Introduction to *AJVS* 22.1 (2018)

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Fig. 1: Oscar Wilde c. 1882, photographic print, by Napoleon Sarony (1821-96) Library of Congress, public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

AJVS is published by the Australasian Victorian Studies Association (AVSA), which has been active since 1973 in promoting nineteenth-century studies across disciplines in the humanities. The mission of the Journal is to provide a forum for work in Victorian Studies on subjects from throughout the British empire or English-speaking world in the nineteenth century, particularly in the southern hemisphere. AVSA has long-standing connections with other Victorian Studies associations internationally, and with other disciplinary and interdisciplinary associations in Australia and New Zealand. These are reflected in joint hosting of regional, national and international conferences, masterclasses and workshops, as well as in the contents of this Journal, which has a vision of Victorian Studies that crosses both disciplinary and geographical boundaries.

This issue of the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* ends a hiatus of two years since the "Victorians and Memory" issue in July 2016. It is a huge pleasure to send it out into the world, and to "re-boot" the journal's regular publishing program of two issues a year, one general and one themed and/or guest-edited. While including some papers which originated in the 2016 "Victorian Margins" conference in Ballarat, Vol 22.1 (2018) is a General Issue, comprising essays and reviews by Victorian Studies scholars from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the United States and beyond. Together, they present a diverse array of work on topics in nineteenth-century literary and cultural history by distinguished professors, mid- and early-career researchers, and current or recent postgraduates.

The two opening articles by Joseph Bristow and Lydia Wevers originated as plenary addresses at the 2016 "Victorian Margins" Conference of AVSA, held in conjunction with the Australian History Association (AHA). In the grand Minerva theatre at the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, AVSA's keynote speaker Professor Joseph Bristow held delegates from both conferences enthralled with his account of Oscar Wilde's sensational downfall, focusing on the two criminal trials that resulted in his imprisonment for sodomy in April 1895. We are delighted to be able to present here an updated and expanded version of this work, which has been a significant research focus for Professor Bristow over the last few years. In "Homosexual Blackmail in the 1890s," the Wilde trials are seen in the context of the criminalisation of male homosexuality in late Victorian Britain: the cross-dressing subculture in London, its connections with music halls, complex interactions between men from different social classes thrown together by the criminalisation of homosexual activities, and the thriving trade of extortionists. Through his analysis of newspaper and court reports, Bristow shows both how the raids, arrests and court cases were reported, and how the City of London Police interacted with members of this subculture. The police invoked the Vagrancy Act of 1824 as well as the notorious Labouchere Amendment of 1885, and offered protection to the young men who were prepared to testify against Wilde during the trial at which he was accused of indecent offences. As Bristow observes, "instead of stamping out the crime of sodomy, the eleventh section of the 1885 [Criminal Law Amendment] Act created the conditions in which men's sexual intimacy could be exploited for further felonious purposes" (5). Tracing the lives and careers of many of the shadowy players in the Wilde saga, this substantial article provides a richly detailed context for a critical event in British cultural history.

Another highlight of the Victorian Margins conference was Professor Lydia Wevers' paper, "Opossum Hot Pot: Cooking at the Margins in Colonial New Zealand," which explores the provision and preparation of food through the lens of cultural history. Drawing on years of research into the conditions of colonial life in New Zealand, as well as the work of food historians, especially the New Zealand anthropologist Professor Helen Leach, Wevers focuses on textual evidence in cookbooks, recipes in newspapers, and memoirs, dealing with culinary aspirations ranging from plum duff to Empress Pudding, and locations from isolated pastoral outposts to the gentlemen's clubs of the larger towns and cities. Noting continuities and exchanges as well as differences between ethnic and social groups, Wevers shows how literal as well as symbolic appetites and tastes shaped the experiences of settlers learning to feed themselves in a new environment. Their knowledge of indigenous food sources and practices developed as pioneer settlers (especially the shepherds, who lived more closely with the land and the Maori inhabitants) learned to adjust British cooking practices to make the best use of local sources, such as eels and native birds.

An intriguing and significant figure in this account is the indomitable Lady Mary Barker, a New Zealand colonist in the 1860s who wrote about the challenges of feeding British family members, workers and guests on a rural property far from towns and shops. While she may never have needed to resort to cooking "opossum hot pot," she did emphasise the importance of serving up something other than mutton on special occasions. Despite being a "Lady" (from her first marriage), she was an enthusiastic pioneer on a Canterbury sheep station—an example of an upper-class woman whose colonial experience brought her into intimate contact with problems of food: sources, preparation, and modes of consumption. If she had remained in England, she might never have acquired the knowledge and experience which equipped her to write *First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking* (1874), which led to her appointment as Lady Superintendent of the National Training School of Cooking in South Kensington. In addition to her two well-known books about station life in New Zealand, Lady

Barker's *A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters* (1871) compares the celebration of Christmas in England, Jamaica, India and New Zealand. Written in a chatty style addressed to children, this is nonetheless comparative cultural history, which juxtaposes accounts of food and customs in four quarters of the British Empire, culminating in "Christmas in New Zealand":

> . . . Christmas falls in Midsummer at the other side of the world . . . It certainly is the busiest time on a sheep run, and that was where all my New Zealand Christmases were passed . . . We have not time this evening to hear all about the shearing, or even the mustering, though that is really a very wonderful sight to English eyes, and requires nearly as much forethought and arrangement as the plan of a campaign.

Like so much writing about and from the antipodean colonies in the nineteenth century now studied as "Australian" or "New Zealand" literature, Lady Barker's many books were not only published in London (by publishers such as Macmillan), but were in large part addressed to a British readership—they belong to British as well as Australasian literary and cultural history. Also, Australian and New Zealand Victorianists are less familiar with each other's literature and history than those in the northern hemisphere might expect; this introduction to both Lady Barker and New Zealand's food history will be illuminating for many Australian readers, as well as those further afield.

Next in this issue of *AJVS* are three very different Brontë papers by early career researchers exploring new angles on canonical novels by Emily and Charlotte Brontë: *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*.

Marija Reiff's "Condemned to Be Free": Lucy Snowe and Existential *Angst* in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*," explores parallels between Lucy Snowe's anxiety and dread of decision-making, and the development of early Christian existentialism by Brontë's contemporary, Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55). Acknowledging that Charlotte Brontë was unlikely to have known of Kierkegaard's writings, which were only slowly translated from Danish into English and German throughout the nineteenth century, Reiff argues that *Villette*'s protagonist exhibits the same kind of existential *angst* as was being described by the Danish philosopher in reaction against materialism and scientific rationalism in modern society as well as contemporary philosophy. "This idea that despair and anguish accompany decisions was also a key component in the nascent philosophical field of existentialism" (37). Key to Reiff's argument is the deep connection between freedom and anxiety in both existentialist philosophy and in Lucy Snowe's psychological state in *Villette*. Other thematic and philosophical points of comparison are developed in this paper, such as the existence of a tension between reason and passion which for both Kierkegaard and Lucy Snowe must be contained by a sense of obeisance before a higher authority of God, or duty: "For both Kierkegaard and Brontë's heroine, life is full of suffering and terrifying freedom, but ultimately, there is meaning in the pain . . . Existentialist thought accounted for the suffering present in the modern world, while Christian faith made life bearable and gave meaning to the anguish" (48).

The Romantic sense of a human impulse towards the divine which must be obeyed, regardless of the social and intellectual structures within which an individual exists, takes a less identifiably Christian form in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. However, Marie Sassenberg Heneghan, in her article "The Post-Romantic Way to God: Personal Agency and Self-Worship in *Wuthering Heights*," approaches the novel via both the poetics of post-Romanticism and a spiritual association of suffering with transcendence. Heneghan's argument builds on the view that Victorian writers, particularly poets, shared a sense of

belatedness, or at least uncertainty about how to move on from the dizzy heights of Romanticism. Invoking the Romantic conception of the poet as a poetic soul as well as a writer of poetry, Heneghan frames Emily Brontë's famously "un-Victorian" novel *Wuthering Heights* as a work of post-Romantic imagination, and also argues that the transfiguration of the protagonists through suffering can be read as a form of ecstatic martyrdom. Despite growing up in a parsonage, Emily Brontë's religious beliefs have always been obscure, due to the lack of diaries and personal papers combined with her view that religion was a private matter between the individual and God. Noting the unstable and fragmenting doctrinal discourses of Christianity in the nineteenth century, within the Church of England as well as across various forms of dissent, and the freedom of thought allowed by Patrick Brontë to his offspring, Heneghan attributes a pantheistic view of God to Emily Brontë, and argues that the bond between Cathy and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* is a means by which Brontë explores spirituality in the Post-Romantic world. Catherine and Heathcliff famously insist upon their primal connection with each other and the natural elements, in a way that is simultaneously chthonic and spiritual. Heneghan uses Steven Vine's reading of this bond as a form of psychological self-splitting (56) to develop her view of it as a form of self-worship, one imbued with a religious ecstasy that, like the passionate martyrdom of early Christians, explains their embrace of suffering as a mystical experience. *Wuthering Heights*, then, offers a stern "post-Romantic" view of earthly existence as one in which the sublime is attained not through communion with nature, but through the intensity of human passion and suffering.

The third of the Brontë papers in this issue, Ann Erskine's "'Fevered with Delusive Bliss': Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and the Ambiguous Pleasures of the Turk," takes an historical approach to the question of how Charlotte Brontë used Oriental, specifically Turkish, imagery and allusions to convey Jane Eyre's sexuality and erotic desires. The novel contains countless allusions not only to slavery but also to the harem or seraglio; Jane's passionate nature draws her towards a sensuality that she simultaneously finds alarming and repulsive, because of the subjugation she senses within it, even before she learns that her intended husband is already married. The fact that the erotic in this novel is so strongly and consistently associated with the exotic invites an interrogation of what it means to be a Christian, as well as a British, woman in *Jane Eyre*. Most postcolonial and feminist readings have focused on the creole Bertha Mason as a figure of female subjugation associated with British imperialism in the West Indies. However, as Erskine demonstrates, the trope of slavery in the novel is strongly linked to the Ottoman empire, and the centuries-long history of white slave raiding parties on the coast of Cornwall, where the maternal side of the Brontë family came from. Drawing on historical sources such as Robert Davis's *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast and Italy 1500-1850* (2003), Erskine points out that "for the English, Irish, and Scots one aspect of the Ottoman slave trade had particular significance: the enslavement of more than 25,000 Britons by the corsairs from the sixteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century" (67). Her research in Penzance, where she conferred with local historian Melissa Hardie-Budden, established strong connections between the Branwell family and the white slave trade which plagued the West Cornish coast. Not only had a relative of the Branwells, Thomas Pellow, been kidnapped in 1715 and "enslaved for twenty-three years in Barbary before escaping" and publishing a narrative of his experiences (69), but his younger relative (some variety of second cousin), Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, would a hundred years later make naval history by leading the 1816 bombardment of Algiers (Fig. 2) by an Anglo-Dutch fleet which forced Dey Omar to capitulate, "releasing over a thousand white slaves and signing a treaty agreeing to end the enslavement of white Christians" (69).

Fig. 2: *The Bombardment of Algiers* [1816], by Martinus Schouman (1770-1848), 1823. Oil, 95 cm by 159.5 cm (Rijksmuseum, Nederlands). Public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

Erskine's research into these family connections suggests that the Brontë children would have grown up hearing tales of real-life adventure and danger involving Corsairs and Turks from their Aunt Branwell, and that awareness of the white slave trade would certainly have informed Charlotte Bronte's use of *turquerie* in *Jane Eyre* (as well, of course, as the juvenilia written by all four Brontë children). While Charlotte Brontë is unlikely to have read books like *The Lustful Turk* (1828), a frankly pornographic exploitation novel, the erotic charge inherent in *turquerie* was also strong in in the British context. This is evident, as Erskine demonstrates, throughout the novel, perhaps most vividly in the fancy-dress charades in which Mr. Rochester and Blanche Ingram dress up in Turkish robes (Ch. 18), and in Jane Eyre's own perception of her lover as a potential despot during the time of their engagement. As well as providing insights into a hitherto under-explored element in both the Brontë family history and *Jane Eyre*'s historical and cultural contexts, Erskine's reading brings the perceived danger of female sexual desire closer to home for both Brontë and her readers, precisely because it is not displaced onto a pitiable, repulsively caricatured "foreigner" in the person of Bertha Mason, but is rather felt lurking in the very *décor* of British houses, such as the famous red-room at Gateshead, and, more subtly, in Jane's own nature.

Two more emerging Australian scholars complete the range of articles in this issue. Imogen Mathew's "Can the Preface Broker a Realist Pact in Fantastic Fiction?" applies Gérard Genette's theoretical work on the paratext to Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), both classics of nineteenth-century popular fiction. Citing Lyn Pykett's "Sensation and the Fantastic," Mathew argues that "it is possible to trace an ongoing concern with the creation—and maintenance—of 'an illusion of verisimilitude' within fantastic fiction of the Victorian era" (83). It might be argued that Collins creates an illusion of the fantastic within this novel, since there are ultimately no supernatural causes for the uncanny or "spooky" elements in *The Woman in White*. This is, of course, still well within the realm of the Radcliffean Gothic, and of sensation fiction, and it is the question of how the prefatory apparatus is used by Collins to manage the tension between the thrills of the apparently fantastic and the demands of realism that Mathew sets out to explore, alongside Bram Stoker's paratextual packaging of the more frankly supernatural fantastic in *Dracula*. Mathew pays close attention to the textual variations between different editions, and notes the existence of prefaces in other languages (French, for *The Woman in White*, and Icelandic, for *Dracula*, albeit published with a "translation" of the novel which proved to be

more than just a translation).[1] The uncertainty for the first-time reader of *Dracula* as to whether the preface, with its assertions of sober truthfulness in the recording of facts, is meant to be read as standing outside the body of the text or ascribed to one of the characters in the novel, is arguably emblematic of what Mathew sees as the function of paratextual components—to bridge the real world of the reader and the fictional world of the text, creating a mutable pact between them. "By withholding authorship of the preface," she argues, "Stoker is able to make a claim for realism whilst simultaneously avoiding allegations of disingenuousness" (92).

Finally, Katie Hansord's article "At the Margins: Working-Class Women's Traditions in the Poetry and Poetics of Mary Fortune and Louisa Lawson" makes a welcome contribution to the neglected area of nineteenth-century Australian women's poetry. Radical nationalist poetry of the 1880s and 1890s has been well studied, albeit often with the understanding, tacit or explicit, that the heart of Australia, "the Bush," was a pioneering white man's frontier, and no place for a woman (let alone a "lady"). Radical women's poetry has not fitted easily into this narrative, and, as Hansord notes, even the resolutely independent journalist Mary Fortune seemed to feel it necessary to apologise to readers for the democratic tone of the first poems she had produced after arriving in Australia in 1855. While she attributes this partly to her Canadian origins, Hansord shows that the poems share thematic and formal qualities with the songs of labour being published in Britain by Chartist poets. Her "Song of the Gold Diggers" was published in goldfield newspapers under the gender-neutral *nom de plume* of "M. H. F."; it is both a ballad about the Victorian goldfields and a ballad of class resistance on the larger scale, just as the rebellion of miners at the Eureka Stockade two years earlier in Ballarat had been both a protest about local taxation and an opportunity for ideals of democracy to be promoted in the colony, with miners from many countries gathered under the flag of the Southern Cross. Hansord compares Mary Fortune's mid-century example of an explicitly political ballad with the apparently softer, more sentimental 1906 poem by Louisa Lawson, "They Are Taking the Old Piano." Louisa Lawson is well known in Australia as the mother and early mentor of Henry Lawson; overtly radical in her political views and an early feminist, she established and ran *The Dawn* newspaper, with an all-female printing staff, from 1888 to 1905. However, the poem discussed here is at first glance elegiac and nostalgic rather than a strident song of protest. By comparing and linking it with "The Old Arm-Chair," a poem first published in 1837 by popular author and magazine proprietor Eliza Cook which had been reprinted frequently throughout the second half of the nineteenth century in Australia, Britain and North America, Hansord seems to be taking Lawson's poem in quite a different direction from the Chartist songs of labour that had influenced Fortune in the 1850s (and which were still being echoed in the 1880s and 90s by Francis Adams's *Songs of the Army of the Night* and Henry Lawson's *Songs of the Army of the Rear*). However, this impression is turned around, as she develops her reading of the poem to show that Lawson successfully adapts a popular sentimental mode or genre in order to highlight issues about women's access to financial independence and the right to work. Louisa Lawson's "They Are Taking the Old Piano," Hansord argues, is a poem "in which memory is evoked through the emphasis placed on specific physical objects relating to the 'domestic sphere' within a tradition of working-class women's poetry" (103). This closely focused reading of two

[1] For more about the Icelandic version of *Dracula*, *Makt Myrkranna (Powers of Darkness)* by Valdimar Ásmundsson, see Hans Corneel de Roos, "On *Dracula's* Lost Icelandic Sister Text: How a Supposed Translation Proved to be Much More," *Literary Hub* 6 Feb. 2017. https://lithub.com/on-draculas-lost-icelandic-sister-text/. In breaking news (by Victorianist standards, at least), it appears that a Swedish version of Dracula may have predated the Icelandic: https://www.vamped.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/HansDeRoos-WadstroemCase-v17-25May2018-for-W-D-Day.pdf [accessed 26 Oct. 2018].

poems, published decades apart, gives a suggestive sense of a range of voices and views within a tradition of female poetic work in Australia which is creatively localised and in dialogue with radical and women's writing in other parts of the Anglophone world.

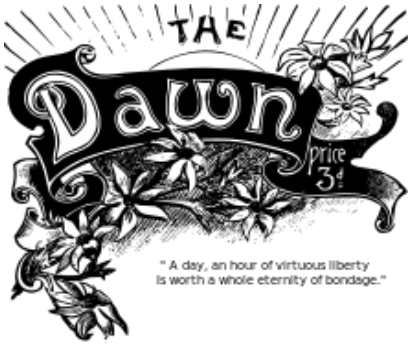

Fig. 3: *The Dawn* masthead 1900-05. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

The issue closes with a number of book reviews, ranging from literary and cultural history to history of science and medical discourses in Victorian fiction and memoirs. In keeping with the theme of marginalisation is Robert Kirkpatrick's self-published reference work, *Pennies, Profits and Poverty: A Biographical Directory of Wealth and Want in Bohemian Fleet Street*. Reviewer Lucy Sussex finds very good value indeed in the wealth of information about "these hard, scribbling lives," noting that this book expands considerably upon the "sometimes sketchy" biographies to be found in existing major reference works.

Reading for Health by Erika Wright is a study of modes of medical narrative in several nineteenth-century texts: novels by Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Harriet Martineau, as well as Martineau's memoir *Life in the Sick-Room* (1844). Natasha Abrahams's review provides a thoughtful and detailed analysis of its scope and theoretical framing, explaining how Wright presents competing discourses around health and illness, the "competing strategies" of sanitation and quarantine in the nineteenth century, and, from a twenty-first century perspective, the therapeutic value of medical narrative and story-telling. This book reflects its author's professional life as an instructor in family medicine, and, as Abrahams points out, includes in its target audience both readers and students of Victorian literature and culture, and contemporary medical professionals in training, "who may use the book as an aid in bringing empathy into their practice."

Weaving together strands of the literary and the biological, Alexis Harley's *Autobiologies: Charles Darwin and the Natural History of the Self* offers an examination of "the collision between evolutionary thought and practices of self-representation, to show how nineteenth-century natural history refashioned the human subject." In her review, Kathryne Ford outlines the way this volume establishes Charles Darwin as a central figure, distinguishes between Lamark's and Haeckel's varieties of evolutionary theory, and traces notions of struggle and development through the autobiographical works of Herbert Spencer, Harriet Martineau, Oscar Wilde, Edmund Gosse and Alfred Tennyson. She astutely identifies the main threads in this study of "the often convoluted relationship between nineteenth-century evolutionary science and Victorian life-writing," including awareness of both spiritual and secular

traditions of autobiography, and the tension between "self-formation" and natural selection as ways of envisaging the path towards "an often unclear future." Ford particularly appreciates Harley's insights into "Darwin's struggle to arrange his autobiography around both evolutionary principles *and* Victorian values," noting the irony of a self-made man and path-finder in natural history who declared he had been "born a naturalist."

Jock Macleod reviews a collection of articles on Victorian discourses in economics: *Culture & Money in the Nineteenth Century: Abstracting Economics*, edited by Daniel Bivona and Marlene Tromp. Providing a clear outline of the topics and angles covered in individual articles, he balances the "centrifugal" pull of eight chapters by different authors against the book's overarching theme and organising principles, concluding that the book offers "a valuable framework for thinking about the process of abstraction by which money and the economy became naturalised and universalised in the nineteenth century."

Finally, Judith Johnston reviews *Blockbuster! Fergus Hume & The Mystery of a Hansom Cab. The Story of the Crime Novel that Became a Global Publishing Phenomenon*, by Lucy Sussex. *Blockbuster!* is a biography of a book, the "shilling shocker" *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* published in Melbourne in 1886. It is also the story of Fergus Hume, who deliberately imitated the popular French crime writer Émile Gaboriau, and of the rather dodgy publisher Frederick Trischler, who helped to make the novel one of the most sensational bestsellers of the 1880s. It increased interest in detective fiction (two years before Sherlock Holmes first appeared in *The Strand*) and prompted writers in both hemispheres to emulate its success. Sussex is a literary sleuth of some repute, and Johnston provides a judicious appreciation of both the scope of the research behind the book and the insights it offers into the colonial and British publishing trades, the 1890s financial and real estate crisis that sent Marvellous Melbourne crashing into depression, and "the opportunism and frauds . . . all swirling around this one book and its author." A ripping yarn, and a lively note on which to finish the collection.

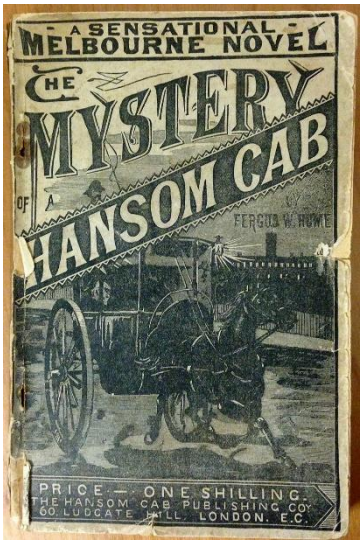

Fig. 4: *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. Original cover, 1886. Public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

We are delighted to re-launch the Journal with such a strong and interesting set of articles and reviews, and look forward to the next issue: "Pre-Raphaelitism in Australasia," guest-edited by nineteenth-century art historian Alison Inglis, co-edited by Nancy-Langham Hooper and Meg Tasker. With a strong art history focus, the two volumes of this special issue (one late 2018, one in early 2019), will be things of beauty, featuring many illustrations of the artistic, architectural, and decorative legacy of Pre-Raphaelitism in the southern hemisphere.

Acknowledgements

Very sincere thanks to Alexis Harley for so kindly and adeptly taking over the General Editorial role on short notice for several months in 2016 when an unexpected health crisis took the incumbent out of commission, and to Jennifer Pont for coming on board in 2018 as editorial assistant—her astute editorial eye, reliability, thoughtfulness, and intelligent interest in each aspect of the work have been invaluable. Thanks also to colleagues near and far who have provided expert and timely advice as referees, to Jock Macleod, Megan Brown and

Joanne Wilkes for moral and practical support, to Reviews Editor Jocelyn Hargrave for her quietly efficient work on this issue's selection, and to Format/Layout Editor Carolyn Lake for her proficient and no-fuss approach to publishing the journal issue amid the usual flurry of final proofs and adjustments. Thanks also to Susan Murray, Manager, and the technical staff of Scholarly Publishing at Sydney University Press, to the lovely indexers at MLA and EBSCOhost who have checked in at intervals to see what *AJVS* is up to, and of course to those who provide and update the free online journal publishing software, OJS, which allows us to continue to provide completely free and open access to a Journal independent of any commercial, institutional or political pressures.[2]

Last, but most emphatically not least, I would like to thank and acknowledge the patience of authors of those articles that were caught up and delayed during the General Editorial *annus horribilis* of 2017. As well as remaining cooperative through the rigours of peer reviewing, revision, editing and copy-editing, they have been uniformly kind and gracious about the time it has taken for their work to be finally, joyfully, published in this issue of *AJVS*.

Meg Tasker, Adjunct Associate Professor of Humanities, has recently taken early retirement from Federation University (Australia), and is looking forward to life as a Victorianist-at-Large. She is currently General Editor of *AJVS*, and co-editing with Alison Inglis a double issue of *AJVS* on Pre-Raphaelitism in Australia. Publications include the 2001 biography of Francis Adams, *Struggle and Storm* (MUP), a Mulini Press edition of Adams's bush-ranger novel *John Webb's End*, and many articles on Australasian writers in London c. 1890-1910 from research supported by the ARC Discovery Project "Unbecoming Australians" (2003-06). She has for many years been involved in both the Australasian Victorian Studies Association (AVSA) and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL).

[2] As this issue goes to press, Australian scholars in the Humanities are learning of unprecedented levels of Government interference in the granting of Australian Research Council grants, awards and fellowships in 2017, with no less than eleven applications, which had been through a rigorous peer review and selection process, having their recommendation for funding rejected by the Minister for Education. The values of academic freedom and independence are not to be taken for granted. *Ed*.