

**The
Victorian Studies Association
Newsletter**



Ontario, Canada.

THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

This is the last issue of the Newsletter to be edited by Jane Millgate, who will be on sabbatical leave in 1974-75. The executive of the Association has asked W.J. Keith (University College, Toronto) to take over as editor, and the retiring editor hopes very much that members will give him the same generous support that she has received since first taking over the editorship in 1969. The best form such support can take is, of course, the sending of items for the Newsletter--information about local events of Victorian interest, news of members, submissions for the Victorian Notes section--since the Newsletter depends for its continuing life upon the willingness of individual members to keep it supplied with the items other members find interesting to read.

The retiring editor would like to express her own and the Association's warmest thanks to Mrs E. MacGregor and Mrs V. Waugh of Victoria College, who have been responsible for the production of the Newsletter during the last four and a half years.

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REPORTS OF CONFERENCES

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

We were unable to include in our last issue summaries of the papers given at the April 1973 Conference but we now give below a report of Michael Collie's paper on Gissing. We hope to resume our usual practice of including such summaries in the Autumn issue immediately following the conference.

Michael Collie, "Psychology and the Naturalist Novel."

Professor Collie offered his paper as a set of reflections on the connection between psychological ideas current in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and problems of motivation peculiar to the Naturalist novel.

On the one hand, it was suggested that, between the predominantly moral and social world view of a mid-Victorian novelist like George Eliot and the predominantly psychological attitude to human beings manifest in twentieth-century novelists like Lawrence, there was a period in which purely mechanistic ideas of human behaviour enjoyed currency. Henry Maudsley, doctor, physiologist, editor, author and propagandist, was taken as a distinguished example of those late Victorians who were not only pre-occupied with neurological explanations of how a human being worked, but also used neurological ideas to combat the moral and religious attitudes they felt ought to be discarded. If eccentric or atypical behaviour, albeit labelled insanity, could be explained or even described in neurological terms, the concept of sin was hardly needed. If a man's nervous system was inherited, notions of moral responsibility had to be modified. In fact, it was argued that a much more humane attitude to eccentric behaviour could be adopted if what a man did was not wholly his own fault. Thus from Maudsley's point of view, mechanistic descriptions of behaviour, even behaviour that was morbid in the pathological sense, were more civilized as well as more

accurate than moral classifications. Yet he stopped short at that point; Freudian or post-Freudian explanations of Maudsley's clinical observations were quite simply beyond his reach.

On the other hand, the Naturalist novelist, pre-occupied with the contemporary surface detail of life as it could be observed and more interested in how people actually behaved than in how they should behave, needed a theory of human motivation that could also accommodate both his sense of the pressure of environment on individuals and his close knowledge of new urban conditions.

It happened that Gissing knew Maudsley's work and was fully aware of the theoretical questions referred to here. Well-read in Continental literature, well-travelled, and almost aggressively the novelist of the contemporary urban scene, Gissing in his early work had difficulty with the construction of plots, because where environment was dominant individual will seemed insufficient as a motivating force. Individuality did not count for much if you had to resign yourself to your predicament. In at least two novels, therefore (Thyrza and The Nether World), Gissing adopted Maudsley's scheme of things as a framework in which a-typical behaviour could be described without the attribution of moral attitudes in fact not held by the population of closed societies in the new cities. More precisely the paper was an explanation, by reference to Maudsley, of why Gissing treated as he did the characters of Thyrza Trent in Thyrza and Clara Hewett in The Nether World.

Finally, it was suggested that Naturalism in its pure form could only survive for as long as mechanistic ideas like those held by Maudsley prevailed. Further developments in both sociology and psychology at the turn of the century effectively put an end to such simple accounts of behaviour. (M.J.C.)

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

The Association's annual conference will be held as usual on the Glendon College Campus of York University (2275 Bayview Avenue, Toronto) on Saturday, 6 April 1974. The chief speakers will be Morse Peckham (Distinguished Professor of English, University of South Carolina), on "Cultural History: Romanticism and Behaviour," and Trevor Lloyd (Professor of History, University of Toronto) on "William Morris and the Utopian Novel"; the sessions will be chaired by Barry Gough (Professor of History, Sir Wilfred Laurier) and William Coles (Professor of English, University of Michigan). The Conference will provide the occasion for the Association's annual meeting, and there may be additional short items or exhibitions as well as the usual opportunities for more informal talk over coffee, sherry, lunch, etc.

Members of the Association will automatically receive full details of the conference. Anyone else interested should write or telephone Professor Ann Robson, Department of History, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A1 (928-4056), as soon as possible.

Graduate students who do not wish to pay the conference fee (which includes lunch, refreshments, etc.) are very welcome to attend the conference papers free of charge. Members are asked to draw the conference to the attention of any students who might be interested and to inform them that the Glendon College cafeteria and other facilities will be open on the day of the conference.

Canadian Learned Societies

The annual meetings of the Learned Societies for 1974 will be held on the Victoria College and St Michael's College campuses of the University of Toronto in late May and early June. A number of papers in the English and History meetings will be of Victorian interest, but members may like especially to note a joint meeting of the Canadian Historical Association and the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science to be held on 5 June under the chairmanship of Professor M.P. Winsor (Toronto). The general topic is "Medicine, Science and Society in the Nineteenth Century"; R. French (Science Council, Ottawa) will speak on "Anti-vivisection and Medical Science in Victorian England," C. Limoges (Directeur, Institut D'histoire et de sociopolitique des sciences, Université de Montréal) on "The Community of Naturalists in Nineteenth-Century France and England: Natural History and Natural Theology"; there will also be a panel discussion including the speakers and S. Eisen (York), J. Kornberg (Toronto), and H. Odom (Sir George Williams). Anyone who would like further information about this meeting should write to Professor Trevor Levere, Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A1.

MEETINGS, LECTURES, EXHIBITIONS

Trent University

Deryck Schreuder reports that "Trent has become distinctly Victorian of late" and provides as evidence of this an impressive list of lectures and other activities. Dr Brian Harrison (Corpus Christi College, Oxford) gave a lecture in December on "Moral Reform and State Intervention in the Nineteenth Century" and also spoke to the Champlain Society on "The Mind of the Suffragette." Traill College at Trent has a Nineteenth-century Society and papers given so far this year have included F.A. Hagar (Trent) on "Evangelical Imperialism in India," Alex Brady (Toronto) on "Mill and Ireland,"

and Deryck Schreuder (Trent) on "The Victorians' 'Little Red Book': Smiles and Self-help."

Forthcoming occasions in this same series will include James Neufeld on "Shaw and Musical Criticism" and Bill Jordan with "An Evening of Victorian Voices on Tape."

Toronto Group

Two meetings have been held since the last issue of the Newsletter. On 6 December the group met at the home of Michael and Mabel Laine to hear Lovat Dickson talk about H.G. Wells as Victorian. Members had been reading or re-reading Kipps as the text for the meeting and the lively discussion which followed the paper centred for the most part on this novel, although the speaker's own friendship with Wells and extensive knowledge of publishing also provided an opportunity for much wider-ranging questions and answers. On 26 February, at Albert Tucker's Glendon College residence, Richard Schiefen and David Dooley led a discussion of Newman's Callista and Wiseman's Fabiola: there was considerable disagreement as to the literary merit of the works themselves but, needless to say, this did not at all detract from the interest of the subject or the success of the occasion.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Marcia Allentuck (C.C.N.Y.) spoke on "American Nineteenth-Century Literature of the Graphic Arts" to the American Literature Section of the Modern Language Association at the December 1973 convention. She has recently published "New John Hamilton Mortimer Drawings of Shakespearean Characters" (Burlington Magazine, August 1973) and "Fuseli and Herder's Ideen" (Journal of the History of Ideas, January 1974).

Henry Auster (Toronto) gave a paper on "Autobiography and Fiction: George Eliot in The Mill on the Floss" at the December 1973 Modern Language Association convention.

J.M. Cameron (Toronto) has recently published in the Penguin Classics series an edition (based on the 1845 text) of John Henry Newman's An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.

John Ferns (McMaster) reports that he and Alan Bishop have an article, "'Art in Obedience to Laws': Form and Meaning in Browning's 'Abt Vogler,'" scheduled to appear in Victorian Poetry during 1974.

Phyllis Grosskurth (Toronto) gave a paper on "The Victorian Outsider" at the recent Florida conference on "The Victorian Counter-Culture."

Brian Heeney (Trent) has been awarded an A.C.L.S. Leave Fellowship for 1974-75 for research into the Victorian clergy as a professional service. He will spend the Hilary and Trinity terms of 1975 at Oxford.

W.J. Keith (Toronto) has edited for the University of Toronto Press's "Literature of Canada" series Charles D. Roberts: Selected Poetry and Critical Prose.

H. Lovat Dickson has completed a life of Radclyffe Hall which is to be published this autumn.

Norman H. Mackenzie (Queen's) reports that during an exploration of Hopkins's classics notebooks he came across a short unpublished lecture on Duty which Hopkins had obviously prepared for his Latin students at Stephen's Green, Dublin. The lecture shows the strong influence of Newman (whose effect on Hopkins has recently been called in question) and illuminates the poems and sermons. Professor Mackenzie has edited it for publication, with an introduction and full notes. He has also begun research into the historical facts connected with the capsizing of H.M.S. Eurydice, the

subject of one of Hopkins's longer poems, and has been fortunate in obtaining, after long search, a book on the disaster of which no copies exist in Canadian libraries or in the Library of Congress.

David Shaw (Toronto) has been on sabbatical during 1973-74 and working on a study of Tennyson.

Rupert Schieder (Toronto) spoke on George Eliot and on Victorian fiction generally (as well as on other topics) at lectures given during 1973 at a number of Australian universities, including Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Armidale, and Brisbane.

Deryck Schreuder (Trent) spent the summer of 1973 in Britain and Africa studying, with the aid of a Canada Council Research Grant, the administrative politics of assimilation and segregation in British imperial South Africa, 1828-1910.

Douglas Wertheimer (Toronto) is at present in England working on Philip Henry Gosse and on Edmund Gosse's various biographical treatments of his father. Mr Wertheimer's article, "Some Hardy Notes on Dorset Words and Customs," appeared in Notes and Queries, n.s. 21 (1974):26.

THESES ON VICTORIAN SUBJECTS

McMaster: Recently Completed M.A. Theses

Wendy Cole, "The Search for Self-knowledge in the Three Major Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough."

Manfred Dietrich, "A Re-interpretation of Matthew Arnold's Empedocles on Etna and a Critical Discussion of his 1853 Preface."

Douglas Haggio, "The Technique of Multiguity in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins."

(These theses, all directed by John Ferns, were inadvertently omitted from the previous issue of the Newsletter.)

LIBRARY NEWS

Toronto

Members interested in late Victorian literature are reminded that the University of Toronto Library is making a special effort to build up its English holdings within the period 1880-1920. Authors particularly emphasised include Hardy, Hopkins, Kipling, Moore, Shaw, Stevenson, and Yeats, and during the 1972-73 academic year significant purchases were made of works by Stevenson and by such other figures as Barrie, Belloc, Bennett, Chesterton, Masefield, Symonds, and Wells. During the same year Professor Emeritus Norman Endicott made a gift to the Library of his own excellent Beerbohm collection. Recent accessions of material from earlier in the nineteenth century include small collections of works by Mary Mitford, Leigh Hunt, and Thomas Talfourd. The Newsletter hopes to include in a future issue a description of the large group of Kipling items which has come to the Library as part of the magnificent Fisher collection.

VICTORIAN NOTES

"Hardy's Edition of Barnes--A Report on Work in Progress"

by
W.J. Keith

Although Bernard Jones published his large two-volume edition of The Poetry of William Barnes in 1962, Thomas Hardy's Select Poems, first published in 1908 and several times reprinted, is still widely used and has an additional interest by virtue of its being a tribute from one distinguished Dorset poet to another. It has long been known that Hardy made certain alterations in the poems, but the extent and effects of these changes have not been fully realized. I hope, ultimately, to publish a reasonably detailed account of the complicated story behind the edition; in the meanwhile, however, it may be of interest to indicate the significance of some of the changes for which Hardy was responsible.

Hardy selected 138 poems. Of these, no less than 52 have been cut without any indication being given that the poems are not as Barnes wrote them. In some cases the omissions extend to only a few lines or a single stanza out of many, but eleven poems are cut down to at least half their original size. Obviously, such drastic slashings have considerable effects upon the character of the poems.

As might be expected by anyone acquainted with the differing attitudes of the two poets, the cuts often involve passages of moralistic or religious commentary. For example, "The Spring," the first poem in Hardy's selection, reads there as a straightforward descriptive nature-poem. In the original, however, two additional stanzas apply the description to life in general and make reference to God and sin. Barnes was fond of writing poems with the structure of parables, and in

some instances this becomes a rather obvious formula. But such poems at least relate the natural world to human belief and human action; to omit the applicatory stanzas too often leaves us with the kind of trivial descriptive poem that has brought the term "nature-poetry" into disrepute.

Several instances may be found of a related, but rather surprising, change. Here poems have been rendered more impersonal and objective by the exclusion of particular references. In "Haÿ Carrèn," for example, Hardy's version converts the first-person narrator into an uncharacterized observer, and the dramatic tension is reduced to a minimum. References to "the bwoy" and "the lwoaders" remain, but the more specific "Jenny Hine" is excluded with the speaker's personal emotion. There is an attractive, human quality about the omitted lines that Hardy (one assumes, deliberately) eschews.

Hardy might have defended his version of "Haÿ Carrèn" by stressing the fact that he tidies up the poem by fitting it into three stanzas of equal length. There are a few cases, however, in which he destroys the symmetry of the original. Barnes tempered the simplicity of his subject-matter with a highly sophisticated technique that often included a complex system of balanced stanzas and subtly varied refrains. "Hallowed Pleäces" is in the original a poem of six stanzas in which the refrain in the first three refers to holly while that in the last three employs the dialect-word "holm"; Hardy prints only the first, second and fifth stanzas, and so the poem ends with what appears to be a trivial and pointless variant. "When Birds be Still" is a four-stanza poem so contrived that the first and third stanzas begin with the conjunction "Vor" [For] while the second and fourth begin with "Zoo" [So]. By dropping the final stanza, Hardy spoils this structural symmetry.

A more startling editorial action is the insertion in no less than sixteen poems of unwarranted exclamation-marks. This can have a palpable (and generally deleterious) effect on the tone. "The Little Worold" ends:

An' small's my house, my rwof is low,
 But then who mid it have to show
 But Fanny Deäne so good an' feäir?
 'Tis fine enough if she is there.

To close, as Hardy does, on an exclamation-mark is to introduce a hearty exuberance into the poem that Barnes did not intend. Such changes have the curious effect of making Barnes seem a much more "romantic-emotional" poet than he actually is.

To be fair to Hardy, I should report that there are some instances in which, in my view, he improves the poems by judicious cutting. "A Zong ov Harvest Hwome" ends crisply in Hardy's version with a reference to the cost of bread and the poverty of the labourers (though here again the final exclamation-mark is Hardy's interpolation); Barnes continues with an additional stanza about hunting which is only vaguely connected with the subject of harvest and so ends rather weakly on an anti-climax. Again, certain poems ("Mindèn House" is a convenient example) are more congenial to modern tastes when their conclusion is left implicit in the body of the poem without being dutifully and unnecessarily spelled out in a final stanza. At the same time, it is doubtful if Hardy's procedures stay within the generally agreed limits of an editor's prerogative, and to make such alterations silently is unscholarly in the extreme.

Why did Hardy make these changes? Various explanations can be offered. However, one fact stands out that seems to me of particular interest. If we compare Hardy's versions with the originals, in most cases the edited poem sounds distinctly closer to Hardy than to Barnes. Perhaps the most dramatic instance occurs in

"Leaves a-Vallèn." Here Hardy omits the third of four stanzas which alludes to "hopeful eastern skies," but significantly prints the last stanza that contains a reference to "winds a-blowèn bleaker." Barnes and Hardy were diametrically opposed in their world-views. As Hardy noted in the introduction to his later selection from Barnes in Ward's English Poets series, Barnes "held himself artistically aloof from the ugly side of things--and perhaps shunned it unconsciously" (Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings [1967], p. 84). Hardy, whatever he may say about "evolutionary meliorism," found the sombre aspects of life artistically more stimulating. This being so, it is natural enough that ("perhaps . . . unconsciously") he tended to shun Barnes's gentler and sunnier outlook, persuading himself that he was making the changes on artistic grounds and in Barnes's best interests. What needs to be stressed, however, is that Hardy's editorial changes constitute in themselves a literary-critical judgment. From a study of these changes we can learn at least as much about Hardy's opinions concerning Barnes's poetic strengths and weaknesses as we can from his more direct critical pronouncements.

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