MIDWEST VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Summer 2006 Newsletter

Edited by Alisa Clapp-Itnyre

2006 CONFERENCE:
"Eminent Victorians: A New Look"
Detroit, Michigan.

The Thirtieth Annual MVSA Meeting was held for the first time on the downtown campus of Wayne State University. Thanks to the untiring work of the conference chair, John Reed, the over 50 participants—an all-time high in recent years—enjoyed a Victorian atmosphere in both its lovely accommodations at the Inn on Ferry Street (see insert) and at the elegant Whitney Restaurant where we dined for both Friday's dinner and Saturday's luncheon. Amongst various engaging talks--on eminent women, the DNB, and sensation fiction-- participants also enjoyed a delightful talk by Martha Vicinus as our keynote speaker Friday night, then celebrated the association's 30th anniversary with a plenary talk by MVSA founder Lawrence Poston. Universities from all around the Detroit area were represented, including U of M, U of M/Dearborn, and Oakland University. I think I speak for many when I say that I hope to come to Michigan again soon!

See the end of this newsletter for all abstracts, and also an opportunity to renew your membership so as to be included in our 2007 Summer Directory and all MVSA mailings. I thank the Humanities and Fine Arts Division at Indiana University East for financial assistance in the printing and mailing of this newsletter.

--Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, Executive Secretary

Entertainment & the Marketplace
or, How the Victorians Were Amused
University of Illinois
April 20-22, 2007

--CALL FOR PAPERS--

The Thirty-First Annual Midwest Victorian Studies Association meeting will be held at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Our theme this year is "Entertainment and the Marketplace: How the Victorians were Amused." In addition to topics about aesthetics and the arts, this might include commodity exchange, circuits of circulation, networks of consumption, concepts of entertainment, relationship between entertainment and didacticism. We welcome interdisciplinary papers on the relationship between the growth of capitalism and the development of the entertainment industry, the relationship between entertainment in the provinces and that in the metropole, relationship between entertainment and religion, critiques of entertainment, the institutionalization of entertainment (the creation of permanent theaters, commercial art galleries, etc.), the finance of entertainment, the morality of entertainment, the objects of entertainment, theories and treatises of entertainment, entertainments within entertainments (e.g. descriptions of theater, dances, music events within novels), comparisons between

different forms of entertainment, etc. In keeping with its long interdisciplinary and inclusive tradition, MVSA welcomes proposals from any disciplinary perspective consonant with this broad theme. We encourage panels and individual papers that look afresh at one or more of these topics.

About MVSA conferences:
Victorianists studying and working in the midwestern or southern United States are especially encouraged to attend at MVSA, and to make a home in this distinguished scholarly organization. Graduate students are particularly welcome as attendees and presenters at MVSA conferences, where they will find a stimulating and collegial atmosphere, and where conference fees are adjusted to make attendance more affordable. MVSA annually awards the Bill and Mary Burgan Prize for an outstanding paper by a graduate student at the conference, while the prestigious Arnstein Prize supports dissertation research of an interdisciplinary kind. Conference news can be found on the MVSA website at http://www2.ic.edu/MVSA/

Submissions: By October 31st, email a 500-word (only) abstract to Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, Assoc. Professor of English, Indiana University East: aclappit@indiana.edu. Please mention "MVSA 2007 Paper Submission" in the Re: line and include your own name, title, institution, email and snail mail addresses, a phone number, and the abstract itself in the text. If you must include an attachment, please include the above information in it, too. If you do not receive an email confirmation of receipt, please re-submit.

From the 2007 Conference Coordinators

The 2007 conference will be taking place at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 20-22, hosted by Walter Arnstein, Christina Bashford and me. Conference space and accommodation have been reserved at the Illini Union. We are all enthusiastic about welcoming MVSA to this campus once again. There is a good chance of reasonable weather at that time of year, and C-U restaurants and night life have improved immensely since the early days of our organization. As an evening entertainment we are planning a mixed vocal and instrumental concert of the kind that was still customary in early Victorian times, taking advantage of Christina's expertise on the subject. We also hope to mount an exhibit drawing on the substantial resources of the UIUC library on the topic of "Entertainment and the Marketplace." All are welcome.

--Nicholas Temperley

From the President's Desk

If the theme of our 2006 Thirtieth anniversary meeting was "Eminent Victorians: A New Look," our urban Midwest locale, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, presented an environment surprisingly nineteenth century for the fifty to sixty "eminent Victorians" who attended. Wayne State is located near the East Ferry Street Historic District of Midtown Detroit. The Inn on Ferry, which was the conference hotel, is actually composed of four restored contiguous Victorian mansions and two carriage houses. I stayed in one of the carriage houses and was immediately attracted to the high ceilings, scrumptious colored wall paper, and brass bedsteads which so much resembled the upper middle class Victorian bedroom. Even more astounding was the Whitney mansion, where the conference dinner and luncheon was held. It was built in 1894 in a Romanesque style by the Detroit architect Gordon W. Lloyd for the lumber baron David Whitney, Jr. The 21,000 square foot home has ten bathrooms, sufficient for even the well-oiled members of the MVSA, and fifty-two rooms. A grand staircase dominates the Great Hall of the mansion and colorful Tiffany stained glass panels richly illuminate the second and third floors. For revealing this sector of American Victoriana to interested nineteenth-century scholars, one can hardly thank enough our local

arrangements chair, John Reed. Thanks also should be offered to others who helped fund the conference, hence keeping fees down: D.J. Trela, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Michigan-Flint; Jim Searing, chair of the History Department at UIC; and Chris Comer, Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UIC.

Making a conference successful, as I trust our Thirtieth anniversary meeting was, involves the untiring work of a number of people, especially our intrepid Executive Secretary, Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, and our long-serving and uncomplaining Treasurer, Julie Melnyk. Our Vice-President, Linda Hughes, bailed us out of numerous difficulties unforeseen by your President, as did our talented Executive Committee, Anne Windholz, Patrick Leary, John Reed, Anne Helmreich and James Murphy. I would also like to express my appreciation to Marc Plamondon for help at the MVSA conference on matters technical.

Last year, I ended my "A word from the Incoming President," with a plea for someone to relieve our indefatigable but tired web-master, Bob Koepp, of his duties. We do thank Kirsten Parkinson of Hiram College, Ohio, therefore, for stepping forward and taking on this task! As a member of the Arnstein Award committee and regular presenter at our conferences, she is no stranger to MVSA. We welcome her help on our board.

Best wishes for the coming year and I hope to see as many of you as possible at UIUC in April 2007.

Jim Sack

Looking Through the Arch: A Word from the Vice-President

I want to second President James Sack's comments about the future for MVSA and thank him for his leadership in moving us forward to the 2007 meeting at the University of Illinois. As I try to peer into the shadowy region beyond the light Jim casts ahead, I find myself recalling the arch through which Tennyson's Ulysses looks, toward "that untravelled world, whose margin fades / For ever and for ever when I move." Victorian studies is as vibrant as ever, but the academic terrain within which it goes forward is changing profoundly, and the boundaries of regional organizations like ours have recently been shifting in relation to the new national organizations like the North American Victorian Studies Association.

The distinctive features of MVSA are well suited to future aims and needs. In an era of constrained travel budgets, a regional organization that sponsors conferences within a contained geographical area can offer members and interested parties affordable access to annual conferences. MVSA conferences are highly-focused, highly-selective, and highly interdisciplinary; they also operate on a smaller scale relative to some others and feature programs with no opposing sessions. Those who attend thus have excellent opportunities to form networks and participate in an ongoing conversation over the course of the meeting.

Yet the "fading margin" of an ever-changing academic terrain should prompt us to consider ways that the conference can be more responsive to evolving needs. Toward that end, I invite anyone with ideas about how we might improve programming, membership, and resources or other matters to contact Jim Sack, me, or MVSA executive committee members with your suggestions.

Linda K. Hughes
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Winners & Prizes, 2006

The Arnstein Prize:

The winner of the 2006 Walter L. Arnstein Prize for Dissertation Research in Victorian Studies is Danielle L. Coriale, for "The Naturalist Imagination: Novel Forms of British Natural History, 1848-1900." A doctoral candidate in English at Brandeis University, Danielle earned a B.A. in English and Philosophy at Boston College (1997) and a M.A. in English at Syracuse University (2002). In her dissertation Danielle focuses on novelists' participation in "a naturalist imagination." For example, Danielle suggests that the detailed particulars comprising George Eliot's realist fiction place readers in positions akin to naturalists who must meticulously sort through minute details to "draw conclusions about the larger systems of which those particulars are constituent parts." As well as novels by Charlotte Brontë, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hardy, Richard Jefferies, and Joseph Conrad, her dissertation draws upon writings by Charles Lyell, Philip Gosse, Mary Kingsley, Charles Darwin, and others. Arnstein committee members were impressed with "the wide and provocative range of writers, both scientific and literary, that she's incorporating" and her genuinely "interdisciplinary exploration of the interaction between literature and scientific discourse . . . that ambitiously seeks to gauge change in that discourse over time."

Danielle attended the conference in Detroit and received her prize from Walter Arnstein at the annual luncheon, delighting the many people with met her. Arnstein funding will help support Danielle's research at the Natural History Museum Libraries and Science Museum Library in London in Summer 2006.
--Linda Hughes

The Burgan Prize

The 2006 winner of The William and Mary Burgan Prize for the outstanding presentation by a graduate student at the annual meeting of the MVSA was Teresa Huffman Traver. Ms. Traver, who received her B.A. in English and Life Sciences at Kansas State in 2001, is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Notre Dame. Her dissertation focuses on fictional depictions of Tractarianism in the context of concern over English national identity, domesticity, and conversion to Roman Catholicism. The Burgan Prize was endowed by Professor Keith Welsh of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Webster University, St Louis, to recognize a graduate student whose presentation at the MVSA demonstrates both obvious scholarship and a certain defined "teacherly" quality. The Prize was named for two scholarly and "teacherly" mainstays of the English Department at Indiana University from the 1960s through the 1990s, Bill and Mary Burgan. The 2006 chair of the Burgan Prize committee was James Murphy of DePaul, assisted by Alisa Clapp-Itnyre of Indiana University East and Micael Clark of Loyola University of Chicago.
--Jim Sack.

Treasurer's Report, 18 April 2006 – MVSA currently has $5262.57 in our interest-bearing checking account, and $1931.64 in our higher-yield investment account. The Arnstein Fund has grown to $28,566.04, and our interest income for the Fund for calendar year 2005 was $622.54. Our Arnstein funds are invested in CDs, but because of low interest rates, we are still well short of our goal of fully endowing the Arnstein Fellowship, which is now worth $1500. This year's Arnstein contributions currently total $1070. Thanks to all who contributed – and keep those tax-deductible contributions coming!

--Julie Melnyk

2006 CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS:

SESSION ONE, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

"Eminent Victorians" Revisited

Moderator: Anne Helmreich (Case Western Reserve University)

Thomas Prasch, Chair & Associate Professor, Dept. of History, Washburn University, Topeka KS 66621 (tom.prasch@washburn.edu).

The End of Heroes: Reading Strachey's "The End of General Gordon" through Carlyle

"A man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him," Thomas Carlyle pronounced early in _On Heroes_, and so religion is the chief fact that organizes Lytton Strachey's portrait of General Gordon from its opening image: "This singular person was General Gordon, and his book was the Holy Bible." But the undermining of the heroic, more than its elevation, is the business of Strachey's dark portrait. Strachey clearly has Carlyle's biographical capsules of heroes as a model for _Eminent Victorians_, but it is a negative model: Carlyle, borrowing from Hegel, traces the steps of heroes in world-historical moments, men risen from obscurity to stride across the historical stage, made by and making their times; in Strachey's ironic reworking of the categories he borrows (like that defining cloak of religion) from Carlyle, the historical processes are finally confused and confuted, nowhere more clearly than in his final portrait of Gordon, that "tragic history" where, instead of a Hegelian history unfolding toward completion, we have "a vision of strange characters, moved by mysterious impulses, interacting in queer complication, and hurrying at last--so it seems--like creatures in a puppet show to a predestined catastrophe." And so Strachey ends his collection of images of a past era's eminence with a hero in defeat, General Gordon, carrying his anachronistic scripture to the grave, facing the Mahde who claimed to be the successor to Mahomet himself, the prophet who found so key a place among Carlyle's heroes. It was not Gordon's time, nor was it the Mahde's ("And yet it was not with the Mahdi that the future lay," Strachey notes). It was not a time for heroes at all: "At any rate, it all ended very happily--in a glorious slaughter," Strachey concludes. And in making so unheroic a portrait his closing commemoration of the Victorian age, Strachey pronounces the end not just of an age, but of its emblematic sage's sense of historical tragectories, the Carlylean heroic. Reading Strachey's portrait through the lens of Carlyle's conception of the heroic thus more fully illuminates Strachey's subversive purpose.

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"When Autobiography Does Theology: Development in Newman's Apologia"

The nineteenth century was a period obsessed with development and transformation, as critics from M.H. Abrams to Gillian Beere have demonstrated, in rather different ways. Darwin's work on evolution was the scientific manifestation of a broader interest in the concept of development, but an interest in the concepts of growth or change can be traced in other areas of nineteenth century discourse. The literary forms of the Bildungsroman, the biography, and the autobiography reflect Victorian interest in how lives developed over time, while in religious discourse, narratives of conversion and deconversion could even more openly examine the concept of personal transformation. Thus the conversion narrative, far from being a minor subset under the category of autobiography, is vital to an understanding of both Victorian life-writing and the Victorian interest in development.

The connection between conversion narrative, autobiography and development can perhaps be most simply seen through an examination of the great convert of the nineteenth century: John Henry Newman. The still-influential Essay on the Development of Doctrine is not the only Newman work invested in exploring development: both Newman's autobiography and his early religious novel Loss and Gain study transformation on the personal level of religious conversion. In particular, Newman's Apologia pro vita sua serves as an organic "history" of the development of Newman's religious opinion, while also illustrating the conflict that could arise between the Victorian emphasis on development over time and a traditional Christian view of conversion as a single, one-time bolt-from-the-heavens experience.

This paper will examine the tensions that emerge between Newman's use of traditional tropes of conversion and his theological understanding of development. In relating key points along the path of his intellectual development, Newman draws from literary and hagiographical models of conversion examples of supernatural intervention which he likens to his own experience, even though his overall narrative works against such models. The appropriation of incidents such as Augustine's reading in the garden serve as literary markers to indicate that what Newman offers is not merely the

story of a life but also the story of soul. At the same time, Newman incorporates such incidents into a uniquely nineteenth century, uniquely Oxonian narrative. By downplaying mystical and emotional experience and privileging scholarly study, Newman recasts conversion as a logical, gradual, and intellectual event, rather than as a single life-defining emotional moment. Such a narrative favors the defensive purposes of the Apologia, in as much as it presents Newman as a reasonable English gentleman rather than as a religious fanatic, but it also demonstrates the connection between Newman's implicit theology of conversion and his view of history, as presented in the Essay on Development. For Newman, the story of a life, like the history of the church, is a story of gradual development towards wholeness.

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Lytton Strachey's Florence Nightingale: Trauma at the Crossroads

In *Eminent Victorians*, Lytton Strachey's construction of Florence Nightingale situates her at the intersection of two distinct trauma discourses—a discourse asserting the traumatic nature of Victorian gender socialization and a more conventional discourse of war trauma. Strachey argues that,

> Wherever she went, in London or in the country, in the hills of Derbyshire, or among the rhododendrons at Embley, she was haunted by a ghost. It was the spectre of Scutari—the hideous vision of the organisation of a military hospital. She would lay that phantom, or she would perish. 1

In this paper I argue that Strachey's presentation of Nightingale crafts an individual who overcomes traumatic circumstances, experiences, and ideologies to become one of the foremost social reformers of the Victorian Age. As such, she provides a compelling model of traumatic recovery that utilizes the role of trauma survivor as social critic by placing at its center the idea of social action as site of wellness. Strachey most obviously wrenched the idealistic vision of the "Lady with the Lamp" from constricting Victorian understandings of women's place and role in society and helped to render this compelling figure in a more complex fashion. Strachey's Nightingale crosses gender roles not only in her determination to participate in the public sphere and her harsh criticism and rejection of traditional domestic roles, but also in current understandings of trauma as articulated by critics such as Judith Herman, Cathy Caruth, and Dominick LaCapra. Men, such as Virginia Woolf's famous rendering of Septimus Smith in Mrs. Dalloway, carry the burden of post-traumatic stress disorder brought on by horrors experienced in the front lines of battle during World War I. Women are often discussed in trauma studies as suffering from domestic abuse, rape, and, more broadly, the constricting nature of gender roles. Laura Brown, in "Not Outside the Range" argues that women require no additional traumatic acts to reveal the traumatic effects of stifling gender roles.2 During the Victorian Period these debilitating effects were certainly more pronounced and speak to her criticism of what critics Myra Stark refers to as Nightingale's critique of "incessant daydreaming, the narcotic addiction of women".3 Seen in the light of trauma studies, of course, this "daydreaming" becomes a more serious issue of dissociation.

In Nightingale' experiences in the Crimean War, we see her confrontation with the traumatic nature of gender roles and with the more traditionally understood traumatizing effects of war and suffering. Strachey's portrayal situates her in this compelling intersection. My paper will look at this overlap and use current studies of trauma to understand Nightingaleâ€™s position as both traumatized individual and what Karen DeMeester argues of Septimus Smith is the trauma survivorâ€™s role of agent of social critique. 4

1. Strachey, Lytton. Eminent Victorians. (1918). New York: Harvest, 1969. p. 165.
2. Gilmore, Leigh. The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001. qtd p. 26.
3.Stark, Myra. â€œIntroduction.â€ Cassandra: An Essay By Florence Nightingale. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1979. p. 13.
4. DeMeester, Karen. â€œTrauma and Recovery in Virginia Woolfâ€™s Mrs. Dalloway.â€ Modern Fiction Studies 44.3 (1998) 649-73.

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SESSION TWO, 10:45 to 12:15p.m.
Female Eminents Reconsidered
Moderator: Natalie Cole (Oakland U)

Sally Mitchell, English Dept., Temple University, Philadelphia PA 19122 sm@temple.edu

Posthumously Edited Memoirs: Frances Power Cobbe Reconstructs Mary Somerville

Many biographies of eminent Victorians were, as we know, patched together by disciples or loving family

from notes, papers, letters and other "remains." So were some autobiographies and memoirs. When scientist
Mary Somerville, sometimes called the "most remarkable woman of her generation," died in November 1872 at age 92, Frances Power Cobbe, who knew that Somerville had been writing a memoir and also knew that her daughters Mary and Martha were left with a very small income, helped arrange for the memoir's publication. After reading the typeset first proof, however, Cobbe wrote to Martha that she was "sadly afraid of the impression the book will make on strangers." Between April and July, she advised, helped, cajoled, rewrote and (eventually) herself created significant portions of the book published late in 1873 as "Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age, of Mary Somerville, With Selections from her Correspondence by her daughter Martha Somerville." Working from Frances Power Cobbe's letters to Martha Somerville (now at the Bodleian Library) and other sources, I will examine the alterations and additions and, more significantly, look at the reasons offered by Cobbe for her editorial interventions. Ultimately, I will suggest, Cobbe shaped Somerville's life and memory in ways that reveal interesting (and not wholly expected) information about the construction of women's public and private lives as the mid-Victorian years gave way to the fin-de-siècle.

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A Once-eminent Victorian - Mrs Nassau Senior, 1828-1877 - the missing link between Octavia Hill and Josephine Butler

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Jeanie Senior, the ardent, politically radical sister of the Christian Socialist, Thomas Hughes MP, author of Tom Brown's Schooldays, was historically important for four reasons:

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1. She helped found the new women's profession of social work under Octavia Hill.
2. She co-founded the British Red Cross during the Franco-Prussian war.
3. As the first woman appointed in Whitehall - to be Government Inspector of the education of pauper girls - she not only pioneered the professional State employment of women, but also championed those at the bottom of the social heap - the unregarded, underfed Olive Twists who became `maids of all work`. Her 1874 Report alleging that they were vulnerable prostitution fodder after leaving the Workhouse District Schools, caused huge controversy.
4. She founded the successful voluntary Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, giving these girls the only protection they had.

It is a testimony to her acknowledged importance in her time that she was given a long obituary in The Times, 29 March, 1877 and that Florence Nightingale declared: `Her premature death was a national and irreparable loss.` For the most vulnerable women and girls in Britain had lost their champion and Victorian `gentlewomen` had lost their chance to humanize social administration for years to come.

Jeanie Senior was more than a social reformer; she also played an important part in the cultural history of the 19th century. An outstanding musician, she was regarded as the greatest amateur woman singer in England (and she was the friend of Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Charles Halle, Jenny Lind and Adelaide Kemble). She was the beautiful model of the portrait painters Watts and Millais. And, as the friend of George Eliot, she had a vital role in inspiring the character of Dorothea Brooke. Thus she crosses the boundaries between social history and literary/cultural history.

My paper will introduce the Conference to this unjustly forgotten Victorian woman.

My source material is the recently discovered treasure trove of Senior family papers, including the twenty years of Jeanie Senior's amazingly frank confidential letters to her son, which tell the story of her personal and her public life from the inside. Once re-discovered, `Mrs. Nassau Senior` will not be forgotten again. Hers was an extraordinary and endearing personality - all the more endearing because she was no plaster saint.

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“Helen Taylor: The Evolution of the Victorian Radical”

I propose to present a biographical essay about Helen Taylor (1831-1907) to establish her as an “Eminent Victorian”, at least a person of prominence on her own merit, no longer dependent on the explanatory footnote, or bracketed identification as the daughter of Harriet Taylor Mill, and/or the stepdaughter of

John Stuart Mill. The paper will offer documentation of Helen Taylor's emergence from their shadows to assume her own persona in her public role as a Victorian radical.

In 1885 she declared her candidacy for Parliament as a Radical Liberal on behalf of North Camberwell, with the claim that no law existed to prevent a woman from **serving** in Parliament. She urged that the ancient right of Englishwomen to represent their countrymen in Parliament should be recognized. Her platform called for several practical measures to aid working people, among them shorter work weeks, right to organize.. Other issues of Taylor's platform were free education for adults, universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, payment to MPs

Taylor was a founding member of the Social Democratic Federation in 1881. Four years later she was elected to the Executive Committee of SDF. During these years she actively supported Home Rule for Ireland, chaired meetings of the Ladies Land League in England and Ireland, in close cooperation with Anna Parnell Her energy and enthusiasm for public action in support of these unpopular issues had to be expended at the same time that she was serving her third term as an elected member of the London School Board, representing Southwark. (1876-1885), a working class community. During her nine years of service she supported the organization of teachers, worked against the use of corporal punishment of the students. Taylor effectively challenged the diversion of funds allocated for the public schools to Church schools. She opposed the teaching of scriptures in government-sponsored schools.

Her essays in support of women's suffrage, of education for women, opposition to the popular "sport" of fox hunting defended by Anthony Trollope, and other articles were published in *Westminster Review*, *Fortnightly Review, Frazer's Magazine,* among others. She edited the three-volumes of the *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works of Henry Thomas Buckle,* the author of *A History of Civilization.* During their lives together (1858-1873) Mill and Taylor developed a mode of shared writing about issues of their common interest. Her encouragement led to the writing of *The Subjection of Women.* On his death, in accordance with his will, Taylor became the sole executrix of John Mill's posthumous works, notably his *Autobiography.*

Helen Taylor's first career was as Miss Trevor, actress, an assumed name to protect the privacy of her mother, and of John Mill. She trained with Fanny Stirling, a popular actress of the time, who prepared Taylor for her work in the licensed theatres of the Provinces.

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SESSION THREE, 2:15 to 3:45 p.m.
Eminent Musicians & Artists
Moderator: Jonathon Smith (U of Mich)

Dr Christina Bashford
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The Forgotten Music Man: John Ella (1802-88)

Eminent in his own day (with an entry in the DNB), but neglected by posterity: that has been the lot of John Ella, a Victorian who by the middle decades of the nineteenth century had risen from provincial, artisan-class obscurity to become a figure of considerable power and influence in London musical life and high society, a successful concert manager and entrepreneur, and a relentless and successful proselytiser for the highest of musical art.

His Musical Union (established 1845), a concert society devoted to the promotion of chamber music in general, and the Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven string quartets in particular, was his most celebrated achievement – a veritable temple for the contemplation of high culture, through the best in classical music. It brought many of the finest instrumentalists in Europe before a well-heeled audience of serious-minded metropolitan music-lovers, and it endured for more than three and a half decades, combining a lustre of excellence and solemnity with an economic buoyancy that many a Victorian concert-organizer must have envied. For Ella operated in times when serious music mattered to people to a degree that can barely be overstated today, and in the city that had by far the largest concentration of public music-making and musicians than any other in Britain or Europe. What is more, the reputation of Ella's impeccable concert society and his so-called 'invention' of the program note was large and far-reaching, having spread across most of central Europe by the 1870s.

In spite of this, Ella's name and significance quickly receded during the twentieth century. The reasons for this are many and complex, often stemming from enduring perceptions of the Victorians, their music and their music-making as unworthy of serious historical study. Added to this, though, has been the persistent suspicion that the biography of an enabler is of little intrinsic interest for a history of music.

How can the man who made music happen be as important as those who 'made' the music itself, that is composers or performers, the enduring subjects for music biography? So the thinking has traditionally gone, beginning even in Ella's lifetime – a period, after all, when the idea of the composer as creative artist crystallized. And yet, as we now see, in Victorian Britain's pre-eminently commercial musical culture, enablers were utterly vital.

There are real difficulties in writing the lives of enablers, since so often their behind-the-scenes activities have vanished from the historical record. For many of them we can only extrapolate from other documents how effective they really were as managers, but for Ella a heap of business and personal papers (cached away in a private collection) have survived and recently come to light. This paper will explore Ella's importance within Victorian musical culture and the reasons for his subsequent neglect, as well as some of the practical issues – including the destruction of papers, and attempts at massaging his posthumous reputation - that writing the first full-length biography of the man have thrown up.

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Chorley and Mendelssohn; or, The Case of the Broken Hand

That the Victorians had a complex relationship with music is no secret: while praising it as the highest form of art and acknowledging its importance in society, the Victorians suspected it of being able to exert too great a control the listener's emotions. The musical virtuosi of the first half of the nineteenth century, such as Paganini and Chopin, were as such both feared and adored.

Henry Fothergill Chorley, principal music reviewer for the Athenaeum for the first half of the Victorian period, also had a complex relationship with music. Chorley felt that one of his life-long goals was to educate and elevate the musical tastes of Britain. It is odd, therefore, to read his last novel, A Prodigy: A Tale of Music, because in it the protagonist, a keyboard virtuoso and composer, is maimed at the end of the novel: he loses the use of his left hand and, thus, his ability to play the piano. Even Chorley, otherwise defender of the value of music, must permanently deprive his musical genius of his music-playing ability.

The treatment of music in Chorley's novel is complex for many reasons. For a novel whose subtitle is A Tale of Music, there is actually very little discussion or representation of music. In spite of this, in gathering the few musical references, the protagonist, Charles Einstern, can be read as a representation of Felix Mendelssohn, the most eminent of music composers in early Victorian Britain. Chorley was one of Mendelssohn's most fervent English supporters and counted himself a personal friend of the composer during his last years. If Charles Einstern is read as directly inspired by and a fictional representation of Mendelssohn, himself a keyboard virtuoso, then Chorley's decision to condemn the musician to a life without the ability to play the piano is either highly perplexing or reveals that even Chorley was thrall to the prevalent Victorian anxiety towards music performance, especially by virtuosi.

I shall argue that while Chorley's novel does indeed betray a conservative Victorian attitude towards music, in spite of being written by one of the most important voices in support of music, it also tacitly supports the importance of the musical genius in society. Chorley could not betray his musical hero, Mendelssohn; he instead, through his novel, fulfills the most important wish of the composer, communicated to Chorley in the last months of Mendelssohn's life. Charles's broken hand becomes powerfully symbolic of Mendelssohn's position as the most important composer for early Victorian Britain.

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Frederic Leighton and the Construction of Image

When he learned of his son's intention to pursue a career as a painter, Frederic Leighton's father, the accomplished physician son of the empress of Russia's personal physician, consulted the American sculptor Hiram Powers to ascertain whether his son had the potential for eminence in the arts. After viewing young Leighton's portfolio, Powers informed Dr. Leighton that his son "may be as eminent as he pleas[ed]." Asked whether he should make him an artist, Powers replied, "Nature has done that already."

Frederic Leighton, it would appear, was keen on eminence. When, in 1859, after years spent living and perfecting his trade on the continent, he returned to his native England to make London his permanent home, Leighton set about establishing himself as one of the most important artists and purveyors of culture of the late Victorian period. Elected to the presidency of the British Royal Academy of Arts in 1878, Leighton became the public face of Victorian art.

Of Leighton's numerous works, two creations – his purpose-built house in Kensington and an 1881 self-portrait commissioned by the Uffizi Gallery – best represent his ideas about art and the role of the artist in society. An examination of Leighton's home and portrait reveals that both were constructed to serve very specific functions. The house, while incorporating a substantial and well-lit workspace necessary for the creation of his grand paintings, was also an interconnected suite of public spaces which, taken together, showcased Leighton's tastes as an artist and a collector. His portrait presents a complex web of visual references. While paying homage to Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Royal Academy's first president, it encapsulates Leighton's views on art in its highest form.

Shortly before his death in 1896, Leighton was raised to the peerage – the first British artist to have ever received the honor. His rise to the highest echelons of Victorian society was subsequently mirrored by an almost catastrophic slide into obscurity. By the 1960's, *Flaming June* – arguably his most important work – had been consigned to a market trader's stall in Chelsea. Later, it appeared in the window of a Polish frame-maker and could be had for £50. The fortunes of Leighton's house mirrored his posthumous reputation. Considered worthy of saving for the nation after his death, it later slipped into neglect and misuse. By the 1980's, most of the original decoration had been stripped away.

Fortunately, since the 1960's, the fortunes of Victorian art have seen a dramatic reversal. Leighton's reputation has undergone its own renaissance. His paintings are once again celebrated and his house, which became a museum soon after his death, has been extensively restored. While the majority of Leighton's impressive collection of art and antiques was sold after his death, the house reverberates with echoes of the eminence that Leighton so carefully cultivated. But it is the transience of fame which reverberates with our celebrity obsessed 21st century culture. A re-examination of Leighton – an examination of the construction of Victorian celebrity – is overdue.

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SESSION FOUR, 4 to 5:30 p.m.
Moderator: Kirsten Parkinson (Hiram Coll.)

Edited Lives: Victorian Obituary & the DNB"

This Panel will present three very diverse perspectives on Victorian biography. Two will focus on the *New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*), and the third on Thomas Carlyle's visions of the dead. William Baker will reflect on his experiences as a contributor and Associate Editor responsible for sections of the *ODNB*. He will particularly focus on bibliographers and literary scholars, and upon the problems of writing obituaries of the recently deceased. Amongst issues to be considered will be whether, for instance, such sensitive personal issues as dementia or mental instability are included in biography and how much consideration should be given to the sensitivities of living close relatives. The subject will also be raised of the selectivity created by the passing of time and how reliable close contemporary (such as family) sources are. Florence Boos will compare coverage of poets in the old and the new *DNB*. Her focus will be on the greater inclusion of working class subjects and women poets, as well as women associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle. Jude Nixon, on the other hand, using lines from Milton's famous obituary sonnet, "On Shakespeare" (1632), as a starting point, will concentrate on Thomas Carlyle's similar love-making with the dead in *In Past and Present* and *On Heroes.* Nixon will examine Carlyle's necrophilic obsession with heroes in his obituary literature, where the bodies of such figures as Burns, Johnson and others become holy relics fetishized for human consumption as sacraments and for veneration. Also there will be an examination of the way Carlyle is himself obituarized in authorized discourses on the dead in the sixteen pages of the old *DNB* and in the thirteen pages of the new.

Each of the presenters will speak for twenty minutes, allowing thirty minutes for questions and discussions.

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Professor Florence S. Boos
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SATURDAY, APRIL 22

SESSION FIVE, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.
Eminent Journalists
Moderator: Nicholaus Podsiadlik (IU Bloomington)

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"George Eliot in the Enterprise of Editing: the Westminster Review, 1851-54"

An important but little explored period of George Eliot's literary career is her time assisting John Chapman as a sub-editor for the Westminster Review from 1851-54. Through a careful examination of her letters and the nine issues of the Review she edited during this period, what emerges is a woman who believed strongly in her writing skills but had to walk a fine line between femininity and masculinity in her position of authority in the male-dominated world of British quarterly reviews. I trace Eliot's editorial challenges, from searching for articles to demanding excellence from the contributors she and John Chapman were able to procure. This investigation of this early part Eliot's career also reveals her interactions with the London literati of the day, including Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, and J.S. Mill. This paper sets out to determine what Eliot's editorial practices were, and how much she deviated from the norm for editors of similar periodicals during the mid-Victorian era. In considering Eliot's position and practices within her historical context, I compare the October 1852 issue of the Westminster Review (the third one she edited) to several other October 1852 issues of competing periodicals and the responses to these various issues. Ultimately, uncovering George Eliot as an editor contributes to our understanding the great novelist and to the broader history of women, writing, and journalism in the nineteenth-century.

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Harriet Martineau: Liberal Feminist or Feminist Liberal?

For over three decades, Harriet Martineau was one of the most prominent non-fiction authors and journalists of the Victorian era, beginning with *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34), two dozen fictional tales that popularized different aspects of political economy. Her immediate success in writing about this "masculine science" was followed over the next thirty years by a variety of works that treated similarly weighty subjects, including politics, slavery, agriculture, taxes, education, philosophy, religion and history. During her later years, she concentrated on journalism, writing at least three editorials ("leaders") per week for the London *Daily News* between 1852 and 1866 with topics ranging from public health issues to foreign affairs to rational dress. Her writing made her financially independent and allowed her to have her own house built in England's Lake District, providing a comfortable, middle class life supported solely by her own income.

Yet despite this copious and wide-ranging output, she was largely forgotten for almost a century after her death in 1876. Since the rise of women's history, however, Martineau has been "rediscovered" by feminist scholars. This is not surprising, for throughout her career, Martineau wrote at great length on the status of women. In *Society in America* (1837) she denounced the United States for violating its own democratic principles in its treatment of women and compared their lot to American slavery. A year later, in *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (1838), one of the first treatises on sociological methodology, she emphasized that an elevated status of women was one of the major indicators of any society's positive development. In the 1850s, she wrote to support the American Women's Rights convention, reform of the divorce laws, and the right of married women to control their own property. She came out of semi-retirement in the late 1860s to write editorials against the Contagious Diseases Acts that subjected women suspected of working as prostitutes to forcible gynecological examinations and imprisonment in hospitals without trial, and throughout her career, she argued in favor of better education, more rights and wider career choices for women.

Yet by emphasizing the supposed links between Martineau's writing and modern feminist issues, scholars overlook her importance as a popularizer of liberal ideology. In fact, a closer study of some of her more unfamiliar works, such as those on Irish women, show that her feminism was clearly subordinate to her liberal ideology. Those who

position her as a precursor of modern feminism can only do so by overlooking this liberal ideology that informed all of her work, including her writing on women. This paper suggests that the revival of interest in Martineau should position her as a feminist liberal in the context of her times, not as a liberal feminist laying the groundwork for modern feminist ideology.

SESSION SIX, 10:45 to 12:15p.m.
Families, Biography, & Sensation
Moderator: Angela Thum (U of Notre Dame)

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, Ph.D. (*)
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Closer than Sisters: Helen and Olivia Rossetti's Auto-Anarcho-Biography

The lives of Helen and Olivia Rossetti intersected with a staggeringly wide range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, politics, and art, yet the women have remained obscure to most scholars of British culture. This paper focuses on the autobiographical novel or fictionalized memoir A Girl among the Anarchists (1903), which the two sisters wrote jointly under the single pseudonym Isabel Meredith. The work is striking not only in its detailed account of the London anarchist movement in the 1880s and 90s, but for its radically autonomous "New Woman" heroine, Isabel Meredith. It is a pointedly feminist book, but in its intermingling of fiction and fact and its ambiguous ending, it resists the proscriptive imperative of political autobiography. Indeed, even more fundamentally, A Girl among the Anarchists resists the very notion of the autonomous self, upon which autobiography as a genre seems to depend. The Rossetti's memoir is a collective memoir, subsuming both sisters' identities into one coherent but imaginary autobiographical voice. My paper positions their work in a tradition of late-Victorian feminist literature, and describes their debt and contribution to New Women fiction, but also reads their collective narrative voice – making two subjects into one – as an anarchist literary technique. The radically collectivist feminism of this novel/memoir thus offers a challenge to the conception that first-wave feminism was *either* individualist and bourgeois *or* socialist.

Late-nineteenth-century anarchism was a collectivist, cooperative, and communitarian philosophy, which rested on a core belief in innate human goodness. It appealed to many radical women because it addressed the class and economic issues that bourgeois feminism often ignored, but also promised a solution to women's inequality in the domestic and familial sphere, which late-nineteenth-century socialism did not always do. The Rossetti sisters converted to anarchism at the ages of 14 and 10, after reading Peter Kropotkin's "An Appeal to the Young." In 1891, as teenagers, they took over the printing press of the defunct Commonweal (formerly William Morris's newspaper), and began to publish an anarchist newspaper called The Torch. A Girl describes this period in the Rossettis' lives, but is heavily inflected by the genre and tropes of New Woman fiction. In fictionalizing their story, the Rossettis alter their life and situation to better convey the novel's feminist contentions. Tackling topics such as governmental paternalism, legal interventionism, and free love, the book addresses crucial issues of late-Victorian feminism from a distinctly radical perspective.

Helen and Olivia were the daughters of William Michael Rossetti, the nieces of Christina Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and the great-nieces of John Polidori, author of The Vampyre and physician-companion to Byron. On the maternal side, artist Ford Madox Brown was their grandfather and writer Ford Madox Ford was their cousin. Under her married name, Helen Rossetti Angeli wrote biographies of two prominent Pre-Raphaelites: the artist Charles Augustus Howell and the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Both sisters eventually abandoned anarchism and joined the opposite political faction, Italian Fascism, and Olivia is now remembered most often for her friendship and correspondence with Ezra Pound. A closer look at A Girl among the Anarchists and the women who wrote it thus offers conference-goers not only a window into the politics of late-Victorian feminist life writing, but also into the lives and afterlives of many conventionally "eminent" Victorians.

Sons Memorializing Motherhood and Authorship: Memoirs of the Lives of Ellen Price Wood and Mary Elizabeth Braddon

Jennifer Phegley
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Charles Wood's account of his mother's life as one of the most famous authors of the Victorian period provides a very strong sense of Ellen Price Wood as a self-sacrificing wife and mother, but only briefly and romantically explores her position as a successful professional who sold thousands of copies of her works and owned and edited her own periodical. Likewise, W.B. Maxwell's reminiscences about Mary Elizabeth Braddon emphasize the ways in which his efficient and hard working mother was able

to balance her professional obligations with her household duties. This paper will examine how these literary sons, whose careers were fostered and advanced by their mothers, pay homage to their mother-mentors by attempting to reconcile the apparent conflicts between their personal and professional roles.

Both Wood, in _Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood_ (1894), and Maxwell, in _Time Gathered_ (1938), assert that their mothers were icons of domesticity who only incidentally excelled in their professional roles. Both sons exhibit intense insecurity about their mothers' literary reputations but seek to bolster them more by highlighting their wholesomeness than by defending the quality of their literary productions. Even at the end of their lives when their reputations as sensational, sentimental, and unabashedly popular writers were no longer the subject of critical controversy, their overwhelming success as professional writers was accepted, and any residual moralism of the high Victorian age had faded away, these sons felt compelled to focus on their mothers as upstanding private citizens more strenuously than they felt the need to cast them as admirable professionals.

This paper asks why both Charles Wood and W.B. Maxwell felt compelled to use conventional Victorian ideals to tell the narratives of their mothers' remarkable and unconventional lives. While these narratives were intended to make their professional mothers acceptable and respectable, they may in fact have contributed to the neglect of these best-selling novelists by scholars until feminist critics began the process of rediscovering and recuperating previously forgotten Victorian women writers.

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Eminent Domains: Victorian Readership and Scholarly Recognition

Other than the attention paid to East Lynne, Mrs. Henry Wood's contribution to the Victorian oeuvre is frequently overlooked and left to gather dust on library bookshelves rather than garner scholarly articles. This could be in large part due to the fact that the larger presses seem to have forgotten her, making her works difficult to obtain in anything but used editions from obscure internet venders. Yet Ellen Wood was one of the most popular writers of her time, her forty-plus novels selling numerous copies and making large sums of money for her publishers. This paper will examine the disparity between the Victorian readers' avid consumption of Mrs. Henry Wood's work and the lack of attention it receives today despite the complexity and import of Wood's narratives: narratives which, when not given sufficient attention, could be considered formulaic and generic, but which, this paper will demonstrate, actually speak to issues of the Victorian's intense preoccupation with and remarkable innovation of narrative.

It is also possible that the notice and notoriety amongst scholars that Wood does not receive today arises out of misguided associations with the means by which she got her start in the business of writing novels. Her first novel was an entry in a competition held by a temperance society, a beginning which seems less than impressive today. Danesbury House, however, won and was widely read thereafter; but perhaps its moralizing theme, one which closely adhered to the tenets of the society that acknowledged its merit with an award, has overshadowed that work's, and all of her following novels' (except again for East Lynne), contribution to the narrative strategies of Victorian writers and reading practices of the Victorian public. Wood's use of subtle narrative movements designed to deliberately distance the reader from dangerous moments in the story demonstrate both the textual and contextual social anxieties of the time, allowing us as scholars to discover the anchors, such as the Gothic genre, that held the reading public and the efforts of writers such as Wood to both liberate and educate readers in more domestic settings while at the same time still protecting them from being set morally adrift in the sea of scandals that immersed her novels.

Aside from showing Wood's contributions to Victorian literary conventions and demonstrating that there would be much to be gained from further study of her work, this paper will also posit that the lack of attention paid to her as a literary figure has much to do with the lack of available resources for scholars interested in researching her life.
Other than a biography written by her son, primary sources on Ellen Wood as a woman and a writer are as rare and difficult to come by as her out-of-print works. Thus, after looking more closely at the body of work of a Victorian author who was eminent in terms of both readership and review in her own time but who has become obscure in ours, this paper will consider what it means for us as scholars to resurrect an author and reestablish a site of study for a once popular and widely influential Victorian figure.

SESSION SEVEN, 2:45 to 4:15 p.m.
Aesthetic Eminents
Moderator: Dan Brown (Oakland U.)

Dr. Sara E. Atwood
Lecturer: Columbus State University, Columbus, GA
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"Cities Crystallized Into Form": John Ruskin and New Urbanism"

A true polymath, John Ruskin was by turns amateur geologist, botanist, etymologist, mythologist, and early environmentalist. A gifted artist in his own right, he was nineteenth-century England's most prominent and influential art critic, as well as one of the period's most articulate social critics and educators. Throughout his long life (1819-1900) Ruskin inspired countless students, disciples, and protégés who championed his belief in a moral aesthetic, moral education, and a society founded on community and "human economy." After his death his teaching was forwarded by the activities of numerous Ruskin Societies, discussed in journals and books dedicated to his work, commemorated by conferences and symposia, and invoked by prominent educators, artists, and politicians. Yet as Tim Hilton notes, Ruskin's wider influence began to wane in the years after the Great War, and Ruskin studies gradually became confined to a small, scattered number of collectors and devotees. Hilton notes that Cook and Wedderburn's *Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, published in thirty-nine volumes in 1903, garnered little respect or fame. Indeed, in the mid-1950s it was possible to purchase a complete set of the Library Edition for as little as forty dollars. Despite the work of pioneering modern Ruskinians such as James Dearden, Van Akin Burd, and John D. Rosenberg in the 1960s and 70s, interest in Ruskin remained limited to a relatively small number of scholars and specialists throughout the greater part of the last century.

The centenary of Ruskin's death in 2000, however, occasioned many exhibitions, publications, and conferences, and today there is evidence of renewed interest in Ruskin's teaching and influence. One example of this interest, rarely addressed by Ruskin scholars, is the New Urbanist architectural movement, which promotes the Ruskinian values of community, civic intimacy and responsibility, and human economy. The work of architects such as Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk in Seaside, Florida, Kentlands, Maryland, and numerous other locations, testifies to the enduring relevance of Ruskin's philosophy and to the feasibility of adapting his ideas to modern urban planning and development.

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"Subjective Immortality": Walter Pater and the Posthumous Moment of Dante Gabriel Rossetti

"Subjective Immortality" seeks to highlight the crucial role that the æsthetic critic Walter Pater (1839-94) played in promoting the secular afterlife of the Pre-Raphælite painter and poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82). This paper takes as its starting point the publication of Pater's essay, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (1883). Pater originally published his influential essay in the year immediately following Rossetti's death, when it appeared as an introduction to his selection of Rossetti poems included in the fourth volume of T. Humphry Ward's landmark collection, *The English Poets*. Pater's "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" essay, along with its accompanying constellation of thirteen Rossetti poems, gives a clear view of how Pater discovers in the work of a contemporary poet a suitable editorial *praxis* for the æsthetic and textual theories he had articulated within his previous writings. Pater's selection is also the first rigorously conceived collection of Rossetti's verse to appear following the poet's death, and this paper makes clear that Pater holds a kind of unacknowledged primacy to the title of "Rossetti's First Editor." Such a realization is vital for truer understanding the close interrelationship between the new aestheticism of the 1870s and 1880s, the profitable late nineteenth-century market for collecting and publishing "English Men of Letters," and late Victorian constructions of identity.

Additionally, "Subjective Immortality" goes on to point out the ways in which the problematic textual history of "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" holds significant implications for scholars of Rossetti's writings and for scholars of Pater's writings, alike. The crux of this textual dilemma originates from Pater's subsequent decision to republish his essay on Rossetti—*sans* the thirteen Rossetti poems—in his 1889 volume of essays, *Appreciations, With an Essay on Style*. Most twenty-first readers only know Pater's essay on Rossetti as it appears in this 1889 re-presentation. The earlier 1883 version of Pater's "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" essay and its accompanying selections from Rossetti's poetry effectively disappeared when Ward's anthology went out of print in the early decades of the twentieth-century. In a real sense, this loss has meant that some of Pater's most significant contributions to the posthumous

conceptualization of Rossetti have dropped out of view.

The present study seeks to recover the literary and cultural significance of the earlier 1883 instantiation of the essay, revealing the editorial self-consciousness that informed Pater's selections from Rossetti's poetry. Moreover, this study makes apparent how Pater, by deciding to republish the "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" essay in *Appreciations*, showed his awareness of the architectonic potential of presenting old texts in new and surprising arrangements. Finally, this paper elaborates how Pater carefully weighs the poetic and cultural significance of the poet-painter in his "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" essay. Ever the sympathetic "student of perpetuity," Pater used his æsthetic and editorial sensibilities to participate in what he termed "the never-resting secular process." In "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Pater not only helped to shape and to perpetuate Rossetti's secular afterlife; he also recast Rossetti as one of his specially-designated elective ancestors, integrating the poet-painter into his carefully-fashioned line of real and imaginary æsthetic precursors, along with Pico della Mirandola, Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Thomas Browne, Winckelmann, Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, and Flaubert.

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Wilde *revenant*; or, the Importance of Being Found Out

Oscar Wilde, judging from the seemingly unending number of biographies of him, is undoubtedly one the pre-eminent Victorians of life writing. Wilde biography and scholarship is governed by two interrelated assumptions: one, that Wilde's trials were the inevitable consequence of the heroic or hubristic flaunting of his homosexuality; and two, that, as a writer, Wilde's primary project was to express (his) homosexuality. This paper problematises these governing assumptions by examining them in the context of Wilde's post-prison years (1897-1900).

Wilde's post-prison years are typically regarded as the useless appendage of Wilde's life-as-tragedy – "The Leftover Years," to quote a chapter title from Richard Ellmann's influential *Oscar Wilde* (1987). Yet this period is important for two reasons. Firstly, I suggest that it is in *these* years, and not the pre-trials years, that Wilde lived as an '(in)famous queer' in an intolerant society, and that it is during *these* years that we can witness and understand the 'terrible freedom' of Wilde's life as (according to an oft-challenged biographical paradigm) a nineteenth-century gay protomartyr and hero. Secondly, I argue that Wilde's writing projects in the post-prison years, particularly *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and the reasons for his eventual abandonment of writing altogether, refute the conception that Wilde's writings are fundamentally invest! ed in expressing (his) homosexuality.

Following his release from prison, Wilde hoped to be able to publicly rehabilitate himself through writing, and his awareness that the persona of the poet-as-prisoner was most likely to find public favour – was readily saleable – resulted in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. In tracing the history of the writing of the *Ballad*, we can see how Wilde's ambivalence towards it as a work of art was the result of the tension between his perception that its saleability rested on the promise that it would offer up the spectacle of his suffering and repentance, and his lifelong resistance to the idea that art was a form of autobiography. Wilde considered the *Ballad* a 'catastrophe in art' and the difficulty of selling the poem to a publisher, combined with the critical reaction to! the 'insincerity' of the *Ballad* (resulting from its favouring of romance over realism), was to convince Wilde that his post-trials public reputation foreclosed the artistic latitude he had earlier enjoyed.

That Wilde subsequently abandoned writing instead of seeing himself free to at last write the openly homosexual works he always presumably had had to postpone or dissemble runs contrary to the assumption that Wilde was primarily invested, in Joseph Bristow's words, in "attempting to make sexual desire between men as visible as possible" in his writings. I suggest that Wilde's artistic persona and writings were instead invested in keeping in play an aesthetic of indeterminacy in the face of a public that was fascinated with trying to determine him. Wilde's disinclination for writing after prison was due to his awareness that any reader, knowing the 'secret' of his life, would presume they could find that 'secret' in this writings: Wilde's sphinxes would now *always* have a secret, and it would always be the *same* secret. This explains why Wilde gave up on trying to rehabilitate himself through art and 'abandoned' himself to living incorrigibly as an "unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort."

SESSION EIGHT, 4:30 to 5p.m.

Victorian Situations, Eminent or Not

Moderator: Caroline Giordano (U of Mich)

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"Eminent in their Professions: 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' and the Dublin Castle Scandals of 1884."

In the autumn of 1883 the radical Irish nationalist newspaper, 'United Ireland', under the editorship of William O'Brien, began to make accusations of homosexual activity against eminent members of the British administration in Ireland, most notable James Ellis French, a senior policeman, and Gustavus Cornwall, the secretary to the Post Office. The articles in the paper resulted in suits for libel being issued against its editor. When these suits collapsed, and in a development which anticipated what was to happen in the Wilde case ten years later, criminal prosecutions were brought against those who had sued and their associates. Several men were imprisoned, including French, though Cornwall got off.

Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella, 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' focuses on the lives of men who are eminent in their various professions and whose lives, I argue, bear a similarity with those who were embroiled in the Dublin cases. In no sense do I think that the novella is a *roman a clef* with one to one correspondences with the Dublin cases, or that what allusions there are necessarily always consistent or logical. What I do think is that the way in which the novella was written would have been reminiscent of the recent Dublin trials and the ways in which they were reported. The presence of the trials in the novels is subdued and allusive and, indeed, coded in ways characteristic of the reporting of the Dublin cases themselves. However, an examination of the novella in the light of the Dublin cases may recover something of the flavour of the way in which it was originally read.

The novella opens with Utterson and the enigma of his friendship with Enfield:

> It was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see in each other or what subject they could find in common. It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing, looked singularly dull, and would have with obvious relief the appearance of a friend. For all that, the two men put the greatest story by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week, and not only aside occasions of pleasure, but even resisted the calls of business, that they might enjoy them uninterrupted.

Yet to Stevenson's readers this practice would have been a very familiar one. There is a startling similarity between this passage and the evidence given at the Dublin Castle trials. Here again are groups of men, walking around together for apparently no good reason. When asked if he had often met Cornwall, Alfred McKernan, one of the witnesses against him, had said, "Yes, frequently by appointment we used to go for walks. He often called at my lodgings." Alan Sandison has remarked of them that "by far the most striking thing about Utterson and Enfield separately and in relation with each other, that is the absence of explanation and the lack of clues." Yet, as we can now see, there are clues and they are to be found in the Dublin cases. Both the novella and the Dublin cases provide interesting perspectives on the prizing of eminence and its costs in Victorian society.

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Much Depends on Toast: Eminent Cookbook Authorities and the Making of A Victorian Middle-Class Breakfast

Picture a middle-class Victorian breakfast, and toast is not likely the first dish to come to mind. Tucked away in a white linen napkin on the far side of the table, its appearance is overshadowed by grilled ham and eggs, a platter of sizzling bacon, a tureen of porridge, and slices of cold roast beef garnished with cress. We might take toast for granted on the Victorian breakfast table because the Victorians seemed to do so as well. While the laborer sometimes depended exclusively on bread and hot tea for sustenance and could suffer near starvation when the price of corn was too dear, the middle-class man reached for his buttered toast and chewed it absentmindedly while he scanned the *Times*. Considering that toast was commonplace enough to be overlooked by families when they sat down to breakfast, why would a maid be required to produce this dish at all? Why do eminent authorities on domestic management write about toast? Why do cookbooks offer detailed recipes for a dish that seems rather simple to produce?

Like many favorite Victorian-era foods, including croquettes and turtle soup, hot buttered toast takes on a symbolic importance that far surpasses its humble origins and simple ingredients. It becomes an important gauge of how successfully a family conforms to the idealized standards of conduct set

forth by the century's most eminent and respected cookbook authors: Alexis Soyer in *Modern Housewife* (1849), Isabella Beeton in *The Book of Household Management* (1861) and *Everyday Cookery* (1872), *Cassell's Book of the Household* (1889), and A. Kenny Herbert in *Fifty Breakfasts* (1894). Much, in other words, depends upon toast. Along with exploring what went on in a typical terraced house to bring this dish to the table, I also explore what the dish tells us about the complexities of Victorian middle-class life: what Victorians ate, and how Victorian virtues as defined by the era's authorities, were tied to what they ate.

I conclude by discussing why toast, a traditional English specialty, comes by the Victorian era to be associated with the middle classes. Toast on the table signifies that family members have enough wealth to neglect eating it if they so choose; that the family likely has a servant to make and serve it; and that if prepared according to the cookbook authors' specifications, the mistress can relish in her own virtue. Even today, this plain, ubiquitous food speaks to us about English middle-class ceremony and status, tastes and pleasures, hidden frustrations and needs. The title of Nigel Slater's 2004 food memoir, *Toast: The Story of a Boy's Hunger*, was not by any means an accidental one.

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"Cholera As Eminent Victorian"

According to G. M. Young, a mid-century Noncomformist pastor is said to have stated that "there have been at work among us three great social agencies: the London City Mission; the novels of Mr. Dickens; the cholera." Among the many pestilences that ravaged the Victorian populace, cholera reigned supreme. A devastating disease, cholera was also a powerful symbol and referent in the culture of Victorian Britain. In the daily press and the papers of Parliament alike, cholera was continuously invoked as a fearfully potent threat to British lives - one that demanded equally drastic social and sanitary reforms. Cholera generated its own set of cultural images and its own specialized terminology: "cholera panic," for example, was a specialized form of hysteria, set apart from all others, with its own set of particular behaviors. Even after Britain ceased to be afflicted by the disease in the 1870s, cholera continued to play a central role in public discourse, and its absence from British cities was often invoked as a sign of British superiority in the realms of medicine and public health.

Cholera, however, was hardly the most devastating nineteenth-century disease. Far more Victorians perished from tuberculosis and typhus, for example, and many historians of medicine and public health have contended that cholera's ultimate importance in advancing medical progress during the century was largely accidental and mythological. Yet, the Victorians never referred to "fever panic," or invoked the figure of the consumptive when demanding national reforms. Cholera was a disease apart, a foul specter that uniquely haunted the Victorian consciousness.

My paper seeks to explain cholera's singular presence in the culture of nineteenth-century Britain by exploring a number of factors that contributed to cholera's identity as the nineteenth century disease par excellence. Among those considered will be the nature of cholera symptoms, its status as a "new" disease, its origins as an endemic disease of British India, and its relationship to the memory of the bubonic plague in Victorian society. While all of these factors together contributed to cholera's cultural force, I argue that it was the relationship between dirt, the poor, and urban space that gave cholera such powerful cultural weight. For this reason, I contend that the chronology of cholera's arrival and disappearance from Britain did a great deal to contribute to and maintain its status as a disease celebrity throughout the century.

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