MVSA Newsletter

Newsletter of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association

Number 11, July 1988

CALL FOR PAPERS

VICTORIAN ANECDOTES, APOCRYPHA, AND HALLOWED CLICHES will be the topic of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, to be held at Loyola University of Chicago on 28-29 April 1989. The Association welcomes proposals on any aspect of legends, mythmaking, and gossip, and how they inform (or misinform) scholarly and popular views of the Victorian period. Eight- to ten-page papers or two-page abstracts should be sent no later than November 15, 1988, to Micael Clarke, MVSA Executive Secretary, Department of English, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626.

A MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

The 1988 annual meeting, held at Indiana University in Bloomington, was a singing, dancing, and paper-giving success of the first order (I feel I can say so because I did not have the honor of serving on the local arrangements committee). Our heartiest thanks to Mary Burgan and Claudia Nelson of I.U. Bloomington for their marvelous management of our Bloomington meeting. A raft of scintillating papers and a Victorian ball that taught us all how energetic the Victorians really were made the meeting intellectually nourishing and delightful as well.

This is my last Presidential message. I will be stepping down and leaving the Midwest Victorian Studies Association in the distinguished and experienced hands of Larry Poston of the University of Illinois, Chicago.

My congratulations and best wishes to him.

Let me conclude with a word of thanks on behalf of all the members o the Midwest Victorian Studies Association to Professor Kristine Ottesen Garrigan as she steps down from her job as Executive Secretary of MVSA. And a warm welcome to our new Executive Secretary Micael Clarke of Loyola University.

I look forward to seeing all of you in 1989 in Chicago.

--M. Jeanne Peterson

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

As a reentrant to the life of MVSA after several years in what is dubiously termed Higher Administration, I can only be pleased at the unmistakable signs of our organization's vitality. The leadership of Walter Arnstein, John Reed, Nicholas Temperley, Martha Vicinus, and Jeanne Peterson as its Presidents, and the steady nurture provided by Frederick Kirchhoff and Kristine Garrigan as its hardworking Executive Secretaries, so necessary to sustain MVSA's life between meetings, have insured the continuance of a lively and genuinely interdisciplinary forum for exchange. Newcomers often remark on MVSA's openness and informality; it is, one of them put it to me, a friendly group, free of the one-upmanship and careerism regrettably characteristic of some scholarly gatherings. Not least encouraging to an incoming President is MVSA's financial health -- not that, organizationally, we lead a terribly complex life requiring endowments, investments, and paid staff (though heaven knows our last two Executive Secretaries should have been paid), but our resources do provide us with something of a safety net, one for its modest purposes less porous than the safety net envisioned by another President who shall remain nameless here. We also owe much to the various institutions over the years which have helped cover the costs of a meeting, the honorarium of a visiting speaker, or the month-to-month expenses incurred by an Executive Secretary. Were our resources to grow, I myself would like to see them going not only to the maintenance of MVSA in these aforementioned ways, but to the support of promising young graduate students in our field; and my flights of futuristic fancy turn not on an office with a secretary and a 24-hour Victorian hotline but on, say, an MVSA dissertation fellowship enabling a future entrant to the field of Victorian studies to carry out study here or in Britain, for a summer if not a year. Is it too much to dream along those lines, perchance to hope for some special donors?

Though none of us believe in organizational aggrandizement for its own sake, we need to enlarge our support base to enhance our ability to carry out such good works, and to that end I believe it may be time for a new membership drive. In 1975-76, when we were taking the first steps toward the regional association which became MVSA, the subscription lists kindly provided to us by Martha Vicinus as then-editor of Victorian Studies served as a basis for recruitment in the midwestern states. (We are, of course, open to Victorian scholars everywhere, but we do not want to poach on the

grounds of our estimable neighboring organizations.) Alas, not everyone subscribes to Victorian Studies who should; powerful professional arguments aside, to what other journal do you subscribe which, in its annual renewal notice, more often than not tells you its prices have not gone up? And of course, recent changes in tax laws have perhaps further reduced the professorial impulse to subscribe to a wide range of journals; all of us make hard choices. To our mail efforts, therefore, must be added personal incentive: if you know someone on your campus we are missing, can you not bring him or her into the fold? I shall be consulting the Executive Committee on this matter, and we welcome the ideas and assistance of our members,

Another issue that has already surfaced in the new Executive Committee since the admirably-planned-and-executed meeting in Bloomington this spring is our longstanding practice of organizing the annual meeting around a specific theme. This, I observe, is the rule rather than the exception in associations like ours, and we are carrying it forward in our 1989 meeting here in Chicago with the piquant topic, "Victorian Anecdotes, Apocrypha, and Hallowed Cliches." Such topics provide a focus, sometimes a tantalizing one, for our efforts, and after a number of weeks of nail-biting on the part of the Executive Committee (which serves as the review panel), they almost always manage to evoke a number of lively papers guaranteeing good discussion. At the same time, there is no doubt that unvarying adherence to this practice tends in any given year to close out papers or ideas for panels that would be acceptable by any other standard. We have always made room for Victorian entertainment at our conclaves, as the delightful contributions of Nicholas Temperley, Jane Stedman, and others have attested over the years. Should we similarly allow for groupings of meritorious papers in sessions unrelated to the announced topic? Indeed, should we contemplate an "open theme" meeting for 1990 and let the topics arrange themselves? This is a question on which the Executive Committee likewise would welcome reactions from all of you.

One word more, this one about the uniqueness of MVSA and the constraints that uniqueness poses. Almost alone, I suspect, among organizations like ours, our by-laws not only require a balance of disciplines among members-at-large of the Executive Committee, but stipulate that no two successive Presidents shall come from the same discipline. There is a real point behind this somewhat legalistic maneuver, and that is that MVSA from its inception has taken seriously the obligation to offer discussions on things Victorian that are of at least potential interest to social and political historians, musicologists, and art historians (to name only a few) as well as the largest such professional group, comprised of people, like myself, in English. That assumption is embodied as well in the way we lay out our programs; eleven of our twelve annual meetings have been scheduled so that only one session is occurring at any given time, and of the one exception I think it can be safely said that while concurrent scheduling was felt to be worth trying, our overwhelming consensus was that the ends of interdisciplinary conversation are far better served by gathering our membership in one place -- from gavel to gavel, so to speak.

In furtherance of that same goal of interdisciplinary conversation, therefore, and whether we converge to discuss one theme or many, I do

believe it may be useful by way of reminder to say that MVSA hopes for interdisciplinary interest in any submission reviewed for the annual meeting. This implies that close readings (or deconstructions) of a single literary text, no matter how subtle the critical discourse or canonical the work may be, are much less likely to receive favorable consideration than, e.g., more broadly-conceived papers setting a body of literature or an authorial career in its Victorian context. The same stricture might be applied to specialized historical papers treating a localized manifestation of a particular social movement without reference to the wider phenomenon, or a body of quantitative data not readily translatable into a historical issue of salience to non-historians. As a general injunction to prospective contributors, therefore, I would suggest that both their topic and its development be weighed from page to page with one test in mind: What is this likely to mean to my colleagues in other disciplines? Not all of us are going to be equally interested in Chartism, Darwinism, dissent, imperialism, Dickens, Maclise, or the Victorian oratorio, but these are all topics, along with many others, about which I would submit it is possible to say something of interest to just about everyone. Commonality of discourse, rare enough on our home campuses these days, is a prized part of MVSA's short but, I trust, steadily-lengthening tradition.

--Lawrence Poston

A WORD FROM OUR VICE-PRESIDENT

The theme for our forthcoming conference in April 1989 is an elusive one, to be sure. Yet we have all had that experience of wishing to challenge the prevailing view of some aspect of the Victorian period. We not only wish to avoid the trite, but we positively thrive on controversy. Others of us will wish to defend a traditional interpretation as preferable to some new, off-the-wall approach.

My own researches have usually taken me into the history of the Victorian book trade. I often wonder why two of our stock words for the hackneyed come from printing history: stereotype and cliche. Perhaps ideas like stereotype plates become worn with use.

As a matter of philosophical speculation, there may be no such thing as ultimate reality. However, we can't help feeling that some perspectives on the past are more useful than others, depending upon what we seek to understand. In my class on the philosophy and craft of history, I like to pass an object around the room and ask students to guess what it is. To make things a bit more challenging, the small item is in a cloth bag, so they must determine its function by feel alone. They come up with a variety of perfectly plausible suggestions, and though they never guess its original intent as a bracket for a microphone, they have made equally valid guesses. After all, though it was not intended to dig in the garden, it certainly could be used for that purpose as well.

We all are in the business of widening or narrowing or shifting our perspectives on the Victorians. How terribly dull it would all be if we

merely had to perpetuate lore and tradition, spiced up perhaps by vivid language and metaphor. That was the notion with which many 18th century historians approached their task. Fortunately we can indulge our penchant for iconoclasm, and hew away at whatever historical monument we wish.

Years ago my wife and I were keen to decipher a signature on a letter, which the writer had carefully inked out. Ultra-violet light and magnification were unavailing. The internal evidence of the document supported several different scenarios. Three or four different individuals fit quite nicely, depending upon how we read the letter and from whose perspective. Fortunately we later learned who the person was, but it was a forceful reminder of both the advantages and pitfalls of historical imagination.

Here then is my challenge to you all. Hone your literary, artistic and historical skills to a fine edge, and go to it. Let's take pleasure in our Victorian demolition derby.

--James J. Barnes

TREASURY REPORT

Balance on hand, July 1, 1987		$ 2,262.53
Income		
Dues	$ 1,572.00	
Annual Meeting Registration fees	1,512.00	
Donations	167.00	
Interest	163.54	
Total Income		5,677.07
Expenditures		
Printing and Duplication	$ 865.12	
Supplies	33.80	
Word processing services for directory	170.00	
Annual Meeting Expenses	1,977.00	
Postage	597.35	
Bank Service Charges	5.75	
Miscellaneous	86.31	
Total Expenditures		3,735.33
Balance on hand, July 1, 1988		$ 1,941.74

Many thanks to these members, whose 1987 donations helped to subsidize graduate student and speaker registration at our 1988 Annual Meeting: Virginia Grossman, Fred Kirchhoff, Bob Colby, Susan Dean, Debra Mancoff, John Reed, Harland Nelson, Lowell Satre, Larry Poston, Bill Morgan, Robert Wellisch, Betsy Cogger Rezelman, Steve Elwell, Janet Price, Jane Stedman, Trevor Phillips, Robin Sheets, Julie Codell, Chris Dahl, Jeffrey Cox, Richard Davis, Janice Carlisle, and Bill Burgan.

Special thanks to DePaul University for its generous support in underwriting day to day expenses of the organization and providing secretarial services during the past four years.

--Kristine Ottesen Garrigan

ABSTRACTS FROM THE TWELFTH ANNUAL MEETING

OPENING SESSION: "Religion and Family"
Shelagh Hunter, Moderator

Varieties of (Un)belief: The Stephen Family

Christopher C. Dahl
University of Michigan - Dearborn
Dept. of English and Chair, Humanities

The three surviving children of Sir James Stephen--Fitzjames Stephen, Leslie Stephen, and Caroline Emelia Stephen--were all prolific writers on religious questions and avid participants in the theological discourse of Victorian England. Though each arrives at his or her own distinctive religious position, each does so by rejecting and modifying religious views held by their father, author of Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography and a lay theologian himself. Indeed, the diverse religious positions held by the three children may each be seen as transformations or heightenings of particular aspects of their father's liberal Anglican evangelicalism--as if the elder Stephen's theological thought had broken into several fragments, each of which was developed into a full-blown personal theology.

As the oldest child, Fitzjames self-consciously embodies the family tradition of religious debate. Like his father, he defends the broadest toleration of religious views in the Church of England. He is never comfortable with the mystical strain in his father's theology, however, and ultimately denies the truth of Christianity altogether. Yet his final religious position, which one contemporary critic called "Calvinism without Christianity," looks back to the stern Evangelicalism of the Clapham sect in the generation before his father. In An Agnostic's Apology, Leslie, the second child, follows the skeptical bent of their father's thinking even farther than Fitzjames, inverting the terms of Sir James's religious discourse. Caroline Emelia, on the other hand, carries on her father'semi-mystical Christianity, reconciling the contradictions in his positions and attempting to bridge the gap between her faith and her brothers' unbelief, while at the same time providing an implicit critique of her father and brothers' mode of discourse.

`Don't Tell Emma': Women and Doubt in Nineteenth-Century Fiction

Elisabeth Jay
Ball State University
Department of English

The portraits of women encountering religious doubt, offered to us in Victorian imaginative literature, drawn by both men and women, believers and sceptics, suggest that although doubt might topple the supreme patriarchal hegemony it need not be subversive of human patriarchal

ideologies. Moreover, for the faithful and the sceptical alike, a changing attitude to the authority of Revelation, whether seen in God's Book of Nature, or in the Scriptures, or in the pronouncements of the Church, raised issues about the place of the subjective and the objective in Christian faith and these conveniently lent themselves to the stereotypical polarities of the heart versus the head or the feminine versus the male. Women, it was repeatedly suggested, retained a unified sensibility. This capacity to `think with their hearts' implicitly associated them with less highly developed and historically doomed civilizations.

In as far as women were allowed to encounter crucial areas of doctrinal debate it was usually in the context of the doctrine of immortality whose intellectual non-specificity and invitation to the imagination made it at once the safest and most appropriate arena for female speculation. Such doubts were, in additon, perceived as likely to surface in the emotionally charged domestic atmosphere of the family death-bed.

Whilst women's function as child-bearers made them the natural guarantors of immortality, Mrs. Humphry Ward's novels went further in suggesting that it was the male duty to find out an intellectually tenable faith and that women's salvation lay in paying tribute to this by accepting the roles of daughter, wife and child-bearer. When these roles were brought into conflict by competing male ideologies or when women sought to usurp the male role of intellectual leadership disaster must ensue because such events defied creation's plan.

In more orthodox novels a woman's rebellion against a patriarchal society is both part of and acts out in miniature man's defiance of God's Authority when he presumes to rely upon his own powers of reason.

This theory of special dispensation according to gender finds its apotheosis in the figure of `the clever woman' whose efforts at sustained intellectual scepticism so often threatened her sexuality. Evolutionary meliorism in theory allowed for Utopian dreams of a far-off world where women might eventually attain independent membership of Tennyson's `crowning race', but the novels of Thomas Hardy and George Eliot indicate that such a doctrine more often led to the dispiriting endorsement of the received picture of woman as historically and physiologically handicapped in the unaided pursuit of the truth.

Conversion in Victorian Children's Books

Mary Burgan
Indiana University-Bloomington
Chair, Department of English

The image of childhood as a time of testing, of the testing as a desperate struggle within the self, and of the outcome of the contest as a matter of the ineluctable grace is one that permeates early Victorian religious literature written for children, from Mrs. Sherwood's infamous

Fairchild Family to Farrar's Eric or Little by Little. The relentlessness of such children's books did not prevent their being read by many Victorian children, who sympathized with the struggles of their young protagonists and internalized their conversions as conforming to their own sense of experience. The pervasiveness and popularity of such books force us to look at them as something more than the quaint productions of a narrow conception of religion. This paper shows how evangelical children's writing may help us to understand the preoccupation in Victorian fiction with the "change of heart," the secular version of conversion. It suggests that Victorian fiction's "great tradition" of attention to the internal dialogue between desire and will in characters who are confronted with situations of moral choosing may draw significantly from the schema established by evangelical children's writers. The narrative of Gwendolen Harleth's temptation and moral awakening in Daniel Deronda provides many parallels with the dramatizations of childhood failings in Mrs. Sherwood's work. Such parallels do not trivialize George Eliot's work; rather, they point to the weight and dignity that the evangelical view gave to childhood as a time of moral growth.

SECOND SESSION: "Victorian Encounters with Non-Christian Religions"
Richard W. Davis, Moderator

"Delhi, a New Alexandria?": The Cambridge Mission to Delhi

Jeffrey Cox
University of Iowa
Department of History

Throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century Protestant missionaries in India had conducted a frontal assault on Hinduism and Islam. Under the influence of B. F. Westcott, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, The Cambridge Mission to Delhi in the 1870s attempted another way forward. Westcott held up as a model the Alexandrian School of the second and third centuries, where Clement and Origen had brought the culture of ancient Greece to bear on Christian truth. Instead of merely condemning paganism, the Alexandrians searched for the incomplete truth in Greek philosophy which found its fulfillment in Christ. Instead of focusing on error in Indian religions, Westcott argued, missionaries should look for truth, and identify ways in which the lesser truth of Hinduism or Islam pointed to the greater truth in Christ.

In the 1870s and 1880s Cambridge graduates established a moderately High Church, celibate "Brotherhood" which became the nucleus of a much larger Anglican missionary establishment in Delhi. They discovered that Bishop Westcott's vision of a New Alexandria provided little guidance to a missionary grappling with practical problems. The Cambridge Brothers in practice behaved like Anglican clergymen everywhere in the late nineteenth century, building up Christian institutions on the assumption that Christian truth would radiate from these institutions through the social elite to the entire nation. Their measure of success became the number of leading non-Christian gentlemen who had passed through their schools.

The story of the Cambridge Mission suggests that Anglican clergymen in Delhi were crippled not so much by racism and imperialism as by the same problems which hindered Anglican clergymen in England: an exaggerated respect for hierarchy and office, a passion for influence with the upper classes at the expense of persuasuion among the masses, clerical professionalism, and outright snobbery.

Which God for Africa: The Islamic-Christian Missionary Debate in Victorian England

Thomas Prasch
Indiana University at Bloomington
Department of History

In October 1887 Isaac Taylor, canon of York, shocked the last-day audience at a church conference in Wolverhampton by telling them that Islam, "though quite unfitted for the higher races . . . is eminently adapted to be a civilizing and elevating religion for barbarous tribes" for whom "Christianity is too spiritual, too lofty." The "Christian ideal" of "humility, purity of heart, forgiveness of injury, [and] sacrifice of self" Taylor argued were "unintelligible to savages." Further, the "extension of European trade" that Taylor saw as an inevitable adjunct of Western missionary activity "means the extension of drunkenness and vice and degradation of the people." By contrast, "the lower virtues which Islam inculcates are what the lower races can be brought to understand," and would lead to the elimination of paganism, devil worship, fetishism, cannibalism, human sacrifice, infanticide, drunkenness, "immoderate dances," "promiscuous intercourse," and much else.

As the Spectator put it, Taylor's lecture "must have sounded to many of the clergy present as a lecture on the sacredness of dynamite would sound to an audience of kings" (15 October 1887, p. 1383). The London Times, in its account of Taylor's address (27 October 1887), parenthetically interpolated his pious audience's responses: "Islam as (Sensation.)"; "Islam has done for civilization more than Christianity. (`Oh, oh.')"; "Islam is not an anti-Christian faith, but a half-Christian faith--an imperfect Christianity. (`Oh.')" The Times account, in turn, set off an angry exchange of letters to the editor that did not end until the following January, and continued for several years more in literary quarterlies and missionary periodicals. As late as the turn of the century, the terms of the debate remained largely unchanged.

If the angry exchange of 1887 did not end the debate about Islam and Christianity, it also did not begin it. As early as 1850 English writers were addressing the rapid expansion of Islam in Africa, and almost always the comparative failure of Christian missionary efforts as well. After Richard Burton's sensational 1855 account of his pilgrimage to Mecca popularized English efforts to gain a fuller and often more sympathetic understanding of Islam, articles on its progress (and the non-progress of Christianity) in Africa became regular features of the English quarterly press, and a continual source of concern in the Christian and missionary

press. The familiarity of the themes, however, does not account for the vehemence of the exchange prompted by Taylor's address.

Islamicists' suggestions that Islam could be a stepping-stone to Christianity for the African blend a number of strands of mid- to late-Victorian thought: ideas about the hierarchy of races and about the historical development of religion; skepticism about Christianity as well as about the cultural consequences of imperialism; early approaches to something of an anthropological relativism and yet the firm belief in the intellectual and spiritual primacy of the Englishman. Most central to Taylor's own address is the conflation of two hierarchial systems: the ranking of races that had become a mainstay of late Victorian physical anthropology (and to which Taylor himself would contribute with writings on the origin of the Aryan race); and the charting by cultural anthropologists like E. B. Taylor of religious systems on a line of "progress" or "development" that moved unequivocally upward from primitive animism to advanced spiritual monotheism. The conflation of the two systems, one racist and one ethnocentric, led to the equation of racial and cultural levels, low races and low religions being suited to each other. Development was seen as a series of stages: one could not leap from the lowest to the highest without passing through the intervening steps.

While the hierarchies of the Islamicist argument in no way challenged Victorian orthodoxies or the self-assured belief of the British in their own cultural superiority, the Islamicists did undermine the foundations of British imperialist ideology by suggesting that contact with the West (especially Western material goods--and above all else Western liquor) was detrimental to the progreess of "lower races." Such a contention directly countered the central tenet of much Christian missionary work (most notably that of David Livingston), which held the endeavor to be part of a broader civilizing program. More generally, by asserting the autonomous, civilized status of Islamic culture, its Victorian defenders undercut the premises of imperial conquest in the name of civilization.

Christian missionary defenders responded to this challenge by disputing Taylor's statistics, accusing him of plagiarism, and dismissing his sources. On a more theoretical level, they countered his arguments by reasserting the savage character of Islamic rule and insisting that the failure to win converts did not negate the Christian Mission. As the Spectator said, "If Christianity is true ... our duty is to propagate it...without thinking for one moment whether we succeed" (15 October 1887). Occasionally missionaries even attacked the racist premises behind Taylor's logic--but usually substituted racist sterotypes of their own for his.

The virulence of their response, however, suggests that the Christian polemicists were on the defensive. Indeed, they felt themselves to be under a double threat, at home and abroad. In England they faced a range of new skepticism, specifically directed at missionary activity (as in Dickens's jesting about missionary subscriptions in Bleak House) and more generally at religious belief. The social scientific perspective that Taylor drew on, and that is more explicit in the works of anthropologists like Taylor, implies that all religions are merely phases in cultural development, that

none can claim any absolute truth value. To this can be added the doubts raised by Darwinianism and the advance of secular socialist ideologies in the same period.

Abroad, the problem cut deeper: most missionary writers conceded that, in his premises if not in his conclusions, Taylor was right. Christian missions were losing ground in Africa to a newly militant Islam. From about midcentury Islamic missionaries were engaged in their own effort to convert Africa, and were succeeding in part because their faith did not require, as Christianity did, so many changes in fundamental social practice (most obviously by allowing polygamy and slavery). It was also widely widely conceded by missionary writers that African relapses to "primitive" beliefs were frequent in the case of conversions to Christianity, and rare in cases of conversion to Islam.

Thus what made Canon Taylor's talk so controversial was that he touched some raw nerves among Christian missionary supporters, first by exposing failures they were already acutely aware of, and then by framing his argument on the developmental premises of the church's domestic critics. What makes the controversy illuminating for us is the way it unveils the complex dynamic of late-Victorian religious belief and unbelief.

"Was Christ a Buddhist?": The Victorian Buddhist-Christian Controversy

Susan Thach Dean
Chicago Public Library
Theatre Arts

When the French explorer and missionary Abbe Huc visited Lhasa in 1846 he was astonished by similarities between Tibetan Buddhist rituals and those of his own church. William Hazlitt's 1851 translation of Huc's Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China was one of the earliest works published in Britain to raise the question of Buddhist-Christian influence.

Through the efforts of missionaries, colonial administrators, and scholars knowledge of Buddhism grew steadily in England during the nineteenth century. As a result, correspondences between Buddhism and Christianity became increasingly apparent. The translation of Sanskrit and Pali texts led to the discovery of striking similarities in the doctrines of both faiths and in the lives of their founders. An extensive literature developed which attempted to explain or reconcile the resemblances between England's state religion and the Asian creed she had sent missionaries to eliminate.

At first the debate was confined to scholars, but the publication in 1879 of Sir Edwin Arnold's highly popular narrative poem, The Light of Asia, with its sympathetic portrayal of the Buddha, caused the controversy to spread to the general and the religious press on both sides of the Atlantic. Early reviewers were quick to point out the similarities between Arnold's depiction of the Buddha and the life and teachings of Christ. Articles with

such provocative titles as "Was Christ a Buddhist?" attempted to prove that Christianity had acquired many of its salient characteristics from Buddhist missionaries in Palestine. In contrast, some scholars cited historical and philological data to show that Mahayana (or Northern) Buddhism, with its emphasis on compassion and service to others, was the result of Christian evangelizing in China. The resemblance between Christianity and Buddhism was accented by such publications as Ernest M. Bowden's The Imitation of Buddha (London, 1891), a compilation of extracts from the Buddha's sermons for daily reading with an introduction by Arnold.

Some theories of Buddhist-Christian interrelationships were wildly imaginative. A popular speculation, promulgated in several book-length studies, asserted that the Essenes (a sect of Jewish ascetics) were actually Buddhists and that both John the Baptist and Christ were Essene monks. At least one writer claimed that stories of the Buddha were merely Asian versions of the life of Christ and the historical Buddha had never actually existed. The noted German-American student of comparative religion Paul Carus made one of the most explicit statements of Buddhist-Christian compatability, declaring that "Christians may be said to be Buddhists that worship Maitreya [the Buddha of the future] under the name of Christ." Perhaps one of the most extreme exponents of an opposing point of view was William Cleaver Wilkinson, who asserted that Buddhism was a travesty of Christianity created by Satan as a snare for the unwary.

The study of Buddhism in the nineteenth century had wide-ranging implications for the Victorian view of religion. As they came to see value in a foreign creed previously dismissed as of only antiquarian or ethnological interest, the Victorians' attitude toward their own religion changed. Critical examination of historical data led them to question aspects of Christianity previously accepted on faith. The systematic study of Buddhism and other oriental religions also led to the development of comparative religion as an academic discipline. Although scientific advances are usually cited as the primary reason for the Victorians' loss of faith, a more sophisticated knowledge of religion may have had as great an impact.

THIRD SESSION: "Unorthodoxies"
Janice Carlisle, Moderator

"Has A Frog a Soul?": Thomas Henry Huxley's Contributions to Victorian Metaphysical Debates

Patricia O'Neill
Hamilton College
Department of English

The Metaphysical Society (1869-1889) played a crucial role in shaping the debates between science and religion in Victorian Society. In the casual but serious structure of the group and its meetings, the members discussed every major issue and perspective pertaining to matters of faith and knowledge. This paper describes in brief the formation of the Meta-

physical Society and then focuses on one of its chief participants, Thomas Henry Huxley. True to his principle of carrying the methods of science into enemy territory, Huxley answers the question he proposes to the Metaphysical Society, "Has a Frog a Soul and of What Nature is that Soul supposing it to Exist?", in materialist terms.

But Huxley denied that he was a materialist or idealist. His great contribution was the name and methods of an "agnostic." His consistent position in his own work and in response to others was to refuse belief to what cannot be verified. At the same time, his contention that there are some things that we do not know, his claim of uncertainty, caused Huxley's opponents to redefine the terms of belief. Using Huxley's agnosticism against him, Dr. W. F. Ward attacked the presuppositions of scientific method, pointing out the limitations of what he called the Experience Philosophy. The theologian's desire for moral truth and the scientist's memory and intuition about natural law suggested a psychological realm separate from the physiological reactions of the body.

There was no compromise, and no conversions followed from those opposing points of view. But the method of agnosticism and the influence of the debates of the Metaphysical Society supported Huxley's fight against mere orthodoxy with regard to religion and against the uncritical assumptions of the social Darwinists and philosophical positivists. Thus he provides an interesting study for modern intellectuals. Huxley's late views of the relations of scientific knowledge to what he called the ethical process remain instructive in a society that fears both technological anarchy and any form of religious or ideological hegemony.

Swinburne, Hugo, and the Divine Humanity: Neo-Hegelian Idealism and the Poetry of Free Thought

Margot K. Louis
University of Victoria

"Glory to Man in the Highest, for Man is the master of things." Perhaps no trumpet-call to unbelief has been so widely misunderstood. Swinburne's "Hymn of Man" has been viewed as a post-Darwinism or as a Feuerbachian text; it has even been abused as a glorification of Victorian technology. I propose, on the contrary, to demonstrate that "Hymn of Man" celebrates a Neo-Hegelian god--and, further, that the whole of Swinburne's Songs Before Sunrise expresses a philosophical idealism which is closer to the views of Mazzini or Victor Hugo than to those of Darwin, Feuerback, or Prince Albert.

The "Hymn of Man" was originally drafted for a "Congress of Freethinkers" organized in opposition to the Oecumenical Council of 1870. In the "profession of faith" sent to the Congress by Swinburne and William Rossetti jointly, it was declared that the "democracy of the spirit without which the body, personal or social, can enjoy but a false freedom, must, by the very law of its being, confront a man-made theocracy to destroy it." The "Hymn of Man," and Swinburne's greater republican lyric, "Hertha," which

was written concurrently with the hymn and under the same inspiration, both stress this "democracy of the spirit." Man (Swinburne's use of the generic man and of the generic he passed unquestioned in his time) has foolishly believed that the material world of "things" has power over himself. The power of an external God is made out of the supposed "malice of things," whereas man is in fact "at one with the reason of things that is sap to the roots" (italics mine). Not only is there an order and "law" in "things," but there is also a "con-science," a shared knowledge of consciousness, and hence a living harmony among them. This harmony can only be realized, can only be uttered, through the activity of the human spirit. Man's holy spirit rekindles, perpetuates, and reilluminates itself "From the flame that [his] own mouth gives": the "reason of things" has been struggling through the material forms of nature to realize itself in human thought and speech. This is what Swinburne means by man's mastery over things--this, not the ability to manipulate, exploit, or destroy at will.

This vision is at least partially in agreement with the vision of such Neo-Hegelian philosophers as T. H. Green. At Oxford, during a meeting of the Old Mortality society, Swinburne had listened to Green's essay on the development of Christian dogma, which suggests that God evolves "as an object to himself." Such a concept strongly resembles the concept of Hertha in Swinburne's poem of that name, where Hertha is the earth-goddess who can become an object to herself only though man, "fruit of my body and seed of my soul" (as she declares). Hence, man is Hertha, her "topmost blossom" who is "equal and one with" her because in his mind she becomes conscious at last, and able to recognize her own godhood.

More powerful influences on Songs Before Sunrise, however, are the political idealism of Mazzini, and the humanist vision of Victor Hugo's "Le Satyre"--a poem which in structure and content seems to be the main source for the "Hymn of Man," while it also contributes phrases, themes, and images to many of Swinburne's other works, including "Hertha." Like Swinburne, Hugo suggests that when man recognizes himself as his own self-sufficient saviour he may master things by recognizing them as parts of a spontaneously evolving harmony, within which the human mind is the most important element. The main obstacle to this happy outcome is the essential error of giving the Divine a form: "tout le mal vient de la forme des dieux." Hence in Songs before Sunrise generally, as in "Hertha" and the "Hymn of Man" particularly, Swinburne promulgates a "double doctrine, democratic and atheistic, equality of men and abolition of gods." True iconoclasts, Hugo and Swinburne shatter divine forms so that the evolving process of conscious, free, human love may be recognized for the god it is.

Apocalypse Then: Millenarianism and Thomas Carlyle

Frank Fennell
Loyola University of Chicago
Department of English and Dean of Humanities

This paper examines a set of Victorian ideas which were at once both

belief and unbelief, both a conviction about the future and a confession of profound distrust of the present. Millenarianism begins in total disillusionment with the world as currently known; what is so patently corrupt cannot last, must self-destruct from accumulated internal tensions. To this apocalyptic vision of the near future the millenarian adds the conviction that destruction of the present world will make possible a reign of peace and plenty. In religious terms this reign was identified by some Victorians with the thousand-year reign of Christ predicted in Revelations XX, but there were many secular versions of the New Jerusalem as well.

The paper begins with a brief excursion into a little-known part of Victorian religious history by outlining the popularity and influence of millenarian beliefs in the first half of the century. Most accounts of Victorian religious history neglect millenarianism in favor of more familiar topics, such as the centrifugal forces at work within the established churches, the growth of dissenting sects, and the challenges to traditional beliefs occasioned by new developments in science and historical criticism. Millenarianism was a very common way of looking at the world--a cultural-religious paradigm, if you will--even among educated elites, and its influence has not been recognized in part because modern readers project their own disbelief into the past. Such readers mistakenly assume that because they do not take millenarianism seriously, educated members of an earlier generation could not have done so either.

The works of Thomas Carlyle support this argument. Carlyle's origins were precisely in those religious, social, and economic groups which were most affected by millenarianism, and he came to intelletual maturity at a time and in a place where its influence was inescapable. The coming apocalypse was as certain for Carlyle as for countrymen and contemporaries like Edward Irving and George Gilfillan, and the effect of this set of beliefs will be traced in works as early as "The Signs of the Times" and as late as Shooting Niagara: And After? and Reminiscences. While Carlyle's vision of the Second Coming tends to be social rather than specifically religious, the difference was much less important to Carlyle's readers than modern critics suppose. This reading will also suggest other reinterpretations: reinterpretations, for example, of biographical matters like Carlyle's Leith Walk "conversion" or his estrangement from Christianity, and reinterpretations of literay issues such as how to read the seeming despair of Carlyle's later works or where to locate the New Jerusalem he posits in Sartor Resartus.

An important paradigm shift was going on during the Victorian period, one that was tied very closely to this belief in the destruction of the world as we know it and the arrival of a millenium. Perhaps there is a greater distance intellectually from Carlyle to, say, Matthew Arnold than there is from Arnold to us. One can speculate about the reasons for this shift. More importantly, one can begin to account for its effects, not only in religion but in our political and social life as well.

FOURTH SESSION: "Recent Studies in Victorian Religion: An Interdisciplinary Conversation"; Harold Perkin, Moderator

RECENT WORKS ON THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE HISTORY OF VICTORIAN BRITAIN: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Walter L. Arnstein
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of History

A. General:

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2. Ward, W. R. Religion and Society in England 1790-1850. London, 1973. Perhaps the most thorough (but not the most readable) overview of the process whereby the eighteenth-century Church of England ceased to be the dominant ecclesiastical organization in the land, giving way instead to the complex Victorian spectrum of Anglicanism, Methodism, and Nonconformity.

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5. Best, Geoffrey. "Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain" in Robert Robson, ed. Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain: Essays in Honour of George Kitson Clark. London, 1967. The best brief summary of the subject.

6. Phillips, Paul T., ed. The View from the Pulpit: The Social and Political Thought of Victorian Ministers of Religion. Toronto, 1978. Essays by specialist authors on influential clergymen, five Anglicans, four Nonconformists, and two Roman Catholics.

B. The Church of England:

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2. Best, Geoffrey. Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England. Cambridge, 1964. A comprehensive study of the official attempts from 1707 to 1948 to redistribute Church wealth and reduce clerical poverty.

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4 Kitson Clark, George. Churchmen and the Condition of England: A Study in the Development of Social Ideas and Practices from the Old Regime to the Modern State. London, 1973. A sympathetic assessment of the attitudes of "the largest organized body of opinion in the country"--at the height of their influence between 1850 and 1870, according to the author, but destined to be supplanted by twentieth-century secular collectivism.

5. Norman, Edward. Church and Society in England, 1770-1970: A Historical Study. Oxford, 1976. A somewhat judgmental survey of Anglican "social teachings and attitudes." For the Victorian era, the relevant chapters are 3 ("Constitutional Adjustment of Church and State, 1828-1846"), 4 ("The Victorian Church and the Condition of Society)," and 5 ("Political Attitudes of the Victorian Church").

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2. Currie, Robert. Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism. London, 1968. A study of the divisions and reunions (between 1797 and 1932) within the religious movement that was growing most rapidly during the first half of the nineteenth century.

3. Briggs, John, and Ian Sellers, eds. Victorian Nonconformity. New York, 1974. A useful collection of contemporary documents illuminating Nonconformity and "the Individual," "the Church," "Society," "Culture," "the State," and "the World."

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1. Royle, Edward. Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791-1866. Totowa NJ: 1974. An account that suggests that organized Freethinkers--from the era of Thomas Paine through that of Richard Carlile, Robert Owen, and George Jacob Holyoake--acted like a small argumentative nonconformist sect.

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5. Wright, T. R. The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian England. Cambridge, 1986. An illuminating account of a movement that constituted at the same time a rejection of and a substitute for revealed Christianity. It had few actual members but numerous influential fellow-travellers.

6. Turner, Frank M. Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England. New Haven, 1974. An account of six major thinkers (including Henry Sidgwick, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Frederic W. H. Myers), who found both the "old orthodoxy" of the Christian religion and "the new orthodoxy" of materialistic science too restrictive.

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8. Lightman, Bernard. The Origins of Agnosticism: Victorian Unbelief and the Limits of Knowledge. Baltimore, 1987. A revisionist account that finds the roots of agnosticism more in theological controversy than in nineteenth-century science.

F. The Interaction of Religion with Politics and Society:

1. Gilbert, Alan D. Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914. London, 1976. An exploration of the implication of Anglican-Nonconformist rivalry for an industrializing society. An excellent compilation of membership statistics.

2. Hampton, David. Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850. London, 1984. A fairly brief book that appraises in a sceptical manner comprehensive historical interpretations that attribute to a monolithic Methodist movement either the safeguarding of England from revolution or the erosion of the Anglican "confessional state."

3. Laqueur, Thomas Walter. Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850. New Haven, 1976. A study of one of the most significant aspects of "the evangelical revival" and a major contributor to literacy. Laqueur views the movement less as a tool of upper-class "social control" than as an example of working-class "self-help."

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18. Parry, J. P. Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-1874. Cambridge, 1987. An exhaustive discussion that pays particular attention to the "Whig-Liberals" who sought to use a tolerant Church of England to reform the nation and whose disenchantment with Gladstone by 1874 foreshadowed, in Parry's judgment, the party split of 1886.

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G. Scotland and Ireland:

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3. Connolly, S. J. Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland. New York: 1982. A helpful topical account of everyday religious life before Ireland's mid-century "devotional revolution." It demonstrates how the Roman Catholic clergy was transformed from a quasi-legal group into an accepted part of the Irish power structure (subsidized by the British Crown) that sought to curb superstition and random violence among the peasantry.

4. Bowen, Desmond. Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism. Dublin, 1983. An assessment of the man who did more than any other to fashion mid-Victorian Irish Roman Catholicism in a disciplined Roman manner.

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7. Connolly, Sean. Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland. Dublin, 1985. A pamphlet (and bibliography) introducing a significant theme. The author stresses the degree to which, during most of the century, Ireland's religions co-existed peacefully.

Michael Bright
Eastern Kentucky University
Department of English

Recent Study in Victorian Religion: Art and Architecture

Belcher, Margaret E. "'The Church of Our Fathers': A. W. N. Pugin and Daniel Rock." Southern Review 15 (1982):321-33. Rock published The Church of Our Fathers(1849-53), a survey of liturgy and ritual in the English Catholic church. Pugin made twenty-three drawings for it, but in the end did not collaborate. Discussion of the two men's attitudes toward religion and architecture.

Bendiner, Kenneth. An Introduction to Victorian Painting. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985. Seven chapters on seven paintings by different artists. Ch. 4 discusses the typology and archaeological correctness of William Holman Hunt's The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple.

Bright, Michael. Cities Built to Music: Aesthetic Theories of the Victorian Gothic Revival. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1984. See especially Ch. 3 and Ch. 6 for discussions of the relationship between religion and architecture.

Brooks, Chris. Signs for the Times: Symbolic Realism in the Mid-Victorian World. London: Allen & Unwin, 1984. Symbolic realism in Gothic Revival church architecture. Ch. 12--Pugin's writings, Ch. 13-- Pugin's influence, and Ch. 14--Butterfield's work.

Brooks, Michael W. John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1987. Ch. 3, "Chapel and Church: The Religious Background to Architectural Theory," deals with the influence of religion on Ruskin's architectural theories, especially in The Seven Lamps of Architecture and The Stones of Venice.

Casteras, Susan P. "Virgin Vows: The Early Victorian Artists' Portrayal of Nuns and Novices." Victorian Studies 24 (1981):157-84. Paintings such as Charles Allston Collins's Convent Thoughts depict repressed sexuality, novices as victims of unhappy love affairs. This article, somewhat revised, appears in Ch. 5 of Casteras's Images of Victorian Womanhood in English Art (Rutherford, N. J.: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1987).

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Landow, George P. "'Christ the Pilot': A Panel from William Holman Hunt's Unfinished Triptych." Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies 1, i (1980):79-91.

Landow, George P. "Shadows Cast by The Light of the World: William Holman Hunt's Religious Paintings, 1893-1905." Art Bulletin 65 (1983):471-84. The Miracle of the Holy Fire, Christ the Pilot, The Importunate Neighbor, copy of The Light of the World, The Beloved, and The Lady of Shalott, like earlier paintings (the original Light of the World, The Awakening Conscience, and The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple), are all about "conversion, illumination, and the encounter of man and God."

Landow, George P. Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought. Boston: Routledge, 1980. Ch. 4, "Typology in the Visual Arts," focuses on Millais's Christ in the House of His Parents and Hunt's The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple. A condensation of Landow's discussion of typology in William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism.

Landow, George P. "William Holman Hunt and the Missionaries," Pre-Raphaelite Review 1, i (1977):27-33. Hunt's disillusionment with Protestant missionaries in Jerusalem.

Landow, George P. William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism. New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1979. Typological symbolism in Hunt and others is part of a larger attempt to reconcile realism and symbolism. The principal examples are A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids, The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple, The Scapegoat, The Shadow of Death, and The Triumph of the Innocents.

Patrick, James. "Newman, Pugin, and Gothic." Victorian Studies 24 (1981):185-207. Controversy between Newman and Pugin about the proper style of architecture for churches.

Sussman, Herbert L. Fact into Figure: Typology in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1979. Carlyle (Past and Present) and Ruskin (The Stones of Venice) influenced Pre-Raphaelites in their use of symbolic realism. Sussman begins with Carlyle and Ruskin and then applies symbolic realism to the paintings of Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti.

A Supplementary List for Victorian Religion, Art, and Architecture

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Cole, David. The Work of Sir Gilbert Scott. London: Architectural P, 1980. See especially Ch. 3, "Church Architect, 1844-51" and Ch. 6, "Restorer, 1859-64."

Cooper, Robyn. "The Relationship Between the Pre-Raphaellte Brotherhood and Painters Before Raphael in English Criticism of the Late 1840s and 1850s." Victorian Studies 24 (1981):405-38. More about art than religion, but a little bit about anti-Catholic and anti-Tractarian criticism of the Pre-Raphaellites.

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Davies, Philip. Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India, 1660-1947. London: Murray, 1985. Includes a number of Victorian churches.

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Harrison, Martin. Victorian Stained Glass. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1980. A history of Victorian stained-glass artists and their work, but little about their religious subjects.

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Linda Peterson
Yale University
Department of English

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Nicholas Temperley
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Musicology

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