A Companion to
The Victorian Novel

EDITED BY PATRICK BRANTLINGER AND WILLIAM B. THESING
A Companion to the Victorian Novel
This series offers comprehensive, newly written surveys of key periods and movements, and certain major authors, in English literary culture and history. Extensive volumes provide new perspectives and positions on contexts and on canonical and post-canonical texts, orientating the beginning student in new fields of study and providing the experienced undergraduate and new graduate with current and new directions, as pioneered and developed by leading scholars in the field.

1 A Companion to Romanticism
   Edited by Duncan Wu

2 A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture
   Edited by Herbert F. Tucker

3 A Companion to Shakespeare
   Edited by David Scott Kastan

4 A Companion to the Gothic
   Edited by David Punter

5 A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare
   Edited by Dympna Callaghan

6 A Companion to Chaucer
   Edited by Peter Brown

7 A Companion to English Literature from Milton to Blake
   Edited by David Womersley

8 A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture
   Edited by Michael Hattaway

9 A Companion to Milton
   Edited by Thomas N. Corns

10 A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry
    Edited by Neil Roberts

11 A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature
    Edited by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne

12 A Companion to Restoration Drama
    Edited by Susan J. Owen

13 A Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing
    Edited by Anita Pacheco

14 A Companion to English Renaissance Drama
    Edited by Arthur Kinney

15 A Companion to Victorian Poetry
    Edited by Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Antony H. Harrison

16 A Companion to the Victorian Novel
    Edited by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing
A Companion to The Victorian Novel

EDITED BY PATRICK BRANTLINGER AND WILLIAM B. THESING
Contents

Acknowledgments viii
The Contributors ix

Introduction 1
Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing

PART I Historical Contexts and Cultural Issues 9
1 The Publishing World 11
   Kelly J. Mays

2 Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader 31
   Jonathan Rose

3 Money, the Economy, and Social Class 48
   Regenia Gagnier

4 Victorian Psychology 67
   Athena Vrettos

5 Empire, Race, and the Victorian Novel 84
   Deirdre David

6 The Victorian Novel and Religion 101
   Hilary Fraser

7 Scientific Ascendancy 119
   John Kucich
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Technology and Information: Accelerating Developments</td>
<td>Christopher Keep</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Laws, the Legal World, and Politics</td>
<td>John R. Reed</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gender Politics and Women’s Rights</td>
<td>Hilary M. Schor</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Other Arts: Victorian Visual Culture</td>
<td>Jeffrey Spear</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Imagined Audiences: The Novelist and the Stage</td>
<td>Renata Kobets Miller</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART II</strong> Forms of the Victorian Novel</td>
<td></td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction</td>
<td>F. S. Schwarzbach</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Historical Novel</td>
<td>John Bowen</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Sensation Novel</td>
<td>Winifred Hughes</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Bildungsroman</td>
<td>John R. Maynard</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Gothic Romance in the Victorian Period</td>
<td>Cannon Schmitt</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Provincial or Regional Novel</td>
<td>Ian Duncan</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Industrial and “Condition of England” Novels</td>
<td>James Richard Simmons, Jr.</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Children’s Fiction</td>
<td>Lewis C. Roberts</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Victorian Science Fiction</td>
<td>Patrick Brantlinger</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART III  Victorian and Modern Theories of the Novel and the Reception of Novels and Novelists Then and Now 385

22  The Receptions of Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy 387
   Elizabeth Langland

23  Victorian Theories of the Novel 406
   Joseph W. Childers

24  Modern and Postmodern Theories of Prose Fiction 424
   Audrey Jaffe

25  The Afterlife of the Victorian Novel: Novels about Novels 442
   Anne Humpherys

26  The Victorian Novel in Film and on Television 458
   Joss Marsh and Kamilla Elliott

Index 478
Acknowledgments

We have worked at a distance, but very well together on this project since the spring of 1999. Our greatest debt is to Andrew McNeillie at Blackwell for first suggesting such an important enterprise to us. He has been unfailingly generous with his time and advice during work on this book. We are also grateful to the excellent staff at Blackwell Publishing, including Alison Dunnett, Emma Bennett, Laura Montgomery, and others who worked on our book. Gillian Bromley did a superb job of copy-editing; Randy Miller compiled an excellent index.

We have been fortunate to receive intellectual, moral, and financial support at our two universities. At Indiana University, we express our gratitude to the faculty and students of the Victorian Studies program, especially Donald J. Gray, Andrew Miller, and Joss Marsh, as well as to the Lilly Library and its superb staff. At the University of South Carolina, several graduate research assistants helped with xeroxing, mailing, and filing chores: we are especially grateful to Leean Hawkins, Jamie Ridenhour, and Amy Smith. Steve Lynn and William Richey have been very supportive with various types of research assistance. Colleagues David Cowart, Patrick G. Scott, and Meili Steele, and the various graduate student members of the USC Nineteenth Century Club, have offered useful suggestions concerning the project. The fine staff of the Thomas Cooper Library offered helpful assistance.

Finally, we are grateful to our excellent and efficient contributors for their outstanding essays that make the volume so successful. Our thanks go especially to our wives – Ellen Brantlinger and Jane Thesing – for their support and encouragement over the years. We also appreciate the patience and love of our children.

Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing
The Contributors

**John Bowen** is a Reader in the Department of English and Director of the Centre for Victorian Studies at Keele University. He is the author of *Other Dickens: Pickwick to Chuzzlewit* (2000) and has edited Dickens’s *Barnaby Rudge* for Penguin. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Victorian Culture*.


**Ian Duncan**, Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (1992), editions of Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe*, and articles on Ruskin’s quarrel with fiction and on Edinburgh as a Romantic metropolis. He is completing a book on the novel in Romantic-era Scotland.

**Kamilla Elliott** is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in the interdisciplinary study of literature and film, with an
emphasis on Victorian literature and film. Her book, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

**Hilary Fraser** is Dean of Arts and Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University College and Adjunct Professor of the University of Western Australia. She is author of *Mediating Gender: Femininities, Masculinities, and the Victorian Periodical Press* (with Judith Johnston and Stephanie Green, forthcoming), *English Prose of the Nineteenth Century* (with Daniel Brown, 1997), *The Victorians and Renaissance Italy* (1992), and *Beauty and Belief: Aesthetics and Religion in Victorian Literature* (1986). She currently works on Victorian women art historians.


**Winifred Hughes** is the author of *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (1980), as well as articles on Victorian fiction and poetry. She is book review editor of *Victorian Literature and Culture*.

**Anne Humpherys** is Professor of English at Lehman College and The Graduate Center, City University of New York. She is author of *Travels into the Poor Man's Country: The Work of Henry Mayhew* and of articles in various volumes and journals on the nineteenth-century press, Victorian popular culture, the Victorian novel, Dickens, and Tennyson.

**Audrey Jaffe** is the author of *Vanishing Points: Dickens, Narrative, and the Subject of Omniscience* (1991) and *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction* (2000). She is a former member of the English Department at Ohio State University.

**Christopher Keep** teaches in the English Department at the University of Western Ontario. He has published on topics ranging from “The Cultural Work of the Typewriter Girl” to theories of embodiment in hypertext fiction and virtual reality. He is currently researching a book concerning the emergent information economy of the nineteenth century.

**John Kucich**, Professor of English at the University of Michigan, is the author of *Excess and Restraint in the Novels of Charles Dickens* (1981), *Repression in Victorian Fiction* (1987), and *The Power of Lies: Transgression in Victorian Fiction* (1994), as well as the
co-editor, with Dianne Sadoff, of Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century (2001).

**Joss Marsh** is an Associate Professor of English at Indiana University. Her book *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* appeared in 1998; she owes her interest in visual culture, on which she has published articles in media as diverse as the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Select* rock magazine, in part to membership in a three-generation film-making family.

**John R. Maynard** is Professor of English at New York University. He has published a biography, *Browning’s Youth* (1974), and is a long-time member of the Biography Seminar in New York. His other work includes studies of Victorian literature and sexuality – *Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality* (1984) and *Victorian Discourses on Sexuality and Religion* (1994) – a book on contemporary Browning criticism (*Re-viewing Browning*, 1999), and a study of reader theory (work in progress). Since 1990 he has been co-editor of *Victorian Literature and Culture*.

**Kelly J. Mays**, an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has published articles on Chartist poetry, working-class autobiography, and nineteenth-century reading practices and serves as an editor of the *Norton Introduction to Literature*. She is currently completing a study of representations of reading and literacy in nineteenth-century Britain.

**Renata Kobetts Miller** received her Ph.D. from Indiana University. Her dissertation, “Setting the Stage: Victorian Culture, Theater, and the Suffragettes” (2001), demonstrated that the centrality of actresses in the suffragette movement derived from the importance of the theatrical woman as a figure of artifice and public influence in Victorian culture.

**John R. Reed** is Distinguished Professor of English at Wayne State University. He has published widely on nineteenth- and twentieth-century British literature and culture. His most recent scholarly book was *Dickens and Thackeray: Punishment and Forgiveness* (1995). He is currently at work on a book-length study of the armed services in nineteenth-century British literature and culture.

**Lewis C. Roberts** teaches Victorian literature and children’s literature at Indiana University. He is the author of “Disciplining and Disinfecting Working-Class Readers in the Victorian Public Library” (*Victorian Literature and Culture*, 1998). He is currently working on a book about Victorian literacy, material culture, and publishing practices, as well as researching the role of children’s literature publishing in the nineteenth-century British marketplace.

**Jonathan Rose** is Professor of History and convenor of the graduate program in Book History at Drew University. He is author of *The Intellectual Life of the British Working

Hilary M. Schor is Professor of English at the University of Southern California. She is author of *Scheherezade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel* and *Dickens and the Daughter of the House*, and of articles on Victorian fiction and culture. Her current project explores realism, gender, and the culture of curiosity.

F. S. Schwarzbach is Professor and former Chair in the Department of English at Kent State University. His most recent publications include an edition of Dickens’s *American Notes* (1997), as well as essays on Harriet Shelley, Dickens as a travel writer, and the cultural significance of Staffordshire figurines.

James Richard Simmons, Jr., Assistant Professor of English at Louisiana Tech University, is the author of a number of published articles and reviews which have appeared in *Brontë Society Transactions*, *Victorian Studies*, *English Language Notes*, and *The Dickensian*. He also has a forthcoming book, *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiographies*.

Jeffrey L. Spear is an Associate Professor of English at New York University. He is the author of *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and his Tradition in Social Criticism*. His current project is a study of Victorian literature and visual culture with the working title *Lines of Sight*.


Athena Vrettos, Associate Professor of English and Director of Graduate Studies at Case Western Reserve University, is the author of *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (1995) and recent articles on Victorian theories of habit and déjà vu. Currently, she is working on a book titled *Mental Economies: Victorian Fiction, Psychology, and Spaces of Mind*. 
Introduction

Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing

The aim of this Companion is to provide contextual and critical information about the entire range of British fiction published during the Victorian period. It offers students, teachers, and general readers at all levels original, accessible chapters written from current critical and theoretical perspectives. In part I, each chapter provides an overview of one central context or issue, including the publishing world, education, social class and economics, nineteenth-century psychology, race and empire, religion, science, technology, the law, gender and women’s rights, the fine arts, and the theater. In part II, the chapters survey the various forms of the Victorian novel: Newgate novels and detective fiction, historical fiction, the sensation novel, autobiographical fiction, Victorian versions of Gothic romance, regional fiction, industrial and “condition of England” novels, fiction for children, and science fiction. Part III deals with the reputations and canonization of such major authors as Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens; Victorian, modern, and postmodern theories applied to Victorian fiction; postmodern rewritings of Victorian novels; and film and television adaptations. The detailed and, we hope, conveniently constructed index will enable cross-referencing and study of a broad spectrum of authors, novels, themes, and controversies. Bibliographies following each chapter offer both a list of “References” detailing works cited directly in the text and a list of “Further Reading” containing helpful recommendations of recent criticism and scholarship that, while diverse and innovative, are accessible to the general reader.

In his consideration of prose fiction as a “rational amusement,” Anthony Trollope declared: “we have become a novel-reading people, from the Prime Minister down to the last-appointed scullery maid.” Indeed, not only was one of Britain’s great Prime Ministers, William Gladstone, a novel-reader; so was Queen Victoria, despite an education from which novels were banned – and another of her great premiers, Benjamin Disraeli, was a novel-writer. John Sutherland estimates that between 1837 and 1901 some 60,000 novels were published in Britain – roughly 20 percent of all book production – and that these figures perhaps double if religious tracts and magazine serials