

## Editorial Introduction

This issue of the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* marks some new beginnings, and some endings: as of January 2016, the Journal has moved to a new Online Journal Server (OJS) host at The University of Sydney Press eScholarship Journals. We have a new Journal Manager, new layout and review editors, and it's also my first general issue since taking on the role of General Editor in 2014. Having had time to think about the Journal's identity and direction as well as working towards the launch of our new OJS site, an editorial Introduction seems appropriate. But first, the thanks, farewells, and welcomes.

Particular thanks are due to Kris Moruzi, Journal Manager and layout/format editor. Kris was instrumental in helping us to get the Journal online in 2006, and she is only now standing down, having launched a successful research career in the intervening years. The dual role is being taken up with great competence and willingness, in the first instance by Carolyn Lake, who in future issues will share the role with Nancy Langham-Hooper. I would also like to warmly thank Kirby-Jane Hallum, who hands over to Jocelyn Hargrave as Reviews Coordinator/Editor, and to wish Kirby well in her new position at the University of Auckland.

The Journal's new support crew come from different fields of study, and bring perspectives and skills which are immensely valuable. I look forward to enhancing the design, structure and functionality of *AJVS* with their assistance, and with that of Hannah McFarlane, OJS expert at Sydney eScholarship Journals, and Susan Murray, Manager of Scholarly Publishing at Sydney University Press. This issue of the Journal already takes greater advantage of its online capability, for example, by providing hyperlinks to websites for books under review. We are introducing changes gradually, to make sure they work well for readers, and welcome feedback. We are grateful to the National Library of Australia for hosting *AJVS* online until now, and for promoting open access publishing and digital humanities, including TROVE.

*AJVS* is committed to remaining free and open-access, while maintaining the highest possible standards of quality. This model of publishing means that we depend on colleagues to assist with everything from copy-editing to guest-editing. Thanks very much to Jock Macleod, the previous Editor and now President of the Australasian Victorian Studies Association (AVSA), and the Executive Committee for their advice and support, especially Megan Brown, Michelle Smith, Mandy Treagus, Madeleine Seys, with former editors Cathy Waters, Barbara Garlick, Judy McKenzie and Tiffany Urwin and life members Margaret Harris and Judy Johnston also sharing wisdom and practical advice. Thanks and welcome also to the AVSA 'interns' for their help in 2015: Kathryn Ford, Adam Grener, Katie Hansord, Vicky Nagy, Ashley Orr, Emily Brayshaw, Heidi Logan. I'd also like to thank Editors of several other journals for their collegiality and advice: Leigh Dale (*ALS*), Susan Lever, Tony Simoes da Silva and Brigitta Olubas (*JASAL*), Frank Bongiorno (*Australian History*), Elizabeth McMahon (*Southerly*), and Simon James (*The Wellsian*). Editing, like thesis supervision, is largely invisible work but can be enormously satisfying; I am happy to have joined their company and to be involved in mentoring others.

I'm pleased to report that the Journal is working with convenors of AVSA and other conferences and symposia in Australasian literature and art history to develop special themed issues. There have been some excellent Special Issues since 2013: "Colonial Girlhood" (guest eds. Kris Moruzi and Michelle Smith) and "Neo-Victorianism" (guest ed. Michelle Smith) in 2013, "Critical Cross-Currents in the Arts" (guest ed. Paul Watt) in 2014, and "The Victorians and China" (guest ed. Julia Kuehn) in 2015. Two in the pipeline for 2016 and

beyond are “The Victorians and Memory” (guest ed. Joanne Wilkes) and “Pre-Raphaelitism in Australia” (guest eds. Alison Inglis and Nancy Langham-Hooper). Our next goal is to increase the number of un-themed General Issues. We have always accepted submissions for General Issues, with papers able to be submitted all-year-round. With the new OJS system in place, as we circulate calls for general submissions, it is helpful to say more about the purpose and scope of the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*.

Since its inception in the 1970s, AVSA has facilitated the work and gatherings of Victorianists “down under.” From 1995 to 2005, the AVSA journal was closely tied to the conferences at which members enjoyed hearing and discussing the work not only of antipodean colleagues but of a stream of distinguished international guests and delegates from Europe and Asia, North America and Britain, many of whom have remained firm friends of the Association. Cooperation between NAVSA, BAVS and AVSA produced the marvellous and unforgettable week-long “Global and Local” conference hosted by in Venice in 2013. On a less tectonic-plate shifting scale, there are myriad migrations to and fro and between the hemispheres, year in, year out, which both create and reflect an interconnected community of scholars in Victorian Studies around the world.

While Victorian Studies internationally continues to reconfigure and renew itself, other changes are taking place in the Australasian region. Gaps which formed in the mid-twentieth century between Australian or New Zealand or Pacific Studies and Victorian Studies have been regularly crossed, with exciting results for Victorianists “down under.”<sup>i</sup> To name only a few examples: Susan Martin and Kylie Mirmohamadi’s *Sensational Melbourne* (2011), Mandy Treagus’s *Empire Girls: the Colonial Heroine Comes of Age* (2015), Robert Dixon’s *Travelling Mass-Media Circus: Frank Hurley and Colonial Modernity* (forthcoming), a essays edited by Tamara Wagner in *Domestic Fiction in Colonial Australia and New Zealand* (2014), and many more works of literary, cultural, economic, art and stage history.<sup>ii</sup> It is within this collegial and international network, with its multiple affiliations and shifting disciplinary boundaries, that *AJVS* is located.

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Whatever one thinks about the “transnational turn” in contemporary scholarship in the Humanities (I tend to think of it as an expansion or dance, rather than a sharp turn), it is pertinent to the purpose and aims of a journal based in Australasia and focused on Victorian Studies, a traditionally northern hemisphere, if not British, domain. The term is not uncontroversial; Sharon Marcus, for instance, has questioned the possibility of Victorian Studies engaging with transnational work while being inherently Anglo-centric both in language and in the use of a British monarch’s name as signifier.<sup>iii</sup> However, the transnational spread, if not precisely “turn,” can also be deployed as an alternative to postcolonial models and imperial hierarchies of centre and margins, as well as to concepts of national identity which are often anachronistically imposed on self-governing colonies or dominions. Recognising what Goodladd calls the “globalizing dynamics of the nineteenth century,”<sup>iv</sup> and looking for networks of influence or traffic as well as hierarchies of power, a loosely-conceived transnational or cosmopolitan approach offers flexibility, without refusing the ideological insights generated by postcolonial studies.

As many postcolonial theorists acknowledge, the British Empire was never totally monolithic, no matter how much pink was spread across the map.<sup>v</sup> As well as being challenged by global shifts in military and economic power and the restiveness of colonies and dominions, it was also shadowed by larger-than-national cultural configurations which

were both congruent and divergent. Examples include the transatlantic and increasingly dispersed English-language publishing industry (the *Theosophist* journal, for instance, was published in Bombay), networks of scientific, economic and political research (Scandinavians and Americans seeking the advice of New Zealander William Pember Reeves on the practical enactment of socialism), the touring routes of theatrical and musical performers (much work has been done on this by Veronica Kelly and others), the “English-speaking world” addressed by W. T. Stead in his *Review of Reviews*, with its trio of British, American and Australian editions, not to mention the new world orders imagined by novelists and artists, futurists such as H. G. Wells or social engineers such as the Fabians.

Some of the work on Dickens since the 2012 centenary illustrates the value of global and antipodean perspectives. While Regenia Gagnier’s ‘Global Dickens’ speech during AVSA’s 2012 conference in Brisbane surveyed a fascinating array of interpretations of Dickens (in a Chinese adaptation of *Great Expectations*, for example, Pip goes away to become a Doctor and make his fortune, so that he can return to his village and help his community), Sue Martin and Kylie Mirmohamadi in *Charles Dickens and Australia* (2014) explored “the multiple ways in which Dickens was read and circulated in the Australian colonies.” As Lydia Wevers noted in her study of the Pickwick Club founded in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1840, Dickens’s “close identification with London, England, and the Victorian century is instrumental in the powerful presence and importance of Dickens in the world outside Britain, especially the colonies.”<sup>vi</sup> Nor is it all about exporting Dickens to the colonies or how the colonies figure in his fiction; a transnational approach looks for returns and interactions. Many Australian colonials returning Home in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, for instance, would comment in letters, diaries, and published accounts on how familiar London seemed to them from their reading of Dickens.<sup>vii</sup> “Dickens” here is not just one author. As an enduringly popular novelist, journalist and editor, the name works metonymically to represent Victorian fiction, periodicals, and illustrated magazines, all of which constituted an extraordinarily powerful filter or lens through which travellers from the former colonies would experience an England they may only have heard about from reading and hearsay, but which was for British settlers and their descendants an important part of their historical and cultural heritage.

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AJVS is interested in many forms of cross-boundary work, placing Victorian subjects in international contexts or approaching them from new perspectives. The first paper in this issue, on an apparently literary topic – two short stories, discussed in relation to other work from the *fin de siècle* – employs theoretical approaches from the cultural history of the senses (e.g. Constance Classen’s *The Deepest Sense: a Cultural History of Touch*). Oulton tests such theories in the detailed reading of these texts, analysing the characters’ interpretations of touch and sight. arguing that “both writers use touch in different ways to question or explore the codification of femininity, disorientating a reader who may be more confident in the transparency of visual codes such as dress” (2). Choosing texts by two very different writers (“the ‘New Woman’ author Mary Cholmondeley and the ‘New Humourist’ Jerome K. Jerome”) Oulton also discusses the fictional construction and negotiation of gender and class within a modern urban context – the stories are set in Paris and London. While Oulton has previously written on both authors, and is able to show how Jerome’s story (not published until 1916) nonetheless reflects his experience of working as a clerk in London in the 1880s, the point of this paper is not to link the writers or stories directly, but to explore the representation of tactile and visual communications in tales of metropolitan modernity.

Next in this issue, new Wilde scholar Ilona Urquhart argues convincingly that there *is* a moral of a paradoxically anti-moralistic kind in the much-debated Preface to *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (1894), and that it hinges on Wilde's understanding of "the soul." She uses his fable "The Fisherman and his Soul" to demonstrate that according to Wilde, the "soul" is the essence of an individual's spirit or genius, which while needing to be balanced by the "heart" (the impulse to love others), must not be subjugated to external authority. In the Preface added to the publication of *Dorian Gray* in book form, Wilde warns readers that "all art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril." One problem with the novel, which Wilde acknowledged and addressed in his Preface, is how to reconcile its repudiation of conventional morality with its use of a Faustian narrative device; the solution proposed by Urquhart is that "the devil" is art itself, but not art in itself. Art, when invested by the reader or viewer with too much authority, can lead the individual to follow its ideals rather than being true to his or her own nature. Urquhart's analysis of the issues, and of the textual evidence, is both subtle and tenacious. By showing how the aesthetic individualism of his non-fictional writings can be reconciled with the problematic and tricky *Dorian Gray*, Urquhart is able to add something to the scholarship on this endlessly fascinating and paradoxical writer.

Not every paper in this issue is about the *fin de siècle* or the 1890s. Claire Thomas contributes an informative and thoughtful essay on the mid-Victorian art collectors, Sir Charles Eastlake and his wife Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake (*née* Elizabeth Rigby). "'Not to embellish the gallery of some affluent nation': The Eastlakes, Nationhood, and the Purchase of Italian Art for the National Gallery, London" is art history written from a cultural historian's perspective: Claire Thomas is also a novelist, whose novel *Fugitive Blue* (2008) tells the story of a young art conservator and her work on an unusual Renaissance panel painting in striking ultramarine. While providing details of particular acquisitions and drawing on archival sources to contribute to the history of the Eastlakes' activities, the paper critiques the imperialist assumptions underlying their practice, with occasional glimpses of the frustration experienced by Lady Eastlake as an accomplished collector and writer in her own right, married to the Director of the National Gallery, as well as her evident joy and relish in sharing in his work

Finally, we have an article by Jennifer Fuller about the Australian-born writer Louis Becke (1855-1913), whose tales of adventure in the South Seas made him a hugely popular and internationally successful writer in the 1890s. While the subject matter of his work invited comparison with R.L. Stevenson, as Chris Tiffin has observed, "reviewers generally agreed that while Stevenson's portrayals of the South Seas were much richer in both atmosphere and characterisation and therefore more artistic, Becke knew a lot more about the actual life there," and what he knew of it was seldom either romantic or enchanting.<sup>viii</sup> As Jennifer Fuller's account of two of his short stories from the 1896 collection *By Reef and Palm* makes clear, Becke's work both exploited and exposed the brutality of colonial traders and pirates. In the early 1880s, Becke wrote a number of letters to his mother which Fuller uses to supplement the close reading of his fiction, observing that his letters "provide a narrative of his life in the small islands, containing as much adventure and tragedy as any of his later fictionalised accounts" (43). Ripping yarns, these stories almost always give accounts of inter-racial relationships which give pause to modern readers (it seems that an earlier working title for *By Reef and Palm* was "Some White Men and Brown Women").<sup>ix</sup> Fuller argues persuasively that Becke's work deserves more attention than it has previously received, observing that "Becke's Pacific stories are striking in the canon of adventure fiction both for

their graphic presentation of violence and their moral ambiguity” (53). There is certainly plenty of material here for cultural historians.

As this survey of one issue’s contents shows, *AJVS* is not confined to ‘antipodal’ Victorian Studies, to use Wagner’s term, but it does have a particular interest in such work. We are also conscious of our interdisciplinary and regional scope with regard to book reviewing, and invite colleagues from all areas of Victorian Studies to nominate *AJVS* as a potential site for reviews of their books.

Reviews in this issue cover an eclectic range of books worth knowing about, starting with Douglas Kerr’s *Conan Doyle: Writing, Profession, and Practice* reviewed by Margaret Harris. I’ve been looking forward to this book since hearing Kerr’s paper on Doyle at the Venice conference in 2013; as Harris points out, he weaves cultural history and meticulous scholarship into his study of Conan Doyle’s entire career so gracefully as to make it appear effortless. *Neo-Victorian Freakery: The Cultural Afterlife of the Victorian Freak Show*, by Helen Davies, receives a detailed critique from Ashley Orr, highlighting the ethical issues raised by neo-Victorian fascination with extremes, and engaging with questions of desire, fascination, empathy and exploitation. Sarah Parker found herself unexpectedly stimulated by Rosie Miles’s *Victorian Poetry in Context*, a survey heightened by points of critical interpretation about, for instance, the adaptation in Tennyson’s “In Memoriam” of formal conventions of the English love sonnet sequence.

In the fourth review, Joanne Wilkes reviews an annotated anthology of British women writers in New Zealand collections (mostly but not all in Dunedin) edited by students at Otago University in a course run by Tom McLean and Shef Rogers. The writers include Anna Letitia Barbauld, Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, Amelia Opie, Jane Porter, Sydney Morgan, Lucy Aikin, Annabella Byron, Felicia Hemans, Anna Jameson and Maria Jane Jewsbury, with a previously unpublished article by Jewsbury. The contents, detailed in this review, should be of value to those working on these writers, all of whom, as Wilkes says, are enjoying renewed interest, thanks to the recuperative work of second-wave feminists. Thanks to the outgoing Kirby Hallum for providing us with this gem, in her final batch of reviews.

Finally, I commend the volume to you, and thank you for your interest the Journal. The *AJVS* Online Journal Site has a [Focus and Scope](#) section which sets out parameters and standards for submissions. We look forward to receiving your submissions and books for review, and hope you enjoy browsing through the archives as well as this issue.

*Meg Tasker, General Editor*  
*Federation University Australia*  
*Ballarat, January 2016*

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Mandy Treagus, *Empire Girls: The Colonial Heroine Comes of Age*. Adelaide: U of Adelaide P, 2014.

<sup>ii</sup> Susan K. Martin and Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Sensational Melbourne: Reading, Sensation Fiction and Lady Audley’s Secret in the Victorian Metropolis*. Melb: ASP, 2011; Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism and Modernity*. NY: Oxford UP, 2001; Susan K. Martin and Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Colonial Dickens: What Australians Made of the World’s Favourite Author*, Melb: ASP, 2012.

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Sometimes this kind of work entails the rediscovery areas of Anglo-colonial culture that have been forgotten or neglected in the drive to establish and define national or post-colonial fields against the imperial centre.

<sup>iii</sup> Marcus, Sharon, "Same Difference? Transnationalism, Comparative Literature, and Victorian Studies." *Victorian Studies* 45.4 (2003): 677-86. Web. 18 Jan. 2016.

<sup>iv</sup> Lauren M. E. Goodladd, "Cosmopolitanism's [*sic*] Actually Existing Beyond; Toward a Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 38.2 (Sept. 2010): 399.

<sup>v</sup>John Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: U Toronto P, 2004 is just one example.

<sup>vi</sup> Lydia Wevers, "Dickens in New Zealand," *Literature Compass* 11.5 (2014):321-27. 10.1111/lic3.12146, first delivered as a paper at the AVSA conference in Brisbane 2013. Wevers draws the "Dickens as England" argument from Robert Douglas-Fairhurst's book, *Becoming Dickens* (2011). Incidentally, Robert was a keynote speaker at the 2015 AVSA conference in Auckland, New Zealand, speaking not on Dickens (or Lewis Carroll), but on "Working Through Memory and Forgetting in Victorian Literature," a paper which will appear in the next issue of this journal.

<sup>vii</sup> e.g. Andrew Hassam, *Through Australian Eyes: Colonial Perceptions of Imperial Britain*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2000; Peter Morton, *Lusting for London: Australian Expatriate Writers at the Hub of Empire, 1870-1950*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2011; Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1996. Observations here draw on my own research into Anglo-Australasians in London between 1890 and 1910, e.g. Meg Tasker, "'The Sweet Uses of London': the Careers 'abroad' of Louise Mack (1870-1935) and Arthur Maquarie [*sic*] (1874-1955)," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 10.1 (2013).

<sup>viii</sup> Chris Tiffin, "Louis Becke, *The Bulletin* and *By Reef and Palm*," *Kunapipi*, 34(2) 2012: 163-69. Available at:<http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol34/iss2/19>

<sup>ix</sup> Tiffin 163, citing Nan Bowman Albinski's very valuable *Australian Literary Manuscripts in North American Libraries: A Guide*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1997, 10.