

Salve Regina University

Digital Commons @ Salve Regina

Faculty and Staff - Articles & Papers

Faculty and Staff

7-1971

George Combe, a portrait of a heretofore generally unknown behaviorist

Anthony A. Walsh

Salve Regina University, walsh@salve.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/fac_staff_pub



Part of the [History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Walsh, Anthony A., "George Combe, a portrait of a heretofore generally unknown behaviorist" (1971).
Faculty and Staff - Articles & Papers. 37.

https://digitalcommons.salve.edu/fac_staff_pub/37

Rights Statement



In Copyright - Educational Use Permitted. URI: <http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC-EDU/1.0/>

This Item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this Item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. In addition, no permission is required from the rights-holder(s) for educational uses. For other uses, you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



GEORGE COMBE: A PORTRAIT OF A HERETOFORE GENERALLY UNKNOWN BEHAVIORIST*

ANTHONY A. WALSH

University of New Hampshire

In June, 1828 a book was published the title and author of which few contemporary psychologists would recognize. The work was entitled *The Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects*—a work which was destined to have fortunes bequeathed in order that it might be made available to all,¹ a work which would be found on 19th Century shelves where only the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress* could be found,² a work which would be translated into at least six foreign languages, produced in an edition especially for the blind by Samuel Gridley Howe,³ sell at least 300,000 copies by 1854, and, according to many, immortalize its author and hand his name down to posterity with honor and lasting fame. The work was not the only—and, perhaps, was not the most important—contribution given to the world of ideas by its author, but it most certainly indicates the scope of his influence. The man was a psychologist, a philosopher, and a liberal reformer. The man was George Combe (1788-1858).

George Combe was born October 21, 1788 at Livingston's Yards, a locality within the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. His parents, George and Marion, were not well educated; however, his father was able to provide a modest income as a brewer and to house—however tightly quartered—George and his twelve brothers and sisters. Their residence, while not atypical within the "middle ranks" of Scottish Society at the time, was described by Combe as being totally unhealthy, ". . . the laws of health, depending on ventilation, ablution, and exercise . . ."⁴ being totally unknown. Scotland during this period was strictly Calvinistic and Combe's parents were strict adherents to its tenets. They

. . . believed, and taught their children to conceive, that the baleful effects of bad sewerage and overcrowded sleeping-closets were attributable, not to their own ignorance of sanitary laws, but to the primeval curse, as explained in the *Shorter Catechism* of the Kirk.⁵

The early years were important ones for Combe. Later in life, he would attribute his frail constitution to the environment into which he was born. In regard to his

*Paper read at the 78th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association September 3, 1970, Miami Beach, Florida.

¹Combe, George, *The Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 20th American Ed., 1854, v, vi).

²Morley, J., *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London: Macmillan, 1908, Vol. 1, 102); Mackay, C. *Forty Years Recollections* (London: Chapman, 1877, Vol. II, 245); Martineau, H. *Biographical Sketches* (London: Macmillan, 4th Ed., 1876, 273). According to Martineau, ". . . there can be no doubt that the effect of the work, as a whole, on the health, morality, and intellectual cultivation of the people, has been something memorable."

³Gibbon, C. *The Life of George Combe* (London: Macmillan, 1878, Vol. II, 358).

⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 2.

⁵Crombie, B. W. *Modern Athenians* (Edinburgh: Black, 1882, 162).

Calvinist upbringing, he would grow to find its tenets more and more repugnant, particularly in regard to the fatalism inherent in its doctrines. In time, he would be accused of atheism, infidelity, and deism,⁶ in addition to being labelled a materialist—the latter charge directed at his objectivist, albeit phrenological, interpretation of human behavior. There was still a third influence during his formative years which was instrumental in shaping his intellectual development. This third directing force was his formal education.

Combe had been born with a practical mind, one which sought for the utility of ideas or objects.

A strange, thoughtful child, seeking reasons for everything, and dissatisfied until they were found . . . [he was to grow] into an earnest man, fervid in all his thoughts and acts.⁷

His early education was a painful experience for him, and he found it to be totally bewildering. Commenting on these early years he stated

In all this mental perplexity no explanation of anything was given me. In the school the teaching was mechanical . . . and not a word was uttered about the relation of the lessons to any purpose of utility . . . In the church nothing was taught but the Calvinistic dogmas, and all manner of glosses of Scripture in support of them. In the domestic circle there was no knowledge to be communicated. My mind, therefore, was in a state of chaos.⁸

Combe began his education in St. Cuthbert's Parish Church at about the age of six. Attending thereafter several private schools—at all of which Combe admits he was not a good student—he was prepared in the year 1797 to enter the High School at Edinburgh. This latter experience was seen by Combe as the worst. The rote memorization of Latin passages required of all bored him, and the disciplinary beatings which were given those who failed their lessons shocked him. He completed his studies there in 1802, and, in October of that year was sent to study Geography and Mathematics under Robert Darling. The following month he entered the Humanities class at the University of Edinburgh.

It was during the years 1802-1803 that Combe first became conscious of feelings which he felt characterized and exercised a great influence over his later life, viz., “. . . the desire to obtain distinction by doing good.”⁹ He was experiencing many self doubts, however, particularly since he felt ill-prepared to enter any trade or profession. “In bed,” he stated, “I used to shed tears of sorrow and disappointment on contemplating the apparent impossibility of this wish [to obtain distinction by doing good] ever being gratified.”¹⁰ It was not until he ended his formal education in 1804, however, that he had to make a choice regarding a career. During that year, after an unsuccessful attempt to gain an apprenticeship in the woolen business, and, with some assistance, he was able to obtain an apprenticeship in a law firm

⁶cf., e.g., “Mr. George Combe and the Philosophy of Phrenology,” *Fraser's Magazine*, 1840, 22: 509-520.

⁷Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, xii.

⁸*Ibid.*, 43-44.

⁹*Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

wherein he was to be trained as a Writer to the Signet.¹¹ He was sixteen at this time and was twenty-two when his apprenticeship was completed in 1810. The self-doubts which Combe had experienced in 1802-1803 apparently subsided in 1811. During this year he began to keep a diary and among the early entries is found the following:

A desire of fame may be one mark of a mind that deserves it. I have taken the imagination that I have the powers of mind sufficient to write some useful book on human nature, and especially on the education and intellectual state of the middle ranks of society.¹²

Passing his law examinations in 1812, Combe set up "writing chambers"¹³ in Bank Street, Edinburgh and his younger brother, Andrew—who was later to distinguish himself in the field of medicine—, resided with him.

During the period from 1812-1815 Combe's law practice continued successfully, although his altruistic and literary needs were not being fulfilled. He had need of forming a philosophy—or, having one thrust upon him—which would allow him to deal with the problems of human nature which intrigued him, and thereby allow him to deal more effectively with what he perceived to be the deplorable state of mankind. He was first drawn to the philosophy of Dugald Stewart.

In no house in Edinburgh or elsewhere [wrote Harriet Martineau] could Dugald Stewart have then found more devoted disciples—more ardent admirers of his so-called Philosophy of Mind [than George and Andrew Combe]. . . . [As a] matter-of-fact George seems to have been lifted nearer to poetry by his attendance on Dugald Stewart's lectures than at any subsequent period of his life. His conscience was kept quiet by the lecturer's assurance that his Philosophy was founded on the inductive method; and as long as George believed this he was satisfied, though at times surprised to find that this Philosophy did not seem to be applicable to any purpose but delighting hearers and readers.¹⁴

Early in 1815, Johann Christoph Spurzheim (1776-1832)—the major disciple of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828)—published for the first time in English an account of the physiognomical system he had been devising with Gall since the beginning of the century.¹⁵ In the 49th Number of the *Edinburgh Review* for June of that year, Dr. John Gordon recommenced animadversions upon their system which he had

¹¹"*Writers to the Signet*, in Scotland, a society of law agents corresponding to solicitors in England. They were originally clerks in the secretary of state's office and prepared the different writings passing the signet; every summons is still signed on its last page by a writer to the signet. By the Titles to Land Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1868, they have the exclusive privilege of preparing all crown writs, charters, precepts, &c, from the sovereign or the prince of Scotland. They have no charter but are usually considered a corporation by long custom; they have office-bearers and are members of the College of Justice. On the Act of Union there was much debate as to whether writers to the signet should be eligible to the Scottish bench. It was finally decided that they should be eligible after ten years' practice. But, with the exception of Hamilton of Pencaitland in 1712, no writer to the signet has ever had a seat on the bench." *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Cambridge, England: Univ. Press, 1911, 11th ed., Vol. XXVIII, 851).

¹²Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 73.

¹³Crombie, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴Martineau, *op. cit.*, 267.

¹⁵cf. Spurzheim, J. G. *The Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim; Founded on an Anatomical and Physiological examination of the Nervous System in General, and of the Brain in Particular, and Indicating the Dispositions and Manifestations of the Mind* (London: Baldwin, 1815).



"A desire of fame may be one mark of a mind that deserves it."

begun in 1803.¹⁶ The animadversions were presented in the form of a review of their works, the author claiming that

The writings of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, have not added one fact to the stock of our knowledge, . . . but consist of such a mixture of gross errors, extravagant absurdities, [etc.] . . . as can leave no doubt . . . in the minds of honest and intelligent men, as to the real ignorance, the real hypocrisy, and the real empiricism of the authors.¹⁷

¹⁶[Gordon, J.]. [A Review of] "A Letter from Charles Villers to Georges Cuvier, member of the National Institute of France, on a new theory of the Brain, as the Immediate Organ of the Intellectual and Moral Faculties; by Dr. Gall of Vienna, Metz, 1802," *Edinburgh Review*, [April, 1803], 1808, 2: 147-160.

¹⁷[Gordon, J.]. [A Review of] "*Anatomie et Physiologie du système Nerveux en général, et du cerveau en particulier*; Par F. J. Gall & G. Spurzheim . . . Paris, 1810 [&] *The Physilogonomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, &c.*, London, 1815," *Edinburgh Review*, 1815, 25: 227-268 [268].

Combe's attention was first drawn to phrenology through contact with Gordon's review, and in the beginning he regarded phrenology negatively. According to Combe

Led away by the boldness of that piece of criticism, I regarded the system as contemptibly absurd, and the authors of it as the most disingenuous of men.¹⁸ [At this time] . . . I regarded . . . [phrenology's] founders as charlatans.¹⁹

During the year following the appearance of Gordon's review, Combe paid no attention to phrenology, the doctrines of which were to determine all his later thinking. His conversion to phrenology was in fact fortuitous. Through the influence of a friend, James Brownlee, Combe attended a dissection of a brain by Spurzheim. Combe was impressed with Spurzheim and with his method of dissection, and, so impressed was he with Spurzheim's refutation of Dr. Gordon's assertions that he became converted almost at once. He immediately gathered casts of brains and skulls in his apartments and studied them assiduously, and, to his surprise, the doctrines of Gall and Spurzheim began to fit together. He remained in constant communication with Spurzheim during the early years of his study and in 1817 published his first article on the subject. The article, an "Explanation of the Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim," appeared in *The Scots Magazine* for April of that year.²⁰ After spending time in France in the company of Spurzheim, Combe began in 1818 a series of essays on phrenology which he published in the *Literary and Statistical Magazine*. Apprehensions which he had formerly felt in associating his name with phrenology's controversial doctrines subsided at this time and toward the close of 1818 "phrenology . . . gained many new disciples through . . . [his] steady advocacy of its principles."²¹ Formerly he had seen himself as a "student" of the new science, he now came forward as its "apostle." He resolved to republish his "Essays" from the *Literary and Statistical Magazine* and brought them out in an opus entitled *Essays on Phrenology, or an Inquiry into the Principles and Utility of the System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, and into the Objections Made Against it*.²² This work was later republished in this country by Dr. John Bell of Philadelphia who dedicated it to the famous physician Dr. Philip Syng Physick.²³ The latter American edition appears to be the first publication in favor of phrenology published in this country.²⁴ On February 22, 1820, with his brother Andrew and several interested friends, Combe founded the first Phrenological Society.²⁵ In December, 1823, he founded the first Phrenological Journal,²⁶ and in

¹⁸Combe, G. *Essays on Phrenology, or An Inquiry into the Principles and Utility of the System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, and Into the Objections Made Against it* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1822, iv).

¹⁹Combe, G. *Lectures on Phrenology . . . Including its Application to the Present and Prospective Condition of the United States* (New York: Kearny, 1846, 92).

²⁰Combe, G. "Explanation of the Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim," *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, 1817, 79: 242-250.

²¹Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 114.

²²Combe, G. *Essays on Phrenology, or An Inquiry into the Principles and Utility of the System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, and Into the Objections Made Against it* (London: Longman, 1819).

²³cf. Footnote No. 18 above.

²⁴Boardman, Andrew. "Introductory Remarks," in No. 19 Above, 78.

²⁵Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 129.

²⁶*Ibid.*

1825, revised his book *Essays on Phrenology, etc.* republishing it under the title *A System of Phrenology*.²⁷ In this same year Combe

. . . was tending towards his most hazardous speculations, . . . The religious doubts which had germinated in his mind as a child began to take definite form, and, through phrenology, to lead to definite conclusions. The problem which he desired to solve was the reconciliation of Divine grace with the condition of man.²⁸

In 1824, Combe had received a manuscript from Spurzheim—later published under the title *A Sketch of the Natural Laws of Man*.²⁹ This work gave Combe his first ideas concerning the “natural laws” and man’s relationship with them. The image of man in Calvinist Scotland at the time, as was previously alluded to, was far from optimistic. To concern oneself with the material corporeal nature of man—such as did phrenology—or to advocate a philosophy which contended that man had control over his ephemeral terrestrial life—a philosophy which grew out of phrenology—would result in accusations of “materialism,” or “deism,” tantamount to out-and-out atheism. Man’s condition since the fall of Adam was seen as unalterable and it was his lot to suffer through this life and tolerate its trials. The optimism and so-called “materialism” brought on this scene by the phrenologists was not, to say the least, too well received.

The first public statements Combe made regarding his ideas on the constitution of man and his relationship to the natural laws were contained in an essay read before the Phrenological Society at Edinburgh on February 2, 1826. It was entitled “Human Responsibility as Affected by Phrenology,” and was received with mixed reactions. He was requested by some hearers to publish it, while others accused him of infidelity and begged him not to circulate it. Convinced of its importance, however, he continued to work on his *magnum opus* on the constitution of man presenting additional ideas in a series of lectures delivered in the winter of 1826-1827. Printing only a few copies of these lectures for private circulation, he was surprised and somewhat chagrined when an 81 page pamphlet, authored by William Scott, appeared attacking his views. Combe replied with a second pamphlet citing as his authorities Dugald Stewart, Montesquieu, Blackstone, Paley and others.³⁰ Scott published a rebuttal, but Combe did not again reply; and, the first edition of *The Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* appeared in 1828 (Edinburgh: Anderson), proving to be one of the most controversial and one of the most widely distributed books of the period (cf. Footnote #2).

In reading *The Constitution of Man, etc.*, one is immediately struck with the contemporariness of the ideas contained therein. One is equally amazed with Combe’s foresight. In reading it today, however, one has to consider that the doctrines of phrenology, upon which it is based, were considered at the time to be both philosophically and psychologically sound by many intelligent men, and therefore, to consider its merits in the light of the period. It is easy to understand why this

²⁷Combe, G. *A System of Phrenology* (Edinburgh: Anderson, 1825).

²⁸Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 180.

²⁹Spurzheim, G. *A Sketch of the Natural Laws of Man* (London: Childs, 1825).

³⁰Gibbon, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 186; cf. also Grant, A. C. “Combe on Phrenology and Free Will: A Note on XIXth Century Secularism,” *J. Hist. Ideas*, 1965, 26: 141-147.

work was at the same time lauded and condemned. As an inspirational work advocating reform during a period when reform movements were ubiquitous, it could be easily grasped by the average man. As a work which denied to a certain extent Divine intervention in worldly happenings, it was condemned as an expression of infidelity.

[In *The Constitution of Man, etc.*, Combe's object was to] . . . exhibit several of the most important natural laws, and their relations and consequences, with a view to the improvement of education and the regulation of individual and national conduct.³¹

The natural laws include—for Combe—the physical, which govern the whole material system of the universe, the organic, which govern organic beings, and the moral, laws which are necessary to maintain social harmony. Infringement of any one of these laws is liable to bring either immediate or eventual destruction of the individual or the group. Combe argues that the social ills prevalent during the day, disease, war, political upheaval, economic problems, crime, mental illness, etc. were all attributable to ignorance and disobedience of the natural laws, and were, therefore, not attributable to Divine intervention. Obedience to the natural laws, for Combe, would result in the individual's feeling sensations of pleasure. This behavior, when learned, would be continued. Disobedience to these laws results in pain and suffering, and behavior associated with this, logically, should discontinue. Since man does not know the natural laws innately, he has to be brought by means of education out of ignorance and into harmony with his world. Combe's objective non-introspectionist methods, his emphasis on education and external control of instinctive (reflexive) behavior, and his belief that human behavior—although subject at first to laws of individual differences—was amenable to change, places Combe—along with other phrenologists—as an anticipator of 20th Century Behaviorism. As Bakan has recently stated:

[Phrenology] . . . manifested an inordinate optimism in connection with the possibilities of change through education and the modification of the environment, very similar to the optimism which was later to be displayed by John B. Watson.³²

In 1831 Combe met Cecilia Siddons, daughter of the famous actress Sarah Kemble Siddons, and two years later on the 25th of September, 1833 they were married. During the years since 1812 Combe had continued his law practice and it was not until 1836 that he gave it up to devote full time to phrenology and educational reform.³³ Since Spurzheim's death in 1832—Gall had died four years earlier—Combe had inherited the mantle of phrenological fame and was now seen by the phrenological world as its leader. In 1836 the Chair of Logic at Edinburgh University was vacated and Combe—although not anticipating success—declared himself a candidate. He proceeded to gather about 100 testimonials from all over the

³¹Combe, G. *The Constitution of Man, etc., op. cit.*, viii.

³²Bakan, D. "The Influence of Phrenology on American Psychology," *J. Hist. Behav. Sci.*, 1966, 2: 200-220 [213].

³³Price, A. "A Pioneer of Scientific Education: George Combe (1788-1858)," *Educational Rev.*, 1960, 12: 219-229 [220].

globe, printed and circulated them extensively, but was defeated—as he had anticipated—by his illustrious competitor Sir William Hamilton.³⁴ Early in 1838 he resolved to visit the United States, and fulfilled this resolve arriving here in September of the same year. He lectured extensively in the Northeast, keeping company with such notables as Samuel Gridley Howe, Horace Mann, Daniel Webster, George Bancroft, George Ticknor, and William Ellery Channing. After about a three year stay he returned to England. The remaining years of Combe's life were spent writing, working on educational reform, traveling and lecturing in Europe, and continuing his phrenological inquiries. His last days were spent attempting to complete his autobiography. At the water-cure establishment of a friend, Dr. Lane, of Moor Park, Surrey, after an attack of pleurisy, he died on February 19, 1858.

Combe's influence on 19th Century thought was far reaching, and, Harriet Martineau saw him as the "greatest benefactor of his generation."³⁵ Stewart and McCann considered him to be the "father figure" of the Scottish progressive education movement which reached its height in the 1830's and 1840's. In this latter area, which might loosely be considered 19th Century educational psychology, Combe was to influence Herbert Spencer, T. H. Huxley, M. Arnold, and Barbara Bodichon to name a few.³⁶ In this country his influence was equally far reaching. Horace Mann, for example, considered to be one of America's greatest educational reformers—a man who, with Dorothea Dix, was influential in improving the conditions and treatment of the insane³⁷ and founded the first Normal school in 1839—was totally indebted to Combe for his philosophy. According to Compayré, Mann, being unable to form his own philosophy had to borrow one—and this he did from George Combe.³⁸ In a letter to Combe, whom Mann saw ". . . on the whole [as] . . . the completest philosopher [he had] . . . ever known . . .",³⁹ Mann stated his indebtedness succinctly:

There is no man of whom I think so often; there is no man of whom I write so often; there is no man who has done me so much good as you have. I see many of the most valuable truths as I never should have seen them but for you, and all truths better than I should otherwise have done.⁴⁰

Although Mann did not become a practicing phrenologist *per se*, he did adopt completely the moral bearings of the science particularly as expounded by Combe. His sixth annual report as Secretary of the Board of Education for Massachusetts, in particular, reads very much like *The Constitution of Man*.⁴¹ He felt that

³⁴cf. Grant, A. C. "George Combe and the 1836 Election for the Edinburgh University Chair of Logic," *Book Old Edinburgh Club*, 1966, 32: 174-184.

³⁵Martineau, H. "Pestalozzi: The Combes; Rowland Hill," *Littell's Magazine*, 1861, 70: 22-29.

³⁶Price, *loc. cit.*, and Stewart, W. A. C. & McCann, W. P. *The Educational Innovators: 1750-1880* (New York: St. Martin's, 1967, *passim*).

³⁷Caplan, R. B. *Psychiatry and the Community in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Basic Books, 1969, *passim*).

³⁸Compayré, Gabriel. *Horace Mann and The Public School in the United States* (New York: Crowell, 1907, 74).

³⁹*Life of Horace Mann. By His Wife* (Boston: Walker, 1865, 116).

⁴⁰Hinsdale, B. A. *Horace Mann and the Common School Revival in the United States* (London: Heinemann, 1898, 95); According to Hubbell, Mann was one of this country's first "physiological psychologists," cf. Hubbell, G. A. *Horace Mann: Educator, Patriot and Reformer* (Philadelphia: Fell, 1910, 239).

⁴¹Mann, H. *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts for the Years 1839-1844* (Boston: Lee, 1891, 129-229).

The principles of Phrenology lie at the bottom of all sound mental philosophy, and all sciences depending upon the science of Mind; and all of sound theology too.⁴²

Mann was instrumental in having Combe's *The Constitution of Man*, etc. established as a text in the Massachusetts Public School System; but, his ultimate expression of approval was in his naming a son George Combe Mann.⁴³

A second man who was indebted to Combe was the illustrious founder of the Perkins Institution for the Blind (Boston), Samuel Gridley Howe. Howe was a convinced phrenologist,⁴⁴ used its tenets in developing methods to educate the blind and the retarded, and had told Combe that

Before I knew phrenology . . . I was groping my way in the dark as blind as my pupils; I derived very little satisfaction from my labors, and fear that I gave little to others . . .⁴⁵

To this list the names Robert Chambers—anonymous author of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*—,⁴⁶ Alfred Russel Wallace,⁴⁷ Charles Caldwell—who, although famous in medicine, came to be known as the “American Spurzheim”—,⁴⁸ Benjamin Silliman,⁴⁹ many founders of the American Psychiatric Association,⁵⁰ the famous economist and statesman Richard Cobden,⁵¹ and George Eliot—who was to influence George Henry Lewes—⁵² may be added. Ralph Waldo Emerson felt that *The Constitution of Man* was “. . . the best sermon [he had] . . . read for some time . . .”⁵³ while the names of Walt Whitman,⁵⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes,⁵⁵ Edgar Allen Poe,⁵⁶ William Ellery Channing,⁵⁷ Henry Ward Beecher⁵⁸—to name a few—may be added as having been directly or indirectly influenced. The complete list of personages influenced by this man is yet to be determined. Suffice it to say that he is

⁴²“Letter from Honorable Horace Mann,” *American Phrenological Journal*, 1853, 17: 99, as quoted in A. Wrobel, *Walt Whitman and the Fowler Brothers: Phrenology Finds a Bard* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: Univ. of N. C., 1968, 7) [Unpubld. Ph.d. Dissertation].

⁴³*Life of Horace Mann. By His Wife, op. cit.*, 245.

⁴⁴cf. Schwartz, H. “Samuel Gridley Howe as Phrenologist,” *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 1951-1952, 57: 644-651.

⁴⁵Combe, G. *Notes on the United States of North America During a Phrenological Visit in 1838-9-40* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1841, Vol. II, 204).

⁴⁶[Chambers, R.], *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (New York: Wiley, 1845).

⁴⁷Wallace, A. R. *The Wonderful Century* (New York: Dodd, 1898, 159-193).

⁴⁸cf. Davies, J. D., *Phrenology Fad and Science: A 19th Century American Crusade* (New Haven: Yale, 1955, 13).

⁴⁹Combe, G. *Notes on the United States, etc., op. cit.*, Vol. II, 276, 396.

⁵⁰Carlson, E. T. “The Influence of Phrenology on Early American Psychiatric Thought,” *Amer. J. Psychiat.*, 1958, 115: 535-538.

⁵¹Morley, J., *op. cit.*, 101 & *passim*.

⁵²cf. Haight, G. S., *George Eliot: A Biography* (New York: Oxford, 1968, *passim*).

⁵³Rusk, R. L. *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Columbia, 1939, Vol. I, 291).

⁵⁴Wrobel, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 50-53; E. M. Tilton, *Amiable Autocrat: A Biography of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes* (New York: Schuman, 1947, 74 & *passim*); & H. O. Lokensgard, “Oliver Wendell Holmes's Phrenological Character,” *New England Quarterly*, 1940, 13: 711-718.

⁵⁶Wrobel, *op. cit.*, 53-58; & E. Hungerford, “Poe and Phrenology,” *Amer. Literature*, 1930-1931, 2: 209-231.

⁵⁷Gibbon, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. II, 360.

deserving of greater attention than he has heretofore received. That he will receive this attention is yet to be decided.

Combe was diagnosed phrenologically as being of the nervous-bilious temperament with the intellectual and moral regions of his cerebrum predominating. His outstanding phrenological faculties were said to be "Benevolence," "Self-esteem," and "Love of Approbation." He was deficient, comparatively speaking, in his phrenological organ of "Veneration." Large "Benevolence" was used to account for his altruism and life-long devotion to the improvement of his fellow man, while his desire for fame and love of independence were accounted for by "Love of Approbation" and "Self-esteem" respectively. "Veneration," the organ which was to give origin to religious adoration, being comparatively small, played an obvious role in his life style. Large "Love of Approbation" was reflected in yet another aspect of Combe's behavior throughout his life. Having a sense of history, and, perhaps, needs for immortality, induced Combe to maintain exhaustive records of his work. According to his chief biographer, a

Profound faith in the importance of phrenology and in the philosophical and educational theories he evolved from it,—induced Mr. Combe to preserve all letters addressed to him in relation to these subjects. He made no selection, but preserved with equal care those containing praise and those containing blame. From 1820 he kept copies of all his own letters; these occupy eleven large quarto volumes of 700 to 800 pages each, and six smaller volumes which he used when travelling. In addition, he left thirty journals, in which he recorded the chief events of his life, the ideas that occurred to him for use in his works, and, occasionally, extracts from the books he read which had any bearing on the subjects of his thought.⁵⁹

The denial by many modern psychologists of phrenology's importance to the development of modern psychology and their relative ignorance of Combe's contributions is unfortunate. In 1898 A. R. Wallace wrote that

In the coming century phrenology will assuredly attain general acceptance. It will prove itself to be the true science of the mind. . . . its persistent neglect and obloquy during the last sixty years, will be referred to as an example of the almost incredible narrowness and prejudice which prevailed among men of science at the very time they were making such splendid advances in other fields of thought and discovery.⁶⁰

History has dealt severely with phrenology and with its followers; and Wallace's optimistic prediction did not find support. With phrenology, we should recall that

We too often forget that not only is there a soul of goodness in things evil, but very generally also a soul of truth in things erroneous. [Herbert Spencer]

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, Vol. I, ix.

⁶⁰Wallace, *op. cit.*, 193.