JOHN LOUGH

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1913–2000

JOHN LOUGH was in very many ways an exemplary member of the British academic establishment. He was a punctilious scholar and industrious researcher, who shared the results of his inquiries with the intellectual community in a prolific series of books and articles. Although he was essentially a man of the written, rather than the spoken, word, he took his duties as teacher very seriously, and also played a prominent part in the governance of Durham University, where most of his career unfolded. There were, however, certain characteristic interests and commitments that distinguished John Lough from the typical academic figure of his generation, who was more likely to be found in the green pastures of the ancient universities in the south of England than in the more raw and bleak north east of the country.

In this urbane, self-protective man, with his quizzical gaze, dry humour and few words, it was difficult to discern the 'geordie', but John Lough was very much a man of his roots, and those roots were firmly in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and its hinterland. He was born in Newcastle on 19 February 1913, the third of five children. His father, Wilfrid Gordon Lough (1880–1962), had been taken into the family business, a butcher's shop in Jesmond, and he eventually became its proprietor. Through his mother, Mary Turnbull (née Millican) Lough (1885–1979), John Lough was descended from a long line of tenant farmers in north Northumberland. As a rather delicate child, John was sent away from the insalubrious city for longish periods, to be spent on his grandparents' farm and later in the nearby village where they retired. His deep attachment

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to Northumberland was revealed only to those who had the good fortune to penetrate his basic shyness in his later years and hear about those long ago visits to his rural relatives. Although such memories did not lure this essentially bookish man to forsake his study for country pursuits, it was undoubtedly his love of the North East that kept him so contentedly in Durham for so many years. His very last book-length publication was to be both a celebration and example of his fidelity to his family. In it, he worked together with his sister, Elizabeth Merson, to apply his professional expertise as an historian to writing a memoir of his great-great-great-uncle, the Northumbrian sculptor, John Graham Lough.[1]

John Lough's parents made considerable sacrifices to send all five of their children to fee-paying schools. In Newcastle, for John, that could only mean the Royal Grammar School, preceded by what he once described as 'a kind of dame school', of a type that was still extant in the region in the 1960s. The Royal Grammar School must have recognised quite early that they had gained an intellectually talented pupil, for his fees were soon subject to a partial remission and were later waived altogether. The school governors also awarded him a scholarship that eased his financial situation throughout his undergraduate years at Cambridge. Lough repaid this generosity by a no less generous recognition of what he owed the school in terms of his intellectual development. Apparently he was lucky in that a new headmaster, appointed shortly after he joined the school, completely reinvigorated the teaching by recruiting energetic new staff. Among them was the Anglo-Russian modern language master, who must have influenced his star pupil's choice of French and German in the sixth form. Modern languages was not a high status academic discipline at that time. We possibly owe Lough's career in the field, and the very considerable efforts he made later to promote the study of French language and literature in the school classroom, to the fact that he was educated at some distance from the fashionable mainstream and its prejudices. Even so, his approach to his studies must have been severely academic. He can have had no direct contact with the peoples and cultures of Europe until he had the chance of a school trip to Lübeck in 1929, a relatively rare opportunity for a lad of sixteen from Newcastle. By then, he may well have internally constituted his view of France as that of the interested and intelligent

[1] (With Elizabeth Merson) *John Graham Lough (1789–1876), a Northumbrian Sculptor* (Woodbridge, 1987).

observer, warily watchful but not immersed. His preferred mode of language learning was always translation, the one that emphasises difference. Much of his later investigation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French cultural practices adopted the point of view of eminent British travellers reporting home. Lough's own first journey to France was to Strasbourg in 1930, prior to taking up the major scholarship he had been awarded by St John's College in December of that year.

Lough arrived at Cambridge in the October of 1931, very conscious of his position as a first-generation student. He was shocked by the antics and conspicuous consumption of the gilded youth who played on the Cambridge scene, and not a little affronted by their disdain of the sort of serious academic work that had brought him there. The lean to the left in politics that one would expect from a young man's close experience of the North East, its decaying industries, unemployment, and bitter labour relations, was confirmed by this encounter. Moreover, Lough's student visits to pre-war France (as a graduate student he was in Paris for the Front Populaire's election victory in 1936) provided a wider context within which to establish informed political conviction. Despite this maturing of attitudes that were to be not without their bearing on the topics and methodology he was to choose for his more advanced work, Lough's time at Cambridge was almost exclusively devoted to his studies. Even in that respect he was shocked by practices that seemed to him to encourage mediocrity and shallow thinking. He was bored by the concentration on language studies in the first year, and came near to giving up modern languages altogether. He was surprised to have no contact at all with senior members of his college, which 'farmed out' all its modern language undergraduates to supervisors who did not have a university post. In his second year, he led a successful revolt against this system, largely because he wanted to be supervised in German by Roy Pascal, the only inspiring teacher he came across in three years. After Part I of the Tripos (in which he gained a First in French and German and an oral distinction in both languages), he chose to focus on France and Germany in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These were studied from a very general perspective in which literature was by no means the privileged and ahistorical subject of inquiry it was shortly to become. It was viewed primarily as a rather inert product of the intellectual, social and political history of a period. For Lough, however, the historical content of the course whetted his curiosity as none of the rest of the syllabus had so far done. The possibility of examining how the ideas of important

writers interact with their historical environment in its broadest sense provided him with the delighted discovery of where his intellectual gifts and energies might be profitably and pleasurably employed. He was awarded a First in Part II of the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos in 1934. After realising that, without a guaranteed private income, he was disbarred from the diplomatic service, and having been reliably informed that his bad eyesight made him unfit for the consular service (the poor man's option, as he saw it), he decided to stay in Cambridge in order to gain the degree of Ph.D.

The subject of Lough's thesis was 'Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of Baron d'Holbach'. The title is very much of its time, both in its modest aspirations and in the 'life and works' approach. It was too original a subject for Cambridge, however, and no properly qualified expert was on hand to supervise it. Lough was advised by Harry Ashton, a scholar with a good general knowledge of the field, who proved extremely conscientious. Lough's account of his years as a research student focused on his constant need for financial support. This was obviously an anxiety for him, though an anxiety that was allayed before it became pressing, as he was awarded scholarships and grants year by year. The most important in terms of his intellectual development was the Esmond Scholarship, which he held at the British Institute in Paris for the whole of his second year. Thus began his intimate acquaintance with the holdings of French libraries and archive deposits. All his subsequent writings demonstrate his thorough mastery of this primary material, his scrupulous accuracy in transcribing it, and his deft judgement in selecting, managing and exploiting it. Lough also made the most of opportunities to meet French scholars of the Enlightenment, notably the most distinguished of their number at that time, Daniel Mornet, who encouraged the young Englishman by publishing his first review and with whom Lough was to remain on very amicable terms. More amicable still was his relationship with a female compatriot pursuing postgraduate research in Paris at the same time. Muriel Alice Barker (1913–98) had graduated from Nottingham, then under the aegis of the University of London, with a First in French. She and Lough were to marry in 1939, a partnership that was also a collaboration, for they were to publish several books as joint authors.

Lough submitted his thesis in 1937 and was awarded the degree of Ph.D., with some avuncular admonishment from one of the examiners about the dangers of excessive modesty. In fact, Lough had much to be proud of, because he was able to embark on his professional career

much more speedily than was usual at the time. Even before the award of the degree he had been offered a post as Assistant Lecturer in French at the University of Aberdeen, solely on the recommendation of his supervisor. The department was very small and the system very hierarchical, but Lough was fortunate in having very congenial close colleagues who guided his beginner's steps. It was not long before this 'beginner', together with his wife, was to be the mainstay of the department. Lough's poor eyesight made him unfit for military service, so he remained at Aberdeen for the whole period of the war. His appointment, which was initially for five years, was renewed year by year. By the end of the war, he and his wife were virtually the only teachers of French at the university. Their students were mostly female. Lough was also commissioned to drill them in the exercise of putting out incendiary bombs (fortunately none fell in the vicinity). Typically, Lough was quick to exploit the eighteenth-century resources of Aberdeen's excellent library, and found much to support his work when travel to other libraries was difficult. He published some of the results of his researches in the *Aberdeen University Review*. This interest in promoting local material in a local context was to prove characteristic of Lough's loyalty to the place in which he functioned. After he moved to Durham, he would not infrequently publish papers connected with his ongoing research in the *Durham University Journal*.

In 1945, Lough was finally appointed to a full lectureship at Aberdeen, but he was ambitious to move on. In 1946, he returned to Cambridge as a lecturer, a very welcome move in terms of access to library provision, but not without its difficulties. Lough found himself the only lecturer without a college fellowship, and considerably hampered in this respect by his membership of a college that had no tradition of appointing fellows in modern languages. One senses that he must have felt socially somewhat isolated, for, although he was essentially a private and self-contained person, there is no doubt that he enjoyed the company and conversation of other men, especially dedicated scholars like himself, and could have flourished in a congenial high-table environment. His proximity to libraries, however, ensured that his research flourished. His rate of publication settled into a rhythm of one or, mostly, two articles each year, a pace that was to accelerate during the next forty years, but not decrease until well into the 1990s. It is in these Cambridge years that one notes his interests diversifying along the three routes that were to remain high on his agenda: the history of French Enlightenment thought; the social history of seventeenth-century

French theatre; and interactions between French and English thinkers in both these periods.[2] Nevertheless, Lough, still in many ways the 'provincial' outsider, was not any more enamoured of Cambridge than he had been as a student, and when the chance came to move to the vacant chair at Durham, he is unlikely to have hesitated. October 1952, therefore, saw him back in his beloved North East, and incidentally, in May of that year, the father of Judith, his only child.

Lough became Professor of French at Durham at the relatively early age of thirty-nine and remained so until his retirement in 1978. When he arrived there in 1952, the whole university comprised 1100 students. Lough oversaw the rapid expansion of his department, in terms both of students and staff, during the 1960s and he was much engaged in managing other changes, for example, the division of the old federal university into the two independent institutions of Durham and Newcastle, that occurred in 1963. He took very seriously his responsibilities as a senior member of the university for its good management. For twenty-five years almost without remission, he was a member of the University Senate. He was a relentlessly efficient Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1965 to 1967, and at some time a member of almost every committee there was. His was a wise head, a moderate voice, injecting reasonableness and humour into debate, resisting extremism and helping the university to keep a steady course. This did not involve taking risks. In 1969, Lough resigned in the middle of his second term on the University Council in protest against the introduction of student members (Durham's modest response to *événements* that might have reminded Lough of the more violent aspects of French culture he had found very foreign in the years before the Second World War).

Lough did not belong to the democratic era of department administration. For almost all his tenure of the Chair of French at Durham he was automatically Head of Department. He managed his staff and students somewhat in the manner in which the benevolent despots of his

[2] Among articles published at this period of Lough's career were: 'The Earnings of Playwrights in Seventeenth-Century France', *Modern Language Review*, 42 (1947), 321–36; 'Condorcet et Richard Price', *Revue de littérature comparée*, 24 (1950), 87–93; 'The *Encyclopédie* in Eighteenth-Century England', *French Studies*, 6 (1952), 289–307. In the year after he left Cambridge, two important edited volumes appeared: *Locke's Travels in France, 1675–1679, as Related in his Journals, Correspondence and other Papers* (London, 1953); and Denis Diderot, *Selected Philosophical Writings* (London, 1953). Both were published by Cambridge University Press. Diderot was always central to Lough's preoccupation with Enlightenment thought. The Locke volume was to prove of perennial interest, and was reissued in facsimile by Garland (New York and London) in 1984.

beloved eighteenth century ran their domains (at least in popular conception). He kept himself a little aloof from the fray, but he always knew exactly what was going on, intervened to bring matters to a sensible conclusion at precisely the right moment and with an unerring knack of getting his own way without arousing overt antagonism. Colleagues deferred to him because they respected him as a man, as well as bowing to the authority of his standing in the world of scholarship. His qualities as an administrator and as a person were essentially those of the Enlightenment. He was rational, humane, tolerant, and very shrewd, with more than a touch of Voltairean irony about the follies and foibles of his fellows. All irrational and ill-founded convictions he regarded with a confident and benign suspicion. His younger colleagues were in considerable awe of him. He could seem disconcertingly distant, observing the world from behind the smoke-screen emanating from the pipe that was never out of his mouth, saying little, and apparently letting one flounder helplessly in unfinished sentences and inchoate opinions. Yet, once one had glimpsed the amused, but kindly glint in his eyes, once one realised that all the time one was being gently drawn towards paths that were sane, reasonable, and in everyone's best interests, one was delighted to find in him a supportive and utterly reliable mentor and friend. He was tolerant towards his female colleagues, if somewhat surprised to have them. His wife, whose intellectual gifts and achievements he respected, was doubtless a positive influence in this area, and they together were hospitable hosts at slightly formal sherry parties, at which his young colleagues vied in the consumption of cheese footballs. The abiding legend of Lough at Durham is one of the most admirable efficiency. Rumour has it that he polished off his teaching and administration in the mornings, and then betook himself to the library for the rest of the day to get on with what really mattered. It was said that he had a private key to the library and could be found hard at work on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, but that was unproven. Lough himself swore that this picture of effortless time-management was far from the truth, but the legend persists and speaks eloquently of the respect in which he was held and the reasons for it. His daughter's memory of her father is, happily, somewhat at variance with the legend. He did indeed leave the department at the end of the morning, when meetings allowed, but it was nearly always in order to come home, often to devote an hour or so to his well-tended, well-loved garden, and then to work in his study. Even she, however, allows that the only day in the year that her father took off was Christmas Day.

Lough's essential conservatism in the micro-politics of university administration arose primarily from a concern to preserve the highest professional standards in teaching and research. It did not denote any realignment of his political views with respect to the fabric of society in general. Lough had joined the Labour Party in 1937, and, despite his belief that a very broad all-party coalition government might have been best for the country in the immediate pre-war period, he resisted pressure by an academic colleague to join the Communists in 1938. His commitment to Labour was demonstrated by active campaigning on behalf of a friend contesting a County Durham seat at successive general elections. In his later years he let his party membership lapse, partly owing to the local party's failure to ask for his dues, but mainly because his opinions veered increasingly towards the cause of moderation in government. For this reason he voted for the SDP/Liberal Alliance in 1983 and 1987, hoping that no party would have a majority. His dearest wish, however, was 'to see the back of Mrs Thatcher'. He lived to see Labour's triumph and rejoiced in it. The lad from Newcastle, in politics, as in many things, remained true to his roots.

Despite his willing involvement in university management, it was clear to all at Durham that academic research and academic publishing were Lough's prime preoccupation and the centre of his life. His first and abiding love was for the thought and thinkers of the French Enlightenment. His left-leaning political opinions were not without their influence on his interest in the *philosophes*, those clever critics of establishment thinking and establishment *mores*. His scrupulously documented accounts of the broad historical context, political, social, and economic, in which they developed and functioned was essentially marxist, though Lough himself preferred to define his approach as a 'sceptical marxism, with a small "m"'. A particular facet of Enlightenment thought that Lough undoubtedly found sympathetic was its highly critical attitude to religious belief and practice. This exactly chimed with Lough's own views and confirmed them.

The single author from this period on whom Lough did most work was Denis Diderot. His careful collecting of documentary evidence on various aspects of Diderot's thought and career culminated in the volumes of Diderot's complete works that Lough edited in conjunction with a major French scholar, Jacques Proust, in 1976.[3] Many years prior to that, in 1953, Lough had also acted as Diderot's publicist in England with

[3] Denis Diderot, *Œuvres complètes*, eds. J. Lough and J. Proust, vols. V–VIII: *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1976).

a volume of his selected philosophical writings published by Cambridge University Press (see above, n. 2). Lough was always intrigued by the ways in which ideas moved between France and Great Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and he did much by his own endeavours to ensure that the cross-channel flow continued. His promotion of Diderot, however, was part of a wider project. His object was to ensure that British scholars, as well as French, were in a position to have informed access to the whole of that vast compendium of eighteenth-century knowledge and Enlightenment opinion, the *Encyclopédie*, that Diderot had conceived, that he edited, and that he supplied with many of its more lively and controversial articles. In 1954, in parallel with his selections from Diderot's philosophical writings printed in the previous year, Lough edited some of Diderot's *Encyclopédie* articles for an English-speaking readership, along with others by Diderot's original co-editor, D'Alembert.[4]

On a broader front, and in less-well-travelled terrain, Lough applied himself to track down the identity of anonymous authors of articles in the *Encyclopédie*, disentangle its publishing history, and investigate its, often very hostile, reception in France and elsewhere. This invaluable detective work is documented in a series of pioneering articles written between 1952 and 1967.[5] It was finally embodied in book form in *Essays on the 'Encyclopédie' of Diderot and D'Alembert*, published in London by Oxford University Press in 1968, a collection of new essays on the history of editions of the *Encyclopédie*, on the articles written for it by D'Holbach and D'Alembert, and on the light thrown on its contents and history by contemporary books, pamphlets and periodicals. Meanwhile, Lough was also preparing a work of greater compass on the *Encyclopédie*. Perhaps only someone who has gazed with astonishment and awe at this huge, many-volumed work that constitutes a statement of

[4] *The 'Encyclopédie' of Diderot and D'Alembert: Selected Articles* (London, 1954).

[5] 'The *Encyclopédie* in Eighteenth-Century England', *French Studies*, 6 (1952), 289–307; 'Louis, Chevalier de Jaucourt (1704–1780): A Biographical Sketch', in E. T. Dubois *et al.* (eds.), *Essays Presented to C. M. Girdlestone* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1960), pp. 195–217; 'Louis, Chevalier de Jaucourt: Some Further Notes', *French Studies*, 15 (1961), 350–7; 'The *Encyclopédie* and the Remonstrances of the Paris Parlement', *Modern Language Review*, 56 (1961), 393–5; 'The *Encyclopédie*: Two Unsolved Problems', *French Studies*, 17 (1963), 121–35; 'Mme Geoffrin and the *Encyclopédie', Modern Language Review*, 58 (1963), 219–22; 'Luneau de Boisjermain v. the Publishers of the *Encyclopédie', Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 23 (1963), 1071–83; 'The Problem of the Unsigned Articles in the *Encyclopédie*', ibid., 32 (1965), 327–90; 'New Light on the *Encyclopédie*', *History Today*, 15 (1965), 169–75; 'The *Encyclopédie* in Voltaire's Correspondence', in W. H. Barber *et al.* (eds.), *The Age of Enlightenment: Studies Presented to Theodore Besterman* (Edinburgh, 1967), pp. 51–65.

the Enlightenment project and also a demonstration of that project applied to every form of knowledge conceivable in the eighteenth century can properly comprehend how ambitious Lough was. He was seeking to encapsulate its history, its content and its reception for students of the eighteenth century at all levels, the majority of whom would know it was crucial to their inquiries, but found it almost impossibly daunting. Lough's work of synthesis, *The 'Encyclopédie'*, published in London by Longman in 1971, was a very important landmark in eighteenth-century studies, and, indeed, in the general growth of interest in Enlightenment thought that is noticeable at that period. Its readers were provided with an account of the origins of the *Encyclopédie*, its difficult progress into print, a review of its contributors and subscribers, and an account of contemporary readers' recorded reactions to it. The nub of Lough's book seeks to answer questions about the intentions of its editors and authors: was it primarily a neutral work of reference or was it conceived as a vehicle to propagate the subversive views of the *philosophes* in the fields of philosophy, religion, politics, social structure and social practice? Chapters devoted to each of these subjects explore the way they are treated in the *Encyclopédie* by means of extended quotations from its articles and from contemporary critics. Lough was convinced that the 'true meaning' of many of the articles must be located in their eighteenth-century context and can often best be found in the way they were read at the time. This apparently slightly naïve justification of the method of exposition he decided to adopt conceals the expert judgement and acrobatic manoeuvres Lough displays in moving through the plethora of material collected in the *Encyclopédie* under apparently unrelated heads. The years in which Lough had been familiarising himself with the text and context of the *Encyclopédie* had equipped him to define the exact targets it was aiming for, and fully to comprehend its attacking stratagems and the extent of the damage it inflicted. This required a truly encyclopaedic knowledge of its contents, a fine response to the ironies deliberately employed in its allusive and digressive method, and a knowing selection of the most illuminating criticisms directed at it by its contemporaries. Lough's lucid exposition and explanations of the content of the work are extraordinarily efficient and informative, and it was probably as a source of information about this major, but rather inaccessible, monument of the Enlightenment that his book was most valued.[6] It was not, however,

[6] Its importance is attested by the fact that it was reprinted some time later: *The 'Encyclopédie'* (Geneva, 1989).

Lough's only contribution to knowledge of the *Encyclopédie* emanating from this period of his career. In 1970, he had published a collection of essays partially devoted to his favourite topic of the exchange of ideas between France and England.[7] In 1973, in accord with the strong pedagogical bent to which we shall return later in this memoir, he published a succinct account of the *Encyclopédie*'s contributors in a series intended for undergraduates.[8]

The ways ideas travelled between France and Great Britain had been part of Lough's research agenda since his youthful investigations of eighteenth-century French books that had been imported to Scotland and had ended up in the University Library at Aberdeen. A predictable move from voyaging books to voyaging authors had given him the topic of his first book-length project in 1953, his edition of Locke's journals of his travels in France in 1675–9 (see above, n. 2). This interest was to blossom again in Lough's retirement with sporadic articles and the publication of two books: *France Observed in the Seventeenth Century* (Stocksfield, 1985) and *France on the Eve of Revolution: British Travellers' Observations 1763–1788* (London, 1987).[9] It might be said that these late works mainly took the form of quotations connected by narrative, rather than analysis, but, even so, it is remarkable that Lough's expertise in selecting and transcribing this fascinating archival material, as well as his choice of topic, coincided happily with the emphasis accorded to travel literature by a new generation of scholars interested in the ways inhabitants of one culture regard the alien and in their angled reports of it. He was rather pleased and amused to be consulted by his young historian colleagues. His interest in the eighteenth-century *philosophes*, on the other hand, apart from some retrospective articles and contributions to encyclopaedias, was to bear late fruit only in an attempt to chart their

[7] *The 'Encyclopédie' in Eighteenth-Century England and Other Studies* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1970).

[8] *The Contributors to the 'Encyclopédie'* (London, 1973); it was considered valuable enough to the scholarly community at large to be reprinted, with additions and corrections by the author, in R. N. Schwab (ed.), *Inventory of Diderot's 'Encyclopédie*, vol. VII, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 223 (1984), 485–568.

[9] Among the articles are: 'Two More British Travellers in the France of Louis XIV', *The Seventeenth Century*, 1 (1986), 159–75; 'Encounters between British Travellers and Eighteenth-Century French Writers', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 245 (1986), 1–90; 'Regency France Seen by British Travellers', in *Enlightenment Essays in Memory of Robert Shackleton* (Oxford, 1988), 145–61; 'France in the 1780s Seen by Joseph and Anna Francesca Cradock', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 267 (1989), 421–38.

after-life in *The 'Philosophes' and Post-Revolutionary France* (Oxford, 1982). It was a brave attempt to see how ideas propagated by eighteenth-century reforming thinkers were realised in reforming measures enacted by French political and legal authorities at the turn of the century and in the early part of the nineteenth century and subsequently. The topics covered are forms of government, social and economic questions, the law, and, perhaps closest to Lough's heart, the secularisation of society. Informative though the book is, it perhaps suffers, as Lough himself acknowledges in the conclusion, from having two distinct narratives: the ideas of the *philosophes* and the history of political, legal and cultural change. The direct influence of the first of these narratives on the second remains impossible to calibrate.

Eighteenth-century thought was not Lough's only enthusiasm, nor was it the only area in which his research made a substantial impact. It might even be said that the book for which he is best known is his very influential *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, published in London by Oxford University Press in 1957, some time before his magisterial work on the *Encyclopédie*. Here we see Lough the literary scholar. Yet, it is a very particular sort of literary scholar. His predilection was for theatre, of all literary activities the one most intimately connected to the social and economic fabric of the age by reason of its conditions of production and reception. It was precisely the material context of theatrical performance that interested Lough. The remark he makes in his introduction to the book defines its focus clearly in a way that is apparently defensive, but is in fact supremely confident:

> Such a book may repel and even shock people who prefer to study literary masterpieces in a complete vacuum and are content to register the impact which great plays make on their refined sensibility without ever wishing to know anything about the vulgar details of the conditions under which they were first produced.

Lough was essentially a historian, rather than a literary critic. He enjoyed working at the interface between the history of literature and social history, and as far as French theatrical history was concerned, his perspective and his methodology were unusual. Previous literary scholars had occasionally gestured in the direction of the importance of the audience in the history of dramatic production, but Lough pursued the topic much further. Delving into the archives of Paris theatres and companies of players, reconstructing the precise arrangements of auditoria and theatrical spaces, examining expense accounts for payments and receipts, he vividly recreated the experience of actors, theatre managers and theatre-

goers. Basing his conclusions about the social composition of the play-going public on a very accurate reading of documentary evidence, he provided a chapter of French social history that had not been written before. The enormously detailed information he assembled with admirable clarity has constituted a crucial point of reference in the field over many years.

In 1978, Lough returned to the social history of literary production with a very ambitious book that had been in gestation over many years. This was his *Writer and Public in France: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, published by Oxford University Press. The chronological scope, as the title indicates, is vast, perhaps a little too vast for someone whose expertise had been neither in the Middle Ages nor in the present day. The range of material is also vast. Lough includes all kinds of non-technical authorship, touching on newspapers and 'popular' literature, as well as poets, novelists and playwrights. It is a book about the material conditions of the production and consumption of books. Lough is most at home with statistics, account-books, legal material, the correspondence of writers, publishers and informed observers, with documentary evidence of all sorts. He uses it to investigate topics that have risen high on the scholarly agenda since he published this work and since the History of the Book became a burgeoning discipline. Issues of patronage, the relationship between authors and publishers, authorial rights, print-runs, sale of books, income from writing, literacy, censorship, and many more are recurrent themes. Yet, this book has not had the impact of Lough's previous work on Paris theatre audiences and the *Encyclopédie*. It could be that Lough's social history of authorship was ahead of its time in its subject matter, but when the academic community caught up with it, the narrative mode of Lough's 'marxist' history of writing gave the illusion that it was already dated.[10]

When Lough retired from the Chair of French at Durham in 1978, his standing in the world of scholarship, both in the United Kingdom and in France, had been ratified by the honours accorded him. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1975. Prior to that, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Clermont-Ferrand in 1967, followed by an honorary D.Litt. at the University of Newcastle in 1972, and he was made an Officier de l'Ordre National du Mérite in 1973. Those

[10] It did have a certain success in France, however, translated into French by A. Tadié and published at Paris as *L'Ecrivain et son public* in 1987.

honours were undoubtedly, and very properly, given him for the very substantial advances in knowledge he made by his research.

That was not, however, the whole story. Lough was a good teacher. His style was certainly not charismatic and one did not go to his lectures for histrionics or even for a display of rhetorical panache. But one of his more able students voiced the opinion of many when he said that 'one quickly learnt just how worthwhile it was to listen to what he had to say in lectures, and to be tutored by him was a joy'. Two of his research students counted themselves fortunate to work with him as departmental colleagues at Durham. What set Lough apart from the ordinary university teacher was his lifelong commitment to fostering the study of French language and literature in schools. Together with his wife, Muriel, he edited a collection of passages extracted from twentieth-century French authors for translation into English, and, with his former Head of Department at Aberdeen, he produced a companion volume of passages from modern British prose authors to be translated into French. The latter contains nearly one hundred pages of 'hints on translation into French', which is as good a synopsis of French grammar, syntax, and usage as one could hope to find.[11] The target audience was sixth-formers and undergraduates, and both books were very extensively used. The modern university teacher of French would regard them with amazement, both on account of the choice of extracts (severely limited to authors from within the intellectual élite), and because of Lough's total commitment to written translation as the ideal medium for foreign language acquisition. Since the 1960s, when these books were in current use, there has been a revolution in foreign language teaching that has ousted translation from the pre-eminent place it once had in the school and in the university curriculum. It is very doubtful whether the average undergraduate at Finals level could in these days make a passable attempt at rendering Trollope, Trevor-Roper, Iris Murdoch or Elizabeth Bowen into accurate and stylish French. Lough's students could, and most of them enjoyed doing it. Whether it was the most effective way of producing people who could think in contemporary French and use its whole range of discourse is another matter. The truly undoubted successes of Lough's pedagogical activity were the bridges he constructed whereby generations of sixth-formers made the crossing to a sophisticated comprehension of

[11] F. C. Roe and J. Lough (eds.), *French Prose Composition: Two Hundred English Passages Selected, with an Introduction* (London, 1963).

the historical study of literature in its political, economic and social context. These were his introductions to seventeenth-century France, to eighteenth-century France, standard reading for the pre-university student (and the undergraduate) for many years, and somewhat later, co-authored with his wife, a parallel introduction to nineteenth-century France.[12] They are extremely readable, packed with information, and accompanied by well chosen illustrations. The books were 'introductory', in that they assumed no prior knowledge, but they did not talk down to the young reader. For many, they were a first, exciting taste of social history and an initiation into the discipline of scholarly inquiry, its use of documentary evidence, and its style of exposition.

Lough's commitment to education was certainly motivated by his conviction that the study of cultural manifestations at any level of the curriculum should be historically grounded and by a concern to propagate his 'sceptical marxist' approach to students at a formative age. It is possible that it was also symptomatic of the left-leaning political stance of a man who had seen at first hand the educational disadvantage of the North East. The conditions of modern academic employment preclude such extramural endeavours. Lough's very real achievements here stand perhaps as a reminder of a duty we do not fulfil. Nevertheless, his introductions to the social, economic and cultural history of France belong to a period when foreign-language teaching in schools took history and literature seriously, and that period is no more. Lough himself, near the end of his life, concluded that the standpoint from which his most scholarly books were written was 'not exactly fashionable today', though these are the words of one who had little regard for fashion. It is true that they are devoid of theory, are oblivious to feminist concerns, and exhibit a concept of history that squares ill with the new historicism. Lough's history is a unilinear narrative, his instincts are always to impose synthesis, his witnesses are quoted with the unstated assumption that they are utterly transparent, and 'facts' are readily recognisable and unassailable. And yet, though the style and methodology are so different, the substance of Lough's work is at the heart of current interests in the social and material history of culture. Cultural materialism of any kind must start with

[12] *An Introduction to Seventeenth Century France* (London, 1954), reissued every second or third year for many years; *An Introduction to Eighteenth Century France* (London, 1960); (with Muriel Lough) *An Introduction to Nineteenth Century France* (London, 1978). A related book, *Seventeenth-Century French Drama: the Background*, was published by Oxford in 1979.

accumulated information. Lough's work stands as a depository of such information and it is a rich resource.

John Lough lived in retirement in Durham until his death on 13 July 2000. He continued his scholarly work almost until the end of his life. The memory of this elderly man making his daily trips to the library now constitutes a Durham legend.

ANN MOSS
Fellow of the Academy

Note. I am grateful to John Lough's daughter, Dr Judith Wale, for reading this memoir and contributing to it.