MVSA Newsletter

Newsletter of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association

Number 13, August 1990

CALL FOR PAPERS

VICTORIAN VIRTUE AND VICE will be the topic of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association, to be held in Chicago on 26-27 April 1991. We invite proposals for papers or performances treating any aspect of the topic. Proposals should be interdisciplinary, and we especially welcome submissions in such fields as science, dance, art, drama, or music. We will consider proposals on topics not directly related to the conference theme.

Eight- to ten-page papers or two-page abstracts should be sent no later than 25 October 1990 to Micael Clarke, Department of English, Loyola University of Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

If you have a suggestion for a featured speaker, panel, or performance, please let us know by October 25. Also, we would appreciate your posting the enclosed call for papers where colleagues can see it. Many thanks.

THE ARNSTEIN FUND: A MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

The convention of a farewell address has been employed previously in these pages, most recently by my distinguished predecessor Jeanne Peterson as she extended thanks to her Indiana colleagues who hosted the 1988 meeting and to Kris Garrigan on the occasion of the latter's retirement from the Executive Secretaryship. I am pleased not to have the burden of announcing Micael Clarke's similar retirement, for I know that Jim Barnes, like Jeanne another distinguished Victorianist from the Hoosier State, will have the benefit of Mike's expertise and zeal. But to our 1990 Urbana hosts, Walter L. Arnstein and Nicholas Temperley, we all owe much, and it is my pleasure similarly to thank them for their superb planning. To do the legwork that makes for a successful meeting is perhaps the most thankless task in academe. It does not seem to impress deans and department chairs, and as often as not hosts can expect only criticism for a mishap, not praise for a meeting that runs smoothly. Those members who attended the delightful Iolanthe at the Temperleys' musicale on Friday night will know that indeed, this was a meeting that ran not merely smoothly, but entertainingly, and that even the non-appearance of a guest speaker, betrayed by bad weather and uncooperative airlines, did not in the least ruffle Walter, who changed his role from that of planner to luncheon speaker with indescribable aplomb.

Immediately following Jeanne's column in the 1988 newsletter, I wrote, with all the brashness of an incoming officer, of my desire to see our resources as an organization going to something more than its mere maintenance. I expressed a hope that we could offer some sort of support to "promising young graduate students in our field," and went on to elaborate a visionary scheme that it is not likely we can soon sponsor: a summer or year-long dissertation fellowship in Victorian studies. The outgoing Executive Committee, however, has approved the establishment o the Walter L. Arnstein Fund to provide an annual grant-in-aid of $500 to assist dissertation research undertaken by students currently enrolled in doctoral programs in U.S. universities. Following the Urbana meeting, President Barnes asked me to appoint an ad hoc committee to draft a description of the fund and to devise guidelines for applications. I asked two former Executive Secretaries, Frederick Kirchhoff and Kristine Garrigan, and two former members of the Executive Committee, Joe D. Burchfield and Debra Mancoff, to take on this task. For the notice that will be distributed to a wider audience, the committee approved the following description: "Proposals may be submitted in literature, history, art history, or musicology, and should have a significant interdisciplinary component. Other considerations being equal, awards will go to doctoral candidates working at midwestern institutions."

At this time of writing the Executive Committee is reviewing two alternate proposals for structuring the fund. One would secure recognition, under IRS regulations, of the fund as a 501(c)3 organization within MVSA. The other would be the establishment of an account in the University of Illinois Foundation. Either option would assure tax deductibility for contributions made by MVSA members; in the meantime, though we cannot provide that assurance, we welcome contributions above the annual dues from those who would like to see some money put aside for the purpose. It is our hope that we can set an endowment goal that would make it possible to support the award from the interest income, but in the transitional period we will defray some of the costs from our operating budget.

For my own valedictory purposes, however, I am more concerned with stressing the name the Fund has been given. Walter Arnstein's contributions to MVSA have been substantial, unceasing, thoughtful, and unvaryingly good-humored. His is a record that in MVSA archives is perhaps equalled only by the redoubtable Nicholas Temperley, to whom I would apply the same four adjectives. In preparing for this year's Nominating Committee a summary of the contributions MVSA members have made to the organization ever since it was founded, I realized that in addition to serving as our first President, Walter took on a second four-year term as a member of the Executive Committee, and has been a panelist, session chair, commentator, or principal speaker at seven out of fourteen meetings, twice a meeting host, and a constant source of sound advice, often volunteering to assist in reviewing submissions even when no longer a member of the Executive Committee. I am aware of few among us who so fully emobdy the humane and interdisciplinary spirit that has made MVSA a thriving organization.

Finally, I hope that all of you have marked on your calendars the last weekend of April, 1991, when we meet in Chicago to talk about Victorian virtue and vice. Whichever you plan to pursue, I look forward to seeing you there.

Lawrence Poston

A MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

In assuming my duties as President of MVSA, I want to reiterate what I said at our conference's final lunch: how very indebted we all are to Larry Poston for his fine leadership and hard work. Similarly, Micael Clarke deserves our continuing hearty thanks for her good work as Secretary. I very much look forward to working with the Executive Committee: Patrick Brantlinger, David Itzkowitz, Julie Codell, Richard Davis, and Barbara Quinn Schmidt. It also goes without saying that I would welcome hearing from any of you throughout the coming year.

Many thanks as well to those who were most directly instrumental in providing us with such a delightful and successful conference in Urbana. Among other things there was much speculation as to which would win out next year, when it came to conference paper topics: virtue or vice. The betting was that vice would have it hands down, but that does seem to be rather a-historical. To be sure there were those "other Victorians" who might applaud the triumph of vice over virtue, but surely most Victorians would have assumed that virtue should receive at least equal time if not more. So, it will be fun to look over the proposed topics as they come in, and note the trend. Perhaps, like everything else, there will be some virtue within the realm of vice and some vice lurking behind a facade of virtue.

James J. Barnes

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

In sending these comments to Micael Clarke for the MVSA Newsletter, I explained to her that anything "vice-presidential" I can think of to say reminds me of Dan Quayle. I hope that isn't because we are both Hoosiers. Perhaps when I am elevated to the Presidency some version of George Bush's "vision thing" will overwhelm me, and I'll begin speaking in more tongues than Hoosier. In more serious vein, it seems to me that MVSA has been important for the professional development of many of us (myself included). I am especially pleased by the number and quality of graduate student contributions to our recent programs. And pleased, too, with the new Walter Arnstein Prize which will, I think, be an added incentive for graduate student participation. I am about to end my term as Editor of Victorian Studies and begin a new life as Chair of the Department of English here at IU-Bloomington. But this metamorphosis isn't from Victorian to modern (or postmodern, or even Edwardian). I remain a staunch Victorianist, if not exactly Victorian; and I will remain, too, a staunch MVSAer, grateful for all the hard work of our colleagues and organizers: Mike Clarke, Larry Poston, Walter Arnstein, Kris Garrigan, Fred Kirchhoff, Nicholas Temperley. . . . I look forward to next spring's meeting, both "virtue" and "vice."

Cordially, Pat Brantlinger

TREASURY REPORT

Balance on hand, July 1, 1989		$ 2,208.65
Income		
Dues: 1989-90	$1,680.00	
1990-91	250.00	
Annual Meeting Registration fees	1,152.00	
Donations	289.00	
Interest	110.00	
Total Income		$ 3,481.00
Expenditures		
Printing and Duplication	$ 848.00	
Supplies	95.00	
Word processing services for directory	271.00	
Annual Meeting Expenses	1,351.00	
Postage	630.00	
Bank Service Charges	9.00	
Total Expenditures		$ 3,204.00
Balance on hand, July 1, 1990		$ 2,486.00

Many thanks to the following members whose donations have helped to subsidize the operations of MVSA:

Walter Arnstein, Ed Block, Patrick Brantlinger, Lawrence Clipper, Julie Codell, Chris Dahl, Richard Davis, Therese Ellsworth, Catherine Golden, Elizabeth Helsinger, Linda Hughes, David Itzkowitz, Frederick Kirchhoff, Debra Mancoff, Harland Nelson, Philip Beggrov Peter, Lawrence Poston, John Reed, Owen Rogal, Lowell Satre, Peter Shillingsburg, Jane Stedman, Glennis Stephenson, Nicholas Temperley, Pearl Warn, Robert Wellisch.

Thanks also to Nicholas Temperley and Walter Arnstein for careful planning and hard work (arranging the Iolanthe sing-through, or bringing rather than renting a slide projector, for example) that kept down the costs of this year's meeting, and to Lawrence Poston for bringing in at least twenty-five new members whose dues and meeting fees have been included in this year's report. Please note that this year's donations will go toward starting up the Walter L. Arnstein Fund described above by Larry Poston.

Michael M. Clarke

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS GIVEN AT THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OPENING ADDRESS

"System and Sentiment: A Clash of Views on Crime and Criminals in Late Victorian England"

Sean McConville

Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century one to two hundred thousand persons annually entered and reentered the English gaols. By definition these were comparatively minor offenders and detainees, yet were subject to an extremely harsh penal regime, perhaps the most severe in the developed world. Judges, politicians and administrators well understood and justified what happened in the gaols. Next to death, it was agreed, gaol was the heaviest penalty in English law. Having passed the longest gaol sentence then possible (four years), a judge remarked "I have only passed that sentence twice before; in the one case the man died; in the other he went raving mad; and I believe it is a sentence that no man can survive and retain his senses." A gaol governor told a committee of the House of Lords that were he to inflict for just two years the full weight of the discipline allowed by law "no man alive could bear it: it would kill the strongest man in England."

This was not suffered by default or neglect. Close attention was paid to the health of the prisons, and the bodily preservation of the prisoners. The gaols frequently were islands of safety as epidemics swept surrounding localities. Suffering was calibrated and controlled. With skill and ingenuity, the regime addressed every corporal and mental vulnerability. At first by trial and (sometimes fatal) error, and then aided by emerging medical and scientific knowledge, the prisoner was cast into a state of abiding hunger, isolation, and unremitting and inescapable exertion that made life a misery. Lacunae in this penal experience were dealt with as they were identified. Sleep provided no haven: hours of rest were restricted as far as possible, and for most adult males bare boards replaced mattresses and hammocks. Food barely sustained, but was intentionally flavourless and nauseous in taste, texture and smell. Hours at treadwheel and crank labour were spiced with the awareness that one's painful effort ground nothing but oneself.

Elements of this system had existed for centuries, but it was the generation born in the 1830s, which began to come into power in the '60s, that gathered and welded them together. The objective was scientific deterrence and the repression, if possible elimination, of a notional criminal class. Keeping religion, but rapidly losing the consolation of belief, this generation was the first to face such a convincing vision of a bleak, mechanical, empty and uncaring universe. Order, rules,

duty, work and submission became the stuff of belief: systems displaced spirituality.

The succeeding generation sought consolation and meaning in an elevation of personal integrity and human relationships. In social policy there was a "discovery of poverty", while in social administration, personal commitment challenged remote philanthropy. The higher civil service, a "structured intelligence", educated in the beliefs of Arnold and Jowett, increasingly confronted the penal policy and administrative authority of the older generation. A changed urban mission within the Church, a more critical secular philanthropy, and journalism which found a rich vein in social reportage, provided context and occasion for a decisive clash. The inevitable committee of inquiry found what it was expected to find, and penal policy entered upon a new set of opportunities and contradictions.

FIRST SESSION: THE COLONIAL MARGINS

"Victorians and the Invention of Indian Art: Sir George Birdwood, John Lockwood Kipling and International Exhibitions, 1851-1901"

Peter Hoffenberg
University of California, Berkeley
Department of History

This project explores the invention of "traditional" Indian arts and crafts by a group of influential public figures in England and India during the last half of the nineteenth century. Sir George Birdwood (Bombay Museum and India Office), John Lockwood Kipling (Central Museum and Art School, Lahore) and various other officials of the Science and Art Department, South Kensington Museum and Indian Government created the models, institutions, curricula and critical literature which both legitimized and popularized the craftsmanship of potters, weavers, metal-workers and wood-carvers from the South Asian periphery. These members of the growing Imperial Science and Art Clique turned to the medium of the great international exhibitions held in London, Paris and other major metropolitan centers to introduce and authenticate Indian art-wares to a large and diverse audience and to reposition both their social group and the South Asian products in the general Victorian discourse on the relationships between art, society and culture. In turn, Birdwood, Kipling and their colleagues used the new illustrated press, and public art collections to create and perpetuate a self-referential canon about traditional art and society and to underscore their role as cultural experts. Their vision of Indian history and culture remains an attractive one and has influenced twentieth-century South Asian politics and nationalism.

"Isolated Grandeur: Military Spectacle
and the British Public from Waterloo to the Crimea"

Scott Hughes Myerly
University of Louisville
Department of History

Traditionally, the British army is an institution which has to a significant extent existed outside the mainstream of British life. In the first half of the nineteenth century, civilians feared it as an engine of oppression and as a constitutional threat to the liberties and rights of Britons. Common soldiers were viewed by the public as outcasts, and the leaders of the army preferred them to be so: because the conditions of life for the common soldiers usually were so harsh, there was always the fear that they might join forces with those whom they were ordered to oppose in street conflicts. Thus, the army had to insulate its soldiers from the general public in order to avoid the development of sympathetic ties between the troops and civilians.

Visually, military imagery created a strong delineation between soldiers and civilians and it served to emphasize to both groups the distance between them. For soldiers, this served to enhance their feelings of solidarity and esprit de corps, but for civilians, it emphasized the fact that the army was a separate group whose function was the exercise of power. Paradoxically, however, it was against the army's interests to keep its troops totally isolated from civilians, for the most effective form of pro-army propaganda was the display presented by the elaborate and impressive military spectacle. The elaborate and showy uniforms, flags, brilliant cavalrymen, and the many rituals and ceremonies of military life were always attractions, and the greatest military show culminated in the enormously popular grand review.

This spectacle achieved many goals for the army: it was a means to promote both discipline and morale in the ranks, attract new recruits to the army, and provide an elaborate show to civilians. For the public, this spectacle functioned as a grand entertainment which served to defuse some of the hostility against the army and military spending. During this period, all ranks of society, ranging from Nottingham Chartists to Queen Victoria herself seemed to be dazzled by the military spectacle presented in the grand reviews.

Thus, the British army was an institution that was deliberately kept outside of the mainstream of British society for reasons of discipline and security, and yet it was intentionally brought into contact with the British public under certain controlled and specified conditions which helped to promote the goals of the state through providing civilians with

free entertainment. This paper will highlight the ways in which the spectacle and display of the British army in the first half of the nineteenth century helped to isolate the army from the public and yet also tended to influence the perceptions and emotions of civilians in a way most useful to the British state.

"Victorian Aborigines"

Pat Brantlinger
Indiana University
Victorian Studies and Department of English

Much was written about racial extinction in the Victorian period. Like many accounts, Darwin's consideration in Descent of Man focused especially on the fate of the Tasmanian aborigines, nearly extinct after the "Black War" between 1800 and 1830 (the last man died in 1869, the last woman in 1876). Darwin dodges the issue of genocide, and worries instead about disease and infertility as main causes for the demise of the Tasmanians. But genocide was the obvious main cause. In the 1830s, George Augustus Robinson rounded up the remnants of the Tasmanians and resettled them on Flinders Island. He tried to "convert" them to Christianity and "civilization," establishing an "aboriginal police," an "aboriginal newspaper," a "circulating medium," etc., and also abolishing native customs like "corroborees" or dances. But his "sable friends" continued to pine away, and soon charges began to be leveled against him (by, for instance, members of the Aboriginal Protection Society back in London) that he was killing the last Tasmanians by civilizing them -- rather than, as he believed, saving their souls if not their bodies.

SECOND SESSION: SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PERIPHERIES

"John Bull and the Squirearchy: Ruskin's Imaginary Audience"

Linda M. Austin
Oklahoma State University
Department of English

When John Ruskin began lecturing as Slade Professor of Art at Oxford in 1870, he brought his vision of a future England without class antagonism -- or mobility. Ruskin's ideal England would be rural and united; that is, it would combine certain stereotypical elements of the early or even pre-nineteenth-century aristocracy and peasantry and simply erase the middle classes. The latter covered an enormous span, and ironically, at Oxford Ruskin addressed many of its members. During the same years, he launched his museum for the working classes of Sheffield, but again, the picture of England manifested in the displayed objects elided all evidence of visitors' lives. At

both Sheffield and Oxford, then, Ruskin addressed his audience as other than they were. In his Inaugural lecture, he used imperialistic rhetoric to reflect and exploit the undergraduates' conception of themselves as persons rising from their entrepreneurial roots into leisurely lives modelled on the landed gentry. At the Sheffield museum, which opened in 1878, he exhibited objects like the illustrations of John Leech to advance a notion of Englishness based on material conditions and values that estranged audiences from their present lives. Leech's drawings of political and social scenes, as well as Percival Leigh's Comic English Grammar and Comic Latin Grammar, celebrated the "John Bull" qualities of his subjects. These included a xenophobiac attitude toward the Irish, the Jews, and the working and under-classes in Britain itself. Of course the "peasants" Ruskin imagined visiting the museum at Walkley did not conform to this image; in reality they were factory workers or art students. For both a Sheffield operative and an Oxford undergraduate, being "Ruskinian" or simply adopting Ruskin's vision meant separating oneself from one's native surroundings and social group and aspiring to a prototypical English life that belonged mainly in an agrarian, hierarchical past.

"Leaving the Periphery: The Moral Discourse of Manchester Unitarianism, 1830-1850"

Howard M. Wach
Clarkson University
Center of Liberal Studies

Early Victorian Manchester was the psychic center of industrializing England. In the decades after 1815, Manchester's middle-class Unitarian community came to occupy a significant place in the city's public life. As they entered, and in some ways created, structures of authority in the industrial city, their contributions to social, political, and cultural institutions had a deep and disproportionately heavy influence on Manchester's civic life during its heyday as the "shock city" of the age. Despite their small numbers and marginal status, the Manchester Unitarians became a powerful local force.

This paper will discuss the ideological implications of the Manchester Unitarians' journey from "periphery" to "center" as it was articulated by the Reverend John James Tayler, minister to a congregation which included some of the most active and influential Unitarian families. The complex mixture of idioms Tayler employed in his sermons and speeches constructed a moral posture for a community in the process of assuming and legitimating newly-won power. Prescriptive edicts of economy, politics, and social organization, filtered through a romanticized, idealist theology, produced the social meanings which lay at the heart of his moral discourse. Those meanings,

in turn, formed a blueprint for Victorian middle-class morality.

Tayler's work will be compared to the preceding generation of Manchester Unitarians, whose radical politics and rationalist theology, best represented by Joseph Priestley, aggressively challenged the established social and intellectual order. In the evolution from confrontational challenge to defensive respectability, the paper will map the Manchester Unitarians' passage away from the periphery, demonstrating how a reconceived morality accompanied the assumption and exercise of power.

"Victorian Anglo-Jewry and the Rise of the Modern Jewish Novel"

Sharona A. Levy
Baruch College, C.U.N.Y.
Department of Germanic/Hebraic/Oriental Languages

The nineteenth century brought a thorough transformation in the nature of the Jewish community in England. Demographically the community shifted from approximately 25,000 mostly poor Jews of Sephardic origin in the early years to 65,000 mostly middle-class native-born Ashkenazic Jews in 1880. Politically, Victorian England saw the gradual lifting of civil restrictions on non-Anglicans. By the 1880's a Jew could sit in Parliament, attend Oxford or Cambridge, even become a peer.

With the economic and social rise of the Jewish community in England, works on Jewish themes or with Jewish characters increasingly appeared. Anglo-Jewish writers joined the fray. Their work, particularly in the early years of the century, sought to compensate for anti-Semitism and generate support for Jewish emancipation. This apologetic literature, epitomized by Grace Aguilar's Vale of Cedars (1850), idealized Jews of the past. In their desire to improve the lot of the nineteenth-century Jew, Jewish authors turned to another time, another country, because contemporary settings and characters couldn't serve their purpose. The common romanticized portrait of the Spanish Jew showed that one was not a degraded Eastern or German Jew, but a cultured child of the great age of Spain.

Socially and politically, anti-Semitism proved little deterrence to successful integration into Gentile society. As the century wore on, the Jewish community assimilated to the extent of earning the epithet "Anglo-Jewry." Conversions were rare, unlike the period preceding and succeeding this one. Jewish and Victorian values seemed interchangeable: both stressed family, morality, tradition, hard work, and material wealth. To Karl Marx, the Jews embodied the bourgeois spirit par excellence.

But as the century wore on, stereotypes, both positive and negative, persisted as seen in Dickens, Kingsley, Thackeray,

Eliot, and Trollope. Yet even at their worst, these novelists played an invaluable role in freeing the fictional Jew from the relentless dictates of history by placing the Jew in contemporary English settings. By assimilating so well into society, Jews became the perfect scapegoats for expressing a writer's discontent with England.

Interest in Jews was pervasive. Articles on Jewish themes appeared so frequently in major newspapers and journals that articles commented on the phenomenon. The Star newspaper in the eighties carried a monthly column "interesting to Jews" by The Wandering One. Over 75 novels about or with Jewish characters were published. The increased visibility of the community, traditional Cristian fixations, anti-Jewish events world-wide, the prominence of the "Jewish Question" in Europe, and the rise of the social sciences all contributed to this preoccupation.

Ironically, at a time of diminishing religious prejudices, new ones, based on "scientific" findings, were fueling anti-Semitic feelings. By the 1880s it was an accepted truism that Jews had greater mental imbalance due to inbreeding, exclusiveness, and their urban nature. The high number of Jewish men in the important field of finance (e.g. the Rothschilds) fortified traditional associations of Jews with money and commerce.

The 1880s saw the Anglo-Jewish community firmly, comfortably and respectably established. For all their seeming integration, though, the Jews remained a separate entity in Victorian society with their own social and communal network. The community's unique position created its own problems. Assimilated yet detached, alternately drawn to and repelled by the insularity of Anglo-Jewry, late-Victorian Jews lived ambivalent lives. But how to express the ambiguities inherent in Anglo-Jewry's new status? "There has been no serious attempt at serious treatment of the subject; at grappling in its entirety with the complex problem of Jewish life and Jewish character," Amy Levy complained in 1886, "The Jew, as we know him to-day, with his curious mingling of diametrically opposed qualities . . . living, moving, and having his being both within and without the tribal limits; this deeply interesting product of our civilisation has been found worthy of none but the most superficial observation."

When the call came for a narrative exploration of the new tensions felt by Anglo-Jews, it was women who took on the challenge and paid for it with diatribes hurled at them from the community. Julia Frankau's Dr. Phillips (1887) told the story of a brilliant Jewish doctor who murders his wife out of love for his Christian mistress and illegitimate daughter. A sordid, Zolaesque novel infused with negative stereotypes and self-hate, the community's uproar helped turn the book into a best-seller: a second edition appeared within a month and the book reportedly

netted Frankau nearly £1,000.

Though branded with the same brush, Amy levy's Reuben Sachs (1889) differed. The story centered around a large extended family of nouveau rich West End Jews. For the first time, a writer presented the inner world of Anglo-Jewry from its denizens' point of view. The conflicting pull of Jewish upper-middle-class values, and the opportunities and "higher" values of the outside world empowers the book and gives it poignancy (much of that pathos arising from Levy's own life).

This concern with the internal struggles of the post-Emancipation Jew marks Reuben Sachs as possibly the first modern Jewish novel. By articulating the tensions facing the assimilated Jews of late-Victorian England, Levy set the standard for, and paved the way for a new genre alive today: what Josephine Knopp labelled the literary "trial of Judaism."

THIRD SESSION: SEXUAL PERIPHERIES

"Peripheral Women: The Sacred and the Profane in George Frederic Watts' Images of Prostitutes and Social Workers"

Marilynn Lincoln Board
S.U.N.Y. at Geneseo
Art Department

Victorian gender ideology is generally presented as a familiar system of binary hierarchies in which the public sphere of government, culture and commerce is identified as 'masculine', and situated in opposition to the private realm of the family which is described as 'feminine'. However, Victorian gender ideology was neither as monolithic nor as absolute as it has sometimes been portrayed; it was always contested and continuously under construction.

George Frederic Watts' representations of prostitutes and female social workers are visual texts that engage in ideological negotiations which attempt to conceal the gap between an 'ideal' division between public and private gender roles and the 'truth' of the capitalist marketplace. They reveal an irreconcilable tension between a conscious desire to 'classicize' and thereby transcend class and gender conflicts, and an unconscious need to confront disturbing ideological contradictions. His pictures of prostitutes render the opposition between purity and pollution ambiguous by sacralizing the polluted bodies of fallen women and portraying them as martyred saints and magdalenes. Portraits of social workers (such as Josephine Butler, who organized the controversial campaign against the contagious diseases act which institutionalized the sexual double standard, or Jeanne Nassaue-Senior, who established homes for unwed pregnant servants) are

represented as secularized madonnas who have crossed the boundaries between private and public charity.

In Purity and Danger (1966) anthropologist Mary Douglas observes that in 'primitive' cultures the boundaries of the body are used symbolically to express danger to community boundaries. Undefinable, imperfect members of a class, function as 'polluting' forces that pose destabilizing threats to the social order which must be reincorporated into the system through rituals that redirect asocial irregularities into recognized social categories. Watts' representations of prostitutes and female social workers perform a ritual purification similar to the 'primitive' rituals of purification described by Mary Douglas; they function as icons that sanctify potentially-polluting women who have entered the public sphere and reposition them within the category of 'femininity', thus re-confirming the binary hierarchical structure that was an essential premise in the process of constructing patriarchal ideology. The contradictions inherent in Watts' iconography reveal a crisis in the construction of Victorian gender ideology that results from the insufficiency of traditional stereotypes within the context of modern industrial capitalism.

"Victorian Sexual Politics at the Periphery: Effeminate Men and Masculine Women"

Thais E. Morgan
Arizona State University
Department of English

This paper concerns marginalized groups and controversial texts produced at the periphery of Victorian culture. My focus is on gender construction during the mid- to late Victorian period: that of the "effeminate" or "unmanly" man, and that of the "masculine" or "unwomanly" woman. Recent historians of nineteenth-century sexuality either assume that these two sex-gender types were constituted in clear opposition to each other or do not consider the masculine woman type at all. I will argue, however, the fulcrum of Victorian sexual politics at the periphery from the 1860s through the 1890s was precisely the complex interdependence of stereotypes of effeminate men and masculine women. Furthermore, I will show that the power imbalance between normative masculinity and femininity was reiterated in the construction of these two peripheral gender identities. The masculine woman type was consistently appropriated by the homoerotic, male-identified community to promote and to protect its own interests at the expense of women, particularly that less visible and less powerful group of female-identified women that made up what might be called the periphery of the Periphery.

My evidence consists of a selection of texts which depict peripheral genders--always featuring effeminate men and masculine women together--and whose canonical status has, accordingly, often been contested. The characteristic structure of sexual politics at the Victorian periphery--the use of the stereotype of the masculine woman by male writers/artists not only to represent but also to vindicate male homoeroticism--will be outlined in three examples: in poetry--Hopkins ("Wreck of the Deutschland"); in theatre--Wilde ("Salome"); and in art criticism--Pater (on Renaissance painting). Each of these texts displays a comparable tension between normative and peripheral genders, and each engineers the victory of masculinity over femininity under the guise of an apparently 'liberating' gender-crossing. Historical and theoretical studies of Victorian sexuality at the periphery by Michel Foucault, Jeffrey Weeks, Eve Sedgwick, and Sandra Gilbert/Susan Gubar will be engaged at relevant points in the argument.

An important implication of my paper for Victorian studies as a whole is its challenge to the long-standing schema of "public" versus "private" culture, used, for example, by Morse Peckham and Steven Marcus in their influential work on the Victorian sexual underground and pornography. Instead of a clear opposition between public and private realms, normative and transgressive sexualities, I maintain that the hegemonic definition of appropriate sex-gender roles in the Victorian period actually included rather than excluded the periphery--here, the effeminate man and the masculine woman. Thus, the sex-gender hierarchy that governed heterosexual relations between Victorian men and women was reasserted through the definition of peripheral genders: while male effeminacy was relatively unacceptable, female immasculinity remained totally so. Ironically, the heterosexual masculinist hegemony of Victorian culture needed the periphery--or rather, several peripheries--for its very existence.

"Howard Overing Sturgis: Peripheral Novelist?"

Frederick Kirchhoff
Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne
Department of English and Linguistics

Howard Overing Sturgis holds tenuous place in literary history as the friend of Henry James and Edith Wharton, George Santayana and E. M. Forster. In his own right, he is remembered for what he did not do: having published three promising novels--Tim (1892), All That Was Possible (1985) and Belchamber (1905)--he virtually abandoned fiction. Forster summarizes the usual explanation for this disruption: "he wrote to please his friends and deterred by his failure to do so he gave up the practice of literature and devoted himself instead to embroidery, of which he

had always been fond." However, negative criticism inadequately explains Sturgis' decision to write no more novels. That decision is implicit in his project as a novelist.

As a group, his three novels constitute a penetrating critique both of the Victorian sexual system and of the narrative conventions mirroring that system. All three novels deal with central figures who fail, in some sense, to "fit." Sturgis' choice of this theme links him with the literary mainstream--specifically, with the exploration of overt or thinly disguised homoeroticism in writers like Wilde, James, Forster, and Proust. Whether or not Sturgis was a homosexual, he was clearly a type many would now label gay. Youngest son of an aggressive American businessman turned British banker, brought up as his beautiful mother's favorite child, he became, at least as Santayana pictured him, "her last and permanent baby": "The dear child was sensitive and affectionate, with abundant golden hair, large blue eyes, and well-turned chubby arms and legs. Her boudoir became his nursery and his playroom. As if by miracle, for he was wonderfully imitative, he became, save for the accident of sex, which was not yet a serious encumbrance, a perfect young lady of the Victorian type."

Other descriptions of Sturgis confirm his capacity for imitation and his use of imitation as a mode of social satire. Like the mannerisms of a drag queen, Sturgis' caricature of "a perfect lady of the Victorian type" lays bare the conventions of appropriate female behavior with devastating accuracy. The name of his country house, Qu'acre--Queen's Acre--parodies British conventionalities in much the same vein. Like James, Sturgis was an outsider; unlike James, he had the money and credentials--he was a graduate of Eton--to guarantee his security in British society. As a result, his three novels screw James's American awareness of British manners to an intensity at once keen and preposterous. They dramatize the affective potency of stereotypes even as they scrutinize them with the eye of an anthropologist.

Sturgis' novels might be described as imitations of Victorian fiction, in which the gesture of novel writing is essentially parodic. Tim, in some respects the most daring of the three works, recasts the Victorian public school novel as a homoerotic novel of sentiment. All That Was Possible, an epistolary comedy of manners, furthers Sturgis' onslaught on the self-deception inherent in Victorian maleness. Belchamber is a bildungsroman in which the reversal of sexual expectations assumes tragicomic proportions. The first two novels managed to achieve closure by death or strategic retreat. In Belchamber, Sturgis' effort to subvert narrative conventions led him to an ending in which closure itself is denied or evaded.

Belchamber thus takes Sturgis to the limits of parody as a mode of social criticism. To evolve as a writer of fiction, he would have had to have found substitutes for the conventions of Victorian narrative (and sexuality) that were the targets of his work. He would have had to become, in effect, a modernist. It could be argued that through his influence on Forster's novels he vicariously achieves this end. But for Sturgis himself, however, having made his point, there was no need to go further.

A LECTURE AUDIENCE

Two Views of a Lecture Audience: 1. "Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, As he appeared at Willis's Rooms in his celebrated character of Mr. Thackeray" from a sketch by John Leech in The Month, July 1851; 2. "A Lecture Audience," W. M. Thackeray.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

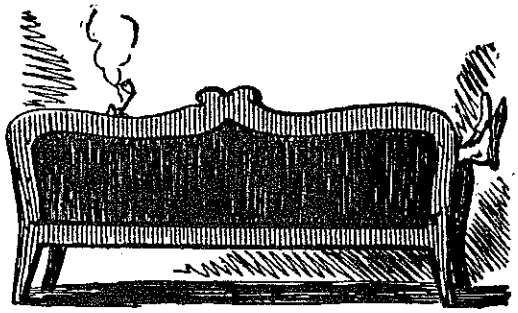
Papers and panels are invited for a scholarly conference on George Eliot, to be held 11-13 April 1991 at Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, Missouri. Interdisciplinary panels are particularly encouraged. The conference titled "Dorothea's Window: The Individual and Community in George Eliot" will feature a keynote address by Professor Barbara Hardy. Presentations should be limited to 20 minutes. Papers will be reviewed by blind jury for publication of conference proceedings. Those interested in participating should submit a one-page single-spaced abstract by 10 January 1991. Inquiries, abstracts, and applications for registration should be directed to the George Eliot Committee, c/o Dennis Leavens, Division of Language and Literature, A/H 310, NMSU, Kirksville, MO 63501.

The nineteenth annual meeting of the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada will take place at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, on 10-13 October 1990. For further information, write the secretary-treasurer, Glennis Stephenson, Dept. of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6G 2E5.

The Victorian Review is a refereed interdisciplinary journal published twice yearly. We welcome submissions on all aspects of the nineteenth century, including history, literature, art, science, religion, music, and law. Papers should be 10 to 20 pages long and follow the MLA style sheet. Contributions (no more than 7 pages) to a forum on the influence of recent critical thought on the teaching and study of the nineteenth century are also welcome. Send 2 manuscript copies and, if possible, diskette, preferably wordperfect, to G. Stephenson, Editor, Victorian Review, Dept. English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA, T6G 2E5.

The Huntington Library will hold a conference on English scholar and explorer Sir Richard F. Burton (1821-1890) in 1990, the 100th anniversary of his death. This centennial conference will bring together Burton scholars, historians, and book collectors for a two-day series of lectures and discussions. For further information and registration forms, contact Jane Hill at the Huntington Library, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California 91108. Tel: 818-405-2194.

FIRST TERM



SECOND TERM