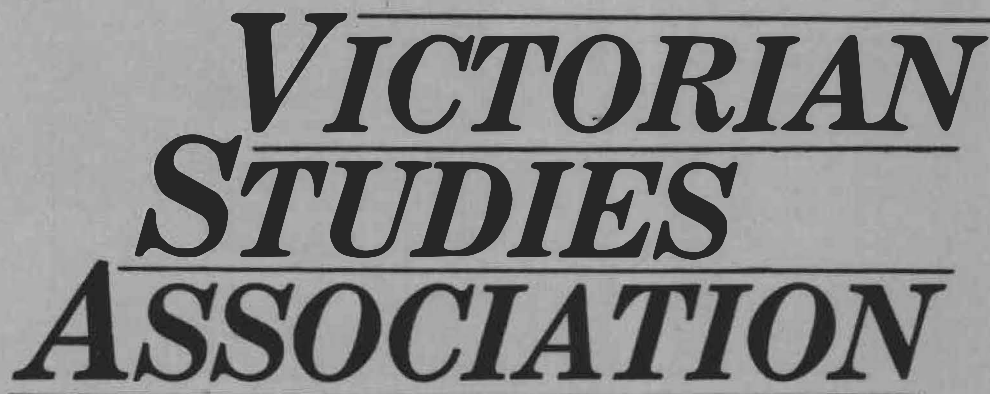

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News and queries

MICHAEL MILLGATE (English, Toronto) reports the publication of the seventh and concluding volume (incorporating a general index) of the Clarendon Press Edition of The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, of which he has been co-editor with Richard L. Purdy of Yale. At the recent Modern Language Association convention in New Orleans he organized and chaired the Victorian Division session on Victorian Biography and gave a paper on Hardy in a session on the editing of Victorian documents organized by the Association for Documentary Editing.

REA WILMSHURST (Mill Project, Toronto) has signed a contract with McClelland and Stewart to edit three more volumes of rediscovered stories by L.M. Montgomery (Akin to Anne: Tales of Other Orphans came out in May 1988). Along the Shore: Tales by the Sea will appear in April 1989; Among the Shadows: Tales from the Darker Side is scheduled for the spring of 1990, with After Many Days: Tales of Time Passed following in the spring of 1991.

* * *

Conference notes

Our two speakers at the Conference on 8 April 1989 at Glendon College will be Martha Vicinus (Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), and Margaret MacMillan (Professor of History at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto). Professor Vicinus will speak on "Victorian Secrets: Sexuality in Villette" and Professor MacMillan on "What India Did to the Idea of Progress: The Cases of Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Henry Maine, and Others."

Martha Vicinus was educated at Northwestern University, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she was awarded her doctorate. She was the editor of Victorian Studies from 1970 to 1982 and did much to guide the development of the periodical and to make it effective in the growth and deepening of work in the Victorian field. Among her works are Suffer and Be Still (1972), The Industrial Muse (1974), A Widening Sphere (1977), and Independent Women (1985); Ever Yours: Florence Nightingale will appear later this year. Her paper to the conference is a draft of an essay to be included in a projected volume of essays on Victorian sexuality.

Margaret MacMillan, Chairman of the History Department at Ryerson, was an undergraduate at the University of Toronto and took a B.Phil. and a D. Phil. at Oxford. Her grandfather was physician to the Viceroy in India in the 1920s, and she herself has spent some time in India. Her Women of the Raj, a description of the way British social and domestic life was re-created in India, was published in 1988. Her interest in Lyall, Maine, and others was stimulated by her inquiries into the role of the English in India in the nineteenth century.

Hans de Groot will entertain the Conference with a Dickens reading. It is possible that there will also be an exhibition of Victorian artefacts, but this is, at the time of writing, not in a final state.

This Conference is our twenty-first, and although 18 has replaced 21 as the age of civic maturity, I think we may congratulate ourselves on marking

our twenty-first birthday with yet another distinguished programme.

J.M. Cameron
President, VSAO

The twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals will be 22-23 September 1989 at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The theme for the conference is "RSVP Comes of Age." Papers should deal with some aspect of Victorian periodicals or their use as sources for research, be limited to 15-20 minutes, and be submitted to Dr. Rosemary T. VanArsdel, Program Chair, 4702 N.E. 39th St., Seattle WA 98105. Write Professor Barbara Penny Kanner, Conference Coordinator, 467 Comstock Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024, for details.

Riddle-de-dee

OLD CAMERON'S Nursery Rhyme Riddles

No. 5

Nutmeg and Demerara
For the fairer;
Chinese and French delights
Make rougher wights.

(The answer is a well-known nursery rhyme.)
Solution on page 29

Theorizing the Victorians

William Whitla
York University

> "Party" ... She had used the word, not in its legal or business acceptation, when it merely expresses an individual, but as a noun of multitude, or signifying many.
>
> Miss Tox, in Dombey and Son, ch. 2

> However, the Multiplication-Table doesn't signify: let's try Geography. London is the capital of Paris ...
>
> Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, ch. 2

You might be wondering why your senior undergraduate students have been so full of signifiers lately. Or when reading Victorian Studies are you worried by references to the terrible Teutons (Gadamer, Jauss, Iser) and frightful Franks (Barthes, Derrida, Kristeva)? Or does it seem that even Miss Tox or Alice has descended from her flights of fancy to Saussurean distinctions between signifier and signified, or Barthian intertextual reference to Macbeth? Ah, well--the day of deconstruction has dawned, and its tortuous terminology is creeping into the sacred gardens of Victorian poets and realistic novelists alike; even the tranquil historicist waters of Victorian politics, art history, cultural studies, and religion are troubled by a fleeting voice that cries "Zeitgeist" and is gone.

If you have an interest in talking to your avant-garde students or even in dipping a toe into the swirling waters of contemporary theory, there are many places to start. At the risk of being accused of historicizing the complex interconnections of theory in the late twentieth century, I offer the barest outline, which might help to sketch a few of these relationships, aware that each assertion limits necessary qualifications, and distorts subtle differences into a metaphysical construct sufficient to invoke the wrath of most of the post-structuralists I know.

The new wave of theory takes its inspiration and initial definitions from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) who, in arguing that language is a system of signs, drew the distinction between general language systems (which he called "langue") and the individual utterance or discourse ("parole") of actual speakers or writers. Similarly, he defined a "sign" as an inseparable and arbitrary union of a "signifier" (the "sound-image" of a word, such as "tree"), and the "concept" which it signifies (the "signified"). Both of these together form a structural relationship, a "sign"; "language is a system of signs that express ideas," not referents that point to things. But there is nothing natural in the relationship between signifier and signified: Saussure's major point here is that the connection between the mental concept of a tree and the signifier is arbitrary, depending on the conventional relationship between signifier and signified, and neither is fixed in form or meaning, but changes through time (diachronically). We are able to locate ourselves in language because of the differences between one signifier and another (tree, free, reed, brood, brie, twee, this) which work in a system of arbitrary but conventionally agreed signs (Alice is lost linguistically in the wood of Chapter 3 of Looking-

Glass when she cannot perceive the relations in the system, read the signs, or recall the differences between units of meaning or *semes*: "'I mean to get under the--under the--under *this*, you know!' putting her hand on the trunk of the tree. 'What *does* it call itself, I wonder?'"). The result is that signifying language in its individual utterance only works within the general system (*langue*) to which it belongs, that such a language depends upon arbitrary signs and differences between signs (see Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, New Accents Series [Methuen, 1977]). Most contemporary theory working in any of the traditional disciplines makes use of the theory of signs, or semiotics (see Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* [Oxford, 1983], and *The Sign in Music and Literature*, ed. Wendy Steiner [Texas, 1981]). Such a study stresses the differences between relationships in signs, and depends upon Saussure's notion that language (*langue*) depends upon forms rather than upon substance, upon the relations and differences in paradigms (vertical structures of changing forms) and syntax (the forms of phrases, sentences), upon the structure of the language system itself. It was revolutionary to argue that language depends not on the etymological continuity of notions of representation (or *mimesis*), but that representation depends upon the discontinuity of signs, on their differences in linguistic structure. Saussure's distinctions were to have great impact on the theory of the twentieth century in many disciplines.

These insights and many related ones were carried to the Moscow Linguistic Circle after 1916, and helped give birth to the movement known as Russian Formalism, itself the mother of the Prague Linguistic Circle, where Roman Jacobson and René Wellek were active in the 1930s before coming to America in 1942. In the 1950s the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss applied Saussure's linguistic models (the understanding of the individual *parole* [= experience] by seeing its relationship to the *langue* [= social customs and conventions]) to the analysis of kinship and the preparation of food, cultural taboos, and their embodiment in cultural patterns, including stories. At the same time other thinkers (like Roland Barthes) were applying Saussure's thought to French culture, to literary study, and to the theory of literature. This "structuralist" literary theory sees literature first as a particular discourse within language, following linguistic rules, as an "*écriture*" or mode of writing characterized by the play of literary conventions and codes which are self-referential, and do not impart knowledge about the outside world. Second, the pronoun "I" refers to a particular code and convention about the "subject" and does not refer to an individual author. Third, the reader as a knowing and feeling individual disappears into the act of reading which is plural in its signification. Finally, structuralism adopts and adapts conventional literary terms (like plot, narrative, genre, figures of speech) to its own use, not as objective features of a text, but as conventional responses prepared in the reader from earlier readings. While some attention was given to poetry by the structuralists, they devoted most of their energies to the theory of narrative, especially prose fiction ("narratology"), to general theory ("poetics"--see Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* [1975]), and, especially in France, to the phenomena of popular culture (Barthes, *Mythologies* [1957 in French, 1972]).

At the same time, Marxist theorists and critics (like Walter Benjamin and Georg Lukács) revived and revised traditional Marxist approaches to

aesthetics and literature. More recently Louis Althusser, in a structuralist reading of Marx, found gaps or epistemological breaks in Marx's text which led him to reassess the supposed continuity of Marx's thought and his relation to Hegel (Reading Marx [New Left Books, 1976]). Althusser began a process in which Marxism itself is being re-theorized. Literature is seen as a product of human activity, whose cultural formation is impelled by complex economic and class contradictions and conflicts. Far from being a transparent and ideologically isolated aesthetic expression shaped in a specific text, literature in general, and even language itself as a social product, are textured with their own historicity and embedded struggling ideologies. The base (or economic structure of society) conditions the superstructure (the forms of the state and social consciousness), or, as Marx says, "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general" (Preface, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy). In the thought of structuralist and post-structuralist Marxists like Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, Pierre Macherey, Fredric Jameson, and Terry Eagleton, the literary text is produced by society's economic structures, but it assimilates the dominant ideology and modifies it, and through the fictive form, with its absences, gaps, silences, and explicit critiques, it distances itself from and exposes the limitations of its own ideology. Of particular interest to Victorianists is the application of some of this theory to five English novels in Norman Feltes's Modes of Production of Victorian Novels (Chicago, 1986), where the relations between the production and format of each novel determine the ideology of the text. The materialist history of production can also be applied profitably to other areas of Victorian culture, as in Ann Bermingham's Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860 (California, 1986) or Simon Pugh's treatment of the earlier part of this period in Garden, Nature, Language (Manchester, 1988). Marxist treatments of Victorian history are already well known, but the effect of the "new historicism" which has been making such an impact in renaissance studies in the work of Stephen Greenblatt and others and in The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature (ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown [Methuen, 1987]), is bound to have an influence on how we look at the Victorians. Indeed, Jonathan Dollimore, who has been involved in re-theorizing the renaissance, is one of the editors (with Alan Sinfield) of a new series from Manchester University Press on "Cultural Politics," the first four volumes of which appeared in 1988.

Feminist theory, like Marxist theory, and often in association with it, challenges the received notions that texts are free of bias (especially gender bias), that they are not centres of political power struggles, and that they are autonomous aesthetic creations of individual authors. On the contrary, feminist critics read texts, especially western texts, as an expression of white male power over words, an extension into language of male imperialism (called "phallogocentrism"). Women's texts have been excluded or marginalized as part of the exclusion and marginalizing of women, despite valiant efforts from at least the late eighteenth century to present the case for women's rights in a deeply patriarchal culture. Feminist theory attacks the assumptions that the male is the human norm in a literary text, that males are the normal readers, and maintains that criticism is not universal and disinterested but is heavily patriarchal. Part of the theoretical praxis of feminist critics has been the recovery of many hidden or

suppressed women writers and texts, a new concentration on the better-known writings of women, and on subject matter and imagery which expresses women. Among the many feminist examinations of Victorian literature are: Elaine Showalter's A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing (1977); Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic (1979); Margaret Homans's Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing (Chicago, 1986); and Linda Nead's Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Blackwell, 1988). More particular studies include Claudia Johnson's Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel (Chicago, 1988); James Kavanagh's Emily Brontë (Blackwell, 1985), which exploits a psychoanalytical and feminist approach; Gillian Beer's feminist reading of George Eliot (Indiana, 1986); and Dianne F. Sadoff's Monsters of Affection: Dickens, Eliot and Brontë on Fatherhood (Johns Hopkins, 1982). And again, feminist theory is applied not only to Victorian literature, but to all aspects of Victorian life and thought, as Association members will recall who heard Judith Walkowitz talk on the discourses of melodrama and popular culture in relation to W.J. Stead's trial for the "Maiden Tribute" articles, or who have read her Prostitution and Victorian Society (1980).

Both Marxism and feminism are sometimes regarded as "meta-theories" in that both have made extensive use of other theoretical strategies, each of the other, as well as structuralism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis. These tendencies to assimilate various theoretical positions have been particularly powerful in French feminism in the writings of Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva.

Post-Structuralism is both after and behind (underneath) structuralism, and is manifested in a number of differing though related developments in theory. One form of post-structuralism is that developed by Jacques Derrida, to which he has applied the term "deconstruction." Writing in Yale French Studies (69), Barbara Johnson says:

> A deconstructive reading is an attempt to show how the conspicuously foregrounded statements in a text are systematically related to discordant signifying elements that the text has thrown into its shadows or margins; it is an attempt both to recover what is lost and to analyze what happens when a text is read solely in function of intentionality, meaningfulness, and representativity. Deconstruction thus confers a new kind of readability on those elements in a text that readers have traditionally been trained to disregard, overcome, explain away, or edit out--contradictions, obscurities, ambiguities, incoherences, discontinuities, ellipses, interruptions, repetitions, and plays of the signifier. In this sense it involves a reversal of values, a revaluation of the signifying function of everything that, in a signified-based theory of meaning, would constitute "noise." Jacques Derrida has chosen to speak of the values involved in this reversal in terms of "speech" and "writing," in which "speech" stands for the privilege accorded to meaning as immediacy, unity, identity, truth, and presence, while "writing" stands for the devalued functions of distance, difference, dissimulation, and deferment.

Derrida's "axial proposition" in Of Grammatology (1967) is that there is nothing outside the text, no possibility of moving beyond or behind the linguistic signs of a text to some reality which the text makes "present" or refers to. Attacking the no-

tion of a metaphysic of presence as the major flaw in the western philosophical tradition, chiefly because the stress on the spoken word implies both the presence of the speaker and the speaker's communicated intention (logocentrism and phonocentrism), Derrida stresses the absences from a text, hunting out the "traces" of other discourses and texts, noting the gaps and silences, drawing out the differences between signifiers which distinguish one signifier from another, and which also defer to an infinite degree any hint of final meaning (and this notion combining both difference and deferral he coins <u>différance</u>: as Humpty Dumpty says to Alice, "You see, it's like a portmanteau--there are two meanings packed up into one word."). In particular, all binary oppositions, like mind/body, truth/error, ideal/real are to Derrida "a violent hierarchy" rather than a "peaceful co-existence"--one of the two is in a privileged position of power and authority over the other: "one of the two terms governs the other," and it is the task of deconstruction to be continually in the position of overturning these oppositions (<u>Positions</u> [Chicago, 1981], 42). Derrida calls the "interminable analysis" of overturning the binary oppositions "dissemination," in which the linguistic semes (elements of meaning) are disassembled to make a text polysemic. Dissemination overturns those binary oppositions which privilege one of the terms, which give presence to authorities, especially to the transcendental signifieds of author, intention, definitive meaning, and unambiguous text. Dissemination, while allowing the illusory effect of meaning, disperses the elements of meaning (semes) among many alternatives, and at the same time negates (<u>dis</u>seminates) any particular meaning. Accordingly, meaning is constantly dispersed, deferred, and different from what one expected: one is caught in a conflict (Derrida's term is rhetorical: <u>aporia</u>, a double bind) which is unresolvable by means of this operation of <u>différance</u>. Furthermore, the notion of <u>supplement</u> disperses referential meaning even more widely. Supplement is explained in <u>Of Grammatology</u> (144-5) as both surplus and replacement. For instance, the "supplement" to the <u>OED</u> is both a surplus to the full set of volumes, and also an indication that the original collection of volumes was somehow incomplete and needed the added part.

Yet even in the act of addition, the supplement replaces the completion, the presence of the original volumes, with a new completion of plenitude. So it is with all writing which has beyond and behind it only supplements, with traces of additions to and substitutions for referents, indicating gaps in the text which the supplement fills, and, by filling, points to an emptiness in it.

Various kinds of post-structuralist theory, especially influenced by the later (post-structuralist) work of Roland Barthes and of Derrida, developed in the French, English and Comparative Literature departments at Yale University in the writings of Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller. Miller, in particular, has applied his theory to Victorian materials in, among other books, Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels (Harvard, 1982) and The Linguistic Moment from Wordsworth to Stevens (Princeton, 1985), which examines the moment when the medium of language becomes an issue in poems by Arnold, Browning, Hopkins, and Hardy, as well as other poets.

Another kind of post-structuralism is found in the theory of Harold Bloom, originally a member of the Yale group. Bloom theorizes the complex relationships between texts and their traditions and influence. He argues that each text produces in its followers a series of misreadings, and that readers must misread texts in the light of other texts. These networks of misreadings lead to an "anxiety of influence" in which each writer, caught consciously and unconsciously in a relation of discipleship and reaction to predecessors, must imitate, parody, quote and misquote, follow and distort the genre, and so on.

Then very different, now widely scattered, the Yale theorists have exerted a profound influence on the writing of criticism in North America. Although Hillis Miller in his presidential address to the Modern Language Association (1986) spoke of the triumph of theory in America, he also spoke of "the violence and irrationality of the attacks on theory"; yet, in the pages of PMLA, article after article shows evidence of careful reading of current theory, and the application of it to texts; readers of Victorian Studies will have observed the same phenomenon.

All of these kinds of post-structuralism are opposed to the mimetic view that literature imitates or represents reality in any direct way, to the expressive view that literature expresses or communicates an author's thoughts or feelings, and to the New Critical view that a work of literature is an independent verbal pattern with an inherent meaning. It is of course not surprising that these enriching critical theories should have an enormous impact on all study of literature, and beyond literature to the study of historical texts, artistic monuments of all kinds, religious documents, social phenomena, and so on. On the one hand recent theorists have been especially interested in developing theory for its own sake, in order to establish new epistemological grounds for literature; on the other they were interested in applying theory (chiefly) to Romantic and Modernist texts (so Derrida writes on Rousseau, Barthes on Balzac, the Yale "School" on the English Romantics; particular interests are James Joyce and the authors of the French nouveau roman of Robbe-Grillet and others). But with the proliferation of theory in the last five or six years, virtually every national literature and period, as well as almost every intellectual concern, has been touched and modified by it.

The present generation of theoretical critics is refining and developing

theory in many directions, both as poetics and in specific applications. Methuen has now issued over twenty titles in their "New Accents" series which are devoted to current strategies in theory and criticism, to high art and popular culture, to the received canon and to non-canonical writings, to literature and to other forms of discourse. New journals, such as Textual Practice and Cultural Studies (both begun by Methuen in 1987), are moving in far more specific theoretical directions than the more general older theory journals like Diacritics (Cornell, 1971-) and Critical Inquiry (Chicago, 1974-). Many of the journals are frankly interdisciplinary (History and Theory and Yale Journal of Criticism: Interpretation in the Humanities). Many introductions to contemporary theory try to accomplish the forbidden act of essentializing and rationalizing conflicting theories: still, they usefully survey the various schools and theorists, or attempt to place their own argument within a broad theoretical frame. Among those most frequently referred to are Catherine Belsey's Critical Practice (Methuen New Accents, 1980); Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory: An Introduction (Blackwell, 1983); Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction, ed. Ann Jefferson and David Robey, 2nd ed. (Batsford, 1986), and Raman Selden's brief-to-the-point-of-obscurity Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (Harvester, 1985). The fifth edition of M.H. Abrams's A Glossary of Literary Terms (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988) contains a 50-page section on "Modern Theories of Literature and Criticism" which, although coming from a non-believer, is balanced, synthetic, and synoptic. There is no comprehensive bibliography of contemporary theory, but the recent book edited by Joseph Natoli, Tracing Literary Theory (Illinois, 1987) in its twelve chapters gives a "bibliographic-historiographic" account of what it calls the "members" of the "theory body." Some of the essays in Interrelations of Literature (ed. Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Joseph Gibaldi [MLA, 1982]), which considers the interrelations between literature and 13 other disciplines (curiously, not history), are very au courant with contemporary theory, but in every case literature is put in a privileged position. Still, the book, with its bibliographical helps and biblio-historical surveys, is a very helpful guide to the literature and controversies. More stimulating and more radical is The New Art History, ed. A.L. Rees and F. Borzello (Camden, 1986) with its critique of the market, pedagogy, related institutions, and art history itself.

Readers of Victorian literature puzzled by the onslaught of theory will be helped by a number of current studies which introduce some contemporary theories and apply them to specific texts. I mention only a few in different areas: Steven Connor, in a lucid and short book, Charles Dickens (Blackwell, 1985), gives structuralist readings of Pickwick Papers and Dombey and Son, deconstructive readings of Bleak House and Hard Times, and Marxist and psychoanalytic readings of Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend. Harold Bloom has edited a collection of "Modern Critical Views" in Charles Dickens (Chelsea House, 1987), about half of which (150 pages) appeared from 1982 on. Two recent books on Wilde and the 1890s adopt different strategies: Regenia Gagnier's Idylls of the Market Place: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public (Stanford UP, 1986) sees Wilde's dilemma of being caught between private art and public audience as an aspect of the relation of popular culture and social discourse at the beginnings of mass consumerist society, evident in late-Victorian institutions; Linda Dowling's Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle (Princeton, 1986)

traces the connection between the history of philology and Britain's notion of imperialist destiny (a civilization rooted in the language of the King James Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton) to develop a theory of the decay of language in a moment of linguistic crisis. Stephen Prickett, in *Words and "The Word": Language, Poetics and Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1986), draws on biblical and literary hermeneutics to establish lines of relationship between them during the nineteenth century.

There can be no doubt that to theorize the Victorians leads to an exhilarating redirecting of one's reading practices, and of one's teaching practices too. Conferences like the one at York on "English as an Institution" (1985), or at Northeastern, whose proceedings are published as *Critical Theory and the Teaching of Literature* (1985), address what *Yale French Studies* calls *The Pedagogical Imperative: Teaching as a Literary Genre* (63: 1982). Other practical helps are to be found in *Theory in the Classroom*, ed. Cary Nelson (Illinois, 1986). But the task of pedagogy also bears fruit in our curriculum and institutional structures. At the end of *The Crisis in Criticism* (Johns Hopkins, 1984), William E. Cain sets out a future for theory as relevant to Victorianists as to students of any other culture:

> We need not only to initiate new research projects and promote revisions of the canon, but to strive to make certain that these studies bear on teaching, curriculum planning, departmental organization and design. For theory to have deep and lasting influence, it has to make its way into pedagogy and administration and contest the "ground" that traditional models and customs have occupied.

In the thirtieth anniversary number of *Victorian Studies* (Autumn 1987), where former editors reflect on the changes in the journal and the field, Martha Vicinus directs such reflections pointedly:

> The intensely self-reflexive nature of literary criticism appears to have inhibited the growth of sophisticated interdisciplinary work. The examination of literature in a cultural context is less popular among graduate students now, in comparison with the study of different literary theories and their application. Social history suffers a similar identity crisis. ... Unless those of us who have practised the interdisciplinary criticism of *VS* for twenty years incorporate some of the insights of the new theorists into our thinking and writing about the social context of Victoria's age, we risk repeating old formulas and insights. Our vaunted relevance to contemporary social and political issues may become useless because our tools of analysis seem crude and inapplicable. *VS*--like the study of Victorian England in general--needs more research using ideas of the new theorists without sacrificing an interdisciplinary approach.

Perhaps the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario might try to find ways of participating in this retheorizing of our disciplines and their texts. There might be a series of text-reflective answers to Alice's first question: "What is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversations?" We might discover Miss Tox's polysemic "party" ("signifying many") to be as appropriate as Alice's with the Mad Hatter.

Books

Helen Cooper. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Woman & Artist. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
Marion Shaw. Alfred Lord Tennyson: Feminist Readings. Ed. Sue Roe. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1988.

These books are feminist readings of Victorian poets, but Helen Cooper's feminism is very different from Marion Shaw's. One can in fact see the books as representing two faces of feminist criticism, one looking to the liberal humanist tradition for its central idea of the development of a unified self, the other turning to psychoanalysis and its emphasis on engagement with a mysterious Other.

Cooper locates her book on Barrett Browning in the kind of literary study defined by Elaine Showalter as "gynocriticism," which is based upon the assumption that any theory about writing by women must depend upon a knowledge of the works women have actually written, and of the cultural context in which they wrote. Woman in the overwhelmingly male nineteenth century has been the subject of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's criticism, to which Cooper acknowledges her indebtedness, and in this context the identification of the pen with the penis is the defining metaphor of the phallocentric view of artistic creation. On my own bookshelves is a nineteenth-century edition of Bulwer Lytton, the emblem on each volume's cover inscribed with the words, "The pen is mightier than the sword"; the gap between subject and verb is unintentionally (I think) but suggestively narrowed by the designer. Sandra Gilbert uses this aphorism in her essay, "Literary Paternity" (1979), to explore the dark link between male writing and killing--fixing in art, that is, and in a cultural context. The dilemma of a female writer in such a context is Cooper's subject. Whatever post-modernist criticism may do with Barrett Browning, "she needs to have her work read," Cooper insists, "on the terms in which she wrote it" (4).

In her personal life, that context was embodied in Barrett Browning's father, who expected obedience from his eleven children and opposed the marriage of any of them; three disobeyed--Elizabeth, her sister Henrietta, and her brother Alfred--and he cut them out of his life and out of his will. In her writing, that context was defined for Barrett Browning largely by Milton--this is Cooper's argument, and she makes it persuasively--though there are other possibilities, such as Wordsworth. It is Angela Leighton who argues for Wordsworth in her 1986 books on Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh being, in Leighton's words, "a woman's 'Pre-

lude,' which is concerned to chart the origins and development of the woman poet's mind" (118). But Milton was a more powerful presence. Barrett Browning took as her subject "Eve's allotted grief"--this is her phrase in the Preface to _Poems of 1844_--and she was determined to tackle it because it was "imperfectly apprehended hitherto, and more expressible by a woman than a man."

Cooper links this subject with (what she argues is) the "central issue" in the poetry: "how a woman poet empowers herself to speak" (5). In effect, then, Cooper reads the work as a _Künstlerroman_, with Barrett Browning moving from the early poems, where she was working skillfully but uneasily in a male tradition, to the climactic _Aurora Leigh_, where Aurora's narrative of her life gives the essence of her creator's. Through Romney (explicitly likened to Milton in one of Barrett Browning's letters to Anna Jameson), Aurora--and the poet--at last come to a working relationship (though not an unproblematic one) with a literary tradition defined largely by men. At the beginning of the story, Aurora, "fixed" by Romney's male gaze when she crowns herself a poet, rejets his offer of marriage, which would trap her in his artistic and cultural assumptions; at the end, she is united with Romney, now blind like Milton, but entering a world of her making rather than his. "Milton/Romney," Cooper concludes, "becomes lover/muse, object of woman's passion and vision" (190).

On the way to this point, Cooper revises our understanding of the Barrett Browning canon in a persuasive way. Those of us who knew the poet through the usual anthology pieces--"The Cry of the Children," for instance, and "How do I love thee?"--had no difficulty fitting her into a patriarchal scheme of things. Cooper's readings dispel such an illusion, and one begins to realize how daring (and how disturbing to her thoughtful readers) Barrett Browning actually was, in the story of Marian Erle in _Aurora Leigh_ and in "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," among other texts. And no one reading Cooper's analysis of the _Sonnets from the Portuguese_ can any longer read "How do I love thee?" as the sentimental utterance of a soon-to-be angel in the house, the comforting figure of male fantasy. The poem is "confidently female" and "authoritative about its speaker's desire" (108), Cooper argues, and, in the context of the sequence as a whole, there can be no doubt that this is so.

Cooper's position is liberal humanist (a position she knows is often suspect now, and under attack); her central figure is the unified human self, whether male or female. Shaw, by way of contrast, focuses on division--a tension-filled gap between male and female--and her frame of reference is more French than Anglo-American. "Tennyson as a 'great poet' has become desexed into representativeness of _all_ humanity," she says, and "A feminist reading ought to put the sex back into the text ..." (3). Indeed, this is the aim of the series to which this study belongs ("Feminist Readings" of "the key works of English Literature by male authors"), and it is based on the notion of gender difference. Gender embraces not only the biological difference between the sexes, but cultural influences on sexual identity; and biology and culture combine to make the Other at which the woman critic is looking a mystery to be explored. Shaw reverses the old question of the conventional male in a patriarchal society and asks, "what are men really like? what do men want?" (6). Criticism thus means an engagement with this mysterious Other, an engagement for which one of Shaw's images is sexual intercourse, which may be either "homo-critical" or "hetero-

critical" (5). The former is "the search for sameness and lineage, for self-identity"--presumably this is how she would describe Cooper's study of Barrett Browning--while the latter is "where otherness and opposition are sought, where the self is defined through difference" (5). Another of Shaw's images for her criticism is that of a woman fleeing from a cultural tradition defined by men and turning to confront her captors: "And there they all are: Milton and Wordsworth and Dickens, and aching Hardy and raging Lawrence--and needful, unsure Tennyson" (6).

"Needful, unsure Tennyson"--these are the first strokes of Shaw's portrait of Tennyson, and that picture darkens as she proceeds. Her study has three sections ("Love and Marriage," "Men," "Women"), and in each we have an idealistic poet stumbling in ways that psychoanalysis can best explain. The first section deals with the failure of romantic love; such love "is almost always impossible to translate into marriage" (14) because it is based on sibling twinning in infancy. Yet Tennyson at the same time defended marriage as "potentially the main source of personal happiness and fulfilment and also as a central, stabilizing social institution" (37)--and at this point one begins to discern a new version of the myth of two Tennysons (the Lincolnshire mystic and neurotic, and the conventional and confident Laureate) first set out by Harold Nicolson in 1923. This pattern is particularly evident in the second section, where Shaw takes as her paradigm the brothers Adam and Seth in Adam Bede, one the embodiment of manliness, the other gentle and relatively effeminate. "Tennyson's male figures are, for the most part, vacillating, weak and effeminate and display a vulnerability which belies the patrician image that Tennyson himself presented, particularly throughout his Laureate years" (63). The third and largest section presents Tennyson's double image of woman. Her type is Mariana, "the woman who waits to be released by a man from a sterile self-absorption and inactivity into marriage or into death" (102), but her "desperate sexuality" (109) is a disturbing need. Tennyson, Shaw argues, was both attracted to and repelled by female sexual desire, and this doubleness accounts for Arthur's final loathing of Guinevere, and the poet's equation of female sexuality with destruction and death (in "Lucretius," for instance, in Maud, and in the Idylls). Tennyson emerges, as Shaw admits (141), as a misogynist poet, even in In Memoriam. With the help of Melanie Klein and Lacan, among others, Shaw undertakes a psychoanalytic reading of Tennyson's elegy, arguing that elegy as a genre is "doubly female"; it is so because "femaleness is its buried theme--woman as the irrevocably lost--and it is also the act of writing, the unstable female Otherness of male creativity" (143). Tennyson's mourning for Hallam is in fact the re-enactment of a primal loss (the child's separation from its mother's breast), and a tentative (and dangerous) approach to "a forgotten stage of life prior to the acquisition of language" (159)--language itself being "irre-

deemably male" (159), and the feminine standing in "unspeakable opposition" (160) to it. One is likely to have reservations about this argument, and one must, for Shaw takes everything as the expression of psychological states and does not allow for the poet's inventiveness or for his use of a dramatic voice; moreover, she sometimes distorts her evidence and wrenches quotations out of context to make a point. Nonetheless, her analysis goes a long way toward explaining why Sorrow and Nature in _In Memoriam_ are both female figures, and why an infant appears frequently in the poem.

Shaw's Tennyson is not a very admirable man. Perhaps Shaw felt it necessary to examine critically the appeal of the poetry--she acknowledges its power for her in the introduction--and to reveal that this power comes from "a polarized vision of human sexuality as all that is most depraved as well as most transcendent" (10). Her book is disturbing, and it is a challenge to all who will subsequently write about Tennyson.

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* * *

Jerome Meckier. _Hidden Rivalries in Victorian Fiction: Dickens, Realism, and Revaluation_. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987.

Publishers, it is said, prefer books on single authors, and literary scholars tend to find single authors more manageable than groups, schools, or movements. As time goes by, critical traditions develop which are specific to the more frequently discussed writers; since each fresh critic must enter into dialogue with a mass of earlier critics, all of whom have responded to _their_ predecessors, it grows harder and harder to break away from the assumptions, the topics,the passages which have controlled earlier readings. Scholars are so used to these self-reinforcing traditions that they can step from one to another without suffering any strong sense of incongruity. Dickens criticism has its own specific themes and approaches, other writers his contemporaries are treated with similar individuality, and any attempt to bridge the gap, to bring two writers within the same frame of discourse, is liable to seem odd and awkward, ultimately disconcerting. Histories of, say, the novel in the nineteenth century tend to skirt the problem by devoting separate chapters to each major figure, reproducing between the covers of a single book the artificial segregation promoted on the shelf by the academic profession, the book trade, the alphabet, and the Library of Congress cataloguing system.

Jerome Meckier's _Hidden Rivalries in Victorian Fiction_ is welcome because it tries to break down these conventional barriers that insulate criticism of one major Victorian novelist from criticism of all the others. Meckier wants to observe the great mid-century novelists as they read and react to each other's novels, to set them in relation to each other. Since there is ample evidence that these novelists (like most novelists in all periods) read the works of their fellow-practitioners with careful attention to issues both aesthetic and commercial, it is surprising and even deplorable that this book should seem such a novelty.

Meckier places Dickens at the centre of his study. During the last two decades of his career, Meckier argues, Dickens was being attacked on the one hand by novelists who claimed to be better realists and therefore more reliable commentators on society than he--Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot--while on the other Wilkie Collins tried to outdo him in the mystery and sensation which Dickens cherished as his own and which the

new realists rejected. Dickens fought off both challenges triumphantly. In Meckier's words:

> This is a study of what could be called the "realism wars." Reexamining Victorian fiction as a series of revaluative responses and replies, it changes the way Victorian novels should be read by suggesting a new way that the novelists themselves--professed realists all--read and reread one another. (2)

Much the most successful part of this enterprise is the central hundred pages devoted to Dickens and Wilkie Collins. Meckier traces the mutual admiration and irritation of these rivals with care and zest. He concludes with a lengthy discussion of Edwin Drood, providing not one but several possible endings, any one of which would have driven Collins from the field with ignominy. Connoisseurs of Drood solutions may diagree, but there is a lot to be said for Meckier's premise that the ending was to be consistent with the professional objectives that moved Dickens to write his last novel.

Dickens-centricity gravely weakens the rest of the book. Trollope is represented only by The Warden, Mrs. Gaskell only by North and South. In neither case does Meckier's attempt to make the relationship with Dickens much more significant than is commonly recognised convince this reader, though the Gaskell chapter makes some interesting points. George Eliot is represented by Felix Holt and Middlemarch. Dates raise doubts here, and the claim that Felix Holt rewrites Bleak House raises many more. Thackeray is seldom mentioned, apparently on the grounds that his best work was behind him in the period covered by this book. That may be true, but to omit him, revered as he was by authors so different as Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot as the only one who told the truth, is a major liability in a study of mid-Victorian realism.

Unhappily, the "modern revaluator" has written this book in a jerky, hectoring, over-emphatic style which makes painful reading indeed.

> Felix Holt is entitled to persist as the classic instance of revalu-

A scene from The Woman in White

ative parody in Victorian fiction. It remains the purest instance of a double-barreled novel that stands on its own yet rephrases a rival work. (242)

It is sad that anyone can study George Eliot for years and write like that; doubly so, when the style gets between the reader and a host of acute and stimulating insights.

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* * *

Charles A. Jones. International Business in the Nineteenth Century: The Rise and Fall of a Cosmopolitan Bourgeoisie. New York: New York University Press, 1987.

In the preface to this book, the author pays intellectual tribute to his wife, Linda Jones, and adds the comment that "we have [both] moved into new fields increasingly removed from orthodox empiricist history." For the growing field of business history, the book develops an argument that is critical of those empirical studies that have taken the form of biography or of monographs on particular companies.

From a Marxist perspective one generation after the "Group" described by Gertrude Himmelfarb in The New History and the Old, Jones deplores the failure of businessmen--"especially British businessmen"--to take their history seriously. They see history as essentially political and marginal, important only if it relates their role to that of the state. As a result, they have opted out of a conscious historical responsibility and have chosen to settle for an amateur form of corporate history which has stultified the historiography of the field. Those engaged in the writing of business history have collaborated in the failure to adopt a comprehensive, eclectic view of sources and to undertake the development of themes that would reach across national boundaries and particular firms. By contrast, social historians influenced by E.P. Thompson, and historians of third-world countries, have raised "neglected classes and downtrodden nationalities" to an imaginative level of study. Unfortunately, this interest has been accompanied by "an irrational disdain for the bourgeoisie," which has tended to buttress the perception of business history as "a poor cousin of economic history."

The argument is timely and welcome; there is room for questioning why the history of business has not achieved the academic status of political, social, or labour history. Part of the reason may well lie with the paucity of scholarly, thematic books that raise the subject to the level of conception and structure that is stated in this book. But Jones also exaggerates these problems; his thesis is inflated in the title; and the style and composition of the book do not fulfil the reader's expectations.

Because the subject and approach are basically British, there is not even a gesture toward the interpretive, comprehensive studies of Alfred Chandler in the United States. Chandler's work bears no trace of Marxist structure, but the broad sweep of his interpretation certainly reaches across the empirical histories of major American firms, and the work is therefore indispensable to comparative business history. In Britain, the writing of Charles Wilson, William Reader, Barry Supple and Clive Trebilcock is empirically based but so large and acute in its treatment of company history that the understanding of the whole business context is enhanced for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It would be unfair to say that Jones deliberately neglects these scholars;

his references are abundant to a wide range of published monographs and articles. But the premise of his study is antithetical to what he sees as their preference for the particular while his own emphasis is always on the sweep of synthesis, organized in this book around three stages in the history of the bourgeoisie as they pursued and projected the changing patterns of British trade from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Selection of the locale and definition of this trade is influenced by Jones' earlier studies under the direction of D.C.M. Platt, for whom he wrote three essays in the latter's Business Imperialism, 1840-1930 (1977). The focus of his interests then was British banking and insurance companies in Argentina. That area continues to be prominent in this study, in conjunction with India and Britain. The three areas together constitute the geographic points for his "mercantile diaspora," which began in the late eighteenth century with the breakup of mercantilism and the adjustment of merchants and manufacturers to prolonged warfare between Britain and France.

The high point in this evolution of a cosmopolitan bourgeoisie came in the mid-nineteenth century, when free trade based on partnerships, family relationships, a sense of bourgeois community with its ties to London, and an acceptance of the neutrality of the state, all provided a foundation for the ideology of liberalism. Its most revealing spokesman was Richard Cobden, for whom unfettered international commerce was not simply an end in itself but a vehicle toward the promotion of peace and democracy.

Cobden's vision for the dynamic role of the bourgeoisie was undermined in the third stage, beginning with the limited liability acts, which led to greater concentrations of capital, to larger incorporated firms, the spread of British banks, and the displacement of middlemen. Business organization required that senior figures become executives based in London, where they could demonstrate the energy to master larger and larger markets by the new virtues of "aggression, daring, publicity and a Napoleonic command of detail." Success involved the achievement of order and control through oligopoly, which in turn raised the bureaucracy of the firm to a level that presented a rational alternative both to the chaos of competition and to the socialist threats of left-wing parties. The men in charge of these firms became associated visibly with the state, moved more closely toward the centres of political power, and articulated their preference for a national frame of reference as distinct from the former cosmopolitan ethic of the previous generation.

It was a change in scale with ominous implications, some of which were reflected in actual careers, such as

those of Sir Alfred Jones or Marcus Samuel, whose passion for expansion and diversification in oil led to close involvement with the First Sea Lord. But Jones draws equally on the novels of H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad and G.K. Chesterton. Illustrations from this literature are frequent in the concluding chapters, adding credence to Jones' statement that his approach is more akin to that of the social than of the economic historian. Readers of the book may well agree, while regretting at the same time that the fiction is marginally illustrative rather than sufficiently integrated. Jones' own writing is sometimes marred by a lack of grace and needlessly involved sentences. Criticism of this kind, however, assumes that the book contributes significantly toward stimulating greater sophistication for the business history of Britain in the nineteenth century.

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Anthony H. Harrison. Christina Rossetti in Context. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

The critical wheel of fortune may be coming around again for Christina Rossetti. Once a more popular poet than her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, she has been neglected for the past fifty years, unless you count an appearance of "Goblin Market" in Playboy.

Christina was born in 1830 and raised, with her brothers Dante Gabriel and William Michael, in a literary and learned household. Their father became professor of Italian in King's College the year after Christina's birth, but he had previously been a librettist to the opera house in Naples and a curator of antiquities in the Naples Museum, leaving Italy for political reasons in 1821. Christina was precocious like her brothers, and at the age of nineteen contributed several poems to The Germ, the little magazine founded by her brothers which in 1850 sparked what is known as the Pre-Raphaelite Movement.

Her life was outwardly uneventful, and she never married. She was of a deeply religious temperament, and her poetry reflects a High Anglican ideology, but its beautiful sensory images and the frequent theme of betrayed or disappointed love have led to much biographical speculation on the part of critics. Lona Mosk Packer's Christina Rossetti suggested that Christina's love was William Bell Scott, but Packer's book is now much maligned.

Anthony H. Harrison sets about to restore Christina's work to its justified place in critical estimation, refuting the still commonly held belief that the poems are artless and confessional. In fact, in his efforts to prove Christina's poems are not confessional, Harrison almost throws the baby out with the bath water, turning her poems into intellectual exercises. However, the "In Context" part of Harrison's title tells us what he set out to do, and this contextualizing he does admirably. Through close reading of her work and unpublished letters, Harrison demonstrates the careful craft, intensive rewriting and breadth of intellectual influences on Christina's work. These include medieval and renaissance love poetry, Romanticism, Tractarianism, and Aestheticism. But even Christina's secular love poetry is related primarily to traditions of the sonnet. Christina is simply not allowed any biography.

A brief instance of this is Harrison's comment on the triumphantly lovely poem, "A Birthday," which ends:

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

Harrison sees the early images of the poem, the "singing bird," the "watered shoot," and the "halcyon sea" as vulnerable, suggesting the transience of love, rather than the beauty of it. He suggests the speaker withdraws into a world of art, that the

> rich artistic details of the "dais" overshadow the impulse of love that generates its gothic artifice (note for instance the use of the archaic 'vair'), and those details, in contrast with the natural images of the poem's first stanza, imply the only true and permanent fulfillment of love is to be found in the art it gives birth to. (112)

Christina Rossetti
from a drawing made by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1865.

This seems to me a wilful misreading of a poem whose tone is exulting and life-affirming, with a ring that is decidedly biographical.

On the other hand, Harrison's extended study of the Monna Innominata is important and illuminating. Pointing out that Christina's poems reflect dominant post-Romantic directions in nineteenth-century literature, namely didacticism and aestheticism, Harrison nevertheless manages to demonstrate that Christina, like Dante, the poet she emulated, succeeded in the Monna Innomnata sonnets in transcending her context.

It is most encouraging to see Victorian women's writing coming in for serious consideration, of which this book is an example. However, it does take heroic effort to turn Christina into a major poet. Much of her work is dull and derivative, and Harrison's chapter "The Poetics of Conciseness" resorts to all kinds of verbal pyrotechnics to make us perceive Christina in a new way. When we are asked to compare an interminable poem like "An Old World Thicket" (36 stanzas) with Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode," the suggestion redounds to Christina's discredit. Yet, on the whole, Harrison succeeds in making us newly regard and admire the quiet achievement of this woman who chose a contemplative life for herself and managed to turn the emotional and spiritual tensions of that choice into poetry.

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Richard Brent. Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform, 1830-1841. Oxford Historical Monographs series. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

In Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform, Richard Brent set himself the salutary task of demonstrating that the members of the grand Whig coalition of the so-called decade of reform "were no more immune from the contagion of nineteenth-century Christian renewal than were their Tory opponents, and that this affected their outlook on policy and politics every bit as much" (1). The late George Kitson Clark regularly excoriated would-be students of the nineteenth century for their inability or unwillingness to give religion its historic due and to put themselves into the same religious frame of mind that characterized our ancestors.

Modern habits of thought have led historians to characterize the liberal reforms of the last century as belated but welcome fruits of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment; the Whig reform coalition as a continuation of the old Foxite Whiggery, merely shorn of a measure of its old libertinism. Indeed, the Whig reform coaltion of the 1830s was a coalescing of somewhat disparate opposition elements, including old-line Foxites such as the successive Prime Ministers, Lords Grey and Melbourne, and others such as Lords Holland and Lansdowne. There were "ultras"--Brent calls them "the Cassandras of the Whig party"--in the persons of Graham, Ripon, Richmond, and Stanley, who eventually bolted from the Whigs over issues of policy and principle. There was also a godless, utilitarian element, personified by Lord Brougham, who went the traditional way of mavericks and outcasts.

These members of the coalition, Brent assures us, did not represent the future of Whiggery and liberalism. That role was played by a coterie of young, liberal Anglicans led by Lord John Russell, and included Morpeth, Howick, Althorp, Radnor, Cam Hobhouse, and Poulett Thomson, who helped transform the Whigs from their Foxite tradition as "a party which concerned itself primarily with circumscribing the powers of the crown rather than with relieving the discontents of the people, even if, when in opposition, it was prepared to enlist popular protest if this tactic furthered the aristocratic end of storming the royal closet" (30). Traditionally the Tories stood for the protection of Church and King, while the Whigs defended the rights of the subject in the tradition of the Glorious Revolution. In breaking with the Foxite tradition, Brent argues, these young, liberal Anglican Whigs "sought to reinvent Whiggery as a form of political action rather than nostalgia" (36).

Admitting that his argument "relies for its plausibility on the accumulation of evidence" (18), Brent is very much aware that the practitioner of intellectual history faces no more daunting task than the documenting of ideas and personal influence. To seek causal certainty in relationships of this kind has been compared to nailing jelly to the wall. Wisely, he adopts a technique pioneered by Namier, the prosopographic survey and analysis of personal connections and relationships. By this means he is able to link the liberal Anglican Whig politicians both personally and intellectually with the principal poles of liberal--or "Broad Church" --Anglicanism in the country at large. Those two poles lay in the ancient universities, one the so-called "Noetic" school centred at Oriel College, Oxford, and the other based at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Through the universities, the Anglican Church and its clergy, the Inns

of Court and legal fraternity, the salons, periodicals, and territory known as "the Republic of Letters," Brent traces the myriad connections that linked the liberal Anglican Whig politicians with their Oxford and Cambridge counterparts and--not infrequently--teachers and mentors. They were Oxford men like Archbishop Whately and Arnold of Rugby, and the still more numerous Cambridge liberals like Adam Sedgwick, William Whewell, Julius Hare, and Connop Thirlwall. These liberal Anglican scholars and churchmen provided the Whig government with advice and counsel, and in return received preferment in Church and university appointments.

According to Brent, the liberal Anglican Whigs "possessed a distinctive Anglican faith," and he demonstrates that liberal Anglican Whiggery was no rhetorical pose to obtain public office, but was based upon sincerely held religious principles. This inspired a brand of liberalism that owed far more to Christian faith than to secular liberal theorists such as John Stuart Mill.

The dynamics of liberal Anglican Whiggery are best seen in those reform issues with a strong religious component. Brent therefore analyses at length the movements for the removal of religious tests from the universities, the creation of a national, non-denominational school system, and the abolition of slavery in the empire. A unifying motive among liberal Anglicans (or Broad Churchmen) was the creation of both a national church and a unified nation, the better to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. Thus the liberal Anglican Whigs "saw no incompatibility between admitting Dissenters and Roman Catholics as members of the political nation ... and maintaining the Anglican Church" (28). In the pursuit of these reforms, they were

> able to transform the language of political liberalism, and so the English political agenda itself. ... Liberal Anglican schemes for forging a united, Christian, and non-sectarian British nation ... were absorbed into the language and practice of British politics. (18)

Brent's erudition and bibliography are little short of awesome. He is to be particularly commended for his thorough use of both unpublished manuscripts and contemporary printed ephemera. For some sceptics this may merely represent the use of an oversized hammer on an under-sized nail. However, this book does yeoman's service in providing such a well-documented link between the intellectual and the political historians, and in showing the working historical interconnections between Lord Annan's "Intellectual Aristocracy" and Peter Allen's "Cambridge Apostles" on the one hand and Norman Gash's politicos on the other. The only serious regret concerning this book is that its exorbitant price ($97.50) will almost certainly serve to limit its audience greatly.

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Dorothy O. Helly. Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s the Empire Marketing Board commissioned a number of noted artists to produce posters exhorting the British public to buy Empire goods. One set of two such posters takes as its theme "great men" of the Empire. These founders of the Empire are depicted as a progression from Cabot, Hudson, and Drake through Wolfe, Clive, and Cook to later figures such as Durham, Brooke, and Lawrence. At

the very end of this "heroic" procession are the scarlet-clad figures of Charles Gordon and Cecil Rhodes--and sandwiched in between them the darker, more austere figure of David Livingstone.

Posters like the one described above were simultaneously uses of and contributions to the mythology of Empire, a mythology which was used to sell both Imperial produce and the "product" of Empire itself. As components of the greater mythology of Empire, each of the individual figures portrayed in such posters was himself, to a greater or lesser extent, a product of the creation of Imperial mythology. Dorothy Helly's study of the fate of the journals and papers of David Livingstone at the hands of his some-time friend and long-time associate Horace Waller is an important contribution to our understanding of the creation of such myths.

To use a fashionable term in a less than fashionable way, Helly "deconstructs" the Livingstone myth by presenting us with a detailed account of the manner in which the papers that Livingstone left on his death and the oral evidence of those who were with him at the end were edited by Waller to create not only a larger-than-life figure but one who was free from human foibles. At the end of Helly's dissection Livingstone does not so much emerge as a hero with feet of clay but as a missionary with a strong commitment to ending the evil of the East African slave trade who was beset by illness, bad temper, a marked incomprehension of the societies he travelled through and lived within, and a nasty tendency to blame his own difficulties on the deliberate sabotage of others.

LIVINGSTONE ATTACKED BY A LION.

The implications of Helly's work should be carefully noted by historians of both Victorian Britain and nineteenth-century Africa for a number of reasons. First, her critical reassessment of Livingstone's diary provides yet another cautionary tale to those who would uncritically use the reports of travellers, missionaries, and other interested observers in order to bolster particular academic positions regarding the quality and pervasiveneess of servile labour in Africa. Second, Helly adds yet another component to our understanding of the complicated intellectual history of British imperialism, a history which is only in the earliest stage of reconstruction. Finally, British social historians would do well to pay attention to the manner in which late Victorian and Edwardian thought with regard to both Imperial and domestic social questions was shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by the marketing of such legends as Livingstone.

Livingstone's Legacy is well written and well argued--no mean feat in a work of textual criticism. At the very least, it should stand for many years as a "must read" work for anyone attempting to make use of Livingstone's papers and diaries.

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Lucy Brown. Victorian News and Newspapers. 1985; Oxford: University Press, 1988.

This book is of value as a detailed analysis of some aspects, mostly from the perspective of management, of British newspapers between 1860 and 1900. It does not provide the background and colour of Alan Lee's The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914 (London: Croom Helm, 1976), nor is it as comprehensive as Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day, ed. George Boyce et al. (London: Constable: Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), but it adds to these studies.

It is a curiously illuminating and, at the same time, frustrating book. It told me both more and less than I wanted to know about Victorian newspapers--more about circulation, distribution, technology and ownership, and less about the kind of writing that was in the papers and who was doing it. Among the most interesting pages are those on how party politics affected journalism and how a form of news-gathering that is considered routine today, the interview, began. The use of the word in the press sense goes back only to 1867, says Brown. W.T. Stead, the legendary editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, did not invent it, but he refined it, stalking and pressing his subjects. In 1889, two years after an interview by Stead, Gladstone showed that he did not comprehend the practice. He complained: "I had believed it to be in England a well understood rule and practice that an interview accorded to an Editor of a newspaper is meant simply to supply him with material he may use if he thinks fit for his own guidance" (166).

Besides telling us things about the history of journalism that we might not have known--like the fact that clipping files, called "clag books," were kept in some newspaper offices but not often used--Brown points us in the direction of more such information through citations of relevant memoirs, business records, manuscripts, archives, biographies and public records. Several times in this book, however, tantalizing morsels are dangled before us and then withdrawn. We are told, for example, that

before Thomas Hardy began to write novels, he was advised by a friend to try to supplement his income by writing a London letter for a provincial weekly like the Dorset County Chronicle. We are left to wonder whether he acted on this tip. That "journalism was exceptional and noteworthy in its employment of women" is certainly of interest, but after five examples in a single paragraph, the subject is dropped.

Then there is the problem of over-documentation. This book tells us that:

* From May 13-25, 1889, the Daily Telegraph printed 183½ columns of advertisements. As each column contained 60 to 70 advertisements, the

weekly average was 5,841.

* By 1891 there was one newsagent or newsroom proprietor for every 1,360 people in London.

* For most of 1868, the Daily Telegraph and the Standard, both London papers, sold more than any other paper in Bradford except the Leeds Mercury.

* In The Times of Oct. 8, 1864, there were small stories (the wordage of each is provided) on the following provincial concerns: an archaeological find at Salisbury, trade at Nottingham, a rare hawk seen at Wick, Lord Russell as Lord Rector at Aberdeen, a visit by the Duke of Cambridge to Dover, the trials of steamships on the Clyde, similar trials on the Tyne, the arrest of a pickpocket in Manchester, and a letter from the Poor Law Board about the cotton famine.

The research has been painstaking. Brown has examined in meticulous detail a great many factors behind the dissemination of news in the nineteenth century. But perhaps social history does not lend itself to quantitative analysis. "If you stand a lantern under a tree," says the narrator of Jacob's Room, "every insect in the forest creeps up to it--a curious assembly, since though they scramble and swing and knock their heads against the glass, they seem to have no purpose." Certainly the accumulation of detail is crucial to the creation of a valid impression. But it cannot in itself impose form and meaning. For one thing, it is not a finite process. One or two significant details may have escaped the observer. For another, the closer to infinity it gets, the more confusing it becomes. The insects illuminated by the lantern are all doing different things, but what do their activities add up to? As Virginia Woolf sees it, the way to make sense out of detail is to encourage the imagination to build with it and thereby transcend it. The objects in Jacob's room, the events of Jacob's life, assume a congruity derived from his connection of them. The detail is only a beginning.

Like observations in life and in novel-writing, statistics have a place in social history, but they cannot substitute for the verbal presentation of trends. They are hints. As an overabundance hampers one from seeing what they are meant to show, Brown's figures would sometimes be more useful as footnotes or appendices than as primary information. "Now, does lamb make the mint sauce, or mint sauce make the lamb?" asks the host of a luncheon party just as Jacob arrives. It is true that for many people mint sauce makes the lamb. But it should be served on the side.

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The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Women's Sphere. Ed. Jeanne Boydston, Mary Kelley, and Anne Margolis. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

In a rootless colonial America always fascinated by roots, families, the dynasty, few clans deserve more admiration--and in one single, dazzling generation--than the children of Lyman Beecher. The minister-patriarch, whose long life began the year before the Declaration of Independence and ended during the Civil War, was a husband three times (the third marriage was childless) and a father thirteen. Three of his sons (Edward, Charles, and James) became clergymen of distinction, though their fame fades beside that of their brother Henry Ward Beecher: he was even more famous in his day than Lyman in his; as Lyman had, notoriously, stood trial for heresy, Henry Ward was named, scandalously, as co-respondent in a

divorce action; both were uncloistered polemicists, much concerned with the great issues of the day, especially slavery. There were, for the nineteenth century, three classes in American society: saints, sinners, and Beechers.

But it was the daughters of Lyman Beecher who achieved a still more lasting fame. Of the four who grew to maturity, only Mary (1805-1900) did not publish, remaining within the domestic sphere and there becoming, eventually, the grandmother of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who would enunciate the feminism of a later generation. The three sisters who make the subject matter of The Limits of Sisterhood, Catherine Beecher (1800-78), Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96), and Isabella Beecher Hooker (1822-1907), were all strong-minded women who wrote both privately and publicly on the disadvantages of being a nineteenth-century woman, yet who differed often on how to relieve those disadvantages. Thus the title, The Limits of Sisterhood, is not without its ironies. These three great polemicists were sisters--not just under the skin--and the limits of their sisterhood were the disparate experiences, and the reactions to their places in the family hierarchy, which they added to the common background. Catherine never married, losing her fiancé in a drowning accident the year of Isabella's birth, and was old enough to play a maternal role (with Mary) towards her much younger sister; Harriet was married to a minister-academic who generally left the upbringing of a large family to her; Isabella married a lawyer who resisted (with her support) the Beecher family's pressure to become a minister, had with him four children, a small family by Victorian standards, and would later write in favour of birth control in the form of male sexual restraint. The three sisters represent a rising note of rebellion, and a diminishing but still considerable dedication to the values of the hearth.

This two-way motion is nowhere more apparent than in the sisters' attitudes towards women's suffrage. They were all for women's rights: Catherine very early supported women's education, and founded the Hartford Female Seminary (with help from Mary) in 1823; she upheld in her most famous work, A Treatise on Domestic Economy (1841), and elsewhere, the moral influence of mothers (a class in which she included all who ministered to the young, including especially schoolteachers) as conservators of the culture; she was thus opposed to the enfranchisement of women, which would move them from their sacred sphere. Harriet, easily the most famous of all Lyman Beecher's children, shared the family's detestation of slavery, and Uncle Tom's Cabin is immortal testimony to that feeling; but it is plausible to read that great novel as embodying a parallel between the black slave and the household slave, and in a book full of flawed men and family tragedy, the only resolute figures--aside from the rather maternal Tom--are "mothers" in Catherine's sense; though Harriet supported women's suffrage, she did not campaign or write for it. Isabella wrote her first pro-suffrage article in 1860, and remained thereafter committed to the cause. Alone of her sisters (or brothers), she questioned Henry Ward's innocence in the Tilton divorce case, and espoused the political causes of Victoria Woodhull, the flamboyant early suffragette and advocate of free love who ran for the Presidency in 1872 and was one of Henry Ward's principal accusers in 1874. Both Catherine and Harriet deplored Woodhull's activities, and Harriet referred in the matter to her "poor wandering sister Belle."

The great virtue of The Limits of Sisterhood is that it allows these

three great women to speak for themselves, with some necessary and scholarly elucidation from the editors. The book is very usefully divided into four parts--the first three dealing with the early life of the sisters, their views of women's status, and their carrying of their beliefs into argument or action. Each part is further divided according to the three individual lives. After each sister has had her triple say, the book ends with "Conversations Among Ourselves," drawing on the private, sometimes "teasing" correspondence, as the early sections drew largely on what are expressions of the public self even in the private letters. The final effect is to give the reader a parallel set of three lives--the book expressly began, in conception, as three separate biographies--which move from juxtaposition to co-existence if not quite resolution. And to show us that the good work was not over in their lives, the very last letter, from an Isabella nearing eighty, speaks in praise of her grand-niece Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who in the twentieth century would advocate what many women are still advocating: paid housework and child care, the freeing of women from sexist medical practice, and even--in Herland--a matriarchal Utopia. The Limits of Sisterhood shows again how often great women spring from dominating fathers; without being excessively psychoanalytic, it skilfully and perceptively presents the primal scene of the Beechers and what it was like, psychically, to grow up in a large, extended, and competitive family. The same factors that brought several of the brothers to neurosis, suicide, and even personal public scandal were converted by these three splendid women into a rebellion of lasting and salutary value.

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Catharine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Isabella Beecher Hooker

Solution to Riddle

What are little boys made of?
What are little boys made of?
Frogs and snails
And puppy-dogs' tails,
That's what little boys are made of.

What are little girls made of?
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice
And all that's nice,
That's what little girls are made of.