Newsletter

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Hello everyone, and welcome to the latest issue of the Newsletter. Ongoing COVID challenges have evidently been well-met by Victorianists, if the recent publications, planned publications, and numerous Zoom events are anything to go by.

We on the BAVS committee already can't wait to see lots of you at the conference in Birmingham next summer. We're looking ahead to future events, too, and if your institution would be interested in hosting a future BAVS conference, see p.2 for details of how to apply.

We've also been working hard to find ways of supporting members throughout this difficult time. Our Auction (see p.2) is open for bidding until August 7, and all funds raised will go towards hardship grants for our most precarious members. You can also still donate to the JustGiving page for the same purpose.

There are a few changes to announce to the BAVS committee. I will be stepping down from it, after eight lovely years in various roles. The new Newsletter Editor will be known to many of you as the excellent Dr Clare Stainthorp (QMU), who will be very ably assisted by Dr Sarah Wride (York). Meanwhile, Dr Andrew Hewitt (Independent) will become our new Digital Media representative (a position that incorporates and expands on the current COVE representative role). Together, these three will form the new BAVS Communications Team.

I wish you all a lovely and, wherever possible, restful summer.

Joanna Taylor
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BAVS News

BAVS Annual Conference: Proposals welcome for 2023, 2024 & 2025

We are inviting expressions of interest and applications for hosting future annual BAVS conferences.

The annual British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS) conference (estimated to take place in July each year) brings together those engaged in research and related activities across multiple disciplines and at all career stages. It is a key annual event in the field.

Applications will be considered at the subsequent Summer, Spring or Autumn BAVS Executive Committee meeting following receipt of this form.

Successful applicants will work with support from a sub-team or members of the BAVS Executive Committee, who can provide guidance and advice on delivering the annual conference. The lead organiser/s will be asked to provide regular updates on the conference plans at Committee meetings.

Please return the proposal form (available here) to BAVS Secretary, Dr Alice Crossley acrossley@lincoln.ac.uk. All proposals will be considered by the BAVS Executive Committee, and lead proposers informed of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter. We encourage early applications, at least 18 months before the proposed conference date. Co/organisers should be members of BAVS.

BAVS Auction

Victorianists and 19th Centuryists love books (and stuff)-- and we all have books (and stuff) we no longer need, or have three copies of. What better way to clear the shelves than to auction things off to support hardship grants for our most precarious community members? All proceeds go directly to BAVS to support those who have encountered hardship during the ongoing COVID-19 crises with £400 grants, disbursed on a rolling basis.

You can bid on items using the sheet here. Bidding closes on August 7 2021.

Reviews

The BAVS Newsletter is always looking for new reviewers, particularly among postgraduate, early-career, and independent researchers. To express an interest in reviewing, please email your name, affiliation, five research keywords, and any titles or digital resources that you are interested in reviewing to bavsnews@gmail.com. Reviewers must join BAVS if they have not done so already. Authors, editors, and publishers of recent work on any aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture are also invited to suggest titles for review by emailing the same address. Reviews printed in the BAVS Newsletter are distributed to over 600 members around the world and then archived on our open-access website. Reviews will be returned to each book's publisher to aid their publicity efforts.

***Scandal and Survival in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: The Life of Jane Cumming* by Frances B. Singh (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 318 pp., £90 (Hardback) ISBN 978-1-58046-955-5**

Many people might have heard of Jane Cumming from the libel trial *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon* (1811-1819). What started this scandalous lawsuit was the allegation by Jane Cumming, the biracial (half-Indian) granddaughter of Dame Helen Cumming Gordon, that her schoolteachers Woods and Pirie were sexually intimate with each other. In the trial, Jane was perceived through a racially prejudiced lens which rendered her claims untrustworthy: as Martha Vicinus explains, Jane was 'stereotyped as a lustful, illegitimate half-breed' (1994: 70).[1]

Frances B. Singh's *Scandal and Survival in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: The Life of Jane Cumming* attempts to contextualise Jane's life before, during, and after the trial. Each chapter deals with a variety of factors which, either directly or indirectly, had irrevocably negative influences on Jane's life: the history of the Cummings ('Ante Jane'), the education Jane received in Edinburgh ('Educating Jane'), how the judges perceived Jane during the libel case ('Jane and the Lords of the Law'), and Jane's marriage to William Tulloch, who was known as a womaniser ('Jane and William Tulloch'). Utilising a wide range of sources which include letters and the court proceedings, this book aims to explore a tangled web of 'race, class, and sex/gender [that] choreographed Jane's life and world' (4).

The penultimate chapter, 'Jane, Posthumously' describes what happened after Jane's death in 1844, especially how the libel suit inspired Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* (1934). Knowing how Hellman created Mary Tilford, a rebellious, contriving, and destructive pupil who was based on Jane, helps us better understand Jane's mind. Although the nature of Marianne Wood's and Jane Pirie's friendship (to be specific, whether their relationship can be labelled as romantic) is not at the core of this book, Singh includes two appendixes ('Marianne Woods, Jane Pirie, and Romantic Friendship' and 'What Really Happened to Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie?'), which give us an insight into what was likely to have happened at the boarding school run by Woods and Pirie.

In *Scandal and Survival in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, Singh provides an extensive variety of information on Jane's life, proving ways of understanding what made her become a troubling presence for those around her. As argued in 'Conclusion: Assessing Jane', Jane's temperament and bahaviour can be attributed to several reasons - 'race-based prejudice, erotic sensitivity to situational and contextual stimuli, stress and anxiety, and child maltreatment' (219). One word that stands out in Singh's assessment of Jane is 'resilient': feeling unwanted in a majority of her life, Jane had to resort to manipulative, often destructive, measures for survival (228). In addition to presenting historical records, *Scandal and Survival in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* provides psychological and neurological evidence that explains the influence of Jane's traumatic experiences, which has not been paid attention before. As a result, Singh succeeds in encouraging us to assess Jane in a 'more nuanced' way (xxxiv). This book sheds light on a series of traumatic situations for Jane which have been paid little attention before, making an important contribution to unveiling the complicated relationship that involves racial, gender/sexual, and class prejudice in nineteenth-century Scotland.

Akira Suwa (Ritsumeikan University, Japan)

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[1] Vicinus, Martha. 'Lesbian History: All Theory and No Facts or All Facts and No Theory?' *Radical History Review*, Vol. 60 (1994), pp. 57-75.

Painting antiquity: ancient Egypt in the art of Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Edward Poynter and Edwin Long **by Stephanie Moser (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020), 584pp., £55 (e-book), £64 (hardback), ISBN 978-0190697020**

Over a century before the archaeologist Howard Carter entered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922, ancient Egypt was a feature of British culture. Starting during Napoleon's military campaign there (1798-1801), fascination with Egypt spanned the nineteenth century. From architecture to interior *décor*, theatrical productions to sensation novels, 'Egyptomania' percolated almost every aspect of British life at one time or another. Cultural productions ranged from John Keats's poem 'Ozymandias' (1817) to Jane Webb's novel *The Mummy* (1827) to John Gardner Wilkinson's highly-influential tome *Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians* (1837). Throughout the century, Egyptian antiquities, small and large, were also transported to Britain for study and display, from the Rosetta Stone to Cleopatra's Needle.

Oscar Wilde once suggested that 'where archaeology begins, art ceases' (Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (1987), 245). Stephanie Moser's *Painting antiquity* refutes this sweeping claim, probing the relationship between art and archaeology in the Egyptian-themed paintings of Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Edward Poynter and Edwin Long. Her study argues that their artistic approaches were profoundly influenced by the development of archaeology as a professional discipline during the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result, each artist produced works deeply engaged with recent discoveries about the material culture of the ancient world. Focussing on the paintings each artist set in ancient Egypt, Moser examines how these captured Victorian fascination with both the epic and the everyday.

Building upon her recent study of the Egyptian Court at the Crystal Palace, *Designing antiquity* (2013), Moser's new book fits into burgeoning scholarly interest in the reception of ancient Egypt. Since its beginnings in the 1990s, the discipline of classical reception studies has concentrated largely upon the legacies of ancient Greece and Rome. But, in the last decade, important foundations have been laid for the study of the Victorian reception of ancient Egypt by David Gange, Eleanor Dobson and others. Moser's book presents another important milestone in this process, and will be of interest to students and scholars of art history, archaeology, classical reception, and Victorian cultural history.

Along with an introduction and conclusion, the study contains eleven chapters. Chapters one to six provide a chronological treatment of the development of Egyptian themes in the works of Alma-Tadema, Poynter and Long. Chapter seven examines the artistic and cultural context of Victorian archaeological painting; chapter eight studies the archaeological sources of the three artists; and chapter nine analyses their materials and working methods. Lastly, chapters ten and eleven evaluate responses to the Egyptian paintings of the three artists in their own day and since. The book is lavishly illustrated with 240 colour and black-and-white images, and three appendices list the Egyptian-themed works of each artist.

Complemented by its numerous art reproductions and photographs, the core of Moser's text provides an examination of over sixty paintings created by Alma-Tadema, Poynter and Long between 1856 and 1904. Much of this material has not been surveyed in detail before, and she relates it incisively to the evolution of Victorian art and archaeology. The author also connects the production of these works to other cultural developments, including advances in photography, the expansion of museum collections, and increasing travel to the Mediterranean and the Near East.

The only criticism that I might make is that the book is perhaps overlong, and its argument could in places have been more concise. Perhaps because of the book's length (and its many illustrations), its publisher has also chosen an unwieldy, double-column format for its text that makes reading unnecessarily taxing. But, such minor issues aside, this is an important interdisciplinary study, which provides ample evidence of the extensive dialogue between the worlds of Victorian art and archaeology.

Providing a space where biblical legend, historical anecdote and the domestic scene could coalesce, nineteenth-century paintings of ancient Egypt represent an important genre often subsumed beneath discussions of classicism in Victorian art. Moser does these works a considerable service in excavating, in their own right, their archaeological inspirations and aesthetic importance. Reframing them as the equal of their Greco-Roman counterparts, she reveals the ways in which the forces of the paintbrush and the trowel were united to create Ozymandian visions of an exotic, departed civilisation for an empire reaching the height of its powers.

Quentin J. Broughall (Independent Scholar)

***The Literature of Connection: Signal, Medium, Interface, 1850-1950* by David Trotter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 304pp., £30 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-1988-5047-2**

This book is about the development of connectivity during the period 1850-1950 involving an examination of signals sent from one character to another (or to the reader) which may (or may not) be picked up by its intended recipient. Having considered signals and signs, Trotter then moves onto considering interfaces such as push buttons which extend our ability to signal. In brief, this book comprises of five chapters setting out Trotter's thesis on connectivity in relation to British literature (G. Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, Mirrlees, Lewis, Loy, Mansfield) before concluding with three chapters which engage with media other than literature as well as with creators who are not British.

One notable feature of this work is the lack of staid language: how refreshing to read an author who pens phrases such as 'Contrary to strict instructions, the two Dad's Army characters …' (p. 25) or 'The moment Arabella Donn tossed a pig's penis at Jude, Tinder became inevitable' (p. 52) or 'a steepling overhang of commentary and interpretation' (p. 62) or 'Borg does not go online in order to share pictures of cats' (p. 175) or 'the ships he purchased were without exception rusty old tubs … his business methods were a bit rusty, too' (p. 221).

Trotter picked the 1850s as his starting point since this was the period in which telegraphic improvements (both optical and electrical) were 'enforcing' differences between signal and sign (p. 15). However, signals may also be noticed by other characters who may then try to jam the signal, thus rendering the recipient unable to detect the message (or sign) from the surrounding noise. Thus we find in George Eliot that Gwendolen signals to Daniel using the necklace-as-bracelet as a sign but whilst Grandcourt detects the signal, he does not understand the sign (i.e. the message conveyed by the pawned-but-redeemed necklace). In Hardy's *Return of the Native,* Eustacia signals to Damon with her fire and this channel of communication continues despite their marriages to others before Diggory Venn commences his jamming campaign: the red string which trips Damon signals his knowledge of their affair whilst his knocking at the door rouses Clym preventing that night's illicit rendezvous. The signalling concept is further developed by considering of lightning in Lawrence's *The Rainbow*, coded messages between lovers in Woolf's *Orlando* and Mirrlees' *Paris*, cosmological interference in Lewis' 'Enemy of the Stars', visual jamming by Loy using *, - and – in 'Songs to Joannes' and the transition between rooms in Mansfield's short stories.

For Trotter, the interface is 'the spot of time at or during which, unable to proceed further in our own existing physical form, we develop a second self' (p. 11). When considering Conrad's ship captains, Trotter argues that the interface occurs once the user is supplemented by the subject 'which will at once divide him from himself and show him the way to digital command' (p. 66). Whilst I will grant that the captain "interfaces" with the crew on the quarterdeck when he issues a command that they carry out for him (thus extending his control over the whole ship), it does not require the theoretical construct of an interface to see this. In addition, I would argue that both 'The Secret Sharer' and *The Shadow Line* are novellas in which the captain's freedom to sail the ship is impeded somewhat by someone on-board rather than being examples of a user being supplemented by a subject. Ultimately, my unease at characterising interpersonal relationships as an interface is that they dehumanise the recipient: the difference between a doorbell and a person is that a doorbell does not have human rights, inalienable worth and dignity – it is just a piece of technology.

In his closing remarks, Trotter sketches out additional avenues of thought including the function of corridors and film depictions of revolution. One additional area is to consider how communication fits within or is shaped by worldviews. As Tom Holland showed in *Dominion* (2019), the West is culturally Christian so interesting angles to explore further could include the Tower of Babel leading to an expectation of miscommunication (Genesis 11) or our world as speaking (Psalm 19). In conclusion, this is a fascinating examination of how we communicate with Trotter's humour and the chapters on signalling being the stand-out aspects of this work.

H-F Dessain (Independent Researcher)

The Escape of Jack the Ripper: The Full Truth about the Cover-Up and His Flight from Justice, by Jonathan Hainsworth and Christine Ward-Agius (Stroud: Amberley, 2020), 286pp., £20 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4456-9814-4

The identity of 'Jack the Ripper' has sparked intense debate for over a century. While several suspects have been considered, no definitive solution has revealed the culprit. Jonathan Hainsworth and Christine Ward-Agius's book attempts to advance the investigation. Here, they argue that the barrister Montague Druitt was the culprit, and that his guilt

was concealed through elaborate deceptions by his family and others.

The book is loosely split into three sections. Chapters one through four introduces the Druitt family. The Druitts were well-respected in their fields; Montague's father and uncle Robert were both noted physicians (Robert also advocated for the prevention of prostitution), and his cousin Charles was a Catholic priest who took Montague's 'confession'. Charles' religious devotion lends some credence to the authors' theory, whilst the family's haste to conceal Montague's 'deeds' is supported through his brother Edward's decision to forgo a mourning period and continue with his own marriage plans in 1889 (p.38). Additionally, the introduction details one of Montague's last legal cases before his 1888 suicide, defending Henry Young, who was convicted of murdering his stepchild. During the trial, Montague implied that Young's wife, a former prostitute, was to blame, having 'a motive to remove the child of shame' (p.25). The authors allude to the popular mood of the 1880s, blaming streetwalkers for men's problems, which was reflected in legislation such as the Contagious Diseases Acts (1864, 1866, 1869), and imply that Montague subscribed to such views. The authors discuss Montague's post-university life, suggesting that he might have considered a medical degree or training before becoming a barrister, due to his family connections. They also attempt to link him with the philanthropic society Oxford House; suggesting that 'Jack' was involved with reform movements. However, there are no clear records of training or philanthropic activities, and this reads more as conjecture.

The second section details Whitechapel murders (Emma Smith and Martha Turner) which might have inspired 'Jack', arguing that if he did not live in Whitechapel, he would travel there for work (as Montague did). They also describe the attempted murder of Ada Wilson, which they attribute to Montague developing his skills. They then recount the 'canonical' Ripper murders: Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Smith, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Kelly. The authors allude to Montague's motives: killing women to raise awareness of Whitechapel's plight; serving as a twisted 'moral lesson'. However, 'his' 'mission' serves to satiate a murderous desire. These chapters briefly recount each victim's life, but quickly switches to a dramatisation of Montague's thoughts during each murder. Notably, none of the victims are portrayed as empowered individuals, and the scenes are invariably Ripper-centric. The authors argue that Kelly's murder unhinges Montague, and the family is forced to institutionalise him before his suicide. Again, there is little evidence, although reports that the Metropolitan Police searched asylums lends this theory some credence. Additionally, the inquest reveals that William Druitt committed perjury, by stating that Montague had no other living relatives (p.159). While untrue, the coroner accepted William's testimony.

The third section introduces the Metropolitan Police Chief, Sir Melville Macnaghten; suggesting that while he was not involved in the 'Ripper' case, Macnaghten concealed Montague's guilt because he was previously questioned before Kelly's murder. Public knowledge of this would have created a political nightmare were it known that the 'Ripper' was briefly in custody. The authors claim that Macnaghten, George Sims and Vivian Dering Majendie wanted to counteract Charles Druitt's potential release of Montague's 'confession'. The evidence centres around Macnaghten's private memos, which might implicate Montague; Macnaghten alludes to this in his retirement speech yet claimed to have destroyed these records. Even the authors question Macnaghten's reliability; his apparent destruction of evidence serves his own self-interests, and his description of 'Jack' as 'a remarkable man' (p.237) indicates his disdain towards justice. Notably, Macnaghten's daughter Christabel inherited his documents, but refused to divulge its contents (p.242).

This is a book for a popular audience; Montague's italicised 'thoughts' during the murders generates a 'Ripper-centric' perspective which is common in this genre. Montague's apparent motive conceives the Ripper-as-anti-hero; further disempowering the victims. For a more balanced perspective, readers may want to access Hallie Rubenhold's The Five. Despite this, the text invites further debates surrounding 'Ripperology' and our continued fascination with 'Jack'.

Emma Catan (Northumbria University)

***Discourses of Vision in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Seeing, Thinking, Writing*, by Jonathan Potter (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 269pp., £59.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-3-319-89737-0.**

Jonathan Potter's study, which explores how visual technologies shaped vision and its metaphors in nineteenth-century Britain, offers a 'pluralistic understanding of polydynamic "experiences"' through its persuasive critique of the paradigm of 'singular individuality' (p. 1). Beginning with an exploration of the 'technological imagination', Potter establishes that technology facilitates imagination through a 'framework for conceiving and articulating vision' (p. 10), which was increasingly understood to

be simultaneous and comprehensive. Although his discussion of visual technologies — the magic lantern, the dissolving view, the stereoscope, and photography — covers much of the same ground as germinal works such as Jonathan Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* (1990), Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Glassworlds* (2008), and Martin Willis's *Ocular Horizons* (2011), Potter's emphasis on psychology and intellectual history helps to distinguish his approach.

Potter prioritises acts of clarification, connection, and organisation in his engagement with the 'breadth and depth' (p. 3) of the already comprehensive field of nineteenth-century vision studies. The most striking example of this programme, can be found in Chapter Two, wherein he reconceptualises the panorama in 'spatio-temporal' terms (p. 12, p. 26). Potter identifies the 'panoramic experience' as comprising 'complex nested meanings' (p. 28), which he unpacks methodologically to make a case for privileging historically contingent interpretations of visual technologies.

While *Discourses of Vision* elucidates how technology facilitates connections between visual experiences and discursive techniques of representing perception, it also addresses major nineteenth-century concerns with urbanisation, technology's influence on conceptions of perception, the professionalisation of science and the privileging of its episteme, and the tensions between individual and mass culture and experiences. Following important trajectories in the fields of literary historicism and cultural studies, the study brings in contemporary works in fields we would now identify as philosophy, sociology, psychology, science communication, and history to enrich discussions of technology and the imagination. This contextualisation is most effective when lesser-known works are set alongside more familiar ones, such as in Chapter Five, where his innovative analysis of the imagination's capacity to reconcile the irrational (pp. 134–5) in David Brewster's *Letters on Natural Magic* (1883) is sustained through comparisons with Benjamin Brodie's 'Address to the Royal Society' (1859) and John Tyndall's 'On the Scientific Use of the Imagination' (1870).

Potter structures his study around the pairing of visual technologies (and their metaphors) with 'discursive practices' (p. 9): the panorama with the genre of urban sketch popularised by Boz (Charles Dickens's pseudonym); the magic lantern show's 'dissolving view' (p.69) with the historical fiction of Dickens, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and Thomas Carlyle; the 'scientific uses of the magic lantern' (p. 14) and other instruments, such as the kaleidoscope and the oxyhydrogen microscope, with ghost or ghostly stories; the stereoscope with popular short stories, particularly those with domestic themes or settings; hybrid or 'specialised perceptual technologies' (p. 185) and the network with Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892–3) and literary naturalism; and, finally the 'fractal episteme' (p. 214) with the impressionism of Joseph Conrad's imperial romance, *Lord Jim* (1900). With the exception of the magic lantern, which proliferates in its variations and uses across the period, these pairings are largely chronologically organised; such a structure highlights how, in the late nineteenth century, certain technologies were repurposed (the kaleidoscope) or became hybridised (photographic and stereographic images).

Discourses of Vision is teeming with content and context; at times, the scale and multitude overwhelm the attentive reader such that the study resists coherent and comprehensive evaluation. The sophistication of Potter's approach often manifests in the lexical complexity of his analysis which, while necessary to the thesis of his study, evades summary. More productively, however, it continually reveals the impossibility of the task of separating out the multiplicity of individual, subjective visual experiences to the extent that the 'complex of nested meanings' Potter uncovers becomes an elegantly structured *mise-en-abyme*. Chapter Four exemplifies this nested methodology. Alongside his reading of the illogical and non-linear narratives suggested by two paintings J. M. W. Turner presented at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1842, 'War. The Exile and the Rock Limpet' and 'Peace – Burial at Sea', Potter places not only 'Spooner's Protean Views' (a series of dissolving views shown as part of magic lantern show at the Royal Adelaide Gallery in the same year) but also Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind* (1879), Henry Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* (1858), and Thomas Carlyle's 'Sign of the Times' (1829) and *The French Revolution* (1837).

Although the magic lantern persists as a technology of and metaphor for vision throughout the study, although Potter does not introduce the consequent discursive concerns until near the end of Chapter 4. Rather than being the focus of the chapter's analysis, how the metaphor of the 'magical transition' that emerges from experiences of the dissolving view manifests in the 'temporal disruption' of 'prophetic vision' (p. 89) in George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* (1859), and how objective and subjective perspectives are mediated through 'doublings and redoublings' (p. 99) in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) become concerns that supplement Potter's alignment of the dissolving view metaphor with the growing 'historigrahical ambiguity' (p. 99) of the period. Such a deferral of literary concerns is a troubling consequence of

Potter's decision to formulate texts (literary or otherwise) as 'discursive formations' (p. 3).

The final two chapters of *Discourses of Vision* are the most innovative. Drawing on other forms of media, such as advertising, toys, and consumer goods, they demonstrate how visual technologies progressed, were transformed, and eventually dissipated. Contending that, '[a]s media and society became more sophisticated, the individual perceptual experience became more mediated and thus potentially more disconnected and fragmented' (p. 189), Potter pre-empts the appropriation of these discursive techniques by modernist studies. He finds that the composition and reading of narrative fiction in the nineteenth century provided an 'ordering process' by which individuals could make sense of a society that was both increasingly fragmented and more extensively networked (p. 231).

Laura Ludtke (University of Oxford)

***Mimicry and Display in Victorian Literary Culture: Nature, Science and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, by Will Abberley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 293pp., £75 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-108-47759-8**

The outcome of his tenure as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, *Mimicry and Display in Victorian Literary Culture: Nature, Science and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* confirms Will Abberley's position as one of today's most exciting interdisciplinary scholars. And interdisciplinary it is – placing his work in the mould of Beer, Levine, Shuttleworth and Otis, Abberley announces that '*Mimicry and Display* has no truck with views of science in culture as a one-way dissemination from expert-originators to passive audiences. It views adaptive appearance as a pliable set of images and concepts that were reshaped to suit different perspectives and agendas' (p. 3). While Abberley positions his argument within a complex matrix of various theoretical frameworks, this statement is perhaps the most important in understanding how his study operates. Having constructed his own particular web of the various stakeholders in adaptive appearance – from nineteenth-century naturalists to modern-day theorists of zoosemiotics and everyone in-between – by the end of the introduction, the reader is confident they are in the hands of a thorough researcher who has left near no stone unturned.

'Adaptive appearance' – the monograph's central concern – is Abberley's coinage, comprising camouflage and mimicry; organisms signalling defence through colouration; and sexual display. While a reader could be forgiven for hearing echoes of *Hamlet* throughout ('Seems, madam?'), *Mimicry and Display* 'is not about mimicry or appearance in general but the construction of appearances as biological phenomena, and the ways in which the biologization of appearance responded to, and helped to shape, wider cultural currents' (p. 22). The subsequent chapters form case studies which show how adaptive appearance was not just an analogy on which to draw, but a concept which led several cultural lives – variations on a theme – which had different ideological motivations, attracted different thinkers, and had wide-reading consequences.

Abberley achieves this in part by dedicated vocabulary tracing, showing how Alfred Russell Wallace's term 'polymorphic' (for mimetic insects which resemble multiple species) is found describing a confidence trickster in Grant Allen's fiction (p. 106). Later, he traces how Israel Zangwill and Charlotte Perkins Gilman both adopt and adapt the term 'protective mimicry' when they write about the comparative semiosis of racial and gender identities, respectively (p. 180; p. 188).

Abberley's prose is pacey which, while providing an exhilarating read, means you'll have to get up to speed with new terms quickly: I found myself referring to the swift definitions of 'crypsis' and 'aposematism' on pp. 1-2 on their reappearance. A touch more anchoring of specialised vocabulary would have aided this reader.

For all that the case studies cover a series of interconnected fields of study, this doesn't lessen the depth of research of each chapter. Chapter 4 on Thomas Hardy's fiction, for instance, manages to discuss all his novels bar *The Trumpet-Major*, as well as some letters and poems. In this way, while I urge you to read *Mimicry and Display* as a whole, individual chapters will enrich the research and teaching of sub-specialisms in Victorian studies: Chapter 2 on tensions between scientific understanding and religious belief; Chapter 3 to detective fiction and Victorian crime; Chapter 6 to studies of race, or sexuality. In fact, the more I tried to list all the authors, genres, and fields to whose scholarship *Mimicry and Display* makes a significant contribution, the more mammoth the task became, and I gave up.

At every turn, Abberley is keen to show the inherent contradictions within the debates around adaptive appearance. In the case of Hardy, the 'pastoral dichotomy of natural truthfulness versus conscious, civilised artifice was contradicted by realist and naturalist tendencies that framed nature's processes […] as amoral' (p. 122). Later, in his reading of *Jude*, Abberley notes how 'Hardy's fiction explores the possibility of deceit being justified when it increases happiness' (p. 135). Part of the dynamism of *Mimicry and Display* comes from

these shifting centres: just when one version of, or belief around, adaptive appearance coheres, it must give way to a competing or conflicting one. Abberley's phrase about Zangwill and Gilman applies – like them, he 'energise[s] discussions about authentic identity even as [he] also problematise[s] it' (p. 203). While the text is the real treasure, as a part of the *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, this is a handsome volume, with the ten black and white figures showing adaptive appearance at work in nineteenth-century visual culture.

Mimicry and Display does something rather wonderful: while you'll read Victorian and Edwardian literature from a new perspective, you'll also never see nature in quite the same way again.

Catherine Charlwood, University of Liverpool

Leon Litvack and Emily Bell (eds.), *The Charles Dickens Letters Project*, https://dickensletters.com/

The quantity of letters written by Charles Dickens has long been an undertaking for Victorianists. With over fifteen novels, novellas, short stories, and nonfiction writings, it is difficult to comprehend how this staple of Victorian literature had the time to write the already published 14,000 letters in his lifetime. As prominent Dickens expert and letter editor, Jenny Hartley emphasises, "[r]eaders who enjoy his fiction, his journalism, and his journal writing will appreciate his gifts in his fourth genre," letter-writing (Hartley, ix). The prominent publication of Dickens's letters in the 12 volumes of Pilgrim Edition of *The Letters of Charles Dickens* has only hit the tip of the iceberg when it comes to uncovering and examining Dickens' letters (Hartley, xviii). Through databases like the *Charles Dickens Letters Project*, over 500 letters have become available to academics and the public.

The *Charles Dickens Letters Project* provides an easy-to-use database surrounding lesser-known letters from 1837 to 1870. Such letters include correspondences between politicians, cultural figures, and individuals influential in Dickens's personal and professional life. It is during this time period that Dickens was most actively writing and associating with political figures and fellow novelists. Between 1837 and 1870, Dickens's published works *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Dombey and Son*, *Household Words*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Hard Times*, *Tale of Two Cities*, and *Great Expectations*. Dickens began public readings both in England and internationally as well as developed a career on the stage in association with literary figures, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Wilkie Collins, and within his own productions. This period also witnessed Dickens's marriage to Catherine Hogarth and the birth of their ten children in addition to the dissolution of his marriage and relationship with Ellen Ternan. It is, therefore, not surprising that mentions of these events appear within letters of this period. Letters within the *Charles Dickens Letters Project* include correspondence with editor George Chapman, critic and friend John Forster, illustrator George Cruikshank, artist Augustus Egg, and fellow literary figures such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, and Thomas Aldolphus Trollope. While these may not be necessarily the most overtly eventful letters, these correspondences still provide an important resource for understanding Dickens's daily life and interactions. These letters provide researchers with the ability to examine Dickens's relationship with his family as well as his relationship with individuals important to the development of his literary career. It is through these letters that researchers can observe the behind-the-scenes details of the production of Dickens' works such as elements of editorial work, illustration consultations, publication specifics, and literary tour details.

The *Charles Dickens Letters Project* provides multiple methods for searching through Dickens's letters. The first method available to researchers is the ability to use the "Text Search" tool to explore specific aspects of Dickens's letters. This tool is valuable not only for Dickens researchers but also for those searching for correspondences of political and cultural figures of the 19th century with the ability to search for specific mentions of individuals within Dickens's writing. The "Text Search" also provides Dickens researchers the ability to search for specific aspects of his letters, including mentions of editors, political opinions, and the struggles of family life. In addition, the *Charles Dickens Letters Project* provides the opportunity to "Browse Letters" in order to view the vastness of letters available through the database. The only difficulty with this option is that letters are not necessarily organised by the date in which they are written but rather, as it seems, the date in which they are uploaded. This option organises letters by correspondent in order order to examine Dickens' epistolary relationships with specific individuals.

The organisation of this database provides not only an introduction to the project and its initiatives but also a detailed timeline of Dickens's life and an extremely in-depth biography of the stages of Dickens's life and the individuals who held an important role in his life during those times. Other sections of the database provide details of the

team of Dickens researchers who authenticate, transcribe, and examine each letter thoroughly. The *Charles Dickens Letters Project* Team is comprised of Principal Editor and authority on Dickens's handwriting Leon Litvack, Editor and expert on Dickens's life-writing Emily Bell, and Consultant Editor and Dickens biographer Michael Slater. Each member of this team bring in a specific level of expertise on Dickens's letter writing so that no rock is left unturned when it comes to providing knowledge about every single letter. Letters are presented with a large scope of footnotes informing users of connections to previous letters, information about the subjects of the correspondence, and details of the events being described. The amount of research that goes into even the shortest letter is astounding. Information regarding not only the circumstances of each letter but also biographical information of correspondences and any individual mentioned within each letter allows research to understand the background of each letter.

The *Dickens Fellowship* has become a staple organisation for continuing to initiate discussions around Dickens' writing. Through the creation of the *Charles Dickens Letters Project*, the *Dickens Fellowship* has provided further depth to this mission. The *Charles Dickens Letters Project* has been created not only for academics researching Dickens but also for a more extensive audience of fellow Victorianists of all levels of education work and a general public with a genuine interest in the life and works of Charles Dickens. It is their aim to "provide scholars, enthusiasts, and indeed anyone who wishes to know more about this fascinating Victorian personality, with open access to Dickens's letters." The *Charles Dickens Letters Project* works with public outreach to authenticate unpublished letters by asking owners of Dickens's letters, book dealers, and auctions houses to notify them in hopes of uncovering further letters. Newly released letters and Dickens research are continuously provided not only on the database website but also through social media outreach. For those unable to visit the numerous archives which house collections of Dickens's letters, the *Charles Dickens Letters Project* upholds the importance of the digitalization of Dickens's letters. This is especially significant for Early Career Researchers and Independent Researchers unable to access physical manuscripts or have access to the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens's Letters. In the current state of uncertainty in archival research, the *Dickens Letters Project* is clearly ahead of the game in its understanding of the importance of digital archives.

Marissa Bolin, University of York

***The Brontës and the Idea of the Human: Science, Ethics, and the Victorian Imagination,* edited by Alexandra Lewis. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 310pp., £75 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-107-15481-0.**

Writings of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë have long been studied for their conflicted interactions with nineteenth-century British literature, morality, and ethics. Alexandra Lewis's edited collection, *The Brontës and the Idea of the Human: Science, Ethics, and the Victorian Imagination,* expands this focus from the cultural to the universal. Lewis argues that these writings, by exploring the significantly broader question of defining the human, resist theoretical or conventional limitations of all kinds and "redraw the boundaries of the human (and human rights)" (p. 23). Consequently, in her introduction, Lewis identifies "three key interlinked areas – science, psychology and education; human rights, ethics and religion; and creativity – where the imagination and the idea of the human intersect in the Brontës' works" (p. 5). Split into three sections, the following thirteen essays give *The Brontës and the Idea of the Human* an impressive inter-disciplinary range that will appeal not only to Brontë specialists, but also to scholars and historians of various nineteenth-century disciplines.

Covering science, psychology, and education, the first five chapters explore the human/animal dichotomy, educational philosophies, consciousness as the seat of creativity, traumatic memory, and the acoustic imaginary. A particularly fascinating chapter is Sally Shuttleworth's luridly titled "Hanging, Crushing, and Shooting: Animals, Violence, and Child-Rearing in Brontë Fiction." Contrasting the popular didactic images of *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751) by artist William Hogarth with Heathcliff's accelerating ferocity in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Shuttleworth reveals that Emily's anti-hero simultaneously imitates and mocks these images; other sections see Anne and Charlotte explore human implications of animal abuse and misuse in *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Professor* (written 1847). Commonly noted throughout this book, animal imagery and characteristics act as human personifiers in the Brontës' novels, which also foreshadow inhumanity towards pets and wild creatures as indication of cruelty to other humans, especially the most vulnerable.

Chapters 6-10 constitute the most thematically varied section, scrutinizing the Brontës' utilization of ethics, law, religion, destitution, degradation, and humanity in literature. Among the siblings' works, parallels emerge that show them sharing or deliberately deviating from theoretical trajectories. Compellingly, Deborah Denenholz

Morse and Jan-Melissa Schramm observe in their respective chapters that Charlotte and Anne often linked the separate struggles of female subjection and enslaved peoples to critique the legitimacy of European patriarchal mastery. Rather than center exclusively on *Wuthering Heights*, a frequent error, Helen Small, Simon Marsden, and Rebecca Styler more comprehensively mine Emily's creative output, poems and essays, for clues to her ideology. Tracing the influence of the oracle, Styler makes the compelling claim that the sisters' varying usage of "the inherited figure of the female prophet" (p. 222), leads to Charlotte's empowered female narrative, Emily's creation of a denunciatory eco-feminine, and Anne's distrust of assuming spiritual authority.

Operating within a theoretical framework, the final three chapters evidence a creative tendency that yields interpretive possibilities far beyond the general scope of typical academic practice. In "*Jane Eyre*, A Teaching Experiment," Isobel Armstrong describes how students interpreted the novel through meticulously considered art projects resulting from close readings and communal discussions. "Fiction as Critique: Postscripts to *Jane Eyre* and *Villette"* by the late Barbara Hardy provides a series of her own post-novel discussions between several characters that further clarify loose ends and demonstrate the personal value of imaginative thinking by the Brontë reader, adjuring shrewdly, "never trust the artist, trust the tale – but read between the lines" (p. 258). Finally, Blake Morrison adapts real events from the Brontës' lives to accord with the general plot of Anton Chekhov's play *Three Sisters* (1900), which also features "three sisters and a wayward brother" (p. 260), creating new Brontë myths in the process that inspire audience interest in discovering actual autobiographical information. At some moments in this collection, further elucidation or specificity in a chapter's thesis might correct a certain meandering tendency occasioned by the vast theme. Despite the somewhat misleading title, works by Patrick and Branwell are largely excluded from central discussion of *The Brontës and the Idea of the Human*, perhaps representing a pertinent subject for a future study. Much remains to be uncovered regarding the mental rebellions and innovations of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë, but this collection establishes a fresh – and refreshing – exploration of their engagements with being, function, and personhood.

Lydia Craig (Loyola University Chicago)

***Imperial Beast Fables: Animals, Cosmopolitanism, and the British Empire*, by Kaori Nagai (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 252pp, £58.88 (hardback) ISBN 978-3-030-51493-8**

Combining animal studies and post colonial approaches, *Imperial Beast Fables* listens attentively to both non-human and human voices and language. Part of the Palgrave series *Studies in Animals and Literature,* the book's main literary focus is on Kipling, with sustained studies of Joel Chandler Harris, Edward Lear and, intriguingly, the Japanese novelist Kobo Abe (1924-1993). Browning, Hardy, Chesterton and Hopkins make significant, if sometimes tantalisingly brief, appearances via wide ranging and innovative connections.

The image or metaphor of Chinese Boxes, stories within stories in *mise en abyme*, is a structuring principle of the book. Nagai sees the Imperial beast fable as an enclosed space, a box containing or showcasing an animal and incorporating the human observer. She explains that this figure 'gives expression to the complex embedding of the lives of humans and non- humans with each other, which is accelerated and complicated by the processes of colonisation and globalisation' p.79. Each of the book's chapters refers to the processes of enclosure, multiplication and escape implied by boxes, pouches or folds: for example sections on *The Jungle Books* are numbered as Boxes 1,2 and 3, with the story of 'The White Seal' headed 'Box 3 (with a hole in the side)', while chapter five carries a marsupial theme of pouches and pockets.

Introduced by a passage from the autobiography of B.F. Skinner, inventor of 'Skinner's Box' , a laboratory apparatus within which animals are conditioned to press a lever to obtain food, chapter one offers definitions of the animal fable, together with an account of Victorian reactions to the genre. This chapter notes that Kipling's *Jungle Books* were seen as reworking ancient Oriental beast fables, and promises Nagai's own rereading of Kipling. Chapter two traces the history of the animal fable, relating it to colonial interest in non-European literatures and connecting Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories with Kipling's *Jungle Books*. Both were seen by contemporaries as modern successors to Aesop. This fascination with the cultural migrations of the beast fable contributed to the rise of comparative philology, a topic developed in chapter three. Here the beast fable is related to nineteenth century debates on the origin and nature of human language and 'the parallel and symbiotic relationship between philological and evolutionary thought' active at the time p.48.

The fourth chapter, focused on the *Jungle Books*, is at the heart of Nagai's argument as she examines Kipling's texts, divided into stories of the forest and stories of the sea. She defines the *Jungle Books*' narrative structure as a network of imperial beast fables showing animals as important members of the British empire, whose lives intertwine with human lives and activities to form ' a perfect example of cosmopolitanism' p.105. Nagai points out that 'In the Rukh', introducing the adult Mowgli, was written before the stories of his jungle boyhood, which thus form its complex prequel. For Nagai, its setting in a Forest Reserve enables representations of the colonial practices of 'enclosing and exploiting nature' while serving to 'problematise and disrupt the anthropocentric assumptions behind such practices' p.79.The remainder of the chapter pairs 'In the Rukh' with 'Toomai of the Elephants' and, drawing on the work of Daniel Karlin, examines 'The White Seal' as a story within a story highlighting threats of animal extinction and hopes of survival/revival.

Perhaps Nagai's most strikingly cosmopolitan combination is chapter five's account of European encounters with Australia, seen within the theoretical framework of Kobo Abe's surreal visions, particularly his 1991 novel *Kangaroo Notebook.* Thus defamiliarised, the marsupials' challenge to Victorian taxonomy questions the boundaries of language, blurring distinctions between human and non -human animals. The two remaining chapters are preoccupied with speech, silencing and cross-cultural communication. 'Animal Alphabets' covers the origins of language, writing and reading, foregrounding animal fables and images with reference to Chesterton's rejection of Darwin and Huxley. Linking first Browning's 'Pied Piper of Hamelyn' with Hardy's 'Fiddler of the Reels' and then Hopkins' 'Pied Beauty' with Lear's Quangle Wangle, Nagai celebrates the joyous playfulness of nonsense alphabets as conveying 'a unifying principle of life in diversity' p179.

The final chapter 'Fabling Cosmopolitanism: The Ark Esperanto' initially discusses the central role in the beast fable of human ability to understand animal language, again with a focus on Kipling. It then offers a parallel between Esperantism, the movement for a constructed international language (initiated in 1887) and the British empire, with both seen as international enterprises enabling global communication. The tale of Kipling's Shere Khan is told alongside the historical account of a young Indian prince named Sher Khan and his mentor, Irishman John Pollen, a retired Indian Civil Servant and President of the British Esperanto Association. Nagai constructs her own beast fable based on their relationship. In her 'The Tiger and the Shamrock' the prince is transmuted into the Indian beast and Pollen into the Irish plant emblem, forms in which they escape the tragic outcome of their 'real' story. This conclusion encapsulates the book's combination of impeccable scholarship and extensive range of cultural reference with its author's own innovative and creative voice. Victorianists may make unexpected discoveries within Nagai's Chinese Boxes.

Julia Courtney, Independent Researcher

Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: An Untold History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2020) viii + 268 pp., £20 (press review copy/ uncorrected proofs), ISBN 9781787381919.

How does one write explicitly antiracist history that addresses contemporary concerns about widespread nationalist and nativist narratives of belonging in Europe? Olivette Otele's book *African Europeans: An Untold Story* provides an engaging model that focusses on celebrating the presence of Africans in Europe in a way that avoids any reduction of their experience to victimhood. The book is to be applauded for its head-on challenge to the terms of imperialist European triumphalism and modes of denigrating and erasing the African past. It not only stakes a widely documented claim to 'the influence Africa has exerted abroad for several millennia' (p.218), but, also, to Africans as active contributors to a revised narrative of a future Europe of more equal opportunity.

While the African presence in Europe has received increasing attention in recent years, Otele argues that the focus on exceptional individuals in much scholarship obscures wider and deeper patterns of action and connection. Otele's book is primarily based on secondary sources, while focussing more on African European women as well as some lesser-known men, across a vast span of time from the third century up to the twenty-first. She begins in Chapter One with Roman incursions into Africa after the Punic wars, also giving prominent attention to the careers of celebrated male elite Roman figures like the Numidian-born lawyer/orator Marcus Cornelius Fronto (*c.* AD 95–*c.*166) and the Libyan-born Emperor Septimius Severus (r.193-211 AD). She ends in Chapter Seven with a celebration of the social justice activism of a diverse selection of African European women whose identity-shaping achievements have positively impacted their communities and wider social sphere in 21st century Europe.

In-between these chapters Black Mediterraneans (Chapter Two), includes discussion of the Renaissance duke of Florence Alessandro de

Medici, while Chapter Three covers The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Invention of Race, as well as early challengers to racial hierarchy. Dual Heritage and Gender Roles are discussed in Chapter Four, especially in relation to Signare and Ga women of nineteenth-century coastal Senegal and Ghana respectively. Colonial Amnesia and Forgotten Figures, especially German, are given attention in Chapter Five, while struggles against colonial legacies that have encourage derogatory stereotyping, including in relation to fictional black characters like Zwarte Piet in the Netherlands, are covered in Chapter Six.

Although Otele bases the stories she tells on the scholarship of others, her unique approach, is to link them up over time in relation to fundamental, if shifting, notions 'such as identity, citizenship, resilience and human rights' (p.6). This approach, inspired by pioneering scholars like Cedric J Robinson, helps to define an urgent and fertile field. However, in attempting to celebrate a long history of 'cross-cultural engagement' between Africans and Europeans in these terms, Otele looks back in time beyond any consistent idea of Africa and Africans, or indeed Europe and Europeans, to a point that seems to be arbitrary. This does something of a disservice to the field she has opened up, as it seems to constitute a teleological rooting of 'pioneer' African Europeans, especially in the case of those that are ascribed a way 'paving' role the first chapter (p.38).

Otele makes the crucial and conclusive point that Europe is better off for its African Europeans. But she leaves questions as to where Africans in colonial Africa sit in relation to the broader narrative of humanising agency. Otele discusses the way anti-colonial movements brought African Europeans together with others in common purpose, but admits that her book presents the history of Africa 'in an oblique way' through 'people who left the continent' (p.218). Little is made of African resistance movements and critiques of colonialism in Africa that helped to counter colonial excesses and to shape movements elsewhere. African intellectuals like John Mensah Sarbah of Ghana, for example, significantly influenced the course and expression of colonialism in the Gold Coast Colony via leadership in the 'Fante Political Society' and by helping to found its successor movement, the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, but also through carefully evidenced scholarship, pointedly argued journalism, and activist legislative collaboration.

Points of critique with regard to 'omissions' of this kind are perhaps inevitable in response to an innovative book that opens up such a broad and diverse field. In the end, Otele has written an urgent and highly engaging work that is certain to encourage others in the vital task of enriching and humanising the intertwined histories of Africa and Europe in ways that promise to help reshape our visions of the future.

Zachary Kingdon (National Museums Liverpool)

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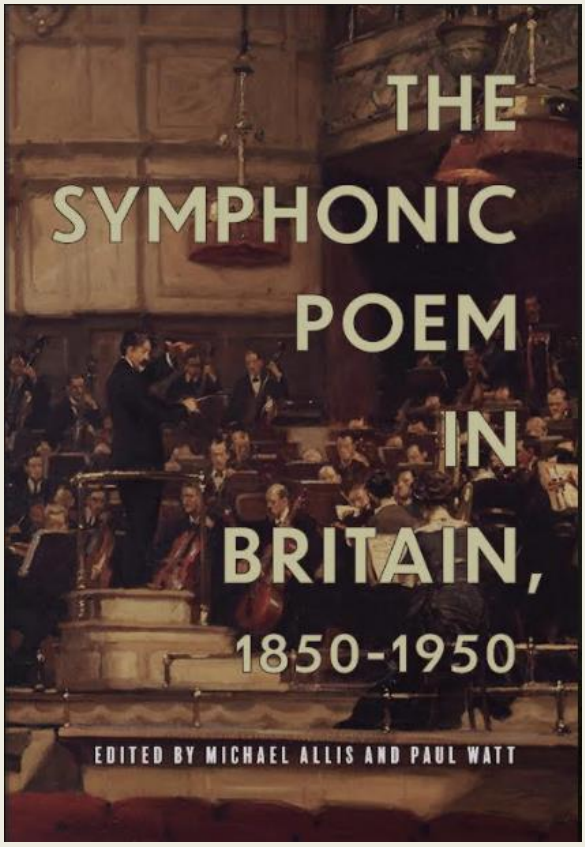

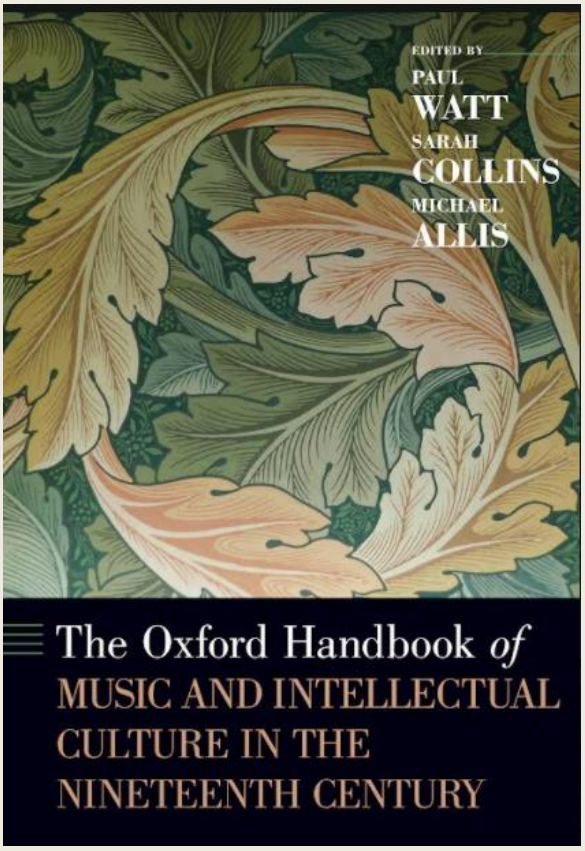

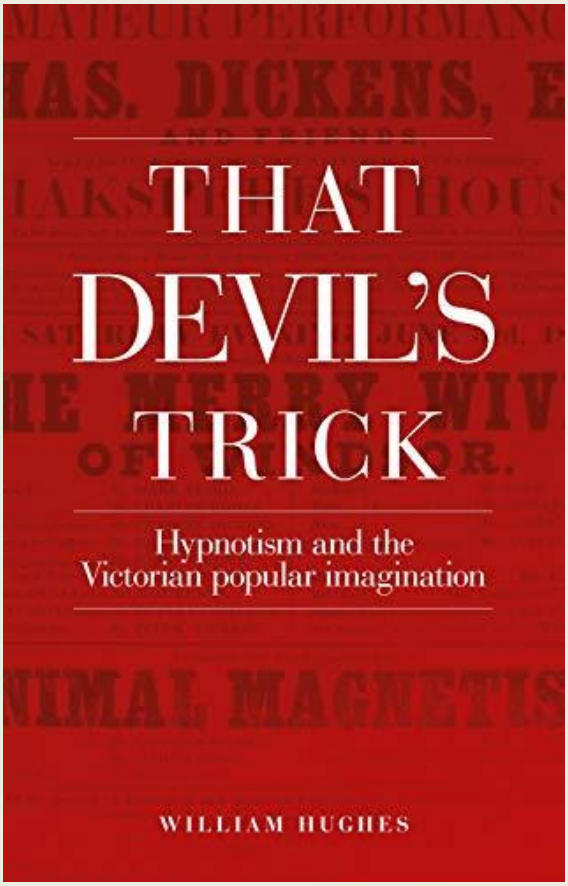

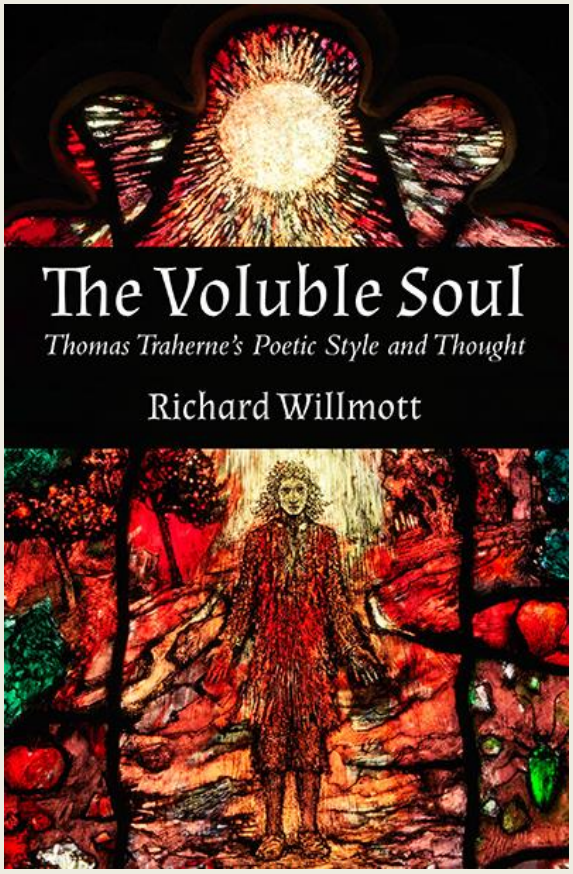
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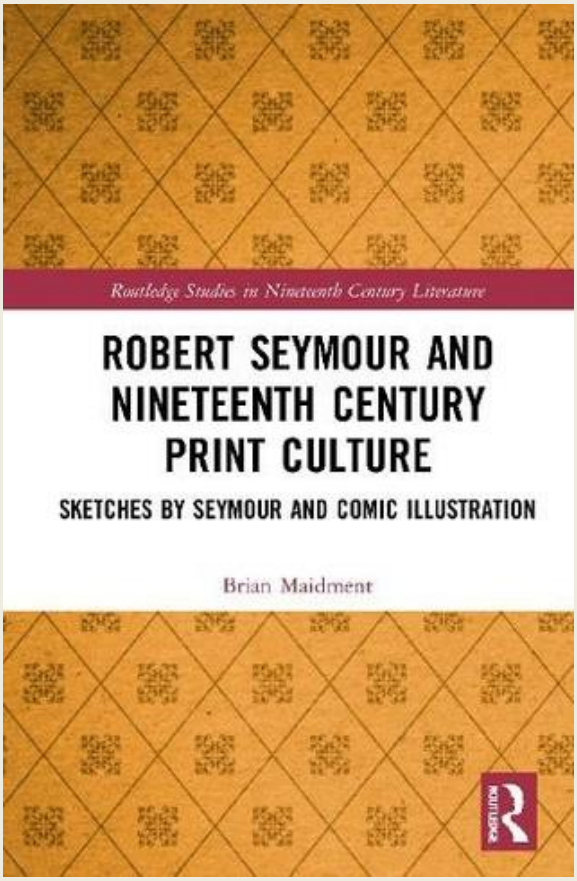
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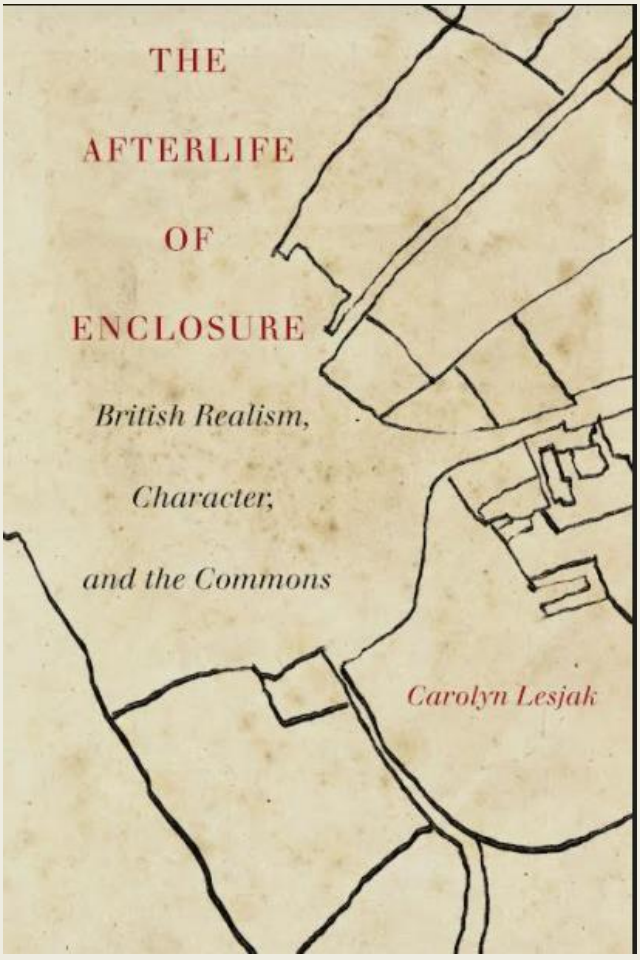
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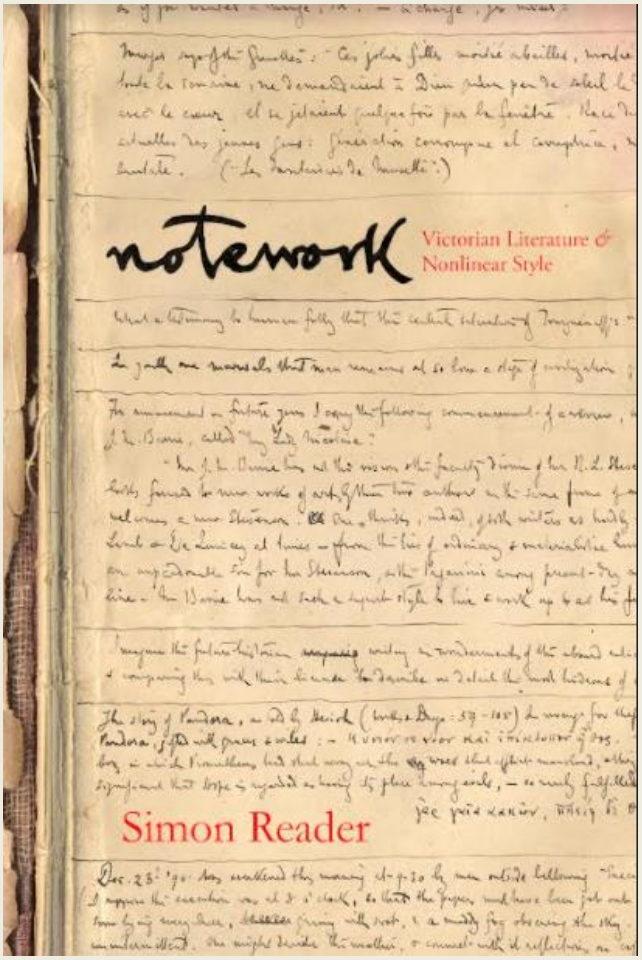
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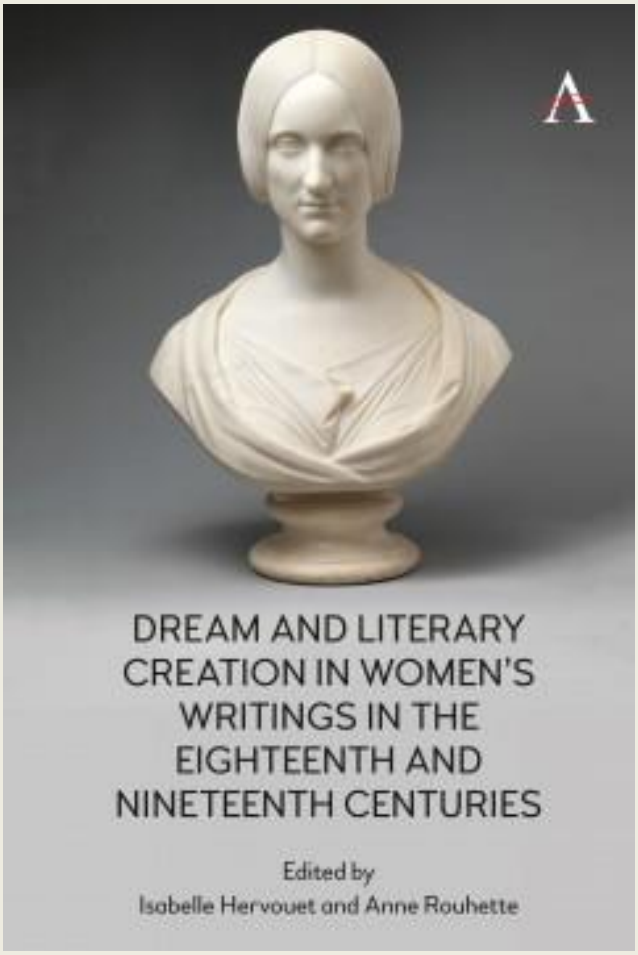
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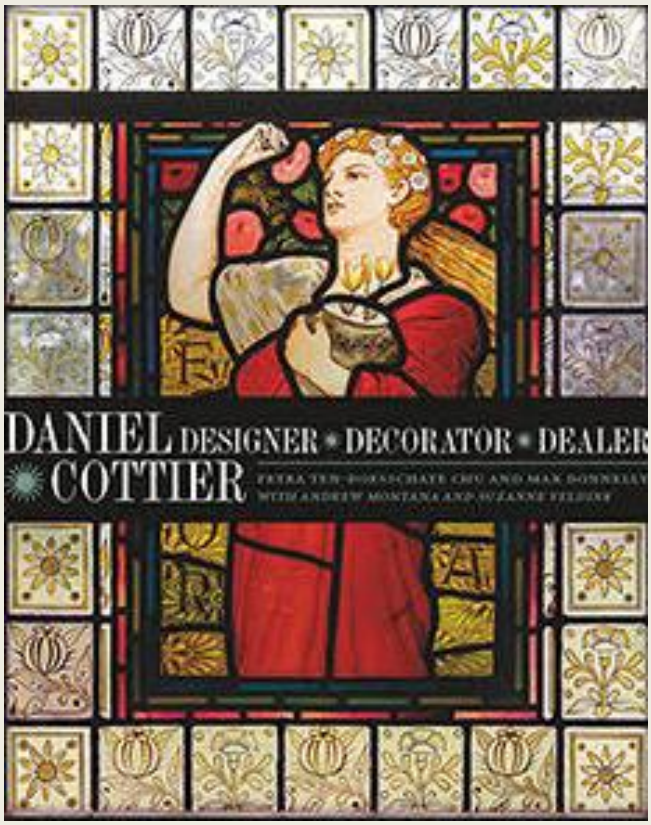
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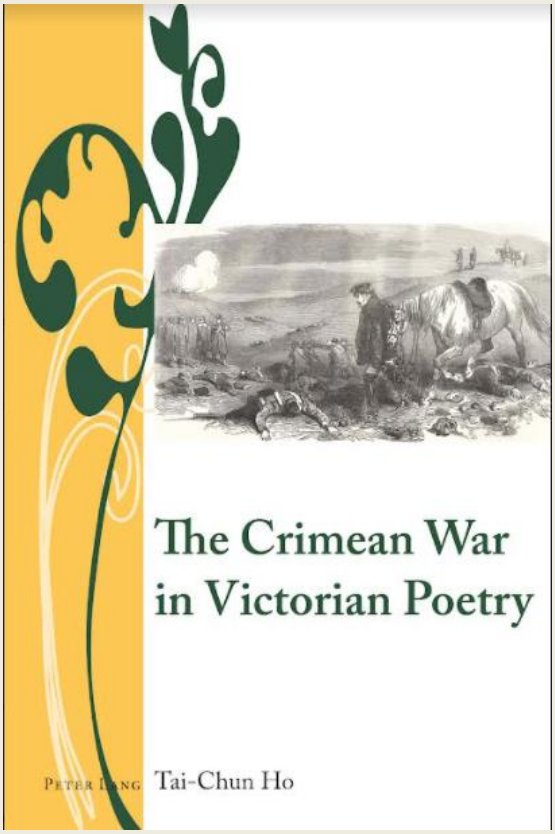
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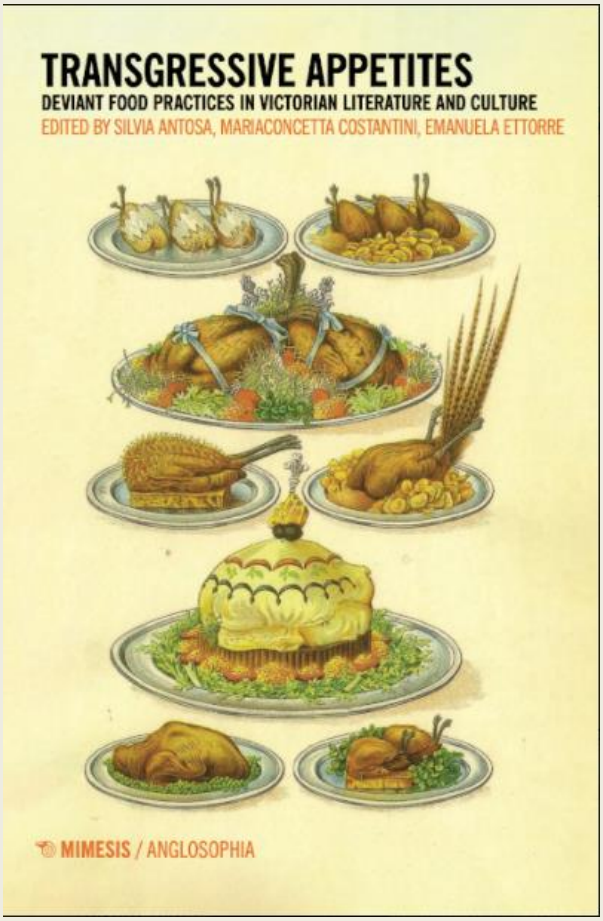
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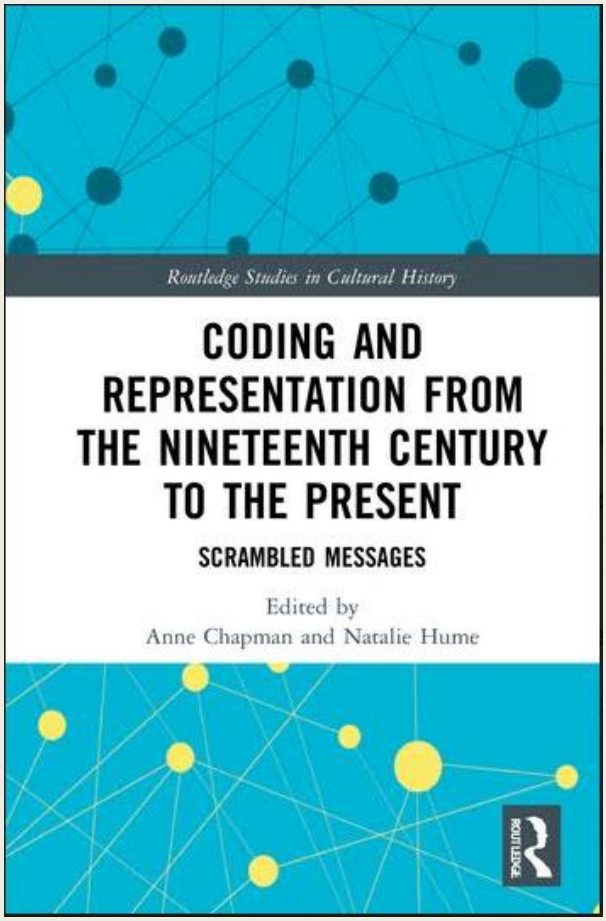
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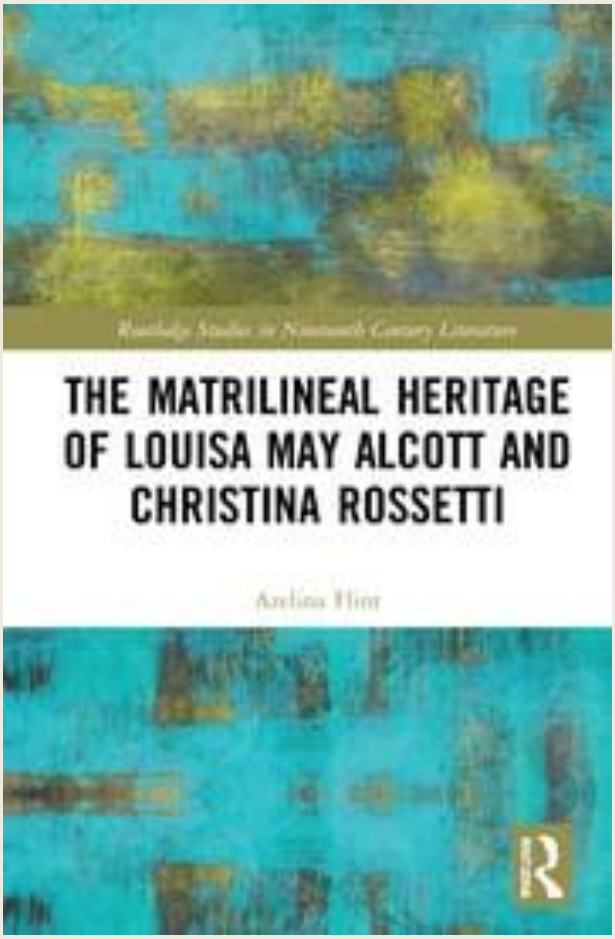
THE MATRILINEAL HERITAGE OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT AND CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Issue: *Journal of Victorian Culture*

Journal of Victorian Culture 26 2 is now online, with lots of exciting interdisciplinary work by BAVS and several free access articles, including a cutting edge Digital Forum on Mapping. We'd also like to remind everyone of imminent deadline for our Graduate Student Essay Prize.

Latest Issue:
'Victorian Faddishness: The Dolly Varden from Dickens to Patience' by Rebecca N. Mitchell.
'Commemorative Print: Serialized Monuments during the Shakespeare Tercentenary Debates' by Matthew Poland.
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'Hilarious Homicides: Satirizing Sensational Murders in Late Nineteenth-Century London' by Lee Michael-Berger.
'"This spasm upon canvas": George Eliot, Gustave Courbet and Realist Aesthetics' by Charlotte Jones.
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Digital Forum:
Introduction: 'Digital Maps and Mapping in Victorian Studies' by Christopher Donaldson and Joanna E. Taylor.
'Maps of a Nation? The Digitized Ordnance Survey for New Historical Research' by Kasra Hosseini, Katherine McDonough, Daniel van Strien, Olivia Vane, Daniel and C.S. Wilson.
'Mapping Victorian Homes and Haunts: A Methodological Introduction' by Karen Bourrier, Hannah Anderson, Sonia Jarmula, David Lapins, Kaelyn Macaulay, Peter Peller, Ingrid Reiche, John Brosz, and Dan Jacobson.
'Chronotopic Cartography: Mapping Literary Time-Space' by Sally Bushell, James Butler, Duncan Hay, Rebecca Hutcheon and Alex Butterworth.

BAVS Funding Report

The British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS) is committed to the support of its members' activities such as conferences, events and research activities. The application forms, including guidance notes and deadlines, are available from: http://bavs.ac.uk/funding. There are two rounds of funding each year, with deadlines in May and November. For further information, please contact the BAVS Funding Officer, Amelia Yeates: yeatesa@hope.ac.uk.

Charles Darwin and Karl Marx: A Correspondence?

I was fortunate to receive a British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS) Research Funding Grant for a project examining a dispute in the 1970s over correspondence purportedly between Charles Darwin and Karl Marx. From the 1930s to the mid-1970s it was widely believed that in 1880 Marx had proposed to dedicate to Darwin a volume or translation of *Das Kapital*, but had been rebuffed by a cautious Darwin who did not wish an association with what he interpreted as Marx's attacks on religion. In fact the story was untrue, having arisen from a misinterpretation of Darwin's correspondence, and been given fuel by the geopolitics of the Cold War. The truth of the matter was uncovered almost simultaneously in the mid-1970s by two scholars working independently, Margaret A. Fay, graduate student in sociology at Berkeley, and Lewis S. Feuer, professor of sociology at Toronto. Between them, and among several others who became their respective allies, there developed a contest of authority and priority over the discovery. Between 1975 and 1982, the controversy generated a considerable volume of spilled ink in academic journals in the history of ideas and the history of science, as well as in popular general interest publications.

My research offers a new interpretation of the dispute as a case study of the phenomenon of 'multiple discovery'. The funding allowed me to travel in October 2019 to Massachusetts to examine two relevant archival collections, the personal papers of Lewis Feuer, held at the archives of Brandeis University just outside Boston, and the papers of the literary magazine *Encounter*, held at the archives of Boston University. The Feuer papers in particular are extremely revealing about the detail of the dispute 'behind the scenes' of the existing print publications, and have enabled me to tell a much richer story of the controversy than previous accounts based on the published material alone. The resulting study, which is forthcoming in *History of the Human Sciences*, considers the differing analytical methods by which the two antagonists arrived at the same finding, and their competing epistemologies. A literary dimension—an interrogation of the motif of the historian as detective—is included through Feuer's framing of his investigation as a 'whodunnit' both in the dispute itself and in a subsequent neo-Victorian novel, *The Case of the Revolutionist's Daughter: Sherlock Holmes Meets Karl Marx* (1983), in which he adapted his research into a mystery set among the socialist and bohemian milieu of 1880s London. I am grateful to BAVS for the funding that made it possible to undertake this research.

Dr Joel Barnes, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Queensland

Calls for Submissions

Please email calls for publication submissions and funding opportunities to bavsnews@gmail.com for inclusion in future issues.

Proposed collection: "The Time of Close Reading: Victorian Fiction's Presents"
Editors: Debra Gettelman, Audrey Jaffe, and Mary Ann O'Farrell

Despite the spatializing intimacy that animates and names it, close reading exists in and as time. Our collection "The Time of Close Reading" seeks to interrogate the multiple meanings that attach to each of our titular terms—"time," "close," and "reading"—in the present moment, specifically within studies of the Victorian novel.

Taking up the question of close reading's present—the present of its practice and its presentist desires—the collection invites contributors to consider close reading's place in the current debates about interpretive method, approaching these questions by way of the nineteenth century. Has close reading come of age as a theoretical method, or is it a ghost of our critical pasts? Is close reading a pedagogy or a methodology? Is distant reading also close reading? Closeness is an intimate spatial fantasy that, if it is achievable, is so as a function of slow time: does close reading have to be slow? How long can one sustain it? How long does a close reading last?

Asking these questions while thinking about both Victorian reading practices and contemporary ones, we are interested in the Victorian novel's particular affinity for, and invitation to, this mode of reading: what is it about nineteenth-century novels that invites close reading? What about them has called to the spectacular close readers who have responded to their appeal? Does close reading have to excise history, or can it make history present? As the nineteenth century seems increasingly distant to today's students, the present moment seems to demand that our discipline assert its close relation to the historical present, and in doing so, collapse or attempt to close the distance between the Victorians and ourselves. New methods and new areas of research arise, and words are newly read in response to the felt urgency of the present moment; yet what remains is the process of close reading.

We seek essays that link the theory and practice of close-reading nineteenth-century novels through example, analysis, or both. Contributions should pertain to nineteenth-century studies and any aspect of the phrase, "The Time of Close Reading." We are open to traditional stand-alone essays of approximately 6000-7000 words and to shorter speculative pieces using innovative styles or strategies (approximately 1200 words).

Topics might include but are not limited to:

- The temporality of reading: close reading as "slow" reading? the time it takes to do it; the time within which it is done (the labor of close reading);
- The relation between theory and practice (for instance, how close reading is taught; how to teach it; what it looks like in the context of contemporary technologies);
- Close reading and the spatial; architectural or spatial conceptions of reading (close; distant; surface; depth);
- Close reading's reputation for excising history versus its utility for historical recovery;
- Historicizing reading: how the Victorians read; how we read now: close reading in response to political/cultural concerns (recovery; presentism);
- The apparent mismatch between the length of Victorian novels and the narrow focus demanded by close reading;
- The culture of close reading, as taught by 19th-c fiction: how do novels of this period invite/incite us to read closely? Do texts incite/invite close reading? What have these texts taught us about how to read closely?;
- Close reading the new archive: close readings of newly "discovered" texts of the period, and what they can teach us about this practice;
- Influencers: how have specific critics or theorists changed our reading practices? Which ones have altered the field significantly; how useful does their example remain?

Proposals are welcome from both early career and established scholars. Potential contributors are requested to send an abstract of approximately 500 words.

Proposal deadline: August 1, 2021

Proposals should be sent to all three editors:

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***EJES:* Interstitial Spaces**

Guest editors: Frederik Van Dam (Radboud University), Joanna Hofer-Robinson (University College Cork), Chris Louttit (Radboud University)

In the course of the past two decades, the field of English Studies has witnessed a return to a focus on space, both as a critical methodology and as a subject worthy of renewed attention. On the one hand, scholars draw inspiration from adjacent fields such as cultural geography and media archaeology to examine the circulation of literature and the arts in local and global contexts. Opportunities offered by digital tools play an important role in such endeavours. On the other hand, scholars rely on the foundational work of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Gaston Bachelard to find new ways of mapping out the representation of space and place in English literature. In this regard, the critical gaze has honed in on overlaps, intersections, and contact zones.

The present issue aims to push established scholarship on the 'spatial turn' in new directions through an examination of interstitial spaces, that is, the corridors, roads, and routes that exist in between and connect different spaces. While contributions on literary and cultural texts from any historical period are encouraged, the editors will particularly welcome proposals that deal with the long nineteenth century.

Topics might include but are not limited to:

- Interstitial spaces of authorship: literary Bohemia, the salon, the club
- The sea as a geopolitical or colonial space
- Non-spaces (Marc Augé) in city literature
- The gendering of interstitial spaces
- The multiple occupancy of interstitial spaces by different communities
- The function of maps in storytelling / the function of storytelling in maps
- Interstitial space and interstitial time: revisiting the notion of the chronotope
- The emotions of being in between spaces
- English literature abroad: transculturation, circulation, reception

Detailed proposals (up to 1,000 words) for essays of no more than 7,500 words and a short biographical blurb (up to 100 words) should be sent to all three editors by 30 November 2021:
Frederik Van Dam (f.vandam@let.ru.nl), Joanna Hofer-Robinson (joanna.hofer-robinson@ucc.ie), and Chris Louttit (c.louttit@let.ru.nl)

This issue will be part of volume 27 (2023). All inquiries regarding this issue can be sent to the three guest editors.

Procedure

EJES operates a two-stage review process.

1. Contributors are invited to submit proposals for essays on the topic in question by 30 November 2021.
2. Following review of the proposals by the editorial board panel, informed by external specialists as appropriate, the guest editors will invite the authors of short-listed proposals to submit full-length essays for review with a spring 2022 deadline.
3. The full-length essays undergo another round of review, and a final selection as well as suggestions for revisions are made. Selected essays are then revised and resubmitted to the guest editors in late 2022 for publication in 2023.

EJES employs Chicago Style (T&F Chicago AD) and British English conventions for spelling. For more information about *EJES*, see: http://www.essenglish.org/ejes.html.

***Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens* n°98, Fall 2023.**
(https://journals.openedition.org/cve/5046)
"Victorian and Edwardian Autobiographies"

This issue of *Les Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens* aims to shed new light on Victorian and Edwardian self-narratives and self-representations (autobiographies, letters, travelogues, diaries etc.) by focussing on their connection to the period's mainstream as well as minor or marginal literary tropes, political ideas, ethical principles, epistemological frameworks and religious beliefs. Subaltern forms of life-writing will be of particular interest, but also literary endeavours which challenge dominant views of the subject from within their own hegemonic or canonical status. Postmodern, feminist, queer, Marxist and Foucauldian theories have fruitfully engaged with how modern subjectivities were fashioned by 19th century capitalist, patriarchal, scientific discourses and archetypal narratives like the *Bildungsroman*. However, the actual autobiographical practices of the time might also involve forms of self-representation and self-understanding which elude such ideological patterns and frameworks of subjectivation. From the cultural centre epitomized by John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* to less prominent and even marginal positions (those, for example, held by female, queer, working-class, radical or Black autobiographers or diarists), Victorian and Edwardian life-writing practices might indeed resist the liberal paradigm of universal male agents developing individual selfhood along a linear course leading to wholeness, self-discipline and self-knowledge.

We invite contributions from all fields of 19th and early 20th-century literature, history and cultural studies. Topics and approaches might include:
- Autobiography and liberalism
- Chartists', socialists', workers' autobiographies
- Black British autobiographers
- Circulation, impact and literary influence of American ex-slave self-narratives and Black abolitionists' lecture tours in Victorian Britain
- Archiving and publication history of subaltern self-narratives
- Women's autobiographies; gender and sexuality
- Religion and faith
- Psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis
- Hybrid forms of self-narratives; "autobiografiction" (Max Saunders); autobiographical uses of literary paradigms, motifs and patterns
- Diaries, journals, letters, travelogues, poetry, biography as alternative modes of self-representation
- 20th and 21st-century rediscovery and reinterpretation of Victorian and Edwardian personal voices (biographies, Neo-Victorian literature, films and series)

A 400-word abstract and brief biography should be sent to Aude Haffen (aude.haffen@gmail.com) by November 10th, 2021. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by December 18th, 2021. Full articles (up to 7,000 words) will be due by June 10th, 2022.
