

## EDITORIAL

Volume Three of the *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal* presents a significant change from previous issues: it has, for the first time, run to two numbers. Such burgeoning is perhaps a consequence of the theme of the journal and of the Eighteenth Australasian Victorian Studies Conference which generated many of the papers published here. Romance, it seems, makes lovers, and writers, wax lyrical, and as a consequence a significant number of excellent papers dealing with the theme from a variety of perspectives will be published in the two numbers of Volume Three (the second issue will appear mid-1998). While we do not anticipate that the journal will become a regular bi-annual at this stage, we are grateful to be able to make it possible this year, partly due to a funding windfall from the English Department at the University of Queensland. Special thanks is also due to Tim Millett for allowing us to use a photograph of his wonderful collection of Convict Love Tokens as our cover illustration for the two "Romance" issues, and to Paul Donnelly at the Powerhouse Museum for bringing the tokens to light and for acting as our pictorial liaison.

The 1997 AVSA Conference on Romance was held at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. The conference coincided with Christchurch's Festival of Romance which, together with the picturesquely blossoming aspect of the town and its gently flowing Avon, provided the perfect backdrop for Romance to flourish. Conference convenor Helen Debenham would like to extend thanks to keynote speaker Juliet Barker, to the British Council for making Juliet's visit possible through its Link Programme, and to the Festival of Romance for providing her accommodation. Helen would also like to thank keynote speaker Susan Casteras and the Fulbright Foundation for funding her visit. Joan Bellamy also received a grant through the British Council Link Programme. In addition, thanks must go to the English Department at Canterbury for financial and administrative support, and especially to the invaluable Kate Trevella; to colleagues Gareth Cordery, Pamela Gerrish Nunn and Margaret Belcher for general assistance and encouragement; to Sam Gill for her accounting skills, and to Robin Stevens of the University of Canterbury Library.

Conference keynote speaker Susan Casteras's paper, "Gendered Places, Female Spaces," which heads this issue, examines depictions of romance in Victorian painting and illustration through courtship motifs and barriers such as country stiles and garden walls—icons of the trysting spot. Picking up on the image of the garden in visual as well as literary culture, Margaret Johnson considers the construction and mythologising of the cottage garden by urban dwellers seeking an idealised rural retreat. Two other papers deal with art and material culture created as a response to separation and romance. Mark Stocker examines the work of sculptor Kathleen Scott in relation to her marriage to Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott, while Paul Donnelly's paper focuses on the distinctive tokens of love made by convict transportees. He situates these enigmatic little items amidst a wealth of material culture produced during the nineteenth century to celebrate loving relationships and to bridge the pain of human separation wrought by the traumatic dislocations of transportation, emigration, or death.

Two of the papers which concentrate on the literature of the period deal with the romance of other-worldliness by examining depictions of ghosts: Clair Hughes in Henry James's shorter fiction, and Stephanie Green in Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost*. Jennifer Yates and Shirley Tyler look at fictional representations of courtship, marriage and domesticity in novels by Harriet Martineau, M.E. Braddon, and Elizabeth Gaskell. Fictional and journalistic feminist writing of the period is discussed in turn by Mandy Dyson in her paper on Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, and by Joan Bellamy, who follows the career of Mary Taylor as she moves from emigrant to passionate defender of women's rights in the periodicals of the day. By contrast, Victorian constructions of masculinity and the idealised male figure constitute the subject of papers on Robert Louis Stevenson by Guy Davidson, and Macmillan's biographical series on "heroic," "fearless," and "manly" Englishmen of action by Jock Macleod.

In addition to the papers, we have endeavoured with this issue to expand the review section of the journal, continuing the precedent set last year by beginning the section with a Review Forum on Patricia Ingham's recent book, *The Language of Gender and Class*. Three reviews of the book were solicited with a response from the author, providing a lively interchange of critical debate which, as Ingham asserts, offers "constructive discussion that suggests useful questions to pursue for both reader and writer." Other reviews in this issue reinforce the interdisciplinary nature of the *Journal*, including books on Victorian literature, drama, art, architecture, medical and scientific discourses. The next issue will continue this pattern and will also include a review of the first volumes of the new Penguin collected edition of Hardy's fiction, reprinted and annotated from the first editions. The review section strives to promote books being published by AVSA members, for instance Pamela Gerrish Nunn's *Problem Pictures* in this issue and a review of P.D. Edwards's *Dickens's Young Men* in the next.