



***VICTORIAN  
STUDIES  
ASSOCIATION***

ONTARIO

***NEWSLETTER***

FALL 1991

The Victorian Studies Association Newsletter  
Ontario, Canada

Number 48

Fall 1991

Published by the Victorian Studies Association (Ontario)  
c/o English Department  
302 Pratt Library  
Victoria College, University of Toronto

Editor: Jean O'Grady

Copy-editor: Rea Wilmshurst

ISSN 0835-1902

Printed through the generosity of Victoria College

# Contents

News and queries	3
Conference notes	5
In memoriam: Dorothy Zaborszky	7
Collecting Victorian Ephemera / Barbara Rusch	9
Review essay: The Gendered nature of Victorian Science / Bernard Lightman	15
Books	
E.A. Smith, <u>Lord Grey, 1764-1845</u> (Neville Thompson)	22
Paula Gillett, <u>The Victorian Painter's World</u> (Nancy Minty)	24
Ina Taylor, <u>George Eliot: Woman of Contradictions</u> (Teresa Snelgrove)	26
J. Russell Perkin, <u>A Reception-History of George Eliot's Fiction</u> (Oliver Lovesey)	28
James Belich, <u>The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict</u> (Margaret MacMillan)	31
Ian Ker, <u>John Henry Newman: A Life</u> (D.J. Dooley)	33
Margot K. Louis, <u>Swinburne and His Gods</u> (Harvey Kerpneck)	35
Report: The Mentorship Programme at Toronto / Peter Morgan	37

# News and queries

VSA members JOHN BAIRD, DENNIS DUFFY, JANE MILLGATE, MICHAEL MILLGATE, and JOHN ROBSON (all of Toronto) were among the contributors to Rough Justice: Essays on Crime in Literature, ed. Martin L. Friedland (University of Toronto, 1991).

PHIL FERREIRA (Ryerson) has two publications scheduled for 1992: Predication and the Absolute: The Argument of Bradley's Logic (Edwin Mellen Press), and "Bradley's Attack on Associationism," in Philosophy after F.H. Bradley (Wilfred Laurier University Press).

MICHELE GREEN published "Sympathy and the Social Value of Poetry: J.S. Mill's Literary Essays" in the University of Toronto Quarterly, Summer, 1991.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH (University of Toronto) has written The Secret Ring: Freud's Inner Circle and the Politics of Psychoanalysis, which was published simultaneously in England, the United States, Canada, and France this fall.

LESLIE HOSAM (University of Toronto) has just published Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History, Cambridge University Press).

PATRICIA MORTON (Trent) has published Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991; also issued in paperback by Praeger).

At a reception this Spring JOHN M. ROBSON (Toronto) was the recipient of a festschrift entitled A Cultivated Mind: Essays on J.S. Mill Presented

to John M. Robson (U of T Press). The volume, edited by MICHAEL LAINE (Toronto), included essays by VSA members BRUCE KINZER (Wilmington, NC), ANN ROBSON (Toronto), and JEAN O'GRADY as well as scholars from further afield.

ALEXANDER M. ROSS (Professor Emeritus, Guelph) published "A Show of Names" in the Whig-Standard Magazine, 7 September 1991.

NANCY ENGBRETSEN SCHAUMBURGER (Manhattanville College, NY) is a University Associate at NYU during her fall sabbatical, doing research on Dickens.

\*\*\*

The VSAO will sponsor a Victorian dinner this winter, on Monday 10 February 1992. It will be held at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. The catering will be provided by Ryerson's school of hotel management, who have undertaken to provide an authentic menu. Final arrangements are now being made, and further details will be provided at a time closer to the event.

The VSAO is now a registered charity. This means that we have the right to issue tax receipts for donations to the Association's scholarly work. The executive is in the process of discussing the purposes or projects to which donations will be applied: these include such things as a special lecture, a scholarship, or a book fund. Further suggestions for special funds are welcome. Donations may be made in care of the Secretary-Treasurer at the Victoria College address.

The VSA executive would also be happy to hear from any members who have suggestions about next year's programmes, whether it be topics for our annual conference or for Toronto

meetings, possible speakers, or names of members who might be interested in joining the executive.

\*\*\*

Jill Shefrin of the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books sends word of two exhibitions at Boys' and Girls' House. The first (October 15, 1991 - January 4, 1992) is of fables from the fourteenth century to the present day. The second, of special interest to Victorianists, runs from January 15 to April 4, 1992, and deals with the works of British children's authors and artists resident in India, including Rudyard Kipling, J.L. Kipling, Mrs. Sherwood, Flora Annie Steel, and Charlotte Tucker ("A.L.O.E.").

Contributions are invited to a collection of historical and interdisciplinary essays on women and American slavery being compiled and edited by Patricia Morton. The project intends to encourage attention to slavery as a gendered institution, and to feminist research in this field. The editor is interested in contributions examining the role of slavery in the shaping of black and white womanhood in Victorian America or women's roles in the shaping of slavery. Requests for further information, or two-page abstracts, with abbreviated vita, may be sent to Professor P. Morton, Department of History, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7B8.

Cambridge University Press are planning the third edition of The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, to be published in five volumes from the mid 1990s. It will concentrate on primary material, and on secondary material which is nearly contemporary with first publication (up to 1920). It will update and check the accuracy of all existing

NCBEL entries, and supply new entries for many hundreds of writers omitted by NCBEL. The individual volumes will also be reorganized, and new sections added to reflect changes in research in the last quarter of a century. Anyone interested in any aspect of the nineteenth century volume (1800-1900)--suggestions for new entries or sections, corrections, expertise on a particular writer or subject--should write to Joanne Shattock, Victorian Studies Centre, Dept. of English, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK.

The Victorian Studies Centre at the University of Leicester welcomes applications from visiting scholars wishing to spend sabbatical terms in the UK. The Centre offers Honorary Visiting Scholar status to successful applicants, together with access to the University Library's excellent nineteenth-century resources, a staff room, and Senior Common Room facilities. Those interested should send a cv to Joanne Shattock, Director, at the preceding address.

The periodical Victorian Literature and Culture solicits longer papers or chapters of books on all aspects of literature, cultural history, and the interrelations of the arts. It is also looking for scholars interested in writing omnibus reviews of authors or entire areas of scholarship and criticism. To volunteer for the latter, please write to Professor Winifred Hughes, Book Review Editor, English Department, 22 McCosh Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544, USA.

\*\*\*



# Conference notes

## 1991 VSAO CONFERENCE

The 1991 Victorian Studies Association (Ontario) Conference was held on 13 April at Glendon College (York University). The theme, appropriately enough at our own perplexing fin-de-siècle, was the eighteen-nineties. Our morning speaker was J.E. Chamberlin, Professor of English at the University of Toronto (New College), whose paper was titled "The Idea of the Infinite: Some Victorian Sleights-of-Hand." Our afternoon speaker was Robin Spencer, Senior Lecturer in Art History at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, whose subject was "Beardsley and Whistler: l'art nouveau et l'art ancien." After lunch we were treated to a delightful sampling of prose, poetry, and drama from the eighteen-nineties by Jill Matus (English, Scarborough College, University of Toronto) and VSAO President Hans de Groot (English, University College, University of Toronto). The Glendon Senior Common Room provided the (relatively) bucolic setting for morning registration, morning sherry, the afternoon business meeting, and--enfin--cocktails and other post-conference pleasures.

Prof. Chamberlin persuasively demonstrated that the concept of infinity posed a special dilemma for the eighteen-nineties. He stressed that discussions of the "reality" of space and time produced a set of linked epistemological concerns for the practitioners and critics of "science" and "art." Paradoxes and aphorisms from both quarters generated convergences which blurred the boundaries of received discourse and raised troubling questions about the

nature of the infinite in all disciplines. Writers as seemingly disparate as Arthur Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde dealt with these epistemological concerns in their work. The questions of infinity were focussed in three domains: the nature of time, the nature of space, and the relationship between "fact" and "fiction." It was Karl Pearson, the statistician and philosopher of science, who raised these issues most forcefully for his generation. Pearson's The Grammar of Science (1892)--with its anti-metaphysical stance and its assertion of the role of the creative imagination in the discovery of scientific laws--was a highly influential text for many. The preoccupation with the infinite was emphasized also in Arthur Symons' The Symbolist Movement in Literature.

Chamberlin cited a number of "insignia of infinity" for the eighteen-nineties: the "moment," both limiting and limitless; the "horizon," both a boundary marker and an invitation to infinity; the notion of intersection in poetry and art, between now/infinity, closings/ openings, fragment/ whole; and, finally, the unique individual in crisis. He suggested that irony functioned as a "trope of infinity" in the hands of many fin-de-siècle writers, as with Walter Pater's "real" dissolving into vanishing impressions. Symmetry and correspondence were fascinations of the decade, as manifested in discourse on the relationship between infinite and finite, reality and imagination, and literary symbolism and science's search for patterns and order in the natural world. Wilde's emphasis on beauty as infinite perception at the intersection of contingent and absolute, and Pater's flame in perpetual motion at the intersection of force and energy are eloquent testimony to this preoccupation. Chamberlin offer-

ed telling examples of the powerful influence of mathematical ideas of infinity upon scientists and artists alike. Scientific interest in "irrational numbers" (such as pi) and the foundations for the mathematics of infinity laid by Georg Cantor's set theory rendered the infinite palpable and actual for the eighteen-nineties. Chamberlin argued that Cantor's "nutty" but prophetic ideas--such as that the part is identical to the whole or that any two line segments, regardless of their lengths, contain the same "number" of points--struck a responsive chord in the nervous (and decadent?) Victorian fin-de-siècle. During that decade, the infinite, in its manifold guises, had become a unifying--if still paradoxical--symbol, routinely employed in art and science.

The afternoon session was the occasion for a stimulating study by Robin Spencer of the careers and relationship of James Whistler and Aubrey Beardsley. Spencer explored Whistler's changing attitude toward the younger artist, upon whom he exercised a profound impact. Despite their apparent striking dissimilarities, Whistler came to appreciate fully the brilliance of Beardsley's "art nouveau" even if he could not transcend his own cultural milieu. Spencer stressed how Beardsley's art was perfectly suited to the new technique of photo-mechanical reproduction. This, in part, accounted for Beardsley's world-wide influence and rendered possible the relatively inexpensive and broader dissemination of art. Beardsley consciously distanced himself, for example, from William Morris' hand-printed and limited editions. Spencer also showed that, despite his protest against the culturally standardizing tendencies of the Industrial Revolution, Beardsley was eminently an artist of the

city--focussing first on London, then Paris. Both speakers provided the conference participants with intriguing insights and provocative interdisciplinary analyses of the work of fin-de-siècle Victorians.

Martin Fichman  
Glendon College  
York University

\*\*\*

OUR NEXT ANNUAL CONFERENCE will be held on Saturday 11 April 1992. In the morning, Alan Ryan of Princeton University will speak on private vs. public morality. The afternoon speaker is John M. Robson of Toronto, whose topic is "Marriage or Celibacy? A Moral or Practical Dilemma."

ENGLAND IN THE 1990s will be the topic of the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, to be held in South Bend, Indiana, on 24-25 April 1992. If you wish to submit a proposal, please send an abstract of two or three pages (seven copies) no later than 15 November 1991 to Micael Clarke, Department of English, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626, USA.

AN EDWARDIAN THEATRE CONFERENCE will be held in Victoria, BC, on 26-29 September 1992. Speakers will include Peter Bailey, Tracy Davis, Joseph Donohue, David Mayer, and George Rowell. For further information write to Michael Booth, Chair, Department of Theatre, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2.

VICTORIAN PLACES AND SPACES is the theme for the 1992 conference of the Northeast Victorian Studies Association, to be held at Rutgers, 24-26 April 1992. Papers will probably cover such topics as living spaces both public and private, landscaping,

cartography, tourism, regionalism, and the concept of man's place in nature.

THE JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA announces its annual conference for 1993, to be held 7-10 October at the Chateau Lake Louise in the Rockies. The Austen novel being con-

sidered is Persuasion; guest speakers are Margaret Drabble, Isobel Grundy, and Elaine Showalter. Proposals for papers are invited by 1 June 1992. For further information please contact Juliet McMaster or Bruce Stovel, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E5.



## In memoriam: Dorothy Zaborszky 1942-91

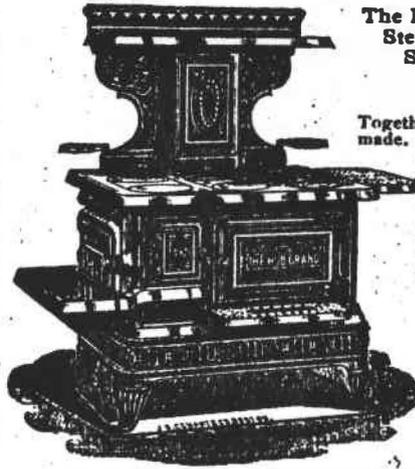
Dr. Dorothy Zaborszky died suddenly in Toronto on 5 March 1991. She had been a member of the Victorian Studies Association almost since its inception, and served for several years as member-at-large. Dorothy was Associate Professor of English at Laurentian University, Sudbury, specializing in Victorian literature and Women's Studies. Born in Budapest, she left Hungary as a refugee in 1956 with her mother and sister. They settled in Toronto, where Dorothy was educated at Loretto College (Brunswick) and St. Michael's College (Honours English). After taking her master's degree at Toronto, with a thesis on the Forsyte Saga, she taught for a year at Loyola College, Montréal. She then took her Ph.D. at the University of London; her doctoral thesis was on George Meredith.

Dorothy began teaching at Laurentian in 1970. She was a concerned and active feminist, publishing articles on the history of the Feminist Party of Canada and related topics, and teaching Women's Studies in Continuing Education as well as in Laurentian's credit programme. Her many friends in the Victorian Studies Association may wish to add to the scholarship fund which has been established in her memory. Contributions to the "Dorothy E. Zaborszky Memorial Scholarship," payable to Laurentian University, may be sent c/o Dr. Shannon Langan, Department of English, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ont. P3E 2C6.

Germaine Warkentin  
Victoria College  
University of Toronto



# THE HUB GRAND RANGE, WITH WIRE GAUZE OVEN DOOR.



The Hub Grand has Beautifully Designed Castings, with Steel Finished Edges, End Hearth, with Sliding Shelf, Center Draft Kindling Damper, Patent Reflex or Triangular Grate, Mammoth Ash Pan, and Nickel Towel Rack,

Together with Every Improvement of Value to be found on any range made. The Wire Gauze Oven Door is an exclusive feature of the Hub Ranges. This door allows the circulation of fresh air continuously through the oven. The Hub Grand Range with the Wire Gauze Oven Door will bake out of doors in the winter with the weather at zero, as well as any other range will in a warm kitchen. Every housekeeper wants to know more about a stove that will do this. Our agents throughout the country will be glad to explain this feature of the Hub Ranges and make it for your interest to purchase one.

**SMITH & ANTHONY STOVE COMP'Y,**  
Makers of Hub Stoves and Ranges,  
48 to 54 Union Street, Boston, Mass.

FOR SALE BY

**A. H. PLOUFF,**  
Market Sq., - IPSWICH, MASS.

Advertising trade card - c. 1895  
REVERSE



Advertising trade card - c. 1895  
FRONT

# Collecting Victorian Ephemera

Barbara Rusch

Ephemera, a word derived from the Greek to denote the minor documents of everyday life that are meant to be used and thrown away, covers a wide range of printed and handwritten material. Mostly of paper, ephemera includes leaflets and trade catalogues, advertising novelties, posters, packaging, greeting cards, tickets, labels, newspapers, notices, and many other categories too numerous to mention. In fact, it comprises pretty well anything printed that is not a book.

These are not the great documents of a given age. They are not the Magna Cartas or the Declarations of Independence, but they nonetheless form an important part of the historical record. A paper relic may contain many stories, each revealing a different aspect of its character and experience. One may compare the document, whether a Victorian advertising lithograph, a political pamphlet or a personal letter, to an onion, each layer representing a separate dimension or component. The outer skin is the typographical layer, followed by the historical, political, social, cultural, and aesthetic elements. Each discloses something vital about itself and about the age which produced it.

The element of nostalgia associated with Victorian printed ephemera, combined with its unique visual attributes, makes it particularly conducive to this kind of layer-by-layer examination. This was an age of great innovations in the field of graphic design, and advances in the process of mass colour printing meant that

reproductions of fine art now fell within the means of ordinary people. The last quarter of the nineteenth century also ushered in the Golden Age of Advertising, when the art of communication evolved into the science of persuasion and manufacturers were quick to put the chromolithograph to use in the rapidly expanding field of commercial art.

By 1875, many goods which had formerly been sold in bulk were now being offered to the consumer pre-packaged. The success of any one product among the vast array to which the public was now being exposed depended largely upon the effectiveness of the brightly coloured packaging, trade signs, catalogues, and especially the beautiful advertising cards, which were distributed free of charge at point of sale or stuffed into tins and boxes as giveaways. Used to promote every conceivable product or service, these charming paper novelties, many featuring illustrations of elegantly dressed women and rosy-cheeked children, proved to be an effective weapon in the burgeoning marketing arsenal. Whether "trade cards" reflected society in the ideal or created an ideal after which middle-class Victorians came to model themselves, they were avidly collected for their aesthetic appeal by those same women and children represented in their illustrations, who assiduously pasted them into scrapbooks, lovingly preserved them in shoe boxes, handed them out as rewards of merit, and used them as scraps in the handmade screens they took such delight in crafting. Clearly, the collecting of advertising

trade cards was a sentimental pastime even a hundred years ago. Today collectors appreciate and study them on many different levels--for their innovative printing techniques, for the information they yield about nineteenth-century industry and business practices, and for the fascinating cultural and social environment they reveal.

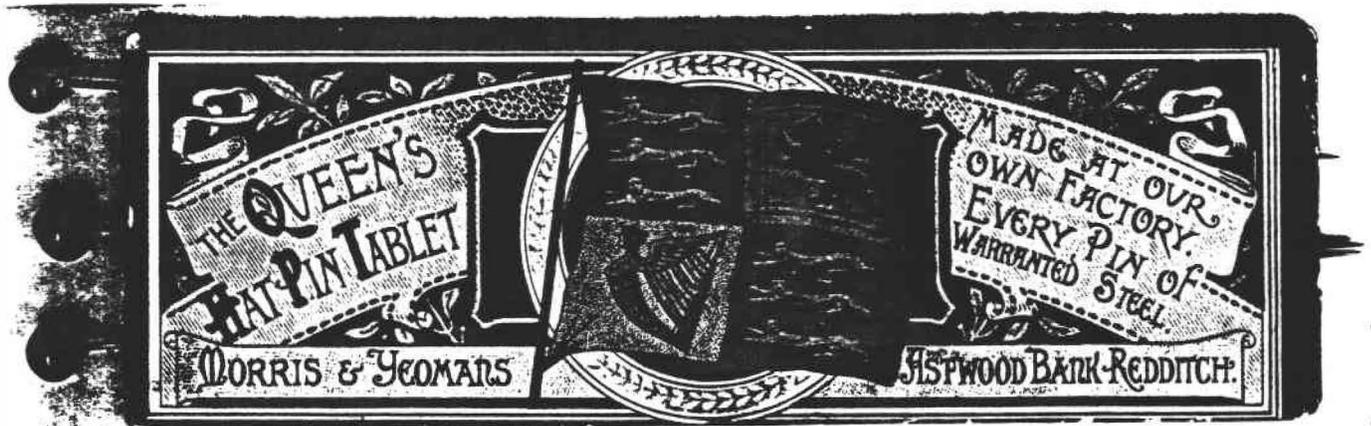
Packaging is another compelling form of Victorian ephemera. Tins, boxes, and bottles all provided a popular repository for decorative chromolithographed images, including beautiful women, pastoral scenes, and famous landmarks. Like trade cards, packaging also offered a visual medium for an outpouring of patriotic fervour. From soap to cocoa to laxatives and corsets, national symbols were routinely exploited in an effort to attract the attention of the flag-waving consumer. In Canada, the beaver and maple leaf figured prominently in nineteenth-century packaging; in the United States it was typically Columbia and Uncle Sam; and in Britain the images of John Bull and Queen Victoria were used unreservedly by manufacturers seeking to capitalize on the patriotic spirit of their customers.

So liberally was Queen Victoria's image applied to contemporary packaging that she became a trademark of all those imperialist, industrialist, and expansionist values for which the Empire stood. This phenomenon was especially true during her Jubilees of 1887 and 1897, marking respectively her fiftieth and sixtieth years on the British throne. These two splendid events aroused the passions of every nation in the Empire. They also provided manufacturers with an opportunity to produce a breathtaking array of commemorative packaging, from biscuit tins and chocolate boxes to hatpin holders and spice bottles, many bearing profusely ornamented portraits of the beloved sovereign. Highly decorative, they boasted the latest advances in mass-production colour printing, and their resulting visual appeal has ensured that they are as cherished by collectors today as they were one hundred years ago, as worthy souvenirs of a glorious reign.

And what of the role of the ephemera collector, researcher, or curator to these affecting tidbits of history? Just as an anthropologist re-creates prehistoric man from a few fragments



Hatpin folder - Jubilee 1897 FRONT



Hatpin folder - Jubilee 1897

REVERSE

of bone, so the ephemerist reconstructs the elegance and charm of the Victorian era from an old ticket stub, a greeting card, or a domestic scene as depicted on a trade card. From the flotsam and jetsam of a by-gone age, the collector assumes the role of social anthropologist, meticulously piecing together a papier-mâché skeleton of an individual, a family, or a society.

Of all types of ephemera, none is more conducive to this form of "recreation" than manuscript material. If Victorian printed ephemera offers a unique glimpse at the social topography of the nineteenth century, its handwritten records yield a wealth of sensory and emotional delights. Though lacking the visual interest of the printer's art, with its bright colours and vivid themes, they are nonetheless enduring personal documents, testimonials to the lives of the ordinary men and women who unwittingly penned them for posterity. As evidence of the human condition, the letters, diaries, and albums of the Victorian period can be even more captivating than its printed paper.

For all their simplicity, their jottings are surprisingly articulate and

often eloquent. In a letter to his young protégé, Miss Margaret Neale, dated 10 December 1835, an American gentleman expounds upon the value of a good education, which

as it assists and cherishes a sound mind so it serves to temper and regulate and correct the extravagances ... of a generous heart. A good education teaches us to know the weaknesses of others as well as ourselves--to despise the saucy chattering of the vain fool--and to esteem the ... more sensible conversation of the discreet and well informed--and therefore a good education ought to inspire us with modesty. ... Modesty thus attained is always accompanied by self respect which is another word for dignity--A good education I have often told you is the very soul of good manners--and is therefore a qualification of the highest value in our intercourse with the world--In short, who can be accomplished, engaging, correct, or respectable through life--in all its varieties and vicissitudes, without an education?

Disease and pain was, not surprising-

ly, a common theme in the letters of the nineteenth century. On 2 July 1874, Uncle William wrote to his nephew Charlie about the pain, both physical and emotional, associated with the loss of an eye in a recent operation:

A sad and dreamy sensation comes over me, dear boy, as I awaken from sleep, or am reminded that an old life companion of three score years has left me, to return no more. I meet plenty of philosophers who tell me they are thankful I have a good eye left (Tis the left in two senses of that word). But when old Uncle Bill looks in the glass, he doesn't quite know hisself [sic] ... that terrible vacancy in my head is like a new-born baby, which Aunt Fanny must attend. I am trying to be patient and reconciled to an event which came suddenly upon me. Five days I had to think of it, suffering all in the anticipation. A blessed oblivion then came over me. When restored to consciousness all was over, the head bandaged and the only pain such as a knife must leave behind it. ... There is no help for all this. The thing is done. The eye is gone and cannot come back. Tomorrow an examination will be made and I shall know whether there was an actual disease--and if so its nature.

In the nineteenth century, the diary or journal served the function of a daily log, providing a running account of the day's activities, often with very little emphasis on the thoughts and feelings of the writer. Diaries were not silent, surrogate penpals, but life records. The secrets they bare are coaxed out almost despite their authors, for there is little conscious attempt at emotional appeal. And yet, these century-old

manuscripts survive as historical transcripts, revealing lives spent in monotonous toil, religious fervour, and dedication to family values.

Frequently, events of great historical or political importance are juxtaposed with the trivialities and mundanities of everyday life, and we realize with some shock and not a little amusement that events of great pith and moment were often but a single thread woven into the fabric of the individual life. On 23 January 1901, H. Le Comb, a farmer in the Niagara Falls area, makes this entry in his journal:

I have been gitting [sic] out Pulp all day. ... A.J. Hicks come about 3 o'clock, he will stay tonight, he says Queen Victoria was dead. She died last night at half past six o'clock. Will Blount stopped and got an axe half that I had made for him.

And the following day he notes, "We wanted to hear from England, it is King Edward the Seventh now." And thus, without fanfare, one age ends and another begins.

Sometimes manuscript ephemera links past and present in strange and unexpected ways. One such example is a journal belonging to Charles H. Gilmore in the year 1865, which came into my possession at an antiquarian book fair in Toronto. Living on the outskirts of Montreal, Gilmore records the minutiae of his daily existence alongside emotional reports of the continuing crisis in the United States, as the Civil War grinds to a slow and bloody halt.

Wednesday, August 2, 1865: Got a letter from A.N. Russell. It contained the melancholy news of Jessie Edward Hunt's death. Poor

Hunt! he was a noble boy, he attended school at Meriden when I did. At the close of school he spent a few days with me at Claremont. Born in Madras, East Indies of American parents. Was in the Army and taken for prisoner and starved to death in Anderson Hell prison. May a rightfull [sic] vengeance fall upon his murderers. And may we meet hereafter.

On the day the Confederate army finally laid down its guns in defeat, Charles Gilmore is appropriately ecstatic: "Monday, April 10, 1865: Glorious news of Lee's surrendering to Grant received. Hip! Hip! Hurrah! Peace comes soon." But his entry for Saturday, 15 April, records an entirely different set of circumstances: "Sorrowfull, dreadfull [sic] intelligence. News came in this A.M. that President Lincoln was shot in Ford's theatre, Washington and died at 7:22 this A.M. Secretary Seward and son assassinated [sic] also and one dead." As a result of a national radio broadcast some years ago, during which portions of the Gilmore journal were read, it was discovered to be the work of an American Civil War draft dodger, whose great-great-nephew lives today in Calgary, Alberta. Subsequent correspondence with Ralph Gilmore yielded additional evidence of his ancestor's life before and after his arrival in Canada, including photographs, family histories, and personal documents.

Every collector of Victorian ephemera is seeking in some way to make a connection with the past--an age which many regard as more idealistic, elegant, and romantic than our own. Every so often, that connection is a serendipitous one, as in the case of the Gilmore diary. Another took place some years ago, when the author purchased a little manuscript book en-

titled Falling Petals, the charming work of a young lady named Mary Louise Webster, second daughter of a Presbyterian minister from Palmyra, New York. From 1879 to 1881 Mary Louise attended a ladies' college in London, Ontario, and it is her recollections of those halcyon days at Helmut that is the subject of her book. Written entirely in verse, penned in magnificent spencerian script, and accompanied by beautiful pen and ink drawings, Falling Petals, written after Miss Webster's graduation, provides poetic insight into women's education during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Fond memories (and some not so fond) of her teachers, classmates, studies, and activities are all lovingly recalled:

Mrs. White, Gifted Dame, I salute  
you;  
Your accomplishments, faith, are not  
few;  
You are Mistress of Note and of  
Needle,  
While you wield Calisthenics Sticks,  
too.  
"Half of my Kingdom" to listen  
To your voice again, strident and  
full  
As you dictate Domestic Economy  
To the larger half of the School!  
The Room--the First Class Room--is  
crowded  
With Maidens who silently write,  
Till one glances up to require--  
"Please say that again, Mrs. White."  
We liked it, I think on the whole--  
That big silent Class all about,  
And the odd homely facts we recorded  
Of Venison, Capon and Trout,  
The testing of dubious Water,  
House-hunting reduced to an Art,  
The choosing of Beef and of Mutton,  
And the technical Names of each Part.  
Unpolished, ungraceful but zealous,  
Shod with terrible English-made  
Shoes,  
Yet--a Part of our dearly-loved

Helmuth--

Not one feature of her would I lose.

A little detective work revealed the sad circumstances of Mary Louise Webster's life subsequent to her return to Palmyra. It seems that "Aunt Louie," as she was affectionately known to her two surviving great-nieces, was stricken with a severe infection shortly after her graduation from Helmuth Ladies' College, leaving her permanently deaf. Remaining single and condemned to a life of silence and isolation, she became somewhat eccentric and was often seen walking about town trailed by a dozen or more neighbourhood cats and dogs. She did try, on at least one occasion, to publish her little books (she compiled several), but a polite rejection from a New York publisher discouraged her from further serious attempts at authorship. She died in Palmyra in 1958, at the age of ninety-seven. However unfulfilled the life of its author, Falling Petals warrants publication. There is much to be learned from its enchanting pages, both for educators of the late twentieth century and for students of Victorian social history with a special interest in women's education.

To those aware of its significance,

Victorian ephemera serves as a sociological barometer, measuring the behavioural standards of the age. As such, the information it provides is often of greater value to researchers and historians than the dry data of official records and textbook history. Much of the charm and, indeed, importance, of Victorian ephemera lies in its very artlessness--in its unwitting role as historical evidence. Less studied, and therefore more candid, it offers an unexpurgated glimpse into the popular culture of a bygone era. The printed and holographic ephemera of the nineteenth century are a kind of historical "crazy glue," providing vital links to the lives and concerns of our predecessors and ensuring that their contributions will not be lost to future generations. It is this mission to link past and present that resonates within the collector of Victorian ephemera, who plays the part of voyeur, peeking through the keyhole of time, beyond which lie the secrets of a vanished world.

\*\*\*

Barbara Rusch, founder and President of the Ephemera Society of Canada, is an avid collector of Victorian printed and handwritten ephemera.



# Review essay

The Gendered Nature of Victorian  
Science: Recent Works

Bernard Lightman  
York University

With the recent publication of Evelleen Richards' articles on Darwin and Huxley, Ornella Moscucci's The Science of Woman, and Cynthia Eagle Russett's Sexual Science, the main shape of a new interdisciplinary area of study has become visible. The field of Victorian science and gender draws upon new scholarly developments in Victorian Studies, the history of science, and feminist theory to examine how scientific thought provided a naturalistic basis to the sexual divisions of Victorian society and how scientific theory itself was shaped by notions of gender. The Victorian period is especially significant for an understanding of the relationship between science and gender for it was during this time that the scientific conception of female nature first became widely influential, even though scientific interest in the topic dated back to Aristotle. The sexual science of the late nineteenth century possessed unprecedented power as its practitioners attempted to be far more precise and empirical than researchers had been hitherto; they could draw upon new developments in the life sciences as well as on the new social sciences of anthropology, psychology, and sociology; and they spoke with the imperious tone of a discipline granted decisive authority in matters social and scientific.

Scholars working on Victorian science and gender have tended to approach the area in three ways. They have

tackled the issue by way of studies of the sexist beliefs of specific scientists, through detailed examinations of notions of gender in a particular science, and by means of an analysis of views of women and the larger theoretical framework cutting across all the sciences. We can best survey the field by dealing with recent works which represent each of the three approaches developed by scholars.

Many of the earlier works in Victorian science and gender were concerned with establishing that eminent scientists were in fact sexist. In their pioneering articles Flayra Alaya and Susan Sleeth Mosedale discuss how such figures as Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, George J. Romanes, Francis Galton, Patrick Geddes, J. Arthur Thomson, and Havelock Ellis provided rationales for maintaining the female status quo. More sophisticated and detailed studies of individual scientists have been provided by the Australian scholar Evelleen Richards in two key articles. In her finely nuanced piece on T.H. Huxley, Richards demolishes the usual depiction of Darwin's bulldog as an enlightened defender of women's rights. Huxley gained this reputation through his publicly reiterated support for female education and entry to the professions. But, as Richards shows, Huxley still accepted the conventional Victorian view of women as frail, religious creatures whose reactionary and frivolous presence was not appropriate in the forums of professional science. When Huxley became president of the Ethnological Society in 1868 he initiated the move to exclude women from the society, subordinating his commitment to women's issues (such as it was) to his goal of amalgamating with the Anthropological Society (which was rabidly sexist) in order to make possible Darwinian

dominance of the key discipline of anthropology. As for Huxley's liberal egalitarianism, Richards explains that he believed that law and custom should not add to the biological burdens weighing women down.

But if Darwin's bulldog does not escape the charge of sexism, what of his master, the gentle Darwin, who avoided controversy and was looked upon by his friends as a saint? Richards' earlier article on "Darwin and the Descent of Woman," still unsurpassed in the literature as a model study of Darwin and gender, demonstrates that Darwin deduced the natural and innate inferiority of women from his theory of evolution by natural and sexual selection. In The Descent of Man Darwin insists that biological law determines not only physical, but also intellectual differences between the sexes. Women were naturally less physically powerful and more tender and altruistic than men, who were by nature competitive, ambitious, and selfish. But, when it came to intelligence, men were superior to women, because higher development of that trait was more fully transmitted to male than female offspring in the evolutionary process. Since evolution had been operating for eons of time to widen the natural inequality of the sexes, Darwin believed that raising the level of feminine intelligence through higher education would have no long-term impact and was therefore a waste of resources.

Richards' work on eminent scientists is complemented by studies of conceptions of gender in a particular field of science, such as psychiatry,<sup>7</sup> medicine,<sup>8</sup> psychiatry, and gynaecology,<sup>9</sup> and anthropology.<sup>10</sup> The most recent contribution to this approach is Ornella Moscucci's The Science of Woman, which focusses on the social and

medical context within which the scientific idea of "gynaecology" was established. Moscucci is interested in dissecting the medical contribution to biological determinism.<sup>11</sup> She argues that the central assumption underpinning gynaecology throughout its long history is "the belief that woman is dominated by her sexual functions" (206). Gynaecologists conceived of their science as a synthetic study of the "whole woman" because they were convinced that the body functioned as an organic unity. The psychological, physical, and moral aspects of femininity therefore could not be understood in isolation from the complex structure of which they were a part. This sort of organicist reasoning validated the notion that different reproductive systems led to essential physical and psychological differences between men and women.

By the 1850s the "ovular theory" of menstruation provided the chief scientific explanation of the biological basis of femininity. The ovaries were redefined by gynaecologists as autonomous control centres of sex and reproduction in the female and thus became the essential biological difference from which all other differences flowed. The other possible candidates for the role of organs of essential femininity, the uterus and breast, came instead to symbolise woman's maternal role, while the ovaries claimed precedence by virtue of their supposed direct tie to nature.

Throughout her discussion of gynaecological efforts to isolate the essential biological difference defining woman, Moscucci conveys to the reader the arbitrary nature of medical theorizing. If the evidence for the notion that woman is dominated by her sexual functions was so highly controversial, why, Moscucci asks, was

it so important to see women as biological beings? And why, Moscucci persistently inquires, was the growth of gynaecology not paralleled by the evolution of a complementary science of masculinity based on the premise that the male sexual system defines man's nature?

The gynaecologist's assertion that puberty, childbirth, and menopause affect woman's mind and body in ways which have no counterpart in man serves two purposes. First, the gynaecologist could regard woman as, by definition, a diseased deviation from the standard of health represented by the male. According to the nineteenth century gynaecologist, women's biological functions, such as menstruation, are akin to physical disease and the source of physiological disorders, from strange moods to hysteria, or even insanity. Physically delicate and psychologically unstable, women could be identified as a special group of patients who required the constant medical supervision of a gynaecologist. Second, the gynaecologist could draw on the notion of sexual difference to prescribe very different roles for men and women. The physiology and psychology of men suited them to the public arena of work, politics, and commerce while women were said to be "made" for activities in the private sphere of the family. The gynaecologist could fancy himself an authority on the issue of women's social duties and responsibilities because he offered a perspective informed by pure science -- "an activity unmediated by the observer's political interests and value judgments" (40).

Scholars like Moscucci and Richards, who have been working on a particular science or specific scientists, have also touched upon the larger theoretical framework cutting across all

science which was used to explain how and why men and women differed from each other. By far the most detailed treatment of this topic is to be found in Cynthia Russett's Sexual Science, which describes how during the nineteenth century the Anglo-American scientific community moved away from the Enlightenment notion of natural equality. She begins with a telling juxtaposition of the positions of Darwin and J.S. Mill. For Mill, it is unknown if there are natural differences between men and women but it is certain that education and external circumstances have produced artificial differences. Darwin's Descent of Man, in part a response to Mill's Subjection of Women, takes the position that women's nature, like men's, is rooted in their biology. In this debate over the nurture/nature question as it applied to gender, most scientists sided with Darwin. As Russett reminds us, some scientists even contributed to a formidable body of theory which, though reliable data was lacking, concluded that women were inherently different from men in their anatomy, physiology, temperament, and intellect. In the evolutionary development of the race women lagged behind men in the same way that primitive people lagged behind Europeans. Women's development was arrested because they needed to preserve their energies for reproduction. Women could therefore never expect to match the intellectual and artistic accomplishments of men, nor could they really expect to obtain an equal share of power and authority (12). Nature dictated a secondary role for women.

In their search for empirical proof of the existence of essential sex differences, scientists could turn most easily to the crowning achievement of nineteenth-century physical anthropology: craniology, the study

of the skull and brain. Assuming that the body (more specifically the head and brain) revealed the mind, craniologists armed themselves with their callipers and measuring tapes as they embarked on a veritable frenzy of quantification exercises. Included among the indices of mental capacity were measurement of the facial angle, the cephalic index (ratio of skull length to skull breadth), and, most importantly, the size and weight of the brain. Of course bigger was better, and women's brains were believed to be smaller and lighter than those of men. But there was a problem with the notion that brain weight is an index to mental capacity: the fact that in sheer size and weight the most massive human brain is outclassed by the brain of an elephant or whale. This led one feminist of the period to observe sarcastically that "almost any elephant is several Cuviers in disguise, or perhaps an entire medical faculty" (36). However such remarks did not deter scientists from looking to craniology for their "facts," nor did it prevent them from turning to the new science of psychology at the end of the century, with its physiological research on the brain and nervous system.

Russett argues that some scientists were not satisfied with the mere accumulation of "facts" about sex differences. They needed a larger theoretical framework and turned to four of the great organizing principles of nineteenth-century science: biogenetic law, sexual selection, the principle of the conservation of energy, and the physiological division of labour. The core of Russett's book deals with these four theories common in the scientific literature of the time. Biogenetic law, or the recapitulation theory that every individual organism repeats in its own life history the life history of its

race, told scientists that women lagged behind men in their resemblance to more primitive organisms. Recapitulation described the differences between the sexes but could not explain why they occurred. Scientists surmised that somehow they must be bound up with the reproduction of the species and hence, Russett concludes, the significance accorded to Darwin's sexual selection theory, which concerned the mechanisms of reproduction and inheritance.

But sexual scientists were not indebted to biology alone. From physics they adapted the new principle of the conservation of energy for their own purposes. They conceived of the human body as subject to the same laws of conservation and transformation of energy which pertain to the whole material universe. The body, then, was viewed as an input-output system similar to an engine; food was taken in and energy (including thought) was produced in an amount equivalent to the amount of food consumed. Bigger bodies can take in more food and produce more energy; men are bigger than women, ergo men produce more energy (QED). Even if women could produce as much energy as men, Victorian scientists estimated that about twenty per cent of it was diverted to reproduction between the ages of twenty to forty. Since conservation theory assumed the existence of a limited and fixed amount of energy, failure by young women to abate from brain work in order to free up sufficient energy for reproductive development would lead to irregular "periodical functions" and a lifetime of weakness and disease (116).

Scientists also had recourse to social thought if theories culled from biology and physics were not persuasive enough. Just as the political economists' law of the division of

labour dictated that highly developed societies produced goods more efficiently by parcelling out the work among many workers each skilled in one operation, the scientists' law of the physiological division of labour categorized as advanced those organisms which developed specialized parts fitted to a specific task. Scientists studied the evolution of reproductive mechanisms from asexuality through hermaphroditism and parthenogenesis to the division into two sexes. Those species within which the sexes were divided were regarded as more advanced. All of human society could be seen as benefitting from a sexual division of labour whereby men provided the family bread and women provided its love and nurturance (144). Nature, then, communicated a clear message: the sexes were meant to complement each other, not to engage in the same activities.

All three genres of work in Victorian science and gender, studies of individual scientists, a specific science, and the theoretical framework grounding all science, aim at revealing the sexist nature of Victorian science. But scholars in the field have also attempted to criticize this sexism. Turning to the reactions of Victorian feminists, they have been disappointed to find that in the process of allying themselves with the scientists in opposition to conventional wisdom and authority, progressive feminists "bought into" the biological determinism of the scientists. Many feminists did not opt for Mill's environmental argument, but rather chose to accept the existence of innate biological and intellectual differences, which undercut their call for sexual equality. Given the enormous prestige of science and the universal acceptance of its authority in issues of sex difference, it is no wonder that feminists tried to con-

front scientific anti-feminism on its own terms.

Since Victorian feminists provide contemporary scholars with few resources for undermining the scientific sexism of Darwin and his colleagues, they have turned to strategies borrowed from both the natural and social sciences. Mosedale argues that Victorian biologists were not only prejudiced and inconsistent, they were also unscientific in their use of a priori reasoning, rather than valid empirical evidence, to verify their statements about the mental characteristics of women. Russett offers more sophisticated and substantial scientific reasons for distrusting the conclusions of the sexual scientists. She points out that the physical anthropologists and psychologists were so preoccupied with things tangible and measurable that their vision was narrowed and their understanding cramped. They were blind to the effects of forces that were not so easily dissected such as the role of social and cultural factors in the construction of the female psyche (48). Even if judged by the criteria of nineteenth-century science, scientific work on sex differences was not legitimate. In one of the most powerful sections of her book Russett applies John Tyndall's formulation of the four main principles of science to the work of the sexual scientists and demonstrates how they violated three of them--they were neither strictly empirical, nor sceptical, nor objective (188). In fact, Russett shrewdly notes that the remarkable uniformity about the nature of womanhood among scientists is peculiar because "so little of the data we would consider germane existed at the time" (155). And even when new scientific developments in the early twentieth century undermined Victorian views on gender difference,

scientists continued to perpetuate the old sexist notions (175).

However, the strongest card played by feminist theoreticians is their argument that the issue of sexual difference be taken out of the court of science altogether since it involves social, not natural, phenomena. Science is unavoidably ideological because "facts" are socially produced. Richards, far more than Russett, stresses the way the social context determined the ideological use of Darwinian theory and even shaped its essential nature. She reminds us that during the last three decades of the nineteenth century the English economy stagnated, her industrial and economic global dominance increasingly challenged by Germany and the United States. This period was also marked by urban and industrial unrest and the emergence of mass socialist working-class politics. Richards therefore concludes that "the bourgeois social order of the 1870s was more than ever anxious to consolidate and justify its class and racial superiority and to preserve that basic bourgeois institution, the family--the cornerstone of the bourgeois social order."<sup>1</sup> Darwin and other middle-class scientists wishfully superimposed their ideal vision of society onto nature and then "scientifically" justified their notion of the "natural" quality of traditional sexual roles through an appeal to the natural order (79).

The growing field of Victorian science and gender, then, has already contributed much to our understanding of the gendered nature of science and its ideological uses. But there are still areas of importance where much remains to be done. We need a full-length study of the feminist reaction to Victorian sexual science. We have studies of the impact of science on

female novelists but we require literary analyses of the scientific texts themselves. What metaphors were seized upon by scientists to legitimize their views on gender? As yet, we have no scholarship on neglected Victorian female scientists and how their gender shaped the nature of their work, such as Shteir's pieces on the earlier period.<sup>1</sup> Finally, much of the scholarship on Victorian science and gender concentrates on the life sciences, in particular medicine and biology. Where are the studies on the "hard" sciences we so desperately need to convince even the most sceptical observer that scientific ideas are shaped by concepts of gender? We must leave these issues to be taken up by future interdisciplinary scholars who, building on the accomplishments of Richards, Moscucci, Russett, and others, are able to take the field one step further.

#### NOTES

1. "Darwin and the Descent of Woman," in The Wider Domain of Evolutionary Thought, ed. D. Oldroyd and I. Langham (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1983), 57-111; "Huxley and Woman's Place in Science: The 'Woman Question' and the Control of Victorian Anthropology," in History, Humanity and Evolution: Essays for John C. Greene, ed. James R. Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 253-84.
2. The Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
3. Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood (Cambridge, Mass./London, England: Harvard University Press, 1989).
4. "Victorian Science and the 'Genius' of Woman," Journal of the History of Ideas 38 (1977), 261-80.
5. "Science Corrupted: Victorian

Biologists Consider 'The Woman Question,'" Journal of the History of Biology 11, No. 1 (Spring 1978), 1-55.

6. "Huxley and Woman's Place in Science," 257.

7. Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

8. J.N. Burstyn, "Education and Sex: The Medical Case against Higher Education for Women in England, 1870-1900," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 117 (1973), 78-89; Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

9. Anne Digby, "Women's Biological Straightjacket," in Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century, ed. Susan Mendus and Jan Rendall (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 192-220.

10. Elizabeth Fee, "The Sexual Politics of Victorian Social Anthropology," in Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives in the History of Women, ed. Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), 86-102.

11. It would be fair to say that biological determinism is not Moscucci's sole interest. She spends a great deal of time discussing the intra-professional rivalries that have shaped the theory and practice of gynaecology. Chapters on men-midwives, the rise of the women's hospitals, and the establishment of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists dwell more on the professionalization and institutionalization of medicine than on science and gender.

12. Alaya, "Victorian Science," 261-2; Richards, "Darwin and the Descent of Woman," 96; Russett, Sexual Science, 12-13.

13. Richards, "Darwin and the Descent of Woman," 94.

14. Ann B. Shteir, "Botanical Dialogues: Maria Jacson and Women's Popular Science Writing in England," Eighteenth-Century Studies 23, No. 3 (Spring 1990), 301-17; idem, "Botany in the Breakfast Room: Woman and Early Nineteenth-Century British Plant Study," in Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives: Women in Science, 1789-1979, ed. Pnina G. Abir-Am and Dorinda Outram (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 31-43.



## Books

E.A. Smith. Lord Grey, 1764-1845. Oxford University Press, 1990. \$103.50

The second Earl Grey, whose name is forever linked with the great parliamentary reform act of 1832, is usually seen as the polar opposite of his near contemporary, the Duke of Wellington. In the first biography, published by G.M. Trevelyan in 1920, and in many other books he appears as the great political liberal, the enemy of privilege, the champion of freedom, the friend of Radicals, and the individual who more than any other paved the way for parliamentary democracy. But in E.A. Smith's new study he is more accurately presented as a profoundly conservative figure who shared much of Wellington's outlook, particularly the importance of preserving aristocratic dominance, greatly admired the Duke and might well have become his colleague in 1829; a man who feared radical reform and whose object in 1830 was to undermine the clamour for a democratic parliament and increase the power of the aristocracy by reducing the influence over the House of Commons of the monarchy and its ministers. Whatever the effects of his actions, Grey was not so much a nineteenth-century liberal as an eighteenth-century aristocratic opponent of royal power. This interpretation is not just a matter of further research--much of the material used by Smith was available to Trevelyan--but also of more thought and better perspectives. Smith's book is thus not just a biography of a major figure but also an important contribution to an understanding of British political and even social history in the half century from the 1780s to the 1830s.

Although Grey always conveyed the sense of being the greatest of aristocrats he came from a relatively modest if secure Northumberland family. He was never wealthy and did not neglect such opportunities as occurred to help his family through government patronage. The aristocratic impression was due mainly to his slim, handsome figure and bearing, his self-sufficiency, aloofness, confidence, and the arrogance which made him such a trial to his friends. The difficulties of his personality were made tolerable only by his manifest abilities and outstanding talents as an orator in parliament, for like most aristocrats he despised speaking in public.



Coming from a family that was naturally inclined to support the government, such a gifted individual might easily and quickly have risen to high office. But from the moment he was elected to the House of Commons in 1786 he identified with the opposition, for no better reason than that he enjoyed the brilliant company of Charles James Fox and his circle. He

had an affair with one of them, the famous Duchess of Devonshire, and the child born to them was raised by his parents as his sister. Forty years later, as attractive to women as ever, he was the lover of Princess Lieven, the wife of the Russian ambassador.

By the end of his first session in parliament Grey had established himself as such an abrasive critic of the government that Prime Minister Pitt complained of the personal, wanton and disrespectful attack on himself, to which Grey replied that "if on any future occasion a compliment to the right hon. gentleman should suggest itself to his mind, he would studiously suppress it, to avoid the risk of being afterwards charged with insincerity" (19-20). Unfortunately for Grey, government remained in the hands of Pitt and his successors for another forty-three years. The only break came in 1806/07 when Grey served in the misnamed Ministry of All the Talents and managed the not inconsiderable feat of raising the pay of the sailors in the Royal Navy for the first time in a century. Apart from that, Grey's career until the age of sixty-five was one of failure. It is no wonder that he experienced long periods of depression and frequently retreated to Northumberland to enjoy country pursuits and the happy company of his wife and fifteen children. He was also not pleased at having to waste his oratory on the desert air of the House of Lords after 1807 since his father, a general, had solicited a peerage from the Addington ministry in 1801. But although he despaired of office he was always lured back to Westminster to attack the government, particularly on Catholic emancipation and moderate reform of parliament which were his fixed principles for over thirty years.

And then suddenly in 1829/30, when Wellington had alienated the Canningites and infuriated the Ultra Tories by emancipating the Catholics, Grey appeared as the only person who could hold together the coalition of Whigs, Liberal Tories and even Ultras which succeeded after they combined to defeat the Duke. Grey had by now come to the conclusion that an extensive reform of the House of Commons, including many new county seats that would fall under the influence of the landlords, would solve the problem forever. It should have been a glorious end and vindication of a long political career. But when his colleagues pressed for more far reaching reforms he resigned in disgust in 1835. By 1839 he was writing in despair: "We must stop somewhere, unless we mean to keep the country in a state of continual agitation, equally incompatible with peace, good order and good government, and I think we have reached a point where a stand ought to be made." In the same year he added: "I am not aware of any essential points on which my opinions differ from those of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel" (321). Such pronouncements might seem a natural consequence of age, but it was not Grey who had changed but rather that he had acquired new, younger and different associates as he lived from one age to another. It was his fate to be praised at last for starting a process which he was then unable to stop. But however he felt about it later it was nevertheless a great achievement which did accomplish his aim of protecting British institutions from violent upheaval.

Neville Thompson  
University of Western Ontario

\*\*\*

Paula Gillett. The Victorian Painter's World. Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1990. \$40.00.

In the author's introduction to this book which is based on her doctoral dissertation, she declares an ambitious goal: to fill the gap left by social and art historians by telling the story of the Victorian painter in the context of his society. She sets out to assess the impact of a large and influential artistic community on the history of the period and, to a certain degree, to document the impact of that community on the individual artist. In the ensuing seven chapters, she concentrates on some of the most intriguing aspects of the story, fulfilling her aims both eloquently and lucidly.

A central focus and unifying idea of Gillett's book is the phenomenon of the social and economic rise of the artist in Victorian England from 1850 to 1880. Aptly christened "Gentlemen of the Brush," artists quickly became wealthy, respected and even venerated members of the upper echelons of Victorian society. This leads the author to a discussion of the trend towards commercialization in the oeuvres of four artists: William Powell Frith, Hubert Herkomer, Luke Fildes, and Francis Holl, men whose tastes for extraordinary houses and the creature comforts led them from monumental and sometimes jarring depictions of "social realism" to the lucrative practice of portrait painting. Gillett follows this development in these artists' careers to the point where she attempts to assess the emotional and psychological impact of "selling out" on these men.

The author devotes two chapters to the women artists of the era, a subject that has preoccupied art historians in recent years. She docu-

ments the preponderance of women as painters and sculptors--an 1871 census reported 1000 of them--while noting the obstacles that were put in their path. Although women were allowed to submit works to the annual Royal Academy exhibitions, they could not become academicians. Art was seen as a respectable occupation if the woman did not leave the home. However, should she venture to the academies for instruction, she had to pay higher fees than her male colleagues. Women were only admitted to life drawing classes, an essential component of Academy training, on highly restricted terms, if at all. Gillett provides case studies of some women who overcame these difficulties and achieved tremendous success. Elizabeth Thompson's monumental Roll Call exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874 attracted so many viewers that a protective railing had to be installed. Not surprisingly, women artists were an active force in the rise of feminism. Gillett perceptively points out that the independent woman artist actually became a protagonist in contemporary literature--Helen Huntingdon of Anne Brontë's Tenant of Wildfell Hall being the most famous.

The author's final chapter investigates the importance and tremendous engagement of the art public in Victorian England. In a reversal of today's critic/public relationship, it seems that the public reception of artists' works shown at the Royal Academy significantly affected the views of critics.

Gillett's book provides the Victorian penchant for polling and recording a happy outlet: the discussion throughout is solidly grounded in statistical evidence. We emerge with a picture of a society in which, for a few decades prior to 1880, the plastic

arts and popular culture intersect, for the middle classes at least. As a museum curator, I was astonished to learn that the 1843 exhibition of cartoons for the mural commissions of the Houses of Parliament attracted 20-30,000 visitors per day during a two month period, and that the 1879 Royal Academy exhibition was seen by 391,197 viewers. During the 1880s and '90s, the average attendance at these exhibitions, which generally lasted two to three months, was 355,000. The Royal Academy juries favoured narrative and didactic painting and the audience evidently responded enthusiastically. However, as the Aesthetic movement gathered strength in the 1870s, the credo of art for art's sake began to challenge these criteria. Schisms appeared in the art world: Sir Coutts Lindsay's opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 as an alternative, less crowded and more elegant exhibition space significantly diminished the status of the Royal Academy exhibitions.

This brings us to the author's concluding discussion of the breaking of the bond between the artist and the community:

The unity of the art world had been shattered, and the process would be carried to its logical conclusion in the next century. In 1907 Walter Crane could note that cliques and small groups of artists were the order of the day. The splintering of the art world into unstable movements and factions (together with the emphasis on formal concerns over thematic content) has served increasingly to remove the painter from the mainstream of ordinary life.

Here Gillett leaves behind the Victorians and enters the twentieth century.

In reading Gillett's book, we are repeatedly struck by the realization that we are heirs to phenomena that



William Powell Frith, *Derby Day*, 1858. By permission of the Tate Gallery, London (Photo: The Bridgeman Art Library).

were born or reborn during the Victorian era. Her consideration of the "secularization of society and the sanctification of art" and her linking of a growing interest in art to a middle-class desire for cultivated respectability are two such instances.

The Victorian Painter's World is a significant addition to the increasing mass of literature on the period. It is also a very good read. Like Frith's Derby Day of 1858 (see ill.), one of the most successful Victorian pictures in its day and to this day, Gillett's book instructs and delights by working a myriad of fascinating details into a grand panorama.

Nancy Minty  
Assistant Curator, European  
Painting and Sculpture  
Art Gallery of Ontario

\*\*\*

Ina Taylor. George Eliot: Woman of Contradictions. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989.

In the "Preface" of her recent biography of George Eliot, Ina Taylor states: "I was determined to use only primary sources, to examine all the available evidence myself, to take nothing on trust and to form my own conclusions unhindered by the opinions of the previous biographers." The portrait of her subject that Taylor reconstructs does evolve from a close reading of the letters and journals as well as from other primary sources. But the resulting delineation of a "woman of contradictions" is not necessarily one that is "truer" than those previously drawn in other biographies.

Taylor's book attests to this commitment to fact by the inclusion of some

hitherto unknown (to this reader at least) details about Marian Evans' life. Some of these findings are helpful to our understanding of the composite portrait of Marian Evans; while others are deployed, it seems, mainly for stylistic effect or, indeed, shock value. An example of the former is Taylor's discovery of a "George Eliot Close" on an old map of Chilvers Cotton on the wall of Marian Evans' father's study. Taylor uses this piece of information to support her explanation of why Marian Evans chose the pseudonym that she did. An example of the latter is the inclusion of a letter in which we are told that Charles Bray wrote to Marian asking if she could spare a pound to contribute to a fund for the ribbon weavers of Coventry; Bray was aghast when he discovered that he was taken at his word--one pound arrived in the mail.

These pieces of biographical "evidence" do give a definition and a shape to Taylor's subject. However, even when evidence is conspicuously lacking, Taylor offers us fiction and asks us to take it as fact. When she writes about Marian's marriage to Johnnie Cross, she describes the event thus: "Soon after the year of mourning ended, Marian proposed to Johnnie Cross. Precise dates and details are vague, having purposely been obscured by Cross in an effort to protect Marian's posthumous image and his own self-respect." Quite surprisingly, Taylor claims that Marian proposed to Johnnie, and not vice versa, as Professor Gordon Haight has had us believe for the last twenty-odd years. In Haight's biography Johnnie seduces Marian: "Johnnie declared that he wanted to be more than a friend to Marian. She probably dismissed it as impossible." Whom are we to believe? Since Marian's letters are tantalisingly, or suspiciously,

mute on this important event in her life, it is possible Taylor may be right. But her version of events can only be speculation.

Taylor's manipulation of the facts--making Marian the pursuer and not the pursued--is necessary for the writer on two counts. Firstly, Taylor's version of the courtship of Marian Evans and John Cross is entirely in accord with the kind of character that she has been slowly building from the first page of her biography. For Taylor, George Eliot's most important characteristics were her unbridled love of sex and money (not necessarily in that order). Secondly, Taylor's assumption that Johnnie suppressed the details of the courtship for the sake of propriety amply supports her hypothesis that Marian Evans' constant concern was to maintain an aura of respectability. This desire to be held in high esteem apparently governed many of Marian's actions.

Marian Evans, as understood by Ina Taylor and other biographers such as Laura Emery and Dianne Sadoff, spent the better part of her life atoning for the break with her father and her brother Isaac. Much of the biography is spent analysing the novelist's anxieties about the irreparable separation from her father over differences in religion and her subsequent break with her brother Isaac over her elopement and her "non-marriage" to George Henry Lewes. Taylor also points to Marian's sense of loss and separation during these years as determining her response to society as a whole, as well as to those who came within her more intimate circle. When Marian Evans rejected her father's religion she suffered a loss of identity, since that identity had been based on her father's values; therefore she attempted to create new identities for herself in the years

that followed. The titles of many of the chapters in the biography illustrate this desire to solidify her sense of self: "The Long Sad Years of Youth," "Neither Use Nor Ornament," "You Excommunicate Me," "Metamorphosis," "I am a Heathen and an Outlaw," and "Changing the Image." Reading these chapter titles reminds one of how important the construction of a strong self-image is for the characters in the novels.

Thus Taylor finds "the contradictions" of her title to lie between Marian Evans' adherence to the conservative, rural values held for the first thirty years of her life, and her subsequent attempts to reclaim those values over the last thirty years. This bisection of the life into two discrete ill-fitting parts seems too simplistic. Such a division ignores or minimises Lewes' importance in Marian Evans' mental and emotional life. While it may be true that Robert Evans helped to "create" Marian Evans, it is equally true that George Lewes was responsible for the emergence of George Eliot.



George Eliot

We find, throughout the biography, Taylor's repeated claims that we must look back to the conservative Robert Evans to understand the apparently radical George Eliot, and that it is in this attachment of daughter to father that we can understand many of Marian Evans'/George Eliot's contradictions. There is obviously some truth to these assertions; however, the repetition of the argument results in a far too simplified portrait of the woman who created both Rosamond Vincy and Romola, Adam Bede and Bulstrode, Gwendolen Harleth and Mirah. One observes in George Eliot's characters combinations of frivolity and seriousness, of sincerity and hypocrisy, and of seductress and virgin. Surely Eliot's characters can legitimately be used to cast light on the character of their creator or at the very least reveal the cast of mind required to create such diverse personalities.

However, despite these limitations, Taylor's book is a welcome addition to the previous "lives" of George Eliot by John Cross, Gordon Haight, Ruby Redinger, Laura Emery, and Dianne Sadoff. I cannot accept Taylor's portrait of Marian Evans in its entirety. When I put the book down I was reminded of the way that I felt when I first discovered that the "real Mimi" (Henri Murger's Mimi in his "Scènes de la Vie Bohème") was a profoundly egotistical woman--no shrinking violet. Suddenly Puccini's sensitive, flowerlike Mimi was metamorphosed into someone entirely at odds with my preconceptions. Is George Eliot really the sex-starved mercenary creature that Taylor paints? I quite simply cannot reconcile that image of her with the writer of the novels.

Teresa Snelgrove  
University of Western Ontario

J. Russell Perkin. A Reception-History of George Eliot's Fiction. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990.

George Levine writes, introducing a "Victorian Cluster" in PMLA (Oct. 1990): "our view of Victorian literature is undergoing an important revision" (1028). This awareness informs J. Russell Perkin's recent "reception history" of George Eliot's fiction, an examination of the critical reception that forms a segment of the horizon against which the novels are perceived and that, according to Sartre and Jauss, is a vital, constituent element of the work of art itself. This book is especially welcome at a time when studies of literary history demand we re-examine the context of novels' production.

Lengthy studies of Eliot's work are now commonly prefaced by remarks about the volume of Eliot criticism and thumb-nail sketches of her work's critical reception, from contemporary hagiography and early twentieth-century neglect to the resuscitation by Basil Willey and F.R. Leavis, the major studies of Barbara Hardy, W.J. Harvey, and U.C. Knoepfelmacher, and the expansion of interest in the last two decades. Karen L. Pangallo's George Eliot: A Reference Guide, 1972-1987 (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990) contains 223 pages listing "writings about George Eliot" produced over just fifteen years since 1972, and Graham Handley's State of the Art: George Eliot (Bristol: Bristol Press, 1990) is sub-titled "A guide through the critical haze." In the "Preface" to his An Annotated Critical Bibliography of George Eliot (Brighton: Harvester, 1988), George Levine notes the "vastness" of Eliot criticism produced over the past forty years and cautions "it would be impossible and unwise to attempt to achieve full coverage of all works about her"

(ix).

Perkin similarly restricts this investigation, which is a reception-history, not a bibliography, even a critical one, of Eliot criticism. This study is circumscribed in two ways: it primarily considers three novels, Adam Bede, Daniel Deronda, and Felix Holt, in this unusual sequence, and treats The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch rather briefly. The study also confines itself to major critical paradigms and prominent critics and doesn't consider in detail the history of the understanding of Eliot's intellectual sources, from the work of Richard Simpson on philosophy to that of Gillian Beer, Karen Chase, and Sally Shuttleworth on nineteenth-century science. Moreover, while it claims to "attempt to connect the reception-history of Eliot's fiction to the histories of the other discourses, institutions, and social groups which collectively make up what Jauss calls 'general history'" (19) and it does offer an energetic and wide-ranging discussion, its coverage is scrupulously concise.

A reception-history, methodologically grounded in phenomenological hermeneutics and based on Jauss's critical theory, historicizes a work's critical reception rather than merely summarizing and classifying it. This volume commences with a lucid history of reception theory itself, but the core of the study critically applies Jauss's theory, while also drawing upon the methods of new literary history, materialist history, and earlier literary sociology--what Annabel Patterson has termed fondly "old literary history." Perkin aims for a synthesis of materialist history and reception theory, the latter modified by close attention to individual texts' production and a "more speci-

fic study of particular horizons" (14). In practice, this means that Jaussian reconstructions of a novel's reception are followed by Perkin's own interpretation. This methodology resembles Jauss's approach in an essay in Toward an Aesthetic of Reception (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), in which an account of the history of the interpretation of Baudelaire's "Spleen" precedes "the most recent one, that is, my own" (139). The assumptions underlying Perkin's own critical practice are apparent in his recommendations for the qualifications of future scholars using reception theory in Eliot studies, which include abilities in "formal analysis, historical scholarship, and an awareness of the various functions of literature in society," but also a grasp of "possibilities of being which are opened up through literature" (157-8).

The chapter on Eliot in the 1850s, while omitting an intertextual consideration of Scott's fiction, examines the influence of Wordsworth, Lewes, and Ruskin on Eliot's work. The treatment of Thackeray in this context is particularly insightful, and, examining Goethe's influence, Perkin reminds us that Eliot's fiction "was seen by its earliest readers as part of a European movement of fiction" (45). He situates Adam Bede's reception within the history of the Victorian market for fiction and fiction's shifting status. This reception-history displays the merits of careful study of contemporary reviews, demonstrating that, despite occasional myopia, many reviewers, such as Edward Dowden, were remarkably perceptive. It traces the reaction against Eliot's eminent persona in the early twentieth century and offers detailed critiques of the work of Henry James (recalling Bloom's "anxiety of influence," Perkin says

Eliot was James's "literary parent and ... rival" [92]), Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf, Lord David Cecil, E. M. Forster, Percy Lubbock, F.R. Leavis, Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

Perkin exposes the critical blindness underlying aspects of prominent critics' readings. J. Hillis Miller, Perkin regards as a "New Critic who has inverted all the assumptions of the New Criticism without transforming the nature of its critical practice" (154). This astute assessment is one which, in part at least, Miller's colleague Paul de Man accepted (see Stephano Rosso's interview with de Man in Critical Inquiry [1986], 789-95). Perkin's judgments are bold and forthright: Barbara Hardy's criticism is "important," although its "narrow" methodology leads to an "impoverished interpretation," inscribed with an "outmoded ideology" (121-2), Q.D. Leavis's sociological methodology is "imperfect and inconsistent" (75) and Cynthia Chase's celebrated deconstruction of Daniel Deronda is "facile" (155).

This volume focuses upon "the study of criticism" (18), but also incorporates Perkin's own interpretations of certain novels. These readings are often illuminating, but the transitions from reception-history to Perkin's own interpretation, especially in Chapters 2 and 3, are, for this reader, somewhat abrupt, and the interpretations sometimes lack the rigour of other sections. For example, we learn that "the whole point" of Middlemarch is that Dorothea's "life has no given aim ... because she is a gentlewoman ... whose lot is predetermined" (151-2). Perkin's reading more frequently, however, locates ideological conflict in the literary form of a text, through an

unpacking of radical opposition in the text's rhetoric. Chapter 3's tracing of Daniel Deronda's reception precedes an examination of the site of "unresolved tensions" (79) of an ideological (religious, imperialist, and feminist) cast. As in his treatment of Adam Bede and Felix Holt, Perkin locates this tension in Daniel Deronda's closure.

While it does not engage in dialogue with the theories of Foucault, this book has similarities to Lennard J. Davis's illuminating study of eighteenth-century discourse, Factual Fictions, and to the Victorian research of the culture critic Catherine Gallagher. Perkin's reception-history has real value for Eliot studies and is an impressive endorsement of the usefulness of reception theory; the study also provides a carefully delineated history of twentieth-century critical applications of literary theory. The volume ends with a celebration of the carnivalesque multiplicity of interpretation, and a note to future interpreters. Perhaps echoing Terry Eagleton's words in his "Preface" to Daniel Cotnam's Social Figures (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), "there is more than one George Eliot" (xvii), Perkin writes:

"George Eliot" is not a monological deity who appears before those who formulate the right question. She is rather a goddess capable of multiple incarnations, and who has appeared in different forms to differently situated believers, none of whom has access to an empyrean realm inhabited by an unchanging presence. (155)

Oliver Lovesey  
Okanagan College  
Kelowna, B.C.

James Belich. The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: the Maori, the British, and the New Zealand Wars. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989. 396 pages, \$17.95 paperback.

Queen Victoria's little wars are generally considered to have followed a similar pattern: the indigenous inhabitants, whether Sikh, Zulu or Maori, fighting bravely but ultimately hopelessly against superior British fire power and discipline. The picture drawn of the losers is usually the same--heroic, even chivalrous, but primitive in their social organization, their inability to develop unified leadership, their insistence on trying old fighting methods such as the frontal attack even when repeated evidence showed that these did not work.

In New Zealand, that far-off corner of the Empire, why should things have been any different? James Belich, in his enormously interesting book about the four Maori wars between 1845 and 1872, argues that they were. The picture he draws is much more subtle than the standard one of an active imperial power overwhelming a static indigenous one. The Maoris were not simply at the receiving end of British might; rather, they fought it to something close to a draw. Moreover, they showed an ability to adapt to the new threat with modifications of their own social and political institutions and with innovations in warfare. That in turn was going to have an impact on the future relations between the races in New Zealand.

These are bold arguments, persuasively put forward. If occasionally Dr. Belich seems determined to quarrel with virtually every received version of the wars, he can be forgiven. His analysis is a model of historical

method; he has gone through the sources with great care, showing where inconsistencies and improbabilities make it impossible to credit earlier accounts. His interpretation is a challenge, not just to New Zealand historiography, but to that of imperial history as a whole, for it shows the importance of revisiting the sources with a critical eye and the need to attempt to judge the conflicts of the nineteenth century from the perspective of both sides, not just from that of the victor.

With all this, he has also written an absorbing narrative of the wars themselves. For too long, the history of war has been seen, often with justification, as the preserve of the military specialists, interested in the minutiae of battle. This book is an example of the best kind of modern military history pioneered by Michael Howard which looks at war in its broader context. Dr. Belich starts, for example, by explaining the reasonably comfortable *modus vivendi* that existed between the two nations before the first war. The Maoris wanted interaction with Europeans but they did not want the authority of their traditional chiefs to be undercut by the new arrivals. One of the irritants in the relationship was the different notions of sovereignty, expressed in the different meanings given to the word in the English language and Maori versions of the treaty of 1840. The Maoris were prepared to concede nominal sovereignty, not, as the British intended, substantive. Another was the presence of settlers who come across here as an unsympathetic group, consistently demanding their own government to protect them against the consequences of their own rash actions and then complaining bitterly when the government forces are unable to defeat the Maoris. (It is a view of settlers

that the British authorities themselves seem to have shared.) The first war, the Northern of 1845-6, for example, started when the respected chief Heke came to the conclusion that he could no longer tolerate challenges to his authority. On the other hand, he did not want to eliminate the British presence altogether; during the war, the settlers in his territory were well-treated.

Out of the story of the campaigns themselves, several key points emerge. In the first place the Maoris managed to sustain campaigns against a much larger British force (which at its height in 1864 totalled 12,000 men) by rotating their soldiers in from their fields for finite periods. Secondly, they generally managed to achieve a high level of discipline and effective leadership in battle. Third, and perhaps most important, they rarely made the mistake of committing their weaker forces in open battle. Rather, they lured the British to attack their forts--or pas--by throwing them up in strategic locations. Moreover, they made significant innovations in the pa construction, including firing trenches and underground bunkers to protect their soldiers against artillery fire. At the battle of Gate Pa in 1864 the Maoris allowed the British to storm the main redoubt and then poured fire at them from covered trenches and bunkers, sometimes quite literally at their feet. The chief in command had told his men "not to utter a word or fire a shot until the proper time came for the order." The British lost 100 dead or wounded, the Maoris perhaps fifteen. This was not a unique pa or a unique outcome. Indeed, Maori messengers had carried models of the new type of pa around the country some years previously.

The British found it difficult to ac-

cept defeat at the hands of a people they considered, in Governor Grey's words, "a semi-barbarous race, puffed up with the pride of an imagined equality". Even when British soldiers experienced the effectiveness of Maori defences they could in the words of a contemporary "scarcely believe that a savage race without any education in military tactics could have designed and so thoroughly carried out the details of such a complete system of defence."

The British reaction to specific defeats followed a pattern: first incredulity, then a search for excuses and scapegoats, and finally a denial either that the battle had been important or that a defeat had occurred. Possibly the most ingenious explanation came from The Times of London, which argued that the temerity of the Maoris in taking on the British Empire unnerved their opponents "just as at chess a bad and reckless player is sometimes more formidable than a master of the game." To understand this reaction and the subsequent treatment of the wars, Dr. Belich argues, again most convincingly, that it is necessary to understand the racial categories in which Victorians so often thought. The distorted interpretation was unconscious but nonetheless systematic and has affected historical thinking down to the present.

The author concludes with the hope that this re-examination of the Maori wars will lead to a fresh look at the other small wars. It cannot fail to do so. He has taken what at first sight might seem a subject of limited interest to the non-specialist and turned it into a starting point for exploring important issues from the use of historical evidence, to the nature of warfare, to Victorian ideas on race and evolution. In so doing he

has provided both a challenge and a model to other historians.

Margaret MacMillan  
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute

\*\*\*

Ian Ker. John Henry Newman: A Life.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press,  
1988. 764 pp., \$38.50.

In his preface, Ker points out that Newman provides unusual opportunities together with unusual challenges for a biographer. The amount of his writing to be considered is enormous--over forty volumes of works, and 20,000 letters which, with the diaries, will eventually fill thirty-one volumes. Ker desires to give a more balanced picture of Newman's personality than Wilfrid Ward did, and a more detailed picture of the thinker and writer than Meriol Trevor did. "I have tried to write a book which is both a reasonably full personal life and also an intellectual and literary biography," he says. "So far as it is a study of the man, I hope it will finally dispel the myth of the hypersensitive, humourless, sad Newman." Ker especially wishes to shed light on Newman's rhetoric, the exuberance of imagery and metaphor to be found in him (sometimes recalling Dickens), and his genius as a satirical writer.

In many of these aims he succeeds. James Cameron has pointed out that he often mutes the dramatic quality of climactic episodes in Newman's life, such as his almost fatal illness in Sicily when he was convinced that he would not die because "I have not sinned against the light." It is a remarkable achievement, however, for Ker to have brought the wealth of information available to him into coherent form--especially when he had 20,000 letters to contend with. As a

former member of the Birmingham Oratory (he is now a diocesan priest), he knew all about those thousands of letters, and the use he has made of them constitutes, paradoxically, both a strength and weakness of his book.

Quotations from them abound; sometimes six or seven are quoted on a single page, usually to very good effect, especially because they throw light on Newman's state of mind at a given period in his life. At times, however, Ker follows them so carefully that he neglects to bring out the special significance of the subject he is discussing. This is particularly true of his treatment of Tract 90. We go round and round the central issue, but never get to it: we learn about the bishops' reaction to it, for example, how gradually they began to come out against it, and how humiliating it was for Newman to have the censure against it "posted up by the marshall on the butterfly-hatch of every College of my University, after the manner of discommoded pastry-cooks." But we are not told clearly what Tract 90 was about, which of its statements were found most offensive by its critics, and whether or not Newman's contention that the Thirty-nine Articles were susceptible of a Catholic interpretation could be supported.

Ker's judicious use of the letters serves, however, to illuminate Newman's uncertain state of mind in the period between Tract 90 and his conversion in 1845; but he also gives special emphasis to the university sermons Newman delivered during this period. In January 1843 he was working hard at the last of them, to be given on 2 February, and wrote to Pusey, "If any one values his Luncheon ... he must not go to hear me at St. Mary's, for my sermon is of portentous length." It actually last-

ed for an hour and a half! It was on a topic which he had first addressed in 1826, the relationship between faith and reason. "If there is one work of Newman which may truly be called 'seminal,'" Ker writes, "it is surely the Oxford University Sermons, where he first explores some of his most brilliantly original ideas. The last two sermons, in fact, contain respectively the genesis of the Idea of a University and of the Development of Christian Doctrine." His discussions of faith and wisdom and the development of the philosophic mind are supplemented here by the conviction that, since elementary principles are necessary to the human mind, some kind of dogmatism or system is inevitable--"it forms the stamina of thought, which, when it is removed, languishes and droops."

A letter to Maria Giberne describes the strict regimen Newman and his followers adhered to during his period of quasi-exile from Oxford at Littlemore:

We have one joint-meal ... during the day at 5 PM, which four days of the week consists of meat, generally cold. We break fast ... not before noon ... but separately and standing. We keep silence till 2 or 3 PM according as it is winter or summer, and resume it at 8 or 9. We begin services at 6 AM--in Advent we begin at 3.

He was attracted to Roman devotional works because of "their great and business-like practicalness": they met definite spiritual needs. But "RCs cannot write English. Our literature is essentially Protestant--All our great writers are such--all the strength, richness, and elegance of the language is devoted to the maintenance of Protestantism."

In the middle of his tension and anxiety, he still retained his sense of humour, as when he heard that a Devonshire farmer had named a prize bull after Dr. Pusey--"You see how Puseyism is spreading. It has reached our very cattle." He also recounted the amusing story of overhearing a man say confidently, on the train from London to Oxford, "Depend on it, Newman is a Jesuit." If he was less than satisfactory on Tract 90, Ker gives a very good summary of the Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine. He also brings out the pathos of the last sermon Newman delivered as an Anglican, on "The Parting of Friends," and of his taking leave of Littlemore on becoming a Catholic two years later--"So many dead, so many separated. ... Other dear friends who are preserved in life not moving with me ..."

In a chapter on "Controversy and Satire," Ker expatiates on the marvellous flow of satiric rhetoric which Newman produced in his "Lectures on the Difficulties of Anglicans" six years after his conversion. The national church, he said, "Provided it could gain one little islet in the ocean, one foot upon the coast, if it could cheapen tea by sixpence a pound ... at the cost of a hundred lives and a hundred souls, it would think it a very good bargain." On the other hand, the Catholic Church "would rather save the soul of one single wild bandit of Calabria, or whining beggar of Palermo, than draw a hundred lines of railroad through the length and breadth of Italy ..." Two years later, in June 1852, just after the Achilli trial had ended, he delivered a sermon on "The Second Spring" whose tone was entirely different: "It was an emotional occasion, and most of the bishops and clergy were in tears, including Wiseman."

In the intervening period he had become Rector of the new Catholic University of Ireland, and had begun to prepare his lectures on the idea of a university--the discourses which, Ker writes, were the first of his Roman Catholic works to evince that new ambivalence which was to achieve its classic expression in the last part of the Apologia. The kind of liberal humanism he praised was very much at odds with the fervour and fanaticism shown by some of his co-religionists; Manning wrote to Monsignor Talbot, "I see much danger of an English catholicism of which Newman is the highest type. It is the old Anglican, patristic, literary, Oxford tone transplanted into the Church." In fact The Idea of a University, Ker says, was a careful balancing act: Newman had to avoid offending those who thought that the new university would be not Catholic enough, or too Catholic, or not Irish enough, or completely impractical. He sees Newman as not so much concerned with the relation of culture to religion as with that between the religion of culture and religion itself. A careful balance between differing perspectives and points of view is typical of the Discourses, he writes, and is the key to understanding them. A similar balance exists, of course, in the Apologia and in the Letter to the Duke of Norfolk--in which Newman both defends the papal prerogative and makes a sarcastic comment himself on what Gladstone called "Vaticanism": "Now, the Rock of St. Peter on its summit enjoys a pure and serene atmosphere, but there is a great deal of Roman malaria at the foot of it."

The sections of this biography to which I have referred may give some idea of the quality of the whole. It shows a sensitive and occasionally shy man who had a remarkable capacity for friendship, an imaginative man

with a great sense of humour ("Be sure there is as much chance of my turning Anglican again as of my being ... the King of Clubs"), a man who spent much of his Catholic life under a cloud and yet, as his bishop Ullathorne pointed out, remained remarkably productive. No single book on



Newman can deal adequately with all aspects of his life and work. Ker's study of him, with certain reservations, contains a great deal of useful information and we can add it to the shelf of worthwhile studies of this Victorian eminence lately designated Venerable.

D. J. Dooley  
St. Michael's Collège  
University of Toronto

\*\*\*

Margot K. Louis. Swinburne and His Gods: The Roots and Growth of an Agnostic Poetry. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1990. \$34.95.

Professor Louis's study of Swinburne's poetry is a precise and carefully detailed portrait of the evolution of Swinburne's thought as it expresses itself in his poetry. While the subtitle is The Roots and Growth

of an Agnostic Poetry, the emphasis is, in fact, put on the "roots" and "growth," not the agnosticism. Furthermore, while at the beginning an attempt is made to derive everything from a fairly narrow formula--that Swinburne exploits and undermines "the language of the Bible and the Prayer Book together with the symbolism and the theology of the eucharist," not too much is made, fortunately, of this angle of approach, which Professor Louis's critical tact obviously assured her would distort the vast, multi-faceted reality of Swinburne's poetry and cramp it into a pedestrian and dogmatic set of patterns. Instead, she carries out with great perspicacity and great thoroughness her objective as stated in the Introduction: "to elucidate the ways in which Swinburne's poetry works and the course of Swinburne's development as a poet."

The volume carefully and objectively analyzes a large number of Swinburne's poems from several periods, showing how lines and images work and how meaning accretes through Swinburne's unique treatment of rhythm, vocabulary, tone, structure. It is especially valuable for the individual analyses, most of which are as intricate and sensitive as any Swinburnian or Victorian could wish. In fact, the clever but searching depth of the analyses raises a question--probably not an important one--about the audience of the study. Even persons generally concerned with the Victorians will find it heavy going. If it has a natural audience, that audience is those well-versed in Swinburne's poetry and in the poetry of his contemporaries. (And, one should add, the currents of thought that unite the creative works of the period--Arnold's "current of true and fresh ideas.") Casual readers will find the book daunting and overwhelm-

ing: it will certainly be of no use as a "pony," a "trot," a "crib." Students of Victorian poetry, on the other hand, will be refreshed by not only the rich detailing of the analyses but their relative freedom from dogmatism of various kinds, including those new "politically correct" ones.

Professor Louis in fact maintains a dispassionate attitude towards Swinburne's vehement denunciations of religion and religious ideologies and tenets, never allowing her own predispositions to show through the commentary. What she addresses is the methods Swinburne uses to vilify conventionality and the change and development in his perspectives upon the conventional. She shows, for example, how from an anti-Romantic at the beginning he is converted to a disciple of Romantic forms, like the "Greater Romantic Lyric," and from a poet who felt that "Romanticism ... seems insufficiently radical," he became transformed into a poet who was able--once the influence upon him of Rossetti and the pre-Raphaelites had become subdued--to proclaim himself a member of "the Church of Blake and Shelley." At the same time she documents the growth in his political sensibility as he first endorses and then moves away from the pre-Raphaelite notion that art that espoused or dramatized political concepts was adulterated and corrupt art.

That the whole Swinburne emerges in this volume is a tribute to Professor Louis's critical tact and sensibility, her "ondoyant" method of proceeding, to quote Arnold again. Swinburne comes alive here as the heretic, the passionate believer, the diabolic defier of orthodoxies, the vehement radical, the consummate artist devoted to art and in love with the great artists--the Sapphos, the Hugos, the

Blakes, the Brownings--from whom he drew inspiration and sustenance. Had she adhered to her ostensible thesis, one doubts that this would have happened. Fortunately, her desire to demonstrate the inadequacy of some conventional, limited views of Swinburne (which at one point she condemns as "superstition"--p. 194) assists her to evade the grasp of a narrowing and distorting thesis and to pursue the larger picture even while closely involved in minute explication. Those especially interested in one scholar's view of how Swinburne integrates religious theorems and religious language into his art, and how love and frustration and antipathy mingle in his treatment both of religious or quasi-religious themes and also of other themes (liberation, individuality, self-fulfilment, the harrowing indifference of the universe to man's activities and his anguish) through the use of religious symbols, imagery, and typology will find a great deal that is attractive to them in this volume. Those simply looking for close readings of Swinburne's poems in their contexts will find constant refreshment in it. For myself, I found the treatment of "Hertha" especially appealing in its multi-dimensionality and its coherence.

Harvey Kerpneck  
St. Michael's College  
University of Toronto

\*\*\*



John Ruskin

## Report

The Mentorship Programme at Toronto

Peter Morgan  
University of Toronto

The mentorship programme of the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto is designed to introduce gifted high school students to the University through their helping professors in their research. Many students apply to take part in the programme and many professors participate. The process of selection is a difficult one. I have participated in the programme for a few years. It seems that it is easier for a high school student to help directly in scientific research than in that in the humanities. Nevertheless, I have found extended discussion of my work with such students rewarding, and I hope that the students have felt the same.

Arrangements for meetings are set up to suit the convenience of professors and students. The students come in their own time, to meet for a couple of hours, say once every two weeks over the course of a term. The work is unpaid and they receive no high school credits for it. It is done for its own sake! The written work is occasional and informal.

This year I took part with Professors Allen and Laine in leading a group of several students. They read Our Mutual Friend by way of introduction to major Victorian preoccupations. Then they split up to work with an individual professor. Of my own two students one studied Thackeray's Vanity Fair and its illustrations. The other (Erin Hannah, in grade 11) studied Ruskin's letters and embarked on his Fors Clavigera. In the course of this

study we attended a reading of a play on Ruskin by a gifted graduate student. The student's brief essay on Fors Clavigera follows.

A New Balance: A Study of Letters from Fors Clavigera

Erin Hannah

In Fors Clavigera, John Ruskin discusses a society that he views, in many instances, to be out of balance. In order for readers to interpret his work, his writing needed to achieve a balance, however precarious. The format of the book, a collection of letters addressed to working men, is original and therefore a different concept of balance may be introduced. The work is challenging to many readers but it does strike a balance.

Ruskin's collection is an attempt to educate the working men of Victorian society. He tries to offer his readers information on a variety of subjects. The topics he covers range from art and botany to politics and religion. He manages to shed light on a great many areas of study. Ruskin seeks to show the relationship between different subjects. He suggests that a harmonious relationship must exist.

One must consider that he is writing in his own unique format. His letters are comparable to essays and editorials and yet they are different. The letters are not always on one subject and the author is free to address the reader in any way he feels appropriate. Ruskin encourages his readers to think. The style of the writing indicates that the author is writing in the way that one would think. He may jump from one topic to another without exhausting the subject. Ruskin also introduces many extremes. This

is much the way a person would mull over information in his thoughts.

In order to evaluate the balance in Ruskin's work we must consider what he advocates. He recommends, for society, a balance that is not based on equality. He suggests the use of certain systems in his hope to achieve a new equilibrium. The writing is no different. His writing achieves unity and harmony by using patterns. He also sees connections between issues and ideas that many would consider unrelated. The letters are a complex new system of patterns and correlation. He does want something new for society and this would mean a change in social order. In some ways, he is modifying writing to get new or unconventional ideas across and naturally there is a shift in balance in the presentation.

Fors Clavigera does achieve a balance. The author has cleverly developed patterns in locations. In letter 23, The Labyrinth, the reader travels in circles through past, present and future. These circles all stem from the maze resembling that through which Theseus travelled. A pattern that is established in every letter is that of the thought process. The consideration of many aspects and the introduction of many subjects is typical of the ways our minds work.

The title gives the work balance and structure. The subjects are unified by "Fors Clavigera." The title has three meanings: strength of deed, strength of patience, and strength of law. If all these strengths were to be present in one instance, one would assume a balance must be reached. Certainly, this is the case in Fors Clavigera.