

## Civil Journey: Mediating the Personal and the Political in the Essays of Storm Jameson

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Storm Jameson is perhaps best known today as a socially committed novelist of the 1930s, interested in pioneering a “fiction of fact” (*Women’s Writing in English* 94). Like Winifred Holtby, Phyllis Bottome and Lettice Cooper, Jameson’s concern for modern writing centred on producing traditional novels that explored materiality in the changing modern world, emphasising community over individuality, content over form. Jameson’s essays continue her pursuit of a socially committed writing but while the individual in her novels is woven into the fabric of the wider community, the use of autobiography in her essays and in her essay collections foregrounds a more personal engagement with politics and writing.

The line—“the personal is political”—has been, and remains, important in feminism’s radicalizing of the private, domestic sphere. Yet, Janet Montefiore has also been calling attention to the need to explore women’s relationships to mainstream politics.

... feminist scholars and historians of women’s writing during this period have not been idle . . . . But because all of these books concentrate on women’s writing primarily for its representation of women’s lives and stories, they have relatively little to say about women as historic subjects, and nothing about the political role of women writers between the wars, except in terms of their feminism, which is only indirectly relevant to hunger marches and the Popular Front. (*Men and Women Writers of the 1930s* 20)

Links should be made between women writers and the public world of politics. After all, committed feminists like Winifred Holtby and Vera Brittain were also committed Labour Party members. Storm Jameson herself was a writer who worked hard to raise awareness of the pressing political issues of the day and as President of the British section of International

P.E.N. helped Continental writers in exile from Fascism. Montefiore's comment is a pertinent reminder that feminist critics should not limit themselves to the private sphere, lest women be effaced "through the implicit but unquestioned assumption that women and their writing are part of the private world," no matter how political that private world may be in gender terms (20).

However, it may not be enough to shift one's focus and examine women writers in the public sphere of politics as a complement to women in the private sphere of domesticity. The private/public, personal/political binaries have to be deconstructed from both sides. If the personal is political, there is also a sense that the political is also personal, that the public world of politics is subject to and motivated by personal motives and private fears. I would like to suggest here that Storm Jameson's *Civil Journey* attempts to blur these boundaries. Ostensibly a collection of literary and political essays from the thirties, *Civil Journey* is also an autobiographical narrative. Here, autobiography acts as the unconscious of Jameson's political and literary writing, repressed in her socialist theories of literature but constantly returning to disturb the separation of private and public, personal and political. This paper will thus examine *Civil Journey* in two moves—the first, taking after Montefiore's suggestion, will be to explore Jameson's essays for its strategies of bringing together literature and politics in a crisis-ridden decade; the second will be to demonstrate Jameson's method of disturbing the private/public binary through her use of autobiography.

As a political activist and a writer, Jameson was deeply concerned about the role of the writer in politically precarious times. The essays in *Civil Journey* reveal her struggle through the thirties to come up with a theory of literature that could encompass an active political function as well. Jameson's awareness of crises within society, politics and literature is constantly emphasised throughout *Civil Journey*. The crises, as Jameson sees it, are manifold. With modern life, it is the problem of modernity itself—the rapid advancements and changes of the age creating havoc with the flow of human life and traditions, making "an old countryman, with his rich instinctive knowledge, a foreigner to his grandson. The break with a living tradition is complete or nearly completed" (*Civil Journey* 18). Blame

is also laid on the First World War, which has irrevocably broken many links with the past. Filled with nostalgia, Jameson recalls the pre-war atmosphere amongst her young contemporaries.

Never to have known anything about war, and so never to have feared. Indeed, to fear nothing except that with so many roads to our feet, we might not be able to walk on all. To walk? To run. (23)

Those roads have since been closed, those running feet cut down. Neither has the one road that lay open, the one that led to war, initiated a better world as the "old men" in charge have only re-made the new world in the image of the old (8).

Literary life, as a result of the severe hammer blows of modernity and war, has also been fractured. Literary traditions and values have been destroyed, leaving writers to write in a vacuum, without "the support of a hierarchy of values" (91). Compounding the problem is the commercialisation of literature and literary tastes in favour of the escapism and cheap emotions of pulp fiction and films—sentiments that swear optimistically that "all is for the best" (92). Such developments leave Jameson particularly concerned.

You hear that such and such a writer is very pleasant, very fertile. You go to this pleasant-sounding place. Alas, the only thing you find there is a factory, blackening the earth with clouds of newspaper articles, novels of two hundred thousand words, scenarios and the rest of it. (18-19)

For Jameson, the commercialisation of literature is as nasty an event as the industrial revolution. The pure country fields of good writing are giving way to polluting, word-minting factories. The erosion of literary values and political awareness is a cause for concern as the flood of escapist literature inundates the population, numbing them to the numerous crises around them.

The solution, despite the poverty of literature, remains literature still. In "Culture and Environment," Jameson, tenacious as ever, hopes to recuperate the novel and the novelist for better ends. Jameson's theorising takes on a Leavisite colouring, advocating literary tradition, the need to educate taste and the promotion of discrimination in order to combat the

commercialisation of literature. The role the novelist has in holding together the literary past and the chaotic present, and in creating the shape of the future is extremely important to Jameson.

Since, by the rapidity and violence of the industrial change-over, the continuity of experience has been broken, it becomes all the more vitally necessary for the writer . . . to maintain touch with what is valuable in the past at the same time that he helps to create the future by exalting one set of values and decrying others. (119)

The influence of Leavis and his belief in the poet as the preserver of cultural values are perceptible here. Seeing that Jameson was a friend of the Leavises and a contributor to *Scrutiny*, the Cambridge journal associated with them, this is perhaps not surprising. There are moments when Jameson's rhetoric echoes Leavis's. Indeed, they both shared a sense of crisis that was extremely acute. As Iain Wright has noted in "F. R. Leavis, the *Scrutiny* Movement and the Crisis,"

. . . the war was above all a rupture—'the great hiatus,' he called it once. It had broken the 'continuity' of national life, irreversibly, and had made history alien and meaningless . . . Disintegration, fragmentariness, things falling apart as the centre ceases to hold; the loss of firm shapeliness and hierarchical order in both society and literary language, each exacerbating the other . . . (41)

The touchstones are familiar—the war, the loss of traditional ways of life, the loss of order and in other instances, the threat of the machine and the problem of industrialisation and commercialisation. Leavis's response was to propose "Spenglerism plus resistance" as Wright puts it (42). Although decline and atrophy are acknowledged, they are not allowed to be the final word. Leavis intends to resist this downward slide by preserving tradition, which, under the sway of I. A. Richards, implies literary tradition because the poet is grandly deemed "the most conscious point of the race" (43). The poet, together with the highly educated elite, works to set and maintain literary standards in a time of disintegration and confusion, and in doing so, helps preserve "the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age" (38).

Replace the poet with the novelist as "the most conscious point of the race" and you have Storm Jameson's creed of faith for the novelist in modern times. With the Leavisite stress on the seriousness and importance of the role of the writer, Jameson finds a response to the crises of modernity that offers her a useful model for bringing together literature and politics. But unlike Leavis, who refuses to recognise that his programme of literature and literary criticism for the sake of cultural renewal is political in any way, Jameson goes as far as to claim that this work of safeguarding traditions and literary inheritances is a form of crucial political intervention, believing the "storm which is now breaking on the world . . . to be more the business of the artist than of other men" (*Civil Journey* 165). The political role of the novelist is not one of propaganda, but the sustaining of humane values through literature. In a political atmosphere of unreason and a lack of respect for the virtues of equality, the novelist has to come to the defence of reason and humanity.

In 1937, with "New Documents" and "The Novel in Contemporary Life," Jameson begins to develop her own theory of modern literature further, gradually moving on from Leavisite ideas.<sup>1</sup> Leavis's extravagant ideal for the writer to be poised at the vanguard of civilisation has become a humble "receiving station for the voices coming from every corner of the society he lives in," sensitively absorbing and recording the social and political transformations going on all around (290). The writer as the preserver of cultural values becomes the writer as chronicler of the times, taking "soundings," as Jameson describes it (301). But what would these "soundings" look like?

They would be a new form of literature, though unlike the new forms promulgated by the modernists. James Gindin has characterised Jameson as an "anti-modernist," and seeing her dismissals of James Joyce's *Work in Progress* (eventually published as *Finnegan's Wake*) and surrealist literature, Gindin would not be far wrong (*British Fiction in the 1930s* 205). Yet, her antipathy to modernism should not obscure the fact that she herself was searching for new forms of writing to suit the modern times, a form of writing that could accommodate socialist politics.

Jameson's desire to make writing new leads her to a genre outside of literature itself. Perhaps the nearest equivalent of what is wanted exists already in another form in the documentary film. (270)

The analogue with documentary film is an interesting choice. In the 1920s documentary film began to emerge and assert itself as an alternative to the cinema of Hollywood. The fact that several schools can be identified attests to the vibrancy of the documentary film scene. There were the experiments of the Soviet school, combining history and revolution, the work of Cavalcanti and Ruttman in their meditations on city life and the work of Flaherty with his successful *Nanook of the North* and *Moana*, bringing together anthropology and narrative. Under the leadership of John Grierson, British documentary film however moved in a direction distinct from the various schools present in the 1920s. Grierson wanted documentary film to be inspirational, a source of information to involve the average person on the street as citizens. In a sense, it was a form of propaganda, but one that sought to engage the ordinary citizen in political issues, to encourage deeper thought about political involvement. As such Grierson's idea of documentary film had the function of exhortation but inspirational as it should be, it was neither to be melodramatic nor romanticised, nor associated "with the private, the realm of self-expression, personal indulgence, art for art's sake and social irresponsibility" (*Studies in Documentary* 29). For Grierson, it was about the everyday and the ordinary, the "drama of the doorstep" ("Cinema in the Thirties" 250). It was to be a form of realism and one that tended to focus on the working-classes.<sup>2</sup>

While no doubt Jameson's literary documents were to be focused on the working-classes as well, that was not to be its only scope. The net was to be cast wider. Jameson recommends documents from a Nottinghamshire mining village, a factory, a family of five living in the West End, or in Paddington, in Hoxton, or in Lambeth. For Jameson, this new form of socialist writing will involve an analysis of change that will not limit itself to only the lower levels of society.

The process of change, of decay, of growth, is taking place everywhere all the time: it does not matter where you open up the social body if you know what you are looking for. (263-64)

The life of a Lord Invernain is apt material for a document as well.

Documents are thus not to be class-bound, like the proletarian novel Jameson calls "that latest weakest version of the naturalist's 'slice of life,'" but texts that emerge from an intimate experience of the subject, just as camera and sound recorder are brought and placed within the midst of their subjects (297). Contemptuously, she declares that these documents are not meant to be superficial journalistic reports based on nothing more than a visit to "the distressed areas in a motor-car," nor official reports written up after an hour's visit (270).

We do not *see* the woman stripping the filthy, bug-ridden wallpaper from the thin wall of her attic; nor the pregnant woman waiting for her turn for the lavatory which serves eight families (forty people); nor the gesture of the woman setting on the table the little pie she has bought for her consumptive child; nor the workless man looking at the soles of his shoes when he comes home. It is necessary that a writer should have lived with these things for him to record them . . . . Something can be discovered in an hour's visit, but not the quick. (*italics original*, 268-69)

Jameson's documents demand an intimate gaze that can identify the unspoken, the gestural. For Jameson, like Grierson, the ability to record the appearances of everyday life is a means to enter the nature of that life.

However, records are not made by innocent simple acts. Though she insists that documents be almost transparent pieces of writing that act as conduits of information, records written "simply and coldly, even brutally," Jameson recognises that this process is actually an art (268). After all, she acknowledges that there are elements of selection and arrangement involved in the making of documents so as to highlight what is of significance. Jameson's enterprise is not a naive attempt to get at the truth, but a promotion of a style of writing that foregrounds physical detail at the expense of the individual writer and that allows the concreteness of details to imply everything: "No commentary—the document is a comment" (272).

Critics who have noticed this contribution of Jameson's, however, have tended to understand Jameson's theory of documents rather too simplistically. This inclination is perhaps best illustrated by following the usual critical path of reading "Documents" in conjunction with Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, bringing together a theory of socialist literature and the classic thirties text of middle-class social conscience in the heart of the proletarian world. *The Road to Wigan Pier* is a book of conflicts. In part, it can be seen to fulfil Jameson's demand for documents that deal with facts alone, and not emotions. Again like Grierson, she shies away from the personal.

The first thing a socialist writer has to realise is that there is no value in the emotions, the spiritual writhings, started in him by the sight, smell and touch of poverty. The emotions are no doubt unavoidable. There is no need to record them. Let him go and pour them down the drain. (265)

The ego is not to protrude and as Samuel Hynes notes, *The Road to Wigan Pier* is filled with lists, tables and case histories, making it look "rather like a census report or the minutes of a committee on public welfare" (*The Auden Generation* 273). However, cold facts are only one part of Orwell's story. There are also his expressions of revulsion, his "spiritual writhings," and in particular his honest but controversial confession that he was brought up to believe that the lower classes smell. Middle-class breeding clashes violently and irrationally with a political and social conscience in the process of development, and *The Road to Wigan Pier* is the story of that conflict and its resolution. For Hynes, the intrusion of feelings into Orwell's plot and his struggle with middle-class preconceptions is *the* story. Cunningham, though he admires Jameson's tough-minded briskness, believes that Jameson, raised with fewer middle-class pretensions, has underestimated the problem. It is impossible for Orwell to simply pour his emotions and assumptions down the drain; they are so deeply ingrained that he has to contend with them openly. The defence of Orwell by Hynes and Cunningham indicates an upper middle-class bias in constructions of thirties writing as they privilege the upper middle-class experience of male writers struggling to come to terms with the realities of working-class poverty and their own prejudiced breeding.



But it is precisely this sometimes embarrassing spectacle of middle-class narcissism that Jameson deplors and wishes to address, not from a naive insistence on facts but because the focus should plainly be on the working-classes. She illustrates why such self-absorbed emotions should be avoided in "The Novel in Contemporary Life."

Perhaps he watches a poor woman, the wife of an unemployed man, giving some little extra food she has got to her half-fed child. He is seized with pity, with rage. He says so, and at once the image of the mother is obscured. (302)

The "straight dark bar" of the first person pronoun casts its looming shadow on the landscape and like Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, Jameson is dodging left and right to catch sight of the woman behind it. The moment is uncannily similar to Woolf's reading experience in *A Room of One's Own* as she catches a glimpse of a woman, Phoebe, behind the letter "I", only to have her obliterated by the dominating presence of Alan and his many, many opinions (90). Although Jameson's other is the working class, Woolf's feminist argument still stands; the effect of the dreaded "I" in socialist literature is boredom and aridity. Jameson is struggling to bring the other into focus here, not the middle-class ego. *The Road to Wigan Pier* demonstrates that any attention on the other only reverts to attention to the self. For Jameson, who is interested in social change, preventing that reversion is part of her agenda. The focus is to be firmly held on the other.

In her insistence on facts and objectivity at the expense of subjectivity, Jameson's theory of documents can be seen as "symptomatic of a spirit of scientific enquiry which characterised the 1930s" (*Literature and Culture*, 17). This was, after all, the decade of Mass Observation as well. Founded in 1937 by Tom Harrison and Charles Madge, Mass Observation set out to report and record "almost every aspect of daily life and social behaviour" (18). It was an anthropological exercise, an attempt to understand thirties society in all its bewildering multiplicity. In its emphasis on the factual and the objective however, it problematised the position of the observing subject.

... the findings of the various scientific enquiries showed that what was observed was far from passive and could exert a determining influence on the observing subject. (18)

Subjectivity re-emerges in spite of the objective discourse much as in *Road to Wigan Pier*. The return of repressed subjectivity is a difficulty that Jameson too faced but her methods of handling this problematic return are significantly different.

*Civil Journey*, as a collection of essays, can be seen as the narrative of her increasing politicisation and emphasis on objectivity, culminating in "New Documents" and "The Novel in Contemporary Life." But *Civil Journey* as a volume is also implicated in a narrative other than the working out of her literary and political responses to the crises of modernity and the thirties. *Civil Journey* closes with an autobiographical essay, "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography." It is the story of her coming to writing from her hapless start in writing theses for her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to her first novel, written in familiar female fashion—over several years with time snatched from household chores and caring for her son. Her story is both familiar and unfamiliar. Her novel is eventually accepted for publication and where one expects jubilation is instead indifference.

I suppose I was pleased when I knew certainly that my book was going to be published. I have forgotten. But I am sure I took it coolly. (321)

Similarly, any anguish expected from her as chunks of her manuscript are excised by her publisher is notably absent.

After dinner I went through the manuscript and drew my pencil through passages he said were silly and must come out. My half-realised contempt for novel-writing made this easy to do. (321-22)

Becoming a writer is not exactly a triumph for Jameson, but a lament. Finding an old reader's report on her first novel that claimed (assuming her a man) that "the man can write and is worth watching," Jameson responds witheringly:

The man' could *not* write. Being denied other uses for his mind he fell into the habit of writing. A pity. (327)

This almost bitter self-contempt highlights Jameson's usual discomfiting disdain for her own achievements. Autobiography becomes a rather punishing mode for her as she evaluates with brutal honesty where her own half-conscious decisions have taken her. Autobiography is also the means by which Jameson recontextualises her literary and political essays.

The fact that *Civil Journey* ends with an autobiographical piece signals Jameson's enormous investment in and her troubled relationship with the autobiographical mode. While her political and literary essays stress the importance of leaving the ego aside when writing, like the return of the repressed, autobiography is a mode Jameson constantly returns to. "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography" could have quite easily been a fragment of Jameson's eventually written autobiography. Made up of brief chapters, *Journey from the North* echoes much of *Civil Journey*. Fragments of text from her essays are dispersed throughout the two volumes of her autobiography and sometimes used almost word for word. Large portions of "City to Let—Berlin 1932" and "The Youngest Brother," first published in *Civil Journey*, are recycled and inserted into the text of *Journey from the North*. Jameson constantly re-writes her life-story with events from her life, such as her experiences working in an advertising agency and her devastation on realising her husband's infidelity, finding their way in different transparent guises into her fiction. The curious thing is that Jameson should call the closing piece in *Civil Journey* "Fragment of an (Unwritten) Autobiography" (my italics), for by 1938 when she wrote this autobiographical essay, she had already rehearsed her autobiography twice in published form—in *That was Yesterday*, written in the third person, and in her thirties memoirs *No Time Like the Present*.<sup>3</sup>

Jameson has a certain obsession with autobiography and it constantly infiltrates her writing practice. With her novels, this autobiographical impulse is tightly regulated. In the "Mirror of Darkness" trilogy, Jameson's self-portrait, Hervey Russell, is never allowed to dominate the entire narrative. Instead she shares the stage with characters from both ends of the class spectrum, from the working classes to newspaper magnates, providing a panoramic view of literary and political London in the 1920s. With her essays, however, Jameson is free to attempt new ways to relate the autobiographical with the world at large. What is unusual about *Civil*

*Journey* as a volume are the autobiographical prefaces that provide contextual glosses on the origin of each essay. In her preface to the whole volume, Jameson notes that the essays have a dual interest. Published because she believes in their intrinsic worth as criticism, they also serve as part of another project. The essays mark, as Jameson puts it, "the stages of a mind, my mind" (5). *Civil Journey* is placed within an autobiographical framework and Jameson even suggests a reading plan for the "friendly critic"—a plan that moves from the latest to the earliest pieces—in an effort to provide an authorial structure for the reader's experience of her mind (5).

*Civil Journey*, thus, works on two levels—the literary-political and the autobiographical. The prefatorial glosses to each essay create another time frame, drawing attention to the current moment of compilation from which Jameson looks back on her essays with hindsight, as opposed to the original moment of writing. This doubling of selves allows her to return and review her decisions and beliefs, picking out the changes and differences that have occurred since. Thus, in the preface to "The Defence of Freedom," Jameson recognises the changes in her thinking through the years that have passed since the essay was first published. Her belief that a writer must defend his/her right to think and write freely has shifted from an insistence that *all* writers "must descend into the arena and fight there in the dust" to a less absolute position (151). The meeting of her contemporary self and her old selves as manifested textually also brings to the surface the threads that link past and present selves together, revealing the continuities and coherence of her personality through the years. Looking back on her essays, Jameson in her prefaces often finds themes repeatedly cropping up. Re-reading "The Craft of a Novelist," Jameson sees how her own steadfast fears have persistently permeated her life and writing.

I see that the lasting obsession of my life since the War—the fear of another—crept into it. The fear that another will kill my son as brutally and uselessly as the last killed my brother in his nineteenth year. It gets, you see, even into an essay on the novel. (53)

In "Technique for Living," an essay full of exemplary notions with Jameson attempting to run away from anxieties over her son and the coming war, the recognition that the repressed will return is even more startling.

It is as though one threw a few shells into a box and found a year or two later that they had arranged themselves in the form of a skeleton. (237)

This dialogic process is also echoed in *Journey from the North*, where Jameson sometimes works with a double time-frame, inserting her present writing self into her text. Such moments are marked in the text with a date, as if Jameson is keeping a sporadic diary within the text itself as she writes her autobiography. At the end of chapter thirteen in volume one, she includes a postscript dated "14th of January, 1963" where she discusses how her education in iconoclasm, via the class of 5b and the King's College group, the Eikonoklasts, has shaped her present self.

The disadvantages of having been a member of Class 5b, and an Eikonoklast, were brought home to me today. I found myself the only person in the room not in ecstasies over a copy of *The Private Eye*. . . . I felt out of things, but took heart: it is not my fault, it is the fault of 5b and the Eikonoklasts. (71)

At the end of chapter thirty-six, which details her entry in the twenties into literary society and her self-consciousness with company, another dated entry appears. Marked "14th of January, 1962," it describes a moment of realisation that her old awkwardness amongst clever people had gone.

The evening before I had listened to arguments tossed between four or five enormously intelligent people, and had realized, suddenly, that I was not afraid of them. Remoteness had taken the place of diffidence and my instinctive fear of punishment. (162)

Such entries dotted throughout the two volumes introduce a level of dialogue to her autobiography, bringing to focus the differences and continuities in her different selves. This process of evaluating her life often features in her autobiographical practice and is best seen in *Civil Journey*. Indeed, *Civil Journey* is a unique example of the public and the personal being brought together. Impersonal essays on the crises of the modern age, literature and politics directed towards the public are, through the

framework of autobiographical prefaces and fragments, contextualised and re-connected with Jameson's personal traumas and development. In an individual manner, Jameson has managed to link her public persona with her private self. The civil journey of the title is not only a political one towards greater involvement and engagement, but a personal one towards greater self-understanding. The two are inextricably linked.

It is this strategy of connecting the personal with the public that Jameson takes advantage of again in 1970 with the double publication of volume two of her autobiography and *Parthian Words*, a collection of literary essays. This time she places autobiography side by side with literary, instead of political, convictions.<sup>4</sup> Published as an opportunity for Jameson to fulfil her frustrated ambition to be a serious critic, *Parthian Words* also acts as a companion piece to her completed life-story. While *Journey from the North* concentrates on her personal dilemmas and actions, *Parthian Words* brings to the view Jameson's balanced, but tough critical values. Indeed, *Parthian Words* is seen by Jameson as "the moral autobiography of a writer as well as an essay in criticism" (8). In it, she grapples with post-war contemporary writing from the *nouveau roman* to erotic pornographic novels—an amazing demonstration of contemporariness by a literary woman in her late seventies. Yet it gradually becomes clear that Jameson is unable to stop herself from reverting to now "lost standards of values," and is still waiting for the novel that will articulate modernity, a novel whose arrival she prophesied as early as 1928 in *The Georgian Novel and Mr. Robinson* (153). Being brutally honest with herself in the Epilogue of *Parthian Words*, she admits as much.

My situation as a writer is the unenviable one of a survivor . . . . Certainly my birth colours my outlook on life and letters, even against my reason . . . I write from the still warm ashes of a society given me by my birth and growth in it, I cannot write in the language of any other. (152-56)

The autobiographer confronts the critic, just as in *Civil Journey* the autobiographer and the political, literary essayist intertwine. Mediating the literary and the political, the public and the private, Jameson constantly insists on being both simultaneously. Combining literature and politics through her own theory of documents, bringing private and public together

with autobiographical discourse, Jameson deconstructs any binary separations by finding the means to blur the categories. As an essayist, she never fails to show us that literature and politics are inextricably entangled, that the public and private spheres are joined at the hip. The pity is that her example of bringing seemingly oppositional discourses into relation has been lost amidst critical categorisations that do her little justice. We need a way of “expressing, in such a way that they are at once seen to be intimately connected, the relations between things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex” (274). This prescient remark of Jameson’s at the end of “New Documents” is still valid today.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>‘New Documents’ was first published as ‘Documents’ in the ‘Writing in Revolt’ issue of *Fact*, 4 July 1937, 9-18. The addition of ‘New’ to the essay’s title is puzzling as the reprinted version in *Civil Journey* has not been altered or revised in any way. Jameson adhered to a policy of non-revision for *Civil Journey*, refusing, as she put it in the prefatorial gloss to ‘The Defence of Freedom,’ ‘to arrange my past to suit my present’ (151).

<sup>2</sup>Film realism and literary realism overlap interestingly in the example of H. G. Wells, an Edwardian realist writer who wrote novels dealing with social problems. He took an interest in documentary film and once commented that ‘he was learning from documentary film-makers’ (*Studies in Documentary* 19).

<sup>3</sup>*That was Yesterday* (London: William Heinemann, 1932) covers the early years of her marriage to the point, when away from her weak husband, she begins to take her life into her own hands, leaving her son in Yorkshire to go to London to work. The preface to this book even acknowledges that some lines of conversation were lifted from an earlier, less read novel. *No Time Like the Present* (London: Cassell, 1933) focuses on an earlier section of her life, rehearsing her mother’s life, her own childhood in Whitby and her life at Leeds University and at the University of London. The latter half of the book analyses her own personality and character.

<sup>4</sup>Parthian horsemen used to baffle their enemies with their quickness and an unusual strategy that turned defensive retreat on the battlefield into an offensive move. In real or pretended withdrawal, they would continue to fire projectiles backwards in the direction of their pursuers, fighting as they fled. In that sense, *Parthian Words* may be read as Jameson’s fighting last words as she retreats into old age and death.

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