reader . . . but without helping on the story" (379). Other notices, such as those found in the May 1877 editions of *L'Opinion publique* and *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, make no mention of Swedenborg or his teachings, and yet single out the portrayal of his Swedish compatriot, the naturalist Peter Kalm, who spent time in New France in the late 1740s.[4]

Twenty years after the book's initial publication, though, a review of *Le Chien d'or* by Carl Theophilus Odhner appeared in *New Church Life*, a U.S. monthly magazine linked to the teachings of Swedenborg that began publishing in 1881. In it he declares that the New Church reader "[will] often experience a curious sensation as of something familiar and sympathetic in the views of life presented" in the novel and that "it is quite evident that the author is more than a mere admirer of Swedenborg. . . . [I]t is clear that he is an affirmative and profound student of the Writings, not only of their directly theological teachings, but of their application to the things of Science, Philosophy, and Life" (190).[5] Coincidentally, the following year *New Church Life* reported on a testimonial it received from Kirby about his belief in Swedenborg, a letter that reads, in part, "You judge rightly in thinking me a receiver of the Doctrines in the Theology and philosophy of the immortal Swedenborg" ("Notes and Reviews" 29). Unfortunately, neither Kirby nor Odhner identify which doctrines Kirby was "applying to the things of Science, Philosophy, and Life" in his romance. A first step, then, is to determine which of the mystic's works Kirby may have favoured.

One clue is a nineteen-page manuscript dated 1838, held in the William Kirby fonds at the Archives of Ontario, titled "Epilogos e regno animali emanuilis swedenborgii." As Edwards points out, this was a "treatise written in Latin while Kirby was a Master of Languages at Kinmount College" ("Editor's" cxlvi). More importantly, the title of the treatise refers to the Epilogue to Swedenborg's *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom* (1740-41), in which he first articulated the notion of correspondences. Here Swedenborg argued that there was a "fundamental law governing the realization of the divine life in the various realms of the universe," and that there existed "a concordance between divine, spiritual, and natural things, and a correspondence between their signs" (Goodrick-Clarke 162). Or, as Gary Lachman explains, "In grasping the links between the physical and the spiritual worlds, we come closer to

understanding the divine design. Swedenborg's correspondences are . . . a powerful embodiment — literally — of the idea that man is a microcosm, containing within himself the entire cosmos" (20). Swedenborg believed there is a kind of hidden key in the material world that if unlocked would enable us to read and understand the divine mysteries of the universe; in other words, for Swedenborg the physical world emanates from the spiritual world, and so to him

> the sun, which in the other life gives light to the angels and to the universal heaven, is the Lord, and the fire there is His Divine love, which gives the heat of life to every living being. . . . [T]hose which come forth from the sun of heaven, are therefore called "spiritual," because they have life in them; and the former, which are from the sun of the world, are called "natural." (*Arcana*, Vol. X, 412)

Kirby's Latin lecture notes thus reveal that in addition to reading *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, Kirby had digested Swedenborg's ideas about correspondences and was teaching them to others.

Furthermore, two theological outcroppings of the doctrine of correspondences as described in *Economy* are Swedenborg's understanding of marriage as well as the spiritual value of charity, both of which are dealt with at length in the *Arcana Coelestia* (1749-56) and *Conjugial Love* (1768). Kirby had intimate knowledge of both works: Bentley points out that Kirby's Swedenborg teacher in Cincinnati, Kinmot, was heavily influenced by the *Arcana* ("Introduction") and so likely discussed this work and its ideas with Kirby; tellingly, the *Arcana* is referenced by Peter Kalm in *Le Chien d'or* (422). Likewise, the term "conjugal [sic] love" is employed in Canto Seventh of Kirby's *U.E.* to describe the relationship between Constance and Ethwald: "Thrice happy pair! Who reap the due reward / Of youthful vows, and long preserved regard. Conjugal love! to innocence decreed" (XV: 239-41). More specifically, in *Conjugial Love* Swedenborg proposes that earthly marriage reflected divine love, and that true love between two people persisted after death: "Married partners most commonly meet after death, know each other, again associate, and for a time live together" (49). He also believed that the opposite of conjugial love was adultery, and that those who engaged in adultery would be relegated to Hell after death: "as the spiritual origin of marriage is the marriage of good and truth, so the spiritual origin of adultery is the connubial connection of what is evil and false. . . .

Hence all who are in hell are in the lust, lasciviousness, and immodesty of adulterous love" (341).

Equally significant is Swedenborg's argument in the *Arcana* that faith alone does not guarantee salvation, that one must also live charitably in order to enter Heaven. In Volume IV, for instance, he proposes through his reading of Genesis that

> no faith is possible except where there is charity [and] that faith is the faith of charity; that charity makes the church, not faith separate from charity. . . . The most ancient people, who were celestial by mercy and truth from the Lord, understood nothing else than the reception of the influx of love to the Lord, and of the derivative charity toward the neighbor. (146)

This notion of living charitably became a cornerstone for many of Swedenborg's followers. As Robert Rix points out,

> From reading [Jacob] Duché's *Discourses* (1779), there is little doubt that it was Swedenborg's emphasis on Faith and Charity that attracted [Duché]. . . . Swedenborg's dictum of "Faith and Charity" was also the pillar in another Swedenborgian society: *Pro fide et charitate* (1795-1832) . . . a group of Swedish Masons with whom [William] Blake's patron Charles Augustus Tulk is known to have corresponded. (107)[6]

Given that ideas of charity and conjugial love factor prominently in Swedenborgian works studied by Kirby, and that these same concepts appear in *The U.E.*, it is plausible that *Le Chien d'or* may contain similar applications of the mystic's teachings. For instance, it is no coincidence that the two main narrative threads of the romance concern these two concepts. First, the corrupt Grand Company, headed by the Intendant François Bigot, wishes to take complete financial control of the fortunes of New France and has one obstacle left to overcome: the honest merchant, Bourgeois Philibert, who is both generous and kind to labourers and friends and thus embodies the idea of Charity. Second, the theme of marriage dominates for much of the novel, as various characters pursue their love interests either for selfish reasons — as is the case with Bigot and Angélique des Meloises — or for more divine purposes, as expressed through the unfolding relationship between Pierre Philibert and Amélie de Repentigny. Indeed, as Carl Murphy has suggested, "Marriage, or

rather its absence, is a key metaphor in Kirby's novel" (14). In other words, operating behind these two metaphors lies a more mystical influence, and Kirby used the basic historical backdrop of the Quebec legend as a framing narrative by which to express two Swedenborgian doctrines in action.

To expound upon the theme of marriage, scholars have typically interpreted the various paramours in *Le Chien d'or* as stock romance types. However, the novel's major love-interests also serve partly as Swedenborgian symbols related to the idea of divine love. The part of the doctrine related to impure or adulterous love, for instance, finds application in Kirby's depiction of the false feelings Angélique shows to Le Gardeur de Repentigny as well as her desire to marry Bigot. In *Conjugial Love*, Swedenborg declares that the "universals of hell are these three loves: the love of dominion grounded in self-love, the love of possessing the goods of others grounded in the love of the world, and adulterous love" (216). Meloises, a beautiful but evil-minded schemer driven by power and greed, rejects the advances of Le Gardeur because "there was no depth in the soil where a devoted passion could take firm root. . . . [S]he regarded men as beings created for her service, amusement and sport" (Kirby 157). Furthermore, her desire to marry Bigot is motivated not by love but by "dreams which regarded the Intendant himself as but a stepping stone to further greatness" (157). Similarly, Bigot rivals Angélique in selfishness, "devoted to the pleasant vices that were rampant in the Court of France . . . [and who] might have saved New France had he been honest as he was clever, but he was unprincipled and corrupt" (55); his doting on Angélique is thus for personal and political gain only. Moreover, he refuses to marry Angélique in part because of the guilt and shame he feels over his former betrothed, Caroline de St. Castin, whom he keeps locked up in a secret chamber at Beaumanoir and for whom he has amorous feelings. Consequently, Angélique's hiring of La Corriveau to kill Caroline is motivated not by jealousy for Bigot's apparent conflicted feelings for the two women, but because Angélique perceives Caroline as the only obstacle to her achieving greater power and wealth in New France.

Joy Kuropatwa reads such negative relationship portrayals as instances of "sin as corrupted love," a notion, she argues, Kirby gleaned from his familiarity with Dante (57). However, given Kirby's lifelong interest in Swedenborg, it is more likely that such "earthly" desires on the part of

Angélique and Bigot are meant to function as moral contrast to the divine love exemplified by Amélie and Pierre Philibert — particularly when we remember that in Chapter XXXIX the Swedish philosopher Peter Kalm is careful to note how Swedenborg's ideas differ from those of Dante: "After exhausting the philosophy of earth, he is now exploring that of heaven and hell. He is not like Dante led by the eidolon of a Virgil or a Beatrice through scenes of intensest imagery, but in visions of divine permission, sees and converses with angels and spirits in their abodes of happiness or misery" (421). Indeed, DePean, friend of Bigot and member of the Grand Company, notes that Amélie is "one of the angelic ones, who regard marriage as a thing of heaven's arrangement. She believes God never makes but one man for one woman" (169). Likewise, Pierre Philibert is presented as an ideal lover: noble, handsome, and respectful, whose tender treatment of Amélie and saving of her brother from drowning sets him apart in the narrative as a foil to Bigot and the other members of the Grand Company. More significant is the moment when the two finally express their love for each other, a description that could have been taken directly from the writings of Swedenborg: "There is a magnetic touch in loving fingers which is never mistaken, though their contact be but for a second of time. It anticipates the strong grasp of love which will ere long embrace body and soul in adamantine chains of a union not to be broken even by death" (298-99). Or as Swedenborg points out in *Conjugial Love*, those "who in their single state have desired marriage, and especially if they have solicited it without success . . . if they are spiritual, blessed marriages are provided" (56). In other words, the love of Pierre and Amélie is not a natural love: it is portrayed by Kirby as a spiritual one, encompassing both "body and soul"; or, as Pierre describes it, "Love like ours is imperishable as the essence of the soul itself, and partakes of the immortality of God, being of him and from him" (316).

Nor does the divine nature of the young lovers escape the keen eye of the Bourgeois's visionary housekeeper, Dame Rochelle:

> [She] continued plying her needles quietly as she meditated by turns upon the page of Jurieu, by turns upon the marriage of Pierre Philibert, illustrating the one by the other, and proving to her own perfect content that this marriage had been from all time predestinate, and that the doctrine of her favorite divine never received a more striking demonstration of its truth than the life-long constancy of Pierre and Amélie to their first love. (563)

Although Rochelle appears to be referring to the French theologian Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713) as her "favourite divine," it is interesting to note how the ideas expressed in this passage regarding divine love resonate with the teachings of Swedenborg that Kirby expresses in *The U.E.* Moreover, that Philibert and Amélie never marry matters little in the Swedenborgian sense, for as the narrator points out in a moment of foreshadowing in Chapter LII, "Their love never received its consummation on earth; but for all that it did not fail to receive it in heaven!" (591). Similarly, as Pierre lies dying on the battlefield at the end of the novel, his "last moments [are] sweetened by the thought that his beloved Amélie was waiting for him on the other side of the dark river, to welcome him with the bridal kiss, promised upon the banks of the lake of Tilly. He met her joyfully in that land where love is real, and where its promises are never broken!" (669). In short, the love between Amélie and Pierre is a similar incarnation of the divine relationship Kirby portrayed in *The U.E.* between Constance and Ethwald, and their marriage will transcend death itself.

Complementing Kirby's Swedenborgian depiction of the difference between divine love and false love is his portrayal of the charitable acts of the *Honnêtes Gens*, embodied by the noble merchant Bourgeois Philibert, against the selfish and corrupt affairs of the Grand Company. In his reading of Genesis in Volume IV of the *Arcana*, for instance, Swedenborg places particular emphasis on the concept of charity as a key foundational doctrine. Employing the term dozens of times in the text, he suggests that "charity is the 'brother' of faith, or good the 'brother' of truth may be seen above . . . so on the other hand, faith is the 'brother' of charity, or truth the 'brother' of good" (267); moreover, he argues in Volume III that "they who are in love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor can receive the truths of doctrine and have faith in the Word, but not they who are in the life of the love of self and the world" (317). This discrepancy between those who act charitably and those who are "in the life of the love of self and the world" aptly describes both the symbolic and realized tension between Philibert and the Grand Company. Indeed, early in *Le Chien d'or* the reader is made aware of Philibert's exemplary conduct even before meeting him. Described by others as a "true gentleman" and "noble by birth" (17), the Bourgeois is considered a fair trader by most of the *habitants*; as Babet notes, "'All the women are on the side of the good Bourgeois! He is an honest merchant. . . . We always get

civility and good pennyworths at the Golden Dog'" (36). Reinforcing such a forthright and charitable portrayal of the Bourgeois is his formal entry into the narrative, in which the reader learns that despite being a widower "he kept up a large household for friendship sake, and was lavish in his hospitality . . . caring for the present only for the sake of the thousands dependent on him" (117). By contrast, the members of the Grand Company are viewed by many as "scoundrels" (17) whose trading practices are "cordially hated, and [who] richly deserved the maledictions" they received (35). The Company's resentment of the Bourgeois's wealth and respect among the citizenry simmers for much of the narrative until they hatch a plot to get rid of him, culminating in the Bourgeois's death at the drunken hands of Le Gardeur.

More importantly, the chapter in which the murder takes place, as well as the one preceding it, offers readers a forceful treatise on ideas related to Charity. Chapter LIII, for instance, begins with a description of the market, but soon a preacher appears and begins to rail against the Jansenists, the radical Roman Catholic group that challenged the teachings of the Jesuits. More specifically, Padre Monti aligns the Jansenists with the *Honnêtes Gens* of New France and accuses them of being selfish and ignoring the plight of the less fortunate: "No wonder charity waxeth cold in the rich, and the spirit of disobedience increaseth in the poor!" (598). However, D'Estebe overhears Monti's remarks and is quick to point out to his colleague that Bourgeois Philibert is not that kind of man: "I did not think [Padre Monti] would have ventured upon it here in the market, in face of so many *habitants*, who swear by the Bourgeois Philibert" (601). In addition, a short time later one of the Recollects, Brother Daniel, remarks that "Our good Brothers the Jesuits . . . set greater store by the wise head than by the loving heart, unlike us poor Recollects who have only wisdom enough to know that charity never faileth, while knowledge vanisheth away, for though we have faith to remove mountains, and have not charity, we are nothing" (603). In both cases the notion of charity is emphasized, not greed: readers are meant to recognize the Bourgeois as a man who embodies this virtue. Put another way, these fictional comments among religious men about the notion of charity are meant to prepare the reader for one of the Swedenborgian climaxes of the novel: namely, the death of the Bourgeois in Chapter LIV while he is performing charitable acts.

In fact, if we consider the way in which Kirby rewrote the histor-

ical Bourgeois Philibert's death to emphasize his moral nobility, the doctrine of Charity becomes even more significant within the novel.[7] In James MacPherson LeMoine's original *Maple Leaves* (1863), which Kirby used as one of the primary sources for *Le Chien d'or*, the death of the Bourgeois is described in detail. What is curious about LeMoine's account, though, are the historical circumstances surrounding his death:

> The Intendant, in order to annoy Philibert, had billeted troops on him, and ordered a French lieutenant by the name of Pierre Legardeur, Sieur de Repentigny, to quarter on the Quebec merchant. This incensed Mr. Philibert very much, and, when the lieutenant attempted to enter the house with the order, Philibert objected, saying he would have the order recalled, to which De Repentigny replied, "You are a fool." A blow from a walking-stick was the answer. The officer then drew his sword and inflicted on his opponent a wound, of which he died on the 21st of January, 1748. The deadly thrust is supposed to have been given on the very steps of the Chien d'Or building. (31)

Kirby's depiction of the event in the romance, however, differs considerably: there are no proposed boarders, De Repentigny does not come to present the order to the Bourgeois, nor is Philibert killed on his doorstep. Instead, Kirby offers a dramatic scene in which the kind merchant leaves his house in order to do charitable work for the community: "It was the practice of the Bourgeois Philibert to leave his counting-room to walk through the market place, not for the sake of the greetings he met, although he received them from every side, nor to buy or sell on his own account, but to note with quick, sympathizing eye the poor and needy, and to relieve their wants" (604). More importantly, the Bourgeois had a daily custom in which "[h]is table in the House of the Golden Dog was set every day with twelve covers and dishes for twelve guests — 'the twelve apostles,' as he gaily used to say, 'whom I love to have dine with me, and who come to my door in the guise of poor, hungry, and thirsty men, needing meat and drink'" (604-05).

Coincidentally, like Constance in *The U.E.* who has a vision of Ethwald's death in Canto Ninth, Philibert's housekeeper, the "prophetess" Dame Rochelle (568), twice warns Philibert not to go to the market place, as she has a "presentiment that some harm will befall you" (606). The Bourgeois, however, does not heed her warning on the socially conscious justification that "Who is to fill the baskets of the poor people

who feel a delicacy about coming for alms to the door, unless I go? Charity fulfils its mission best when it respects the misfortune of being poor" (605). Furthermore, the Bourgeois is not killed at his private doorstep, as LeMoine describes it. Instead, he grabs the bridle of Le Gardeur's horse just as Le Gardeur is about to run over an injured cripple, whom Bourgeois had been consoling. Insulted by such an act, Le Gardeur leaps from his horse, and after a heated exchange he kills the Bourgeois with his sword in the middle of the market. In other words, Kirby manipulates historical accuracy to portray symbolically the ultimate public betrayal of the Doctrine of Charity as lived by the Bourgeois.[8]

Tying these two Swedenborgian strains together is Chapter XXXIX, in which Peter Kalm and the Governor discuss, among other things, the activities and ideas of Swedenborg himself. Here Kirby includes historical details about Swedenborg's life, as well as a summary of the change in Swedenborg's interests from science to theology. Moreover, Kirby aligns Kalm with Swedenborg in this chapter as "a brother" (422), a term meant to imply more than shared national origins, particularly since Kirby distorts historical accuracy by suggesting that Kalm and Swedenborg (and the Governor) attended the University of Uppsala together (420-21).[9] In fact, Kalm appears at times to act as a didactic surrogate for Swedenborg, given how knowledgeable he is about the mystic's teachings. For example, he expresses Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences early in the chapter when discussing the significance of a plant: "This fern . . . is the expression of a divine idea, the form of some use for man's service or delight. Its tiny pores contain a principle of life capable of infinite multiplication for ever. . . . Every moment of its existence displays as great a miracle of divine power as was shown when the earth and the heavens were first made by his *Word*" (411-12). Kalm also suggests that "in its origin [matter] is spiritual, an emanation of the eternal logos by which all things were made that are made" (412), thereby implying that the material world has an inherent relationship with the divine. Such Swedenborgian ideas lead naturally into the conversation between the Governor and Kalm about Swedenborg himself, at which point Kalm offers a summary of Swedenborg's "recent" work on correspondences: "He has struck out a new path. . . . But it is not so much the new as the rediscovery of the old! The rejoining of the broken links of correspondence in the golden chain which once united man and nature with the spiritual world" (422). It is worth noting that

the "chain" Kalm refers to in this passage is a symbol referenced in *Conjugial Love*; Swedenborg declares that

> [since] therefore the Lord God the Creator is essential love and essential wisdom, and from him was created the universe, which thence is as a work proceeding from him, it must needs be, that in all created things there is somewhat of good and of truth from him; for whatever is done and proceeds from any one, derives from him a certain similarity to him. That this is the case, reason also may see from the order in which all things in the universe were created; which order is, that one exists for the sake of another, and that thence *one depends upon another, like the links of a chain*; for all things are for the sake of the human race, that from it the angelic heaven may exist, through which creation returns to the Creator himself. (91; emphasis added)

Not surprisingly, this symbol is evoked in Canto Seventh in *The U.E.* when the speaker is describing the divine love between Ethwald and Constance.[10] Finally, it is also during this exchange that Kalm mentions Swedenborg's "forthcoming" publication, the *Arcana*: "[Swedenborg] was in his favourite summer house in the orchard behind his residence in the Hornsgata. You know the place, Count. It is there the Heavens are opened to him, and there he writes the wonders of the *Arcana Coelestia* which he will one day deliver to the world" (422).

Lorne Pierce has suggested that Kirby likely read the *Voyage de Kalm en Amérique* (1770), and that it gave him "the excuse of introducing a long chapter on the teachings of Swedenborg" as well as "many useful facts regarding the customs, manners and traditions of the time" (239). This statement is misleading, for it implies that the function of this chapter is simply a matter of literary homage — an opinion shared by Northey and others. Yet as a framing device, this chapter occupies a more central and symbolic role in the novel. First, just prior to this lengthy dinner conversation involving Swedenborg and his teachings, the Council receives an order to search for Caroline, "the missing Demoiselle" (399), and Bigot's subsequent denial of any knowledge regarding her abduction leads to much emotion and hot-headedness among the members. Instead of departing with the Intendant to dine at the Palace, however, the Governor and a few others stay at the mansion to eat; the Governor also invites Peter Kalm to dine with them. Kalm's appearance and inclusion in Chapter XXXIX, then, serves at least two

functions: first, it places his detached, philosophical demeanour against the selfish and emotional Bigot. Consequently, readers are meant to recognize in Bigot's departure a transition from fractious, temperamental debate to level-headed social cohesion — a camaraderie borne, in part, by the Count and Kalm's shared knowledge of Swedenborg. Second, by situating this chapter near the midway point in the romance, Kirby is signalling to readers that Swedenborg is not just marginal "after-dinner conversation" (Duffy 39): Kirby may have intentionally placed his mystical mentor's teachings at the heart of his novel so that readers might recognize Swedenborg as the symbolic bridge that links the two main ideas of divine love and charity in his historical romance. In other words, abridged editions of *Le Chien d'or*, such as that of Derek Crawley's 1969 NCL edition, which cuts the Swedenborg chapter on the grounds of not being congenial "to the tastes of the modern reader" (vii), have unwittingly distorted Kirby's moral vision by downplaying the importance of his mentor in relation to two of the narrative's central thematic concerns.[11] Moreover, that Kirby's original moral vision may be partly Swedenborgian in scope is reinforced by a May 1903 review of the 1897 first edition, in which Frank Sewall — a Swedenborgian pastor — cautions fellow New Churchmen "desirous of reading those interesting allusions to Swedenborg" not to read abridged editions by publishers "who issue an edition with the chapters related to Swedenborg carefully eliminated" (282).[12] Indeed, one cannot help but notice that Sewall refers to several "chapters" linked to the mystic, not just Chapter XXXIX in which Swedenborg is explicitly mentioned.

* * *

Critics have long acknowledged a moral element operating in William Kirby's *Le Chien d'or*, although seldom have they offered specifics. Desmond Pacey declares that the novel is sustained by a "moral philosophy" (76) but does not explain or define what such a philosophy might engender. More recently, Ronald Hatch has referred to the novel's "eccentric moralistic explanations" (80) and John Moss to its "moral turbulence" (197), yet both critics offer little by way of explication. Owing to Kirby's devotion to the Church of England (Edwards, "Editor's" xxiii), scholars have perhaps assumed that his moral vision in the novel was informed by orthodox Christianity only. However, Kirby's lifelong

admiration for Emanuel Swedenborg and his inclusion of the mystic's teachings in *Le Chien d'or* suggest that a more complex morality is at play.

Notwithstanding scholarly readings by Dennis Duffy and Robert David Stacey in relation to the novel's pastoral mode and its national and Imperial implications for Canada, or its elements of "decorative gothic" as a function of the novel's romance framework (Northey, *Haunted*), Kirby's infusion of Swedenborgian ideas about the doctrine of correspondences, the notion of divine love, and the value of charity makes his romance not just an authentic recreation of eighteenth-century New France but also a complex moral tale that blends New World history with heterodox theology. Moreover, these same teachings about love and charity appear first in *The U.E.*, suggesting that the Swedenborgian vision articulated in his romance is consistent with that of his earlier epic poem. Although further comparisons between the two works are needed, their more than coincident inclusion of Swedenborgian ideas confirms that Kirby's treatment of marriage and charity in his romance was neither prescriptive nor orthodox. Furthermore, that both of Kirby's major works show a considerable Swedenborgian presence suggests that the Swedish mystic's writings did not simply have a lifelong impact on Kirby's life: they also had a life-long influence on Kirby's literary output.

Notes

[1] McLachlan, for instance, "[a]t one time . . . thought highly of Swedenborg" (Dewart 27) and cites him near the end of the poem "Ahead of His Time"; Bliss Carman references the Swedish mystic several times in his later writings, notably *From the Green Book of the Bards* (1903), *The Friendship of Art* (1904), and *Far Horizons* (1925); Richard Maurice Bucke includes a chapter on Swedenborg in his influential turn-of-the-century esoteric work, *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901).

[2] On the novel's book history, see Elizabeth Brady (1977), George L. Parker (1985), and Mary Jane Edwards (2009). Notable discussions of the novel's representation of history include John Robert Sorfleet (1973), L.R. Early (1979), and Ronald Hatch (1986). Eva-Marie Kroller has examined the possible influences of Walter Scott and George Eliot on the novel (1980, 1984), while Joy Kuropatwa (1980) has explored references to Dante in the text. Northey (1976) and more recently Cynthia Sugars (2014) have explored the novel's gothic dimensions.

[3] Bentley suggests, for example, that Kirby's reference to "the mind / In secret converse with angelic kind" (III: 116) is a blatant reference to Swedenborg (229). He also argues there is a "Swedenborgian interlude" in Canto Second with regards to the dream Constance has

when the brothers pass Prescott (235), and that "the conclusion to Canto 7 derives almost everything but its versification from Swedenborg" (239), although his analysis is limited. Bentley also identifies places where Kirby incorporated Swedenborgian images of marriage and light into the narrative (see 239-40, 242).

[4] One contributing factor to the lack of attention paid to Swedenborg in these early reviews may pertain to the conservative Christian leanings of either the reviewer or the journal: William Henry Withrow, for instance, was an ordained Methodist minister; the original editorial staff of *L'Opinion publique* — Laurent-Olivier David, George-Édouard Desbarats, and Joseph-Alfred Mousseau — expressed views that were sympathetic to Roman Catholicism.

[5] Pierce notes that Kirby was "particularly happy" at the appearance of this review (416).

[6] It is worth noting that the 1888 *Swedenborg Concordance* includes a separate "Key" at the end of the volume for the "Doctrine of Charity" (Swedenborg 895); equally revealing is the fact that the entry on "Charity" runs for thirty pages. It is also telling that after the completion of the *Arcana* — and just two years before the publication of *Conjugial Love* — Swedenborg wrote a separate treatise on Charity, but never published it; a recently translated version is available on the Swedenborg Foundation website.

[7] Linked to this overarching theme of Charity is Kirby's choice for dedication. Marion Diamond suggests that Kirby's dedication of *Le Chien d'or* to philanthropist Maria Rye is largely a result of their friendship as well as Rye's help in trying to find a London publisher for the novel (10). However, given Kirby's attention to ideas of Swedenborgian Charity in the novel, exemplified through the character of Bourgeois Philibert, perhaps he recognized in Rye's service to unwanted children a manifestation of Swedenborg's teachings. It is no coincidence that almost one hundred years after Jacob Duché, an early promoter of Swedenborg's teachings, "held his meetings on the Swedish theosophist's teachings at the Asylum for Female Orphans" (Rix 107) Kirby dedicated his Swedenborg-influenced novel to a woman who devoted her life to the cause of British female orphans. Whether Rye herself was a disciple of Swedenborg is cause for future research, but it appears likely that Kirby felt some resonances between Rye's charitable character and the noble goals of his morally conscious novel.

[8] Reinforcing this symbolic rather than historically accurate death is the fact that Kirby manipulated the chronology of the beginning and end of the novel. According to LeMoine, Philibert was killed by Repentigny on 21 January 1748; moreover, the historical Kalm did not meet with the Governor until late summer 1749. Yet in Kirby's version, Kalm's meeting with the Governor opens the novel, while the death of the Bourgeois occurs at the end. It is equally interesting to note from a framing standpoint that the "charitable narrative" of Bourgeois Philibert occurs mostly at the beginning and end of the romance, thus serving as symbolically bookending Kirby's "divine love" examination, which occupies much of the middle of the book.

[9] Swedenborg attended the University of Uppsala in 1709. Peter Kalm did not enter the university until 1740. The Marquis de la Galissonière (1693-1756), Governor of New France 1747-49, was, like Kalm, an enthusiast of natural history, but according to Étienne Taillemite he studied at the Collège de Beauvais in Paris, not the University of Uppsala.

[10] In section XVI of Canto Seventh in *The U.E.*, the speaker refers to the "golden chain" that "draws nature to its goal, / And joins the sweet espousals of the soul" (251-52), and that in such moments "Man's truth and woman's tenderness unite, / With hues diviner than the gorgeous bow / That seals God's covenant with earth below" (256-58).

[11] Only Leonard Vandervaart, in an MA thesis on *Le Chien d'or*, has attempted to decipher what the NCL edition obscured for readers and future critics, arguing that the novel was "seriously distorted" by Crawley (v) and that its "recognition and acclaim rest,

at least in part, on criticism of substantially reduced texts" (4). More importantly, one of the areas Vandervaart pays particular attention to is the novel's "larger moral framework," which he posits "in the complete *Golden Dog* is more important than psychological verisimilitude [but which] is drastically diminished" in the NCL edition (23); he contends that the "morality is much more complexly developed and represented" in the original version (25), although he does not identify Swedenborg as a key part of that more complex morality.

[12] For a fuller discussion of the excised passages, as well as Frank Sewall's letter to Kirby about the Swedenborg omissions, see Mary Jane Edwards, "Editor's" xci-xciii.

Works Cited

Bentley, D.M.R., ed. "Introduction." *The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada*. By William Kirby. *Canadian Poetry*. Web. 11 May 2017.

—. *Mimic Fires: Accounts of Early Long Poems on Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994. Print.

Bergquist, Lars. *Swedenborg's Secret*. 1999. Trans. Swedenborg Society. London: Swedenborg Society, 2005. Print.

"Book Reviews." Rev. of William Kirby's *Le Chien d'or*. *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 11 (May 1877): 564-65. Print.

Brady, Elizabeth. "A Bibliographical Essay on William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*, 1877-1977." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 15 (1977): 24-48. Print.

Brigger Kruger, Kathryn. "Walt Whitman's 'Who Was Swedenborg?'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 31 (2014): 55-68. Print.

Bucke, Richard Maurice. *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*. 1901. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969. Print.

Carman, Bliss. *Far Horizons*. 1925. *Canadian Poetry*. Web. 11 May 2017.

— *The Friendship of Art*. 1904. *Canadian Poetry*. Web. 11 May 2017.

— *From the Green Book of the Bards*. 1903. *Canadian Poetry*. Web. 11 May 2017.

Claybaugh, Amanda. *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007. Print.

Crawley, Derek. "Introduction." *William Kirby's* The Golden Dog. 1877. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969. vii-xi. Print.

Dewart, Rev. E.H. "Biographical Sketch." *The Poetical Works of Alexander McLachlan*. Ed. Dewart. Toronto: William Briggs, 1900. 17-28. Print.

Diamond, Marion. "Friendship in Isolation; or, Why William Kirby Dedicated *The Golden Dog* to Maria Rye." *Victorian Review* 21.1 (1995): 1-16. Print.

Donovan, Josephine. "Jewett and Swedenborg." *American Literature* 65.4 (1993): 731-50. Print.

—. "A Source for Stowe's Ideas on Race in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." *NWSA Journal* 7.3 (1995): 24-34. Print.

Duffy, Dennis. *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982. Print.

Early, L.R. "Myth and Prejudice in Kirby, Richardson, and Parker." *Canadian Literature* 81 (Summer 1979): 24-36. Print.

Edwards, Mary Jane. "Editor's Introduction: The Anatomy of a Novel." *Le Chien d'or / The Golden Dog*. By William Kirby. Ed. Edwards. CEECT edition. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2012. xix-clxxii. Print.

—. "Occupying Space: William Kirby's Imagination of Canadian Identity in *Le Chien d'or / The Golden Dog*." *New Literatures Review* 35 (Summer 1998): 15-31. Print.
—. "William Kirby's *The Chien D'or / The Golden Dog / A Legend of Quebec*: Translation and Transformation." *Script & Print* 33 (2009): 234-50. Print.
Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
Hatch, Ronald. "Narrative Development in the Canadian Historical Novel." *Canadian Literature* 110 (Autumn 1986): 79-96. Print.
Kirby, William. *The Chien d'or / The Golden Dog*. 1877. Ed. Mary Jane Edwards. CEECT edition. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2012. Print.
—. *The Chien d'or / The Golden Dog: A Legend of Quebec*. New York and Montreal: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Company, 1877. Print.
—. "The 50th Anniversary of the Library." 12 Dec. 1898. *Niagara Reminiscences: Niagara-on-the-Lake*. Niagara Historical Society. Web. 11 May 2017. <http://web.archive.org/web/20130205031251/http://historyniagara.niagara.com/Marshall/MHTMLFolder/rem10.htm>.
—. *The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada*. 1859. *Canadian Poetry*. Web. 11 May 2017.
Kröller, Eva-Marie. "George Eliot in Canada: *Romola* and *The Golden Dog*." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 14.3 (1984): 312-21. Print.
—. "Walter Scott in America, English Canada, and Québec: A Comparison." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 7.1 (1980): 32-46. Print.
Kuropatwa, Joy. "Dante and *The Golden Dog*." *Canadian Literature* 86 (Autumn 1980): 49-58. Print.
Lachman, Gary. *A Dark Muse: A History of the Occult*. 2003. New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2005. Print.
LeMoine, Sir James MacPherson. "Le Chien D'Or: The History of an Old House." *Maple Leaves: A Budget of Legendary, Historical, Critical, and Sporting Intelligence*. Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1863. 29-32. Print.
Moss, John. "William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*." *A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel*. 2nd ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987. 196-97. Print.
Murphy, Carl. "The Marriage Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century English Canadian Fiction." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 13.1 (1988): 1-19. Print.
Northey, Margot. *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1976. Print.
—. "William Kirby." *Canadian Writers and their Works*. Fiction Series. Vol. 2. Ed. Robert Lecker, Jack David, and Ellen Quigley. Downsview: ECW, 1983. 79-104. Print.
Odhner, Carl Theophilus. "The Golden Dog." *New Church Life* 17 (1897): 189-90. Print.
Pacey, Desmond. *Creative Writing in Canada*. 1952. Toronto: Ryerson, 1961. Print.
Parker, George L. *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985. Print.
Pierce, Lorne. *William Kirby: The Portrait of a Tory Loyalist*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1929. Print.
Rix, Robert. *William Blake and the Cultures of Radical Christianity*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
Sewall, Frank D.D. "A Canadian Retrospect." *New Church Messenger* 6 May 1903: 282. Print.
Sorfleet, John Robert. "Fiction and the Fall of New France: William Kirby vs. Gilbert Parker." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 11.3 (1973): 132-46. Print.

Stacey, Robert David. "Romance, Pastoral Romance, and the Nation in History: William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* and Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé's *Les Anciens Canadiens*." *Recalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production*. Ed. Jennifer Blair, Daniel Coleman, Kate Higginson, and Lorraine York. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2005. 91-116. Print.

Starky, George G. "Notes and Reviews." *New Church Life* (Feb. 1898): 28-29. Web. 26 Jun. 2017.

Sugars, Cynthia. *Canadian Gothic: Literature, History, and the Spectre of Self-Invention*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2014. Print.

Sulte, Benjamin. "Le Chien d'or." *L'Opinion publique* 3 mai 1877: 208. Print.

Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*. [1749-56]. Standard Edition. Ed. Rev. John Faulkner Potts. Vol. III. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1928. Print.

—. *Arcana Coelestia*. Standard Edition. Ed. Rev. John Faulkner Potts. Vol. IV. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1946. Print.

—. *Arcana Coelestia*. Standard Edition. Ed. Rev. John Faulkner Potts. Vol. X. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1938. Print.

—. *Conjugial Love.* 1768. Trans. Rev. John Clowes. New York: American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society, 1856. Print.

—. *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*. 1740-41. Trans. Augustus Clissod. New York: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1955. Print.

—. *The Swedenborg Concordance: A Complete Work of Reference to the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*. Ed. and trans. Rev. John Faulkner Potts. Vol. 1. London: Swedenborg Society, 1888. Print.

Taillemite, Étienne. "Barrin de la Galissonière, Roland-Michel, Marquis de la Galissonière." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol 3. Toronto: U of Toronto/U Laval, 1974. Web. 3 May 2017.

Vandervaart, Leonard. "Abridgment as Criticism: A Textual Study of William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*." MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1980. Print.

Williams-Hogan, Jane. "Emanuel Swedenborg's Aesthetic Philosophy and Its Impact on Nineteenth-Century American Art." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 28.1 (2012): 105-24. Print.

Withrow, William Henry. "Book Notices." *Canadian Methodist Magazine* 5 (Apr. 1877): 378-80. Print.