Undissertating

UNDISSERTATING

Re-Envisioning Participation in 19th-Century Studies

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ABSTRACT

The current academic job market presents PhD students and advisors with a forking path. One approach is to be the best at the established game—to publish more, to present at the most prestigious national conferences, and to write a dissertation that academic job committees will immediately recognize as having all of the hallmarks of a future book. The other path—one which scholars such as Leonard Cassuto, Eric Hayot, Whitney Ross Manzo, and Kristina M.W. Mitchell encourage us to pursue—is to rethink our approach to the dissertation process in the face of an expanding range of roles for humanities PhDs. So, what might that second path involve? What does it look like to take job market materials and tenure dossiers out of the picture when conceiving of a dissertation's structure? In this project, I consider this question by highlighting a set of motivating principles and use these principles to inform my dissertation's design.

This examination leads me to some of the central questions in this dissertation project: what does it look like to compose scholarly and educational texts about the nineteenth century that embrace a wider range of authors and audiences than the conventional Western academy has included up to this point? What traditions and emerging practices need to alter or expand in order to promote this inclusivity? How can literary studies scholars use our abilities to close read, to analyze forms, and to critique media institutions in ways that allow us to invite more participation with our work?

My dissertation project turns to open pedagogy and critical information studies as lenses through which to understand Victorian serial fiction's place in 21st-century educational dialogues. Although pedagogy is often left out of research monographs, there is an increasing push for scholars to integrate the work we do as educators with our subject-specific research (Stommel and Morris). Indeed, there is a substantial overlap between the questions that media studies scholars are asking about nineteenth-century print culture and emerging discussions about how we teach, and my dissertation highlights these connections as one way of applying a novel perspective to literary studies scholarship.

These questions redefine the 'final products' I hope to contribute to the field through this dissertation process. Johanna Drucker has observed that "the task of designing an interface is probably the best exercise in reading one can provide," and this dissertation embraces this praxis-oriented approach. Instead of comprising a proto-monograph, I construct a pair of

public-facing resources that intervene in contemporary modes of teaching Victorian studies. The first resource, *The Woman in White, Grangerized* is an open, participatory volume edition of a nineteenth-century serial novel as it was published in its original periodical format. This resource incorporates **SoTL**-informed active learning strategies for engaging with literary texts. This second text, the "Un-dissertation" that you are reading at this moment, explores the principles that researchers, educators, students, and enthusiasts might use to interrogate and resist systemic forces of exclusion in academic writing.
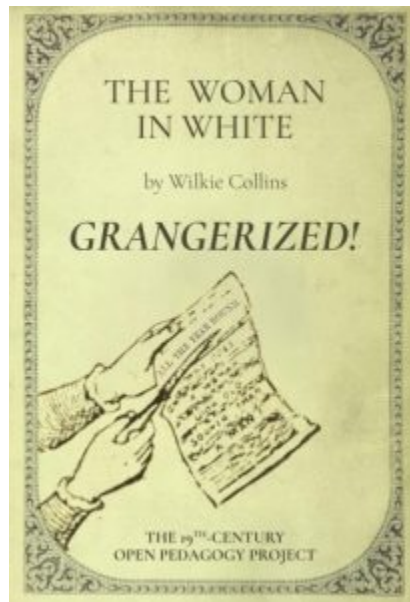
This project's companion text,
The Woman in White, Grangerized

A FIELD AND ITS FORMS

TENURE-EYED TEXTS

Like many people facing a tough humanities job market, I started to draft my dissertation with an anxious eye to my field's generic expectations. Indeed, for years, this compulsion to write in the most traditional academic forms felt like a life-or-death issue.

And when I say "felt like a life or death issue," I mean this somewhat literally. I had spent my formative professional years yearning to teach, imagining a life in which I provided structure and support for students who were learning to recognize the power of their own voices. As a PhD candidate, I made financial, physical, and emotional sacrifices toward this goal on a daily basis. All the while, I struggled to tamp down growing concerns about my future chances in higher education. As Eric Hayot points out in his 2018 article in *Profession,* it is becoming more difficult to find teaching jobs in the humanities, and budget cuts, as well as declining trends in enrollments since 2010, are worsening the situation exponentially.[1] Increasingly, higher education in the United States runs on the fumes of contingent faculty members. As of 2016, 70% of instructors were part-time faculty members, a group of people who often lack assurance that they will hold teaching positions in the following semester or year.[2]

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1. In Hayot's accounting: "Every year since 2013–14 has set a successive new low for the total number of jobs advertised; when you consider the proportion of tenure-track jobs listed (63.4% and 46.3% of the listings in the English and foreign language editions, respectively, in 2016–17, compared with 75.6% and 59.5% in 2007–08), the total number of tenure-track jobs advertised is less than half of what it was a decade ago (807 in 2016–17 versus 2,149 in 2007–08." Compounding this crisis, he observes, there has also been an increase in potential job market candidates: "the number of humanities PhDs produced between 2008 and 2014 increased by 12%" (Hayot n2).
2. In a 2016 report, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) notes: "IPEDS [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System] data indicate that less than one-third of faculty members are now either tenured or on the tenure track. Tenured faculty (generally full or associate professors) make up approximately 21 percent of the academic labor force, while tenure-track faculty (assistant professors) make up just over 8 percent. . . The majority (70 percent) of academic positions today are not only off the tenure track but also part time, with part-time instructional staff positions making up nearly 41 percent of the academic labor force and graduate teaching assistants making up almost another 13 percent (part-time tenure-track positions make up about 1 percent of the academic labor force) ("Higher Education at a Crossroads" 13).

Here are some of the things that weighed on me each time I sat down to write:

- I feared that even if I were lucky enough to find a position that allowed me to teach, I would be working with such a heavy courseload that I would not be able to teach well. Echoing this concern on a broader scale, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reports:

  > In an effort to piece together enough low-wage courses to make a living, many "part-time" faculty members, paradoxically, teach more courses each semester than full-time faculty. Moreover, faculty in part-time positions tend to be less integrated into their institutions and have fewer resources available. The nature of their work sometimes requires commuting between several campuses, and they often are assigned to crowded group offices—or have no office at all. As a result, part-time faculty may be less accessible to students. (15)

  Beyond concerns about being accessible to my students, I worried that the precarity of a contingent position might affect the way I approached course design and discussion. Again, the AAUP report provides data to support this concern, noting that compared to part-time faculty, full-time faculty in a 2016 study were significantly more willing to experiment in their classrooms as well as "to teach content that might challenge students' understanding of their social world" (16). As someone drawn to teach writing and nineteenth-century studies *because* of the way that these subjects can allow students to rethink their assumptions about the world around them, I knew that the pressure to concede in these respects would be a source of constant strain and shame in my life.
- I suspected that these same pressures might reduce my willingness to explore and experiment with my research, as is the case for many contingent faculty members. Larger trends back up this possibility as well: the full-time faculty interviewed in the 2016 AAUP study were significantly more willing to take risks with their scholarly work than were the contingent faculty members interviewed (16).
- In a job market where any stable employment counts as a victory, beggars can't be choosers where location is concerned. And yet, as a queer person, the places where I believed I would feel most accepted and physically safe—that is, cities and towns with an active queer community—were not guaranteed to be places where 19th-century literature positions would open up. Every time I picked up a pen, I felt the need to be competitive enough in the field to have a shot at landing not only a long-term position, but also some of the most highly sought-after jobs in a tight market.[3]

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3. Recent studies published by *Nature Biotechnology* and Harvard University suggest that pressures such as

- I feared that I would struggle for years as an adjunct without employer-provided healthcare. Indeed, I feared for my future solvency even with health insurance. We live in a world where, in 2018, an established and insured English professor at Humboldt State University was hit with a $48,329 bill for an allergy test.[4] This fee represents more than twice my yearly take-home pay during several years of my life as a graduate teaching assistant.[5] It also represents an unconscionable sum in a world where, in 2014, the *median* pay adjuncts received for a semester-long course was $2,700 (Birmingham). And then, of course, there were the stories of adjunct life that circulated in the wake of Margaret Mary Vojtko's death in 2013, accounts that highlighted the long-term precarity contingent faculty face.[6] Accounts like these keep me up at night.

As someone who studies nineteenth-century print culture and digital forms, my research focuses on the social, material, and institutional conditions that shape the way people write. And yet, the more I explored theories of composition and textual interaction, the better able I was to see how my *own* writing reflected the worst parts of my institutional reality.

I now think of the drafts I struggled to write during this period as "tenure-eyed texts"—documents distorted to fit into the most common generic conventions in our field. I wrote these tenure-eyed texts not because those conventions were the most appropriate for the work I wanted to do, but because I feared what would happen if they did not fit the mold of a

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these may be a contributing factor in what their authors describe as a mental health crisis in higher education (Evans et al., Barreira et al.). Evans et al. observe that graduate students are "more than six times as likely to experience depression and anxiety as compared to the general population." Queer and transgender students were significantly more likely to experience depression and anxiety as compared to heterosexual or cisgender peers (Barreira et al. 23, Evans et al.)

4. See Barbara Feder Ostrov's October 2018 *NPR* article, "Bill of the Month: A $48,329 Allergy Test Is a Lot of Scratch."

5. Pay transparency is a radical act, yes? In that spirit: in 2013, I made $13,560 for the year as a teaching assistant in spring and instructor of record in fall. I balanced these positions while taking three to four graduate seminar courses each semester in keeping with my PhD program requirements. By 2015, my pay had increased to $20,513 due to a combination of my ABD status and my eligibility for a spring-fall-summer TAship role at our Writing Center. This was alongside my role as a literary studies discussion section leader during spring and fall academic semesters.

6. See also the *Chronicle of Higher Education* articles "The Ph.D. Now Comes With Food Stamps" and "What Happens When an Adjunct Instructor Wants to Retire?"

professional dossier. For me—and I believe, for most people—these fears were not a recipe for good writing or good teaching.[7]

But then something wonderful happened.

I stopped wanting to go on the tenure-track job market.

Of course, it wasn't a simple shift. Like many who part ways with their ivory tower aspirations, I cycled through the Kubler-Ross stages of grief before I made peace with my decision.*

> * Indeed, this is a common enough experience to have sparked an entire academic genre, "quit-lit," which shares DNA with the contents of this essay.[8] Yet as Katie Rose Guest Pryal observes in her article "[Quit Lit is About Labor Conditions](#)," this term somewhat simplifies

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7. This is *not* to suggest that contingent faculty members lack writing or teaching skills. However, working environments for a large percentage of non-tenure track faculty directly obstruct positive teaching, learning, and research outcomes. For more information on the factors that shape these outcomes, see Adrianna Kezar's 2012 literature overview and study about pre-tenure-track faculty working environments, "Examining Non-Tenure Track Faculty Perceptions of How Departmental Policies and Practices Shape Their Performance and Ability to Create Student Learning at Four-Year Institutions." Another angle on this: research on burnout in higher education calls attention to issues of concern for non-tenure-track faculty. The Maslach Burnout Inventory's Educator Scale (MBI-ES) posits that work-life balance, autonomy, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, a feeling of community, a sense of fairness, and value-match all play a role in protecting against burnout (Schubert-Irastorzas and Fabry 41). And for the reasons I've mentioned above and more, the most common forms of contingent teaching appointments disrupt each of these six categories, increasing the risk of unhappiness and burnout.

What finally cemented my shift away from this path, was, somewhat paradoxically, the renewed enthusiasm I felt for research as soon as I began to take 'leaving' the field seriously. I began to remember what had motivated me to spend a life researching nineteenth-century print culture in the first place. I felt a rekindled enthusiasm for theory. I rediscovered the joy I had once taken in my dissertation project, which examined the intersections between 19th-century audience practices and today's digital communities.

However, the academic genres I had been working so hard to emulate no longer seemed appropriate to the primary audiences I wanted to connect with. I found myself regularly replaying a conference conversation I'd had with a scholar who'd wryly noted that a dissertation is the longest job application a person will ever write. Each time I thought back to this discussion, it became clearer to me

a complex form of writing. "If quit lit is about labor," she writes, "then the best quit lit published in the last year wasn't about quitting at all." To the extent that this piece fits within the quit-lit genre, I intend it to critique labor conditions and imagine ways forward for the field and for those invested in it (very broadly defined).

that I was no longer applying for the kinds of jobs that needed me to practice this kind of writing. The positions I was applying for revolved around open pedagogy practices, faculty development, and the public humanities. They were positions that require research skills, writing proficiency, and familiarity with higher education's institutional labyrinths—and indeed, committees for these positions typically list PhD credentials as a requirement in their job descriptions. However, they were more interested in my educational training than my contributions to literary theory as such.[9]

So, here was a second crux. I had written three dissertation chapter drafts that—while admittedly rough—reflected years of study and extremely painstaking archival research. But viewed either as a job application or as an expression of passion for the discipline, something

8. For more information about quit-lit, see Erin Bartram's piece, "Why Everybody Loses When Someone Leaves Academe" and Leonard Cassuto's response, "The Grief of the Ex-Academic." For some examples of quit-lit, see Keguro Macharia's "On Quitting," Jacquelyn Ardam's" Real Toads at the International Cryptozoology Museum," and Andrew Kay's "Writing After Academe."

9. For a deeper look at the mismatch between the focus of PhD graduate training and the skillsets emphasized in academic as well as nonacademic positions, see Beth Seltzer's 2018 *Profession* article, "One Hundred Job Ads From the Humanities Ecosystem."

about these drafts felt like it was missing its mark. Continuing to try to reshape the oldest versions of this work appeared to be a classic example of the sunk costs fallacy in action. What I most wanted was to contribute to nineteenth-century literary studies and higher education in a way that centered pedagogy and community. Yet because the four-chapter format didn't feel like it fit, it seemed inappropriate to devote more time and energy to a draft that no longer reflected my voice. Better to remix that past work in a way that tapped into my motivating drives than to shore up these past chapters into something that didn't.

Oh, but that's such a horrific waste of work!—a panicked inner voice still sometimes cries. And perhaps this is exactly what you are thinking as you read this. I can only say to this that I believe that work and the conversations that surrounded it have played a significant role in this current project and the skills I will take out of my Ph.D. study.[10] Maha Bali and Suzan Koseoglu encourage us to embrace a "different, a broader understanding" of our work, one that "includes the *processes and products* of open scholarship as valuable, and viable, resources," and in this sense, my research process has helped me to achieve content mastery in exactly the way it was intended to do. Someday, I even hope to revisit what I have written in these past drafts and reshape it into a piece of open, multimedia scholarship. Yet in *this* moment, for the purposes of *this* dissertation project, I want to devote my remaining time to a different kind of intervention in the field.

A Situating Pause:

Here, it is important to highlight the fact that my while the fears that sparked my decisions were both viscerally real and based on real trends in academic employment, I am a person who benefits from multiple intersecting forms of privilege that insulate me from the worst inequalities of our profession. True, I am someone who presents as a woman in a world where the gender wage gap still persists and where women are overrepresented in the adjunct faculty

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10. I think it important to add that I am *extremely* grateful for the years of painstaking work that my mentor, Susan Bernstein, has devoted to guiding my research process and providing feedback on many rounds of drafts. This feedback has been invaluable in helping me learn the motivating questions in our discipline. Susan, I hope—more than anything—that you do not feel that your own careful labors have gone to waste.

pool, (making up 61% of adjuncts as of 2016), so I do face some disadvantages in a competitive field (Birmingham).

However, I materially benefit from other identity categories and experiences. Just to scratch the surface of these, I am a white person. I have no visible disabilities. I come from a privileged financial and educational background. All of these factors are concrete advantages on the academic job market, and they would also serve as protective factors were I to leave educational contexts entirely. Often unrecognized in discussions of academic disillusionment are the ways that the fall-from-grace narrative that is so common in 'quit-lit' is itself a product of privilege. Manu Samriti Chander raised this point powerfully in a May 2019 Twitter discussion about the genre, noting:

> Lots of folks—most folks actually—were excluded from literary studies, the humanities, and academia more generally long before the jobs disappeared. Seems to me we talk disproportionately more about those forced to "quit" than about those already excluded.

I bring up these points to highlight one of the ways in which academia exacerbates the worst kinds of stratification in our culture. As Eric Hayot and many others remind us, the academy is one among many sites of structural violence within the education system.

While I have told *one* story of how I recognized aspects of this structural violence shaping my own life and writing, my goal is not to center this story as representative but to register where this work is coming from. Many aspects of this project draw from others' explorations of the ways that privilege operates in scholarly and educational contexts, but as someone who benefits from many forms of privilege, I recognize that my own lens is flawed. Working against the distortions of this privilege is the work of a lifetime, not just a single project, but what I can promise is that I am taking this work seriously.

Undissertating: A Reassessment

To put a fine point on the story I have been telling: the institutional structures and material conditions associated with the humanities are causing many of us to uncritically double down on traditional modes of writing and teaching.

The issues that shape this outcome are not going away.

- As long as institutions of higher education view increasing the proportions of contingent labor as a solution to budget cuts, this dynamic will continue.

- As long as these same institutions fail to listen to minoritized scholars and students who are disproportionately excluded from the academy, this dynamic will continue.
- As long as departments, reliant on TAs' labor, continue to produce far more professoriate-oriented PhD candidates than there are teaching positions, this dynamic will continue.
- As long as tenure committees and R1 graduate programs elevate demonstration of mastery in research over teaching, this dynamic will continue. And this dynamic not only limits scholars' confidence to devote as much attention to pedagogy as their students need, but it also limits scholars' confidence to research in creative, risky, or experimental ways ("Higher Education at a Crossroads" 16).

Confronting these same disheartening trends, Eric Hayot provides us with a word of encouragement. "How to change things?" he asks, "That is a task for the institutional and moral imagination. The good news is that humanists are specialists of the imagination" (Hayot). So let's reimagine what *is* within our power, and let's do so using the tools that literary studies provides. There's space in our field to experiment with different ways of interacting with our students and our peers—academic and nonacademic alike. There's space for wider participation in academic communities than is reflected by our elevated gatekeeping documents. *So let's change our approach to these documents.*

To be clear: I am not saying that there is no longer *any* place for the modes of writing we have refined in the past fifty years. Many traditional dissertations, scholarly monographs, and critical editions can and do reflect important perspectives and promote needed change in our disciplines. Yet these forms aren't one-size-fits-all, and in many contexts, conventional genres and educational strategies don't actually reflect our goals as instructors, scholars, colleagues, or advocates of social justice and inclusion.[11]

What, then, might it look like to compose a dissertation that *begins* by outlining these goals and works from there? In the following pages, I use critical information studies and constructivist

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11. There are many examples of the kind of innovative and collaborative composition that *does* promote change. While this essay focuses on conventional documents such as the dissertation and the journal article, members of the academy are engaging in consciousness-raising and policy revision projects to advance these goals. As just one example, in their 2018 MLA *Profession* article "Common Good, Not Common Despair," Carolyn Betensky, Seth Kahn, Maria Maisto, and Talia Schaffer describe their efforts to reshape how rankings systems reflect institutions' dependence on contingent labor. This change has the potential to influence college and university budget allocations for instructional faculty and staff.

pedagogical perspectives to explore the media ecosystem of nineteenth-century literary studies as a field. From there, I think about what I want to *do with* my writing—(teach and connect through Victorian Studies research)—rather than using what this writing might do for me—(appeal to future tenure-track gatekeepers)—as the principles that shape this dissertation's form.

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WHAT IS AN OPEN DISSERTATION?

The concept of an "open dissertation"—like the concept of a "nontraditional," "reimagined," or "alternative dissertation"—means many different things to different people.[1] In later sections of this project, I will illustrate what it means to me by describing the values that inspired this dissertation's form. It's my hope that this description will help others see the worth of exploring alternatives to traditional literary studies dissertations as well as to conventional teaching editions of texts.

But at this moment, you are reading a text in medias res: this project has already begun to deviate from the typical literary studies dissertation format in significant ways. Thus, some early explanation about this project's nontraditional form is warranted.

What, then, *is* an open dissertation—at least, as this project conceives it?

An Open Dissertation Is Publicly Iterative

All dissertations change as their authors draft and redraft them in consultation with their advisors. In many academic fields, the dissertation defense includes a discussion of the writer's past revisions and future adaptations of their project. Sometimes, committees permit (or universities require) these dissertation defense conversations to be open to the public. However, regardless of whether a public defense occurs, such conversations predominantly involve people in the writer's existing academic circle.

In this take on an open dissertation, my goal is to make my project's evolution visible to those outside of my immediate advising community. As I finish drafts of sections, I am sharing them online. As my thinking develops through my writing and interactions with others, I will reflect on this process in updates to my work, providing attributions to those who have influenced my thought in formal and informal contexts.

Maha Bali's discussion of the values that open dissertations can enact has had an important

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1. Laura Gogia has distilled many of the varied practices associated with open dissertations into an excellent visual article titled "[Dissertating In The Open](.)."

role in shaping my thoughts on this process. In her work, Bali highlights the role of 'opening' the PhD in both the closed structures of the university and the life of the researcher. She writes:

> Making parts of a PhD public (culminating into a public thesis defense) is a value-laden choice. It means making yourself vulnerable early on in your process, in ways that can be professionally beneficial to you, and to others. It also resists academic elitism which often gatekeeps and hides the knowledge-making process behind the walls of peer-reviewed subscription-based journals. It means an open attitude towards learning and critique, and a belief that the knowledge you are making should have value beyond the pages of a thesis and walls of a university. — ("The Open Dissertation.")

My hope is that by sharing and revising my work in a web text and through social media, I will forge connections with others who may want to think with me outside the context of my institution. This process is still imperfect, of course. In his work about open scholarship, George Veletsianos reminds us that social media platforms like Twitter are "walled gardens," spaces that typically address and admit only a small subset of potential participants. Yet while these platforms may not be fully open, they do make space for connections and forms of communication that conference presentations and formal academic articles do not, and I see this as a strength.[2] In keeping with the values of open scholarship, I seek to be someone who,

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2. An extended aside for those who are interested: this is an emerging but established scholarly practice. Writing of her own open, multiformat dissertation in 2013, Janneke Adema provides a concise overview of other scholars sharing drafts in progress across many stages in an academic career: "*Examples of scholars who are experimenting with (new forms) of online publishing and who can be seen as developing or practicing forms of critical praxis are, for instance, Ted Striphas, who posts his working papers online in his Differences and Repetitions wiki, and Gary Hall, who is making the research for his new book* Media Gifts *freely available online on his website as it evolves, Kathleen Fitzpatrick put the draft version of her book* Planned Obsolescence*online for peer review, using the CommentPress WordPress plugin that allows readers to comment on paragraphs of the text in the margins. Examples of PhD students involved in open research are librarian Heather Morrison, who posts her dissertation chapters as they evolve online, and English student Alex Gil, who is putting his work for his dissertation online on elotroalex.com, using the CommentPress plugin (501).*" In subsequent years, many other scholars have followed suit. Notable among them because of their research's resonance with this dissertation's themes are Remi Kalir and Antero Garcia, whose draft of the book *Annotation* just went through a round of fascinating public comment, and Whitney Trettien, who is releasing chapters of the emerging book *Cut/Copy/Paste* on the new Manifold scholarly publishing platform. In a move that elegantly disrupts the idea of the text as a complete and stable whole, Doug Belshaw likewise published his dissertation online but did so in a way that represents his project's ongoing development since he deposited it. His project, *What is 'digital literacy'? A Pragmatic Investigation* appears his the *Neverending Thesis* website.

in the words of Doug Burton, "make[s] their intellectual projects and processes digitally visible and who invites and encourages ongoing criticism of their work and secondary uses of any or all parts of it—at any stage of its development" (Burton). To the extent that even the in-progress versions of this dissertation may provide ideas or references of use to others, I want my work to be available for these secondary uses.

Sharing drafts of my writing and publicly reflecting on my revision process also taps into values I have developed as a composition teacher and writing center instructor. As readers, and especially as early-career scholars, most of the writing we see is at a late stage of completion. Literary studies graduate programs (among many other disciplines) often assume that students have already developed the composition skills needed to analyze and understand the genre of a dissertation and thus don't structure graduate-level writing pedagogy into their curricula.[3] However, writing is a process, and my teaching has taught me that sometimes the best way to understand how to approach a genre is to see others' works in progress. I hope that grappling with this project in public will help normalize the untidy process of writing a dissertation for other writers.

An Open Dissertation Questions Its Own Form and Context

Composing a dissertation that deviates from common forms of academic authorship can serve as a kind of critical praxis, a process of examination that leads to a clearer understanding of our motivating values. Self-reflexive acts of creation provide theoretical insights in their own right—especially where experimental forms of communication such as interactive web texts are involved. Designing an "interface" for communication outside of established structures of academic production allows writers to make large and small decisions about what kind of interactions we want to invite with our work (Drucker 215-218). This design process also allows us to recognize when the tools and conventions we're drawing from may be working against our goals for them. As Tiziana Terranova, Janneke Adema, and many other scholars warn, nothing about new media promotes access or justice in a vacuum. Indeed, Adema explains, despite the fact that digital media may smooth the path to sharing resources and collaborating

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3. If you recognize this dynamic affecting your own work in literary studies or a related field, I can recommend Eric Hayot's *The Elements of Academic Style* as a thoughtful and process-oriented approach to academic writing in the humanities.

across great distances, "the digital *also* has the potential to reproduce social inequalities and to promote capitalist exploitation" (Adema 493, emphasis mine). For writers invested in destabilizing the unjust systems of stratification that extend throughout our educational institutions, critically examining how our own communication modes and media platforms fit into these systems is a perennial responsibility (Adema 493-496).

An Open Dissertation Invites (Your!) Participation

Know that if you're reading this, I welcome your engagement with this project in the annotation layer or in an email or Twitter dialogue. I see such interactions as an important part of this text's evolution and of my own development as an educator and scholar.

Sharing writing is terrifying for many people, and I'll frankly acknowledge that I'm one of them. On the one hand, I may be calling out into a void: perhaps no one will want to engage in the first place. In their work on what they call "networked participatory scholarship," George Veletsianos and Royce Kimmons caution that our current systems don't always make space for desired forms of engagement. Scholars in academia are often too overwhelmed by their professional responsibilities to engage with open scholarship outside of traditional advancement avenues, so it's entirely possible that this text's openness will be more theoretical than practical (771). A different anxiety that I have is that any comments I do receive will resemble an unholy cross between the comments on a YouTube video and Reviewer Two's most scathing rejection letters. And if we're honest, there's some reason to fear this latter possibility as well. It's true that the authors I turn to in the following pages outline some difficult criticisms of the contexts in which scholars write and teach. This has the potential to elicit some defensive reactions from people who feel invested in the current system or cast adrift at the thought of its flaws. It's true, too, that I'm writing as a learner as much as—indeed, *more so* than—I'm attempting to lay claim to infallible expertise in this text. Openness, institutional critique, acknowledgment of shortcomings, *and* an invitation to engage don't always produce the most generous readings.

What I ask, then, is that if you do choose to engage, you do so with this project's development and our productive collaboration in mind.

Having put these cards on the table, I'd like to outline my commitments to you as a potential respondent. I see critique as an act of generosity, and I will do all that I can to receive it in that spirit. Regardless of your institutional role, affiliation, or educational history, I appreciate the ways you can shape how I understand pedagogy, nineteenth-century studies, and scholarship

writ large. If you respond in the margins of this text, I commit to looking for the values you and I may share as well as opportunities for learning in your response.

Will you take part?

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CRITICAL ORIENTATION

At the heart of this project is a series of questions about what it is that we learn by interacting *with* texts and with other people *through* texts. And because this part of a literary studies dissertation project, by "texts," I specifically mean "nineteenth-century literature" and "texts written about nineteenth-century print culture," although my goal is for this discussion to resonate more broadly as well. Fortunately, these interests place me in good company. Work in nineteenth-century studies is already honing our ability to recognize the shifting influences of institutions—for instance, publishing companies, printers, or universities—on people's access to the Victorian public sphere. Expanding beyond this, I ask, what can researching the media landscape and **reading formations** of the nineteenth century help us to better understand about the institutions that shape our scholarship and pedagogy today?

More pointedly, what can this period teach us about who we are leaving out of our classrooms and communities of thought?

Like our own historical moment, the nineteenth century was rife with technological and social changes that affected how people composed and interacted with texts. What creative modes of expression and connection have the dominant reading practices of the past and present dismissed? Which of these practices highlight missed opportunities for us to connect with our students and our peers? What might it look like to experiment with new approaches? And, finally, which institutions or practices rise up to complicate these experiments? What does that tell us about the power structures we inhabit?

Each of these questions stems from an approach to teaching and research that scholars of the long nineteenth century have termed "strategic presentism." When introducing this framework as a central value in 2015, members of the **V21 Collective** described presentism as having "an awareness that our interest in the period is motivated by certain features of our own moment" (Manifesto of the V21 Collective). The word "awareness" highlights an ethical dimension inherent in this critical turn as well as in this project. Many strategic presentists believe that the New Critical and historicist methods that have predominated in years past disregard their dependence on Western value systems. This, in turn, limits our ability to critically engage with our field.

We can see this longstanding dependence on Western value systems at play in the ways the New Critics treated texts as objects that could be separated from the conditions under which

they were composed, revised, circulated and later subjected to academic scrutiny. Scholars such as Priya Joshi, Rachel Ablow, Kate Flint, and Leah Price counter this attitude by highlighting the ways in which social and cultural contexts shape the way we read texts. Works by scholars of the long nineteenth century have been central to demonstrating that a purely formal analysis simply isn't possible.

Strategic presentists point out that there is a similar self-contradictory logic at play when people conduct historical research without registering that our archive is a mediated by multiple distorting lenses of privilege. This is a dynamic that many past historicisms have failed to acknowledge. Our understanding of the reading practices, lived experiences, and material texts that were common in the Victorian period is shaped by multiple gatekeeping structures that have compounded over time. For example, when people make decisions about which texts to preserve in a library's special collections or which poems to use as a case study in an article, they are inevitably responding to the categories and biases that structure their own present. Current literary criticism may have gained important methods and perspectives from some of the New Critics and historicists who strove for an impossible 'purism' in their approaches. (Among these positive legacies is the language we use to describe close reading practices and archival research methods!) However, we should be sensitive to the ideological traces that persist in the field because of its past elisions.

And so, as Tanya Agathocleous urges, we should think of responsible presentist scholarship "not just as the use of present concerns as a lens on the past but as a stance that rejects specific visions of the future in favor of illuminating the persistence of the past in the present"—however unpleasant that persistence of the past in the present may be (93). In her response to this conversation, Anna Kornbluh registers the politically-charged conclusions that research into past institutional structures can compel us to express. Strategic presentism, Kornbluh says, "might mean active listening to the presentism of past fiction, its critical mediation of potential worlds, and re-sounding that presentism in our own moment, so that in the future, the past can embolden us to say what must be said, in the present tense, now" (100).

These are compelling visions, and to complement them, other scholars call for a more concentrated statement of intent from the field. These writers argue that if we want to sustain productive discourse, we need more than a commitment to self-scrutiny or sense of the persistence of past forms and institutions. Nathan K. Hensley sums up this dilemma by quoting Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. He notes that critics seem quite fond of using the word 'strategic' to modify older, and often reductionist, approaches to interpretation, but there is not enough attention to "what is meant by strategy" (Hensley 113). Bringing the question yet closer to home, Andrew Miller questions whether this broad commitment to looking at the past to

understand present does anything to explain why the long nineteenth century is particularly worthy of study. He asks, "What, in a course taught by one of us, faculty or graduate student, would lead [an] undergraduate to think 'Yes, I can effectively address the things that matter most to me, in my historical moment, by reading Victorian Writers?'"

Roughly, then, what goals can our presentist strategies advance? What can studying the long nineteenth century offer us beyond an arbitrary historical distance that facilitates present-day comparison and contrast?

To respond to these questions requires us to think with other scholars who are invested in how we read, how we interact with media, and how we teach. Let's spend a moment mapping some important threads in this conversation before moving toward this project's central claims.

Interdisciplinary Intersections

This project draws upon perspectives at the intersections of Victorian studies and two broad but overlapping branches of scholarship: Critical Information Studies and Open Pedagogy. Each of these branches is driven by a sense of exigency, and I think it would be well to outline each area's pressing concerns before further unpacking my claim about what sets the Victorian archive apart.[1]

Critical Information Studies

Coined in 2006 by Siva Vaidyanathan, the term "critical information studies" (CIS) fuses an array of ongoing research questions into a transdisciplinary conversation. In Vaidyanathan's words, this field

> interrogates the structures, functions, habits, norms, and practices that guide global flows of information and cultural elements. Instead of being concerned merely with one's right to

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1. My overviews of each branch are necessarily general, and some readers may take issue with the way that I have lumped some discussions together under umbrella categories. If you are one of those readers, I'd like to say that I am open to re-examining whether there are any core philosophical oppositions between the separate sub-fields that would affect the way I've characterized their overlaps and *thus* affect my general argument here. However, I'm less interested in discussing the implications of my categorizations *for those fields.* My goal here is to provide some functional descriptions of influential perspectives rather than enter into debates around disciplinary taxonomies as such.

speak (or sing or publish), Critical Information Studies asks questions about access, costs, and chilling effects on, within, and among audiences, citizens, emerging cultural creators, Indigenous cultural groups, teachers, and students. Central to these issues is the idea of 'semiotic democracy', or the ability of citizens to employ the signs and symbols ubiquitous in their environments in manners that they determine. (303)[2]

Critical Information Studies offers Nineteenth-Century Studies scholars the tools re-examine our own methods. It does so by highlighting the ways in which corporate institutions affect how researchers access and circulate scholarship or primary sources. For instance, of key concern for many CIS scholars are practices or legal interpretations that restrict access to media in the public domain or to forms of creation considered to be fair use.[3]

Open Pedagogy: A Blending of Critical and Constructivist Pedagogies

In later sections, I will refer to open pedagogy as the central educational philosophy that motivates my project. However, in this section, I include the related schools, "critical pedagogy" and "constructivist pedagogy." My intention is to register that many existing

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2. For the purposes of this project, I'd like to situate recent works in participatory culture studies and fan studies within critical information studies. I do so not to redefine the conceptual boundaries others draw for themselves, but to embrace a recent turn in participatory culture studies as being particularly relevant to Victorian studies. A quality that sets the latest participatory culture writing apart from earlier scholarship is the way that researchers approach complex reception networks' situatedness within changing—and often corporatized—media landscapes. As Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington outline in their 2017 work on fandom research, if the first wave of fan studies focused solely on the idea of fans as engaged in anti-hegemonic resistance and the second looked for the ways that unequal power structures play out in fan communities, the third wave "acknowledges that fans' readings, tastes, and practices are tied to wider social structures, yet extends the conceptual focus beyond questions of hegemony and class to the overarching social, cultural, and economic transformations of our time" (8).

3. Some examples of this public domain and fair use scholarship: Siva Vaidyanathan's *Copyrights and Copywrongs* and Jason Mazzone's *Copyfraud* illuminate the gaps in legal theory and practice that restrict how people approach fair use as well as works in the public domain. Evelyn Bottando's 2012 dissertation, "Hedging The Commons: Google Books, Libraries, and Open Access to Knowledge" and Vaidhyanathan's *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)* raises concerns that are of particular interest to scholars of the long nineteenth century because such a wide swath of our archive is digitized and hosted by Google.

projects in Victorian Studies and critical information studies are motivated by the same philosophies that inform open pedagogy. However, not all of them share open pedagogy's beliefs about how to enact these philosophies.

Critical pedagogy

One thing that critical pedagogy shares with Critical Information Studies is the belief that knowledge distribution platforms and educational institutions play a major role in promoting or forstalling participation in the public sphere. Rooted in theories of social justice and critical race theory, critical pedagogy focuses on the power structures at play in the classroom and asks how we can increase students' agency as respected participants in learning communities. Practitioners differ in their opinions of *how* to confront educational power imbalances—and indeed, most consider this restless meta-reflexiveness to be a strength. However, as Jesse Stommel and Sean Michael Morris distill the concept, a general goal of many critical pedagogues is to see "vertical (or hierarchical) relationships give way to more playful ones in which students and teachers co-author together the parameters for their individual and collective learning" (*An Urgency of Teachers).*

This approach views the classroom as a community in which group roles should be openly discussed and desired outcomes should be continually and collaboratively re-determined.

Constructivist pedagogy

Like critical pedagogy, constructivist pedagogy seeks to destabilize dominant assumptions about what constitutes knowledge and to value students' individual learning processes. Indeed, these two philosophies have evolved in response to one another. The *social constructivist* branch of constructivist pedagogy approaches learning as a process of collaborative meaning-making that exists within a network of within-group dynamics, broader institutional structures, and other political systems (Kim 55-60, Richardson 1625).

Social constructivists believe that knowledge is culturally negotiated and embrace student contributions to a knowledge community. However, some scholars have expressed concern about how social constructivist theories may still reflect the privileged belief systems within which its foundational theories emerged (Richardson 1635). Put a different way, even though social constructivists embrace the disruption of traditional power structures in the classroom, they may sometimes fail to understand how the modes of collaborative knowledge generation they seek to cultivate as a universal value can still reflect dominant Western ideals (Richardson

1635). (By now, this critique may sound familiar: social constructivist pedagogy faces many of the same criticisms that the field of Victorian Studies faces.)

Critical Information Literacy and Metaliteracy

We can see some critical and social constructivist values woven together in the interconnected frameworks referred to as "Critical Information Literacy" and "metaliteracy." These two frameworks prioritize outward-looking context analysis and inward-looking reflection as essential parts of the learning process. As Lua Gregory and Shana Higgins define the concept, critical information literacy "differs from standard definitions of information literacy (ex: the ability to find, use, and analyze information) in that it takes into consideration the social, political, economic, and corporate systems that have power and influence over information production, dissemination, access, and consumption" (Gregory and Higgins 4).

This expanded understanding of 21st-century competencies is reshaping many educators' goals for their classrooms. For example, Association of College and Research Libraries' most recent (2016) update to their "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education" registers the importance of critical information literacy (although the framework itself doesn't use this moniker).[4] What the ACRL authors do emphasize is the need for learners to understand "how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information," to "recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources," and to "understand how the commodification of their personal information and online interactions affects the information they receive and the information they produce or disseminate online" (6).

In addition to highlighting the situatedness of knowledge construction, the ACRL framework celebrates the concept of metaliteracy, noting that the term "offers a renewed vision of information literacy as an overarching set of abilities in which students are consumers and creators of information who can participate successfully in collaborative spaces. Metaliteracy demands behavioral, affective, cognitive, and metacognitive engagement with the information ecosystem" (2).[5] Emphasizing the importance of critical information literacy for students,

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4. Julia Bauder and Catherine Rod make this connection more explicit, arguing that the critical analysis of informational power structures at the heart of the new framework is already on the rise in many libraries.

5. The ACRL Framework authors draw this concept from Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson.

instructors, and researchers alike may help us reduce constructivism and literary studies' tendencies to prioritize dominant cultural epistemologies.

And Finally, Open Pedagogy: A Synthesis

In the broadest understanding of the term, open pedagogy explores how we can use, create, adapt, or share freely-accessible teaching objects with our students and peers. Practitioners try to understand how open content might reshape students' and instructors' orientations to their classrooms and communities.

Open pedagogy embraces social constructivism's belief that learning is a process of social meaning-making while maintaining critical pedagogy's commitment to interrogating the roles we play in our communities of thought. However, open pedagogy differs from constructivist and critical pedagogies in some of the central ways that it enacts these commitments. As Rajiv Jhangiani defines the concept, open pedagogy is an "access-oriented commitment to learner-driven education" but "it is also the process of designing architectures and using tools for learning that enable students to shape the public knowledge commons of which they are a part" ("Open Educational Practices"). Open pedagogy teaches students that "knowledge consumption and knowledge creation are not separate but parallel processes, as knowledge is co-constructed, contextualized, cumulative, iterative, and recursive," and it does so by inviting students into the process of knowledge construction and iteration as active and equal participants (DeRosa and Jhangiani). Ideally, an open pedagogy project explicitly welcomes future participation and adaptation (Robbins, "Guidelines").

What can this look like in practice? It may take the form of inviting students to use the classroom research process to correct gaps in Wikipedia's representation of Native American authors, an assignment Sioban Senier outlines in "Indigenizing Wikipedia."[6] It may take the form of inviting students to collaboratively compose their own textbook, as Robin Derosa did with the *Open Anthology of Earlier American Literature*—a text which Abby Goode's students and then Timothy Robbins's students and other volunteers expanded in turn (DeRosa, Sheridan,

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6. Wikipedia assignments like this one are well-established, and like Senier's project, they often encourage students to recognize the absence of people from marginalized identity categories within our most popular knowledge aggregators. One decision of note within this particular project: Senier's "Indigenizing Wikipedia" includes a link to an earlier draft of her article with peer review comments included. This is a prime example of an author modeling as well as teaching the process of writing as an iterative and social process.

Robbins). It may take the form of a decentralized discussion group in which people collaboratively annotate texts on the open web, something Remi Kalir facilitates on an ongoing basis through his "Marginal Syllabus" project.

As its name suggests, open pedagogy is committed to an intentional openness, but this is not the same as saying that *all* information should be open. This distinction is one of the things that critical information studies research offers open pedagogy. Published knowledge can be exploited or misused, and one of the challenges shared by all of the "open" movements is to make careful decisions about the implications of different degrees of publicness. This consideration applies to shared *content* as well as to learning *context*. For example, Johanna Funk, Kathy Guthadjaka, and Gary Kong provide one example of this sensitivity in their open pedagogy research. One of their key challenges in creating a platform for sharing traditional Yolŋu knowledge about plant biodiversity in the Northern Territory of Australia was the difficulty of presenting this information in ways that reduce western "compartmentalizations" of that knowledge.[7] Similar reflections about the nature of sharing knowledge or writing occur within a classroom context. Here, we see practitioners' efforts to resist the kinds of totalizing Western ideologies that prove so limiting in some constructivist approaches to teaching.

Open pedagogy practitioners strive to provide students with opportunities for authentic engagement with broader communities while at the same time maintaining students' autonomy and safety. These educators recognize that some students may be enthusiastic about sharing their writing with others in their class but might also have important personal reasons for limiting their online presence. (A student may, for instance, have an internet-savvy stalker. Alternatively, they may simply fear that they would feel less inclined to experiment in productive ways if their work were public.) Thus, this practice holds that all students should have the right to determine whether and how their work might be seen by wider audiences. More than this, practitioners believe that instructors need to be sensitive to the implications of using online platforms in a teaching context, something that requires ongoing effort as platforms and privacy policies change.[8] Open pedagogy practitioners do not urge a single approach or solution to tensions like these, but instead view confronting them on an ongoing basis as a central responsibility for instructors in the twenty-first century.

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7. In a related reflection on how to engage with traditional knowledges in culturally-responsible ways, the open-licensed Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels project provides a classification structure for digitized cultural heritage artifacts.

8. Some basic questions instructors should ask: How might a specific project make student data available to outside actors such as marketers or become an undesirable facet of students' online identities?

Visualizing Overlaps: Click on each plus-sign icon in the image below for a description of projects at the intersections of multiple areas of study described above.

The square button on the top right will take you to a fullscreen view. To see this diagram in a static, text-based format, visit the [Critical Orientation Appendix](#).

> 📺 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
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> https://wisc.pb.unizin.org/undissertating19c/?p=339#h5p-1

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WHERE WE STAND: THIS PROJECT'S CORE BELIEFS ABOUT 19TH-CENTURY STUDIES

In the following pages, I argue that the most compelling reason to study the long nineteenth century is not the specific works published during that period of time, but rather, our current orientation toward the nineteenth-century archive. Put a different way: our current relationships to long-nineteenth-century texts—as well as to current-day patterns of technological change and global capitalism—make it possible for researchers and instructors to do more with Victorian media and to reflect differently on our own information ecosystems than many other archives permit.

We have the ears and the interpretive tools to identify whose voices our institutions are leaving out. What we need is to use these tools to resituate our own writing and teaching within those institutions.

Having outlined a series of motivating conversations about how audiences participate in scholarly communities, I'd like to return once more to my claim that strategic presentists should be devoting more attention to the present-day affordances of the long-nineteenth-century archive as such when they make a case for the broader relevance of our subdiscipline.

This is an expansive stance, so let's break it down into separate parts.

PART 1: The Victorian Print Culture Surge Enriches Our Present-Day Archive

The long nineteenth century was a time of rapid technological and social change, and this led to a print culture "boom" that expanded the scope of the materials and nineteenth-century reflections about reading culture that we are able to examine in our own work.

During the 1800s, printed texts became much more affordable, prevalent, and accessible to people across a wider range of social classes than had been the case in past centuries. In Britain, literacy rates increased, railroads and the invention of the telegram changed the speed and frequency of communication, the concept of professional authorship gained traction, and new ways of cataloging and legally defining media began to crystallize. If in long-past

eras, books were precious objects to be chained to library tables and limited to the elite, nineteenth-century books could be accessed through a library subscription at unprecedentedly low prices, purchased in penny installments, picked up in railway bookstalls, used as a vehicle for love-notes, or even torn up and used as kindling.[1] Reading practices are always shaped by conventions that affect how people put texts to use. In the Victorian period, disparate interpretive strategies and institutions emerged as technologies expanded. A more-widespread circulation of texts at multiple price points allowed readers to develop a more varied, personalized, and socially integrated range of interactions with literary texts.

These rapid changes in print production, circulation, authorship, and reader interaction practices during the mid-nineteenth century mark what we would now call a period of "media in transition." Participatory culture scholar Henry Jenkins defines this phenomenon as "a phase during which the social, cultural, economic, technological, legal, and political understandings of media readjust in the face of disruptive change" (*Convergence* 289).[2] Such periods of readjustment often inspire writers to map out contrasting beliefs about the past and future of cultural institutions—what they were transitioning *from* and *to*. Because more people were empowered to read and write about such changes during the long nineteenth century, we have access to a wider range of perspectives to draw from in the printed matter that survives today. Preserved and digitized texts, as well as our own research processes, are inevitably biased toward dominant and privileged perspectives,[3] but the sheer proliferation (and comparative democratization) of this media still gives us more artifacts to think with than we can access for many earlier periods.

PART 2: Public Domain Texts Foster Innovative Scholarship

Because the surviving nineteenth-century media archive is both massive and in the public

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1. As Guinevere Griest reports, the price for a library subscription at a circulating library could be a guinea a year, which was considered to be within middle-class readers' means (17). Circulating libraries could even serve as brokers for book ownership: "since the average Victorian reader seldom bought a three-decker until he had sampled its worth at the circulating library, and since Mudie could easily afford to slash prices well below the *31s.6d.* asked for new three-volume novels, the book-selling department was an important section" (29).
2. Less formally but more charmingly, Andrew King and John Plunkett refer to this as a time of "mediamorphosis," crediting Roger Fidler for the term (Victorian Print Media 1).
3. This is a claim I will revisit in subsequent sections of this project.

domain, scholars can interact with this archive in a wider range of ways than it is possible for us to do with many other historical archives.

Victorian texts occupy something of a sweet spot where preservation and accessibility are concerned. It is expensive to preserve physical media, and forces such as mold, fires, and Victorians' tendencies to repurpose written books have caused a large number of texts to be lost to us. Many artifacts that have survived are prohibitively difficult to access or digitize. These challenges apply to many texts in the Victorian period, but thanks to the print boom, we are more likely to have multiple surviving copies of published texts to work from as we research. For example, if the sole existing copy of a 13th-century manuscript has a worm-eaten page, contemporary scholars must rely on context cues to fill the gaps. In contrast, if a grub devours a section of our copy of Dickens's 1836 *Pickwick Papers*, we can look up multiple digital scans of the serial and volume publication of these tales. Added to this, many editions of novels published during and after an author's life include different wordings, chapters, illustrations, or **bowdlerizations**; these are yet more interesting developments to think with.

International copyright policies in the present day also make long-nineteenth-century media easier to access and analyze than is the case for many texts published in more recent years. Thanks again to the Victorian print boom, we have access to a large swath of published media from the period that falls within the protections of the public domain.[4] In the United States, the practice of re-using media for the purpose of teaching, commentary, scholarship, or creative transformation may be loosely protected under the terms of "fair use," but in practice, fair use is vaguely defined and poorly defended.[5] In contrast, when a work is in the public domain, others have the legal right to republish, reuse, or modify it in any way they see fit, with or without attribution. In other words, people working with pre-1923 materials don't have to worry as much about defending their use within a US system that interprets fair use on a case-by-case basis.[6] This allows us to do innovative and experimental things with large numbers of

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4. In many countries including our own, questions of the public domain get muddier when we deal with manuscripts or three-dimensional works of art—however you choose to split hairs around those categories. For a haunting dive into these legal battles, see Griska Petri's "The Public Domain vs. The Museum."

5. Jason Mazzone's *Copyfraud* unpacks how U.S. legal systems do more to punish individuals who violate terms of copyright than to punish corporations who restrict or threaten individuals' fair use.

6. Here, unfortunately, I am best able to speak for scholars in the United States. I considered including representative examples of other countries' policies around scholarly use of copyrighted materials. However, rules of this type are often so complex that even my statements about American copyright, fair

texts, such as running thousands of novels through digital analysis applications and exploring the patterns that arise among them.[7] Likewise, we can playfully modify nineteenth-century texts and printed images for a range of purposes—simple entertainment-value among them!

Compare, for instance, these two images.

<u>Image 1</u>

<u>Image 2</u>

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use, and public domain landscape are necessarily imprecise. The choice of which 'representative' examples from other countries to include seemed just as fraught with value judgments as speaking primarily from a US perspective did. My invitation, then, is to readers: do you have firsthand experience of using copyrighted texts for educational or scholarly purposes outside of the United States? What challenges or opportunities did you find relevant? If you are reading this text in its digital home, I welcome you to share your experiences in a Hypothes.is annotation layer comment anchored to this footnote.

7. To name just one example of a digitally mediated reading approach in practice, Susan David Bernstein and Catherine DeRose used Carnegie Mellon's DocuScope tool to compare rhetorical structures in Charles Dickens's and George Eliot's serial and volume fiction.

(210)
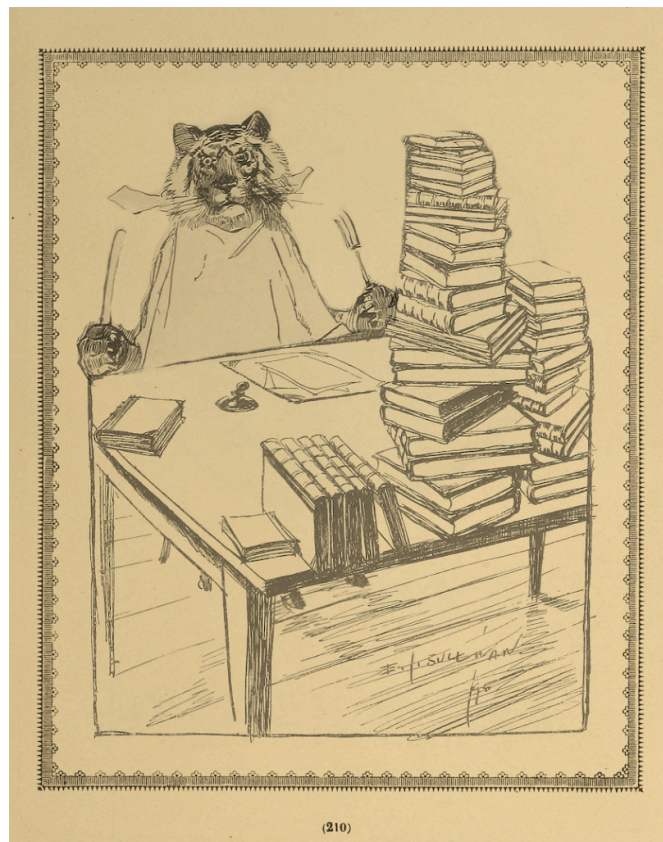
The first image is a screenshot from a video essay that a Youtube creator named Breadsword painstakingly put together to critique the Disney film *Treasure Planet*. Because Disney issued a takedown notice, the author had to remove their initial video and alter its contents.

By way of contrast, the second image is a cheerful mishmash of separate public domain illustrations from the nineteenth century. This second image is infinitely more open to creative engagement than the copyrighted images hidden behind Breadsword's apology statement. Working with these public domain images, the world is my oyster. If I wanted to include this image in the publication you're reading right now, I *could* build the case that my creation and recirculation of the second collage is **fair use** because the image appears in a scholarly essay and plays a purposeful role in this work. I could insist that the book-hungry tiger is a visual metaphor for Victorian readers' voracious enthusiasm for texts. I could say that this image is a reference to corporations' hunger for the profits to be gained from nineteenth-century media and current-day scholarly production alike. I could use it as a flippant description of my own research process, which sometimes produces intellectual appetites I don't understand until they have run their course. Or I could simply say "I made this image hybrid on a whim. It has no special significance for this project." And while this might show questionable judgment, it would be legally unimpeachable.

Admittedly, this image pairing does not convey a simple contrast between the license to adapt media and lack thereof: we can still raise multiple questions about privilege and differing interpretations of transformative use. (Would Disney's representatives have felt as much license to send—or would this Youtube creator have felt that he had the ability to formally protest—the takedown notice had Breadsword been identified as a university-sanctioned scholar? Would the kinds of alteration at play in the collage cause the image to pass a fair use assessment more easily than Breadsword's use of the clip may have done?) However, even if we were dealing with two uses of the same media form—(film or collage)—I would likely only need to justify my use in the US if I were thinking about material published *after* 1923.

My point is that the acknowledged public domain status of the images I used for my own tiger adaptation requires me to expend less effort defending my use as fair use than would be the case if my archive were composed of more recent publications.[8] Both Disney and I benefit from public domain permissions in this situation, as Disney's *Treasure Planet* is itself a retelling of a Victorian novel: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island.* Far from paying royalties, neither Disney nor I even face pressure to credit the original authors or illustrators who produced our 19th-century texts. Yet Disney *can* attempt to police others' commentaries about its recent work based on a US legal system that has more language and precedent for punishing copyright violators than protecting fair use (Mazzone xi).[9] We live in a time when fair use principles are effectively broken thanks to justified anxieties about litigation. However, when working with artifacts in the public domain, Victorianists have opportunities for creative application and experimentation that would be more difficult to pursue if other players had copyright over our subject matter.

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8. I say "less effort" because even the use of public domain images can be complicated. This is a consideration I will explore shortly.

9. In an observation that Breadsword may find poignant, legal scholar Jason Mazzone explains how copyright notices often function as a means of coercion even when companies' claims might not stand up in court: "copyright law does not punish very severely false claims of copyright. As a result, false copyright claims are common. . . . [O]verreaching occurs because content providers are able to take advantage of the fact that the boundaries between private rights and public access are not always visible to the public" (xi)

PART 3: The Openness of Our Archives Affects the Inclusivity of Our Disciplines

Factors that reduce access to disciplinary archives disproportionately exclude people who have limited material resources or institutional capital. A more-accessible archive expands opportunities for people to participate in our fields.

In research contexts, the ability to work with materials depends on having the financial, institutional, political, and social capital to access and legally use that material in some form. For instance, not all scholars are able to obtain research funds to visit their primary sources in a historical society or to pay permissions fees to reproduce media in their publications. And, as I've implied in my discussion of Breadsword's video, not all commentators are equally able to obtain the legal guidance about copyright or the institutional support that can help them make a formal case for their fair use should a concern arise. Corpora thus serve as aggregators of privilege within specific fields, elevating the voices of people best positioned to work with the most compelling artifacts. Specialty areas that present a more level playing field for access to the primary and secondary sources at the heart of their conversations have the potential to be more inclusive than others.[10]

The openness of our archive also has implications for those of us who teach with texts from the long nineteenth century: our students have opportunities to engage with materials that may not have come to the attention of a wider scholarly community. By pursuing original research about lesser-known texts, students are able to participate in authentic learning activities and see themselves as active contributors to the discipline. Providing students with the chance to claim authority over some aspect of the archive is a powerful tool for student engagement that we should not take for granted.

To be sure, there is nothing inauthentic about inviting students to engage with a well-trodden archive. As our theoretical conversations shift, so too do opportunities to think with long-studied texts in new ways: the field renews itself. However, when faced with the challenge to compose 'original' work about canonical resources, the weight of existing commentary can lead many students to feel as though the best that they can do is to retrace others' footsteps. This is compounded by the fact that emerging scholars don't always have the same level of familiarity with the discussions that have come before them as do long-time

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10. This belief in the importance of inclusive structures of knowledge circulation motivates the open access publishing movement more broadly.

participants in these discussions. Even if a student pens an entirely new and productive reading of *Middlemarch*, their experience may feel the same to them as it would if they had interpreted the text in ways that experts view to be deeply conventional.[11] There are still good reasons to assign essays on *Middlemarch*, but there is a value for writers and facilitators alike in creating opportunities for students to explore 'new' territories as well.

Here's where we're back in the world of open pedagogy. Consider how the conversation can change when we change the *task* and *potential audience* for a guided project in the humanities. Many courses in the present day culminate in what David Wiley refers to as a "disposable assignment"—a research paper or persuasive close reading that enters the Learning Management System and never leaves it, save perhaps for an evaluatory review by the instructor and (one hopes) a cursory glance by students once their grades have been posted ("What is Open Pedagogy?")[12] If instead, students work together to compose a resource that has a life outside of the classroom, the instructor becomes a facilitator whose goal is to support students in communicating their work rather than primarily taking on the role of arbiter-assessor. If these students are working on a lesser-known portion of the archive, they're faced with a genuine need to do the kind of background research into their texts' social contexts that will help their audience grasp their arguments. This serves as excellent practice for the work that many established scholars do in the discipline. It also gives students the opportunity to develop arguments about a text's broader significance by synthesizing existing conversations

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11. This canonical text dynamic can take multiple forms. Emerging scholars may fail to see the striking originality of their work and let it wither, unseen, in a Learning Management System. On the other hand, as I am reminded often in my role as a composition instructor, emerging writers who explore 'clichéd' concepts are often generating ideas that are *new to them*, and this is something to be celebrated in the classroom. From the other side of the red pen, however, it can be easy to dismiss real learning as unoriginality when you are reading yet another paper on whether Viktor Frankenstein was the real monster all along. Allowing students to work with less-familiar texts can help instructors recognize the scope of students' engagement with the discipline in more critical ways—as well as more generous ones.

12. The "What is Open Pedagogy?" article I cite in this section emerged before recent discussions of open pedagogy led David Wiley to shift some of his terminologies. In this article, he uses "open pedagogy" to refer to activities that are "impossible without the permissions granted by open licenses"--that is, the explicit permission to remix, revise, reuse, retain, and redistribute a particular learning resource. Wiley has since re-associated this definition with the term "OER-enabled pedagogy" (OEP), registering a wider range of practices that may be seen to fall under the umbrella of "open pedagogy" ("OER-Enabled Pedagogy," DeRosa and Jhangiani).

in the field. And, if students are willing to share the products of their work openly, they can also view themselves as scholars who increase others' ability to access Victorian Studies.

PART 4: Our Research Processes Provide Insights About Current-Day Media Infrastructures and Economies

Our archive can help us see how contemporary media practices—especially our scholarly and teaching practices—are taking on new meanings as technologies and institutions change around us. Digital and legal factors that limit the use of public domain resources shed light on larger information access issues.

On its surface, the legal construct of the public domain is simpler than the legal construct of fair use.[13] But as the long nineteenth century teaches us, when technologies change, new media affordances emerge and new communities form around these affordances. In turn, because these affordances and communities are commodifiable, new disputes emerge about who has the right to use and profit from these media.

Let's consider an example of these economies in action:
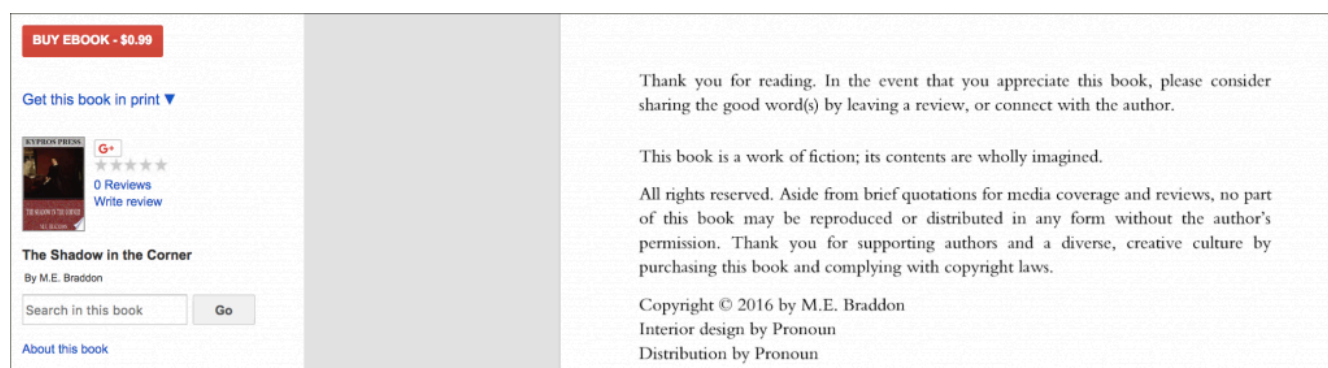
Google Books preview page for a reprinted nineteenth-century tale. Click on the image for a magnified view or visit the media transcript appendix for a text version.

This screenshot features a Google Books listing of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1879 story "The Shadow in the Corner." In an unintended appeal to the few Braddon fans who happen to be

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13. Here again I am referring to the legal categories prevalent in the United States for reasons I mention in an earlier footnote. However, these constructions still have a wider impact for scholars outside of the US, as a robust archive of nineteenth-century media continues to be digitized and hosted by archives, universities, and others located in the United States.

ghost-whisperers, the seller claims that Braddon's copyright is active as of 2016 and encourages readers to connect with the author to express their appreciation.

Here's where we can put on our [Critical Information Studies](#) hats to explore this statement's context and potential impact. While selling a text that is in the public domain is completely above-board, this publisher's attempt to *limit others' rights to do the same* with that text is not. This digital artifact is clearly the product of an ebook-on-demand industry that has grown so cheap and efficient that the accuracy of copyright pages isn't of concern to the gatekeepers at Google Books.[14] It is also possible that no deliberate falsehood was intended: the Braddon cover page may have auto-generated by a computer program, and this ebook may simply be too minor a piece in a larger collection of digitized texts for the producer to feel like customizing appropriately. Regardless of intention, however, it is striking to see such an ardent appeal to readers to respect a fraudulent copyright claim and to think about how different audiences might respond. It is also striking to see this text indirectly authorized by Google, who may well get a small share of this text's proceeds.

While we're on the subject of Google, let's look at an example of the tech giant's own messages to its readers:

- **Public Domain or Public Domain in the United States, Google-digitized:** In addition to the terms for works that are in the Public Domain or in the Public Domain in the United States above, the following statement applies: The digital images and OCR of this work were produced by Google, Inc. (indicated by a watermark on each page in the PageTurner). Google requests that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially. The images are provided for educational, scholarly, non-commercial purposes.

  Note: There are no restrictions on use of text transcribed from the images, or paraphrased or translated using the images.

Screenshot of the HathiTrust usage guidelines for the Google-digitized public domain scans hosted on the site. Image captured in April 2018. (Click on the image for a magnified view or visit the [media transcript appendix](#) for a text version.)

This statement appears on the usage guidelines page for the HathiTrust Digital Library, a treasure-trove of scanned primary texts that draws its collection from a range of libraries and

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14. Whitney Trettien has similar print-on-demand phenomenon in compelling detail in "A Deep History of Electronic Textuality: The Case of English Reprints of Jhon Milton Areopagitica."

archives, many of them publicly-funded. A huge percentage of the nineteenth-century texts in this collection are designated as "Public Domain, Google Digitized."

But what does the sentence "Google requests that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially" actually *mean*? Does Google think it is acceptable for me to re-host the images if I do so non-commercially, or is "used commercially" simply the last item in a list of prohibited acts? Textbooks are educational—can a commercial textbook feature a photo of *Jane Eyre's* Google-watermarked cover page? Journals are scholarly, but they are also big business—would Google want Elsevier to profit from an article that features one of these image scans? Is it asking for a cut?

More importantly, if this text is in the public domain and I'm writing in the United States, should I *care* what Google would prefer I—or my students—do with these scans? Is Google's request even legally binding? One of the clearest precedents we have for questions like this is a 1999 U.S. ruling that reproductions that are intended to 'faithfully' depict an art object or text in the public domain are also in the public domain (Stokes 136).[15] In theory, then, this ownership claim should be just as spurious as that of the sketchy Google ebook-seller we've just discussed. But what does it mean for Victorian Studies if Google's request *is* legally binding?

Alternatively, what does it mean if it *isn't* binding but we—or other scholars and students—believe that it is? Or if it *isn't* binding but university representatives or publishers encourage us to leave the reproductions out of our work just to be on the safe side?[16]

Because so many nineteenth-century texts are in the public domain, questions about the worth of an author's creative productions aren't at the forefront of our decision-making about media reuse. Thus, we are better positioned to spot ambiguous rhetorical strategies like Google's or attempts to redefine what a "faithful" reproduction means. Put differently, if Barthes' figurative "death of the author" helped to reshape the way we think about our methods, in today's environment, the fact that our authors are literally dead can help us understand how larger institutions affect access to those authors' texts.

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15. The ruling stated that a photograph that is a "substantially exact reproduction" of a painting in the public domain would be acceptable for someone to use without paying royalties (Stokes 136 citing Bridgeman Art Library v. Corel Corp., 36 F. Supp. 2d 191 [S.D.N.Y. 1999]).
16. Jason Mazzone expresses particular concern about this last possibility, which he notes to be a reality in many writers' experience (Mazzone 3).

To torture yet another critical phrase, the medium is the message, but the mess left on our hands when we work with that medium is *also* the message. If scholars don't pay attention to that mess now, our field's ability to welcome a wider and more diverse range of participants into our conversations will suffer for it. This vigilance is the work of Victorian Studies too.

As we move forward, it's time to ask where we should direct this vigilance, and one answer is the scholarly publishing industry many of us participate in as a precondition of academic employment.

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PUBLICATIONS AND PROVOCATIONS

The 21st-Century Publishing Landscape

In order to understand the questions we should be asking about our primary and secondary sources, we must first understand the relationships among current-day academic publishing institutions. In this section, I highlight the ways in which the forms, reading platforms, and distribution structures associated with scholarly publishing increasingly reflect the efforts of a few influential corporations to restrict the reuse of texts, to commodify user data, and to maintain negotiating power over public institutions. I argue that this matters for Victorian studies because such business models actively redefine our relationship to the nineteenth-century archive and work against many scholars' central motivations for writing and teaching. By devoting more attention to these concerns, we have the opportunity both to improve our own discipline and to make an impact on other fields by illustrating how writing and power operate in concert.

Broader Contexts

Scholars in literary studies are becoming increasingly aware of the ways in which social and structural inequalities stratify the academy along lines of privilege. These compounding factors affect every institution of higher learning and research, although their manifestations differ depending on the institution's relationship to its community and to broader legal systems.

Writ large, it can be easy to for us recognize the systems that influence how citizens with the most and the least power in society interact with educational and scholarly media. Some government policies reduce access to texts in ways that disproportionately affect low-income people. To name one example, China's "Great Firewall" filters access to information sources and alters the kinds of texts that people feel comfortable publishing (Zhi-Jin Zhong et al). Because educational opportunities are often linked to privilege, such statewide policies combine with social and economic factors to direct the academic conversations students gain exposure to. As an illustration of this dynamic, one study observed that Chinese college students who were proficient in English and had studied abroad were more likely to use Google to access academic articles published outside of China (Fu and Karan 2750-51). This is significant because many of the search engines supported by the state provide only partial

access to work published outside of the country. China also limits access to Wikipedia, thus preventing citizens from either learning from or contributing to a knowledge commons that many students use as a first step in research (OONI).

By contrast, there are other public policies that expand access to academic research. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Funding Council and Research Councils UK, (**HEFC and RCUK**), have not only required that results from projects that receive public funds be circulated in open-access publications, but they have also included open-access publishing as a prerequisite for inclusion in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (MIT Open Access Task Force 6-7). Open Access (**OA**) policies aim to level the playing field for internet users to explore academic publications. They also reframe open-access publishing as worthy of respect, an important shift when we consider how much the prestige of a journal can affect its desirability for scholars and tenure committees. As a result, more readers in the United Kingdom and many other countries are able to read authors' works.

Overarching currents like these establish the basic parameters for our discussions about contemporary authorship and often determine their focus, but conversations about policy at a governmental scope don't capture the whole picture. What is less obvious are the institution-specific policies that intersect with one another to shape media access within these broader legal systems. We ignore these dynamics at our cost: policies at the level of industry, university, or college affect how we are able to write, speak, and teach. Scholars, students, and the public have the opportunity to participate in these institutions in ways that shift our trajectory toward a more accessible knowledge commons. First, however, we need to address a lack of awareness about how scholarly and educational texts are situated in the present day.

Members of the **scholarly community** are already working to change this by investigating how the publishing industry's economic and legal relationship to universities, individual authors, and peer reviewers can affect academic freedom. It's worth noting, however, that the primary drivers of these conversations tend to be authors in the sciences and social sciences rather than the humanities. There are many reasons for this. In a field such as medicine where the purpose of publishing is, at least on its surface, to limit the amount of human suffering in the world, forces that reduce the spread of knowledge take on a sinister dimension. Moreover, the direct influence of publishing norms on researchers' output is often more obvious in the sciences and social sciences because scholars in these fields tend to rely more on grant funding to do their work. The ability to publish in high-impact journals often correlates with increased funding for future research, meaning that the publishers, editors, and peer reviewers affiliated with high-impact journals play a particularly visible role in shaping a field's research directions. When

the profit motivations of these intermediary figures seem at odds with the motivations of the scientific community, scholars see the benefit in digging deeper.

In contrast, no one's bodily health depends on our ability to access the latest volume of *Victorian Studies* or *PMLA.* This dynamic has a plus side in that it makes it more difficult for publishers or aggregators to set a high price for humanities publications. However, it also makes it less likely for us to view a lack of access to our scholarship as an urgent problem. Yet for humanities scholars to leave the main part of access advocacy to other disciplines is a mistake. Those who study the long nineteenth century are well-positioned to recognize how the broader and more-localized legal policies associated with our writing intersect. Our work and our teaching depend on our interactions with scholarly publications as well as with archives of physical texts and public domain materials. We are also methodologically well-prepared to imagine ways to disrupt the practices that restrict our research and teaching.

Monopolizing; Monopolicing

What, then, does the most influential portion of the English-language scholarly ecosystem look like? Information scholar Joe Karaganis can set the stage for us with his description of how publishing industries have evolved over the past thirty years (6). Thanks in large part to the ability to share information through digital networks, he observes,

> by 2013, five companies—Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor and Francis, and Sage—published 50 percent of all research papers, rising as high as 70 percent in the social sciences (Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon 2015). In textbooks, similar processes of consolidation left three publishers—Pearson, McGraw-Hill, and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt—in command of over half the Anglophone market by 2014, and in positions, together with a handful of technology companies, to dominate the emerging fields of digital delivery and learning platforms. (Karaganis 6)
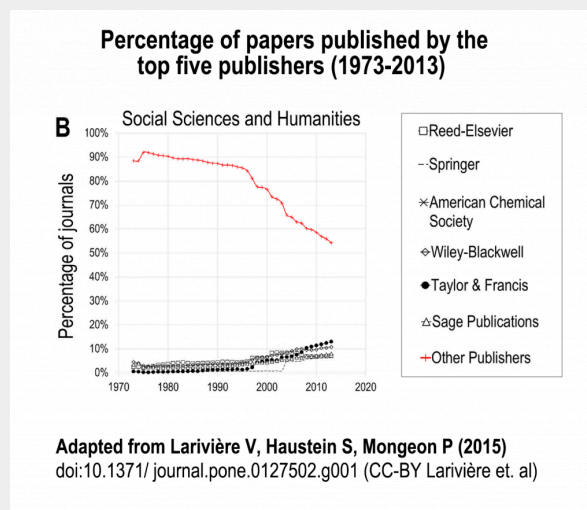
In her examination of the economics of scholarly production and open access, Heather Morrison connects dollar amounts to these monopolies, highlighting the gulf between publisher profits and the rewards offered to the scholars involved in article creation and peer review. As of 2013, she notes, scholarly publishers collected US\$8 billion in revenue, which amounts to profit margins "typically in the 30–40 percent range" for the largest players (Morrison).[1] Even though there are real costs associated with coordinating, marketing, hosting,

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1. For reference, Larivière et al. point out, in 2014, pharmaceutical giant Pfizer had a 42% profit margin (10). They add that several of the big five publishers had profit margins above the "Industrial &

and printing an academic journal, Morrison stresses, publishers do not actually bear much of this burden. She argues that publishers can make such high profits because of "the large percentage of the work that is done on a voluntary basis by scholars paid through university salaries, and in-kind support that is generally available at universities, such as computers, software, and connectivity" (Morrison).
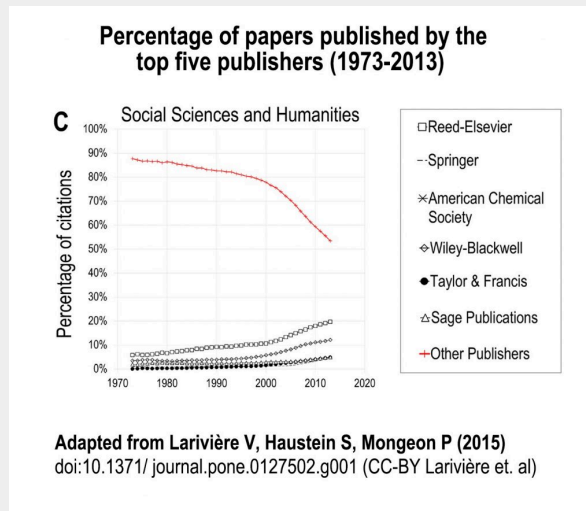
There is a silver lining for humanists in these numbers. In academic journal contexts, at least, the five multinational publishers that dominate the sciences have found it comparatively difficult to obtain a foothold over more than twenty percent of the market for the humanities and arts (Larivière et al. 2). However, this does not lessen the need to ask critical questions about who we include or exclude when we publish scholarship in our field. For-profit institutions control much of our archive at points upstream by shaping how we interact with scholarly databases.

Publishing Changes in the Social Sciences and Humanities (1973-2013)

Percentage of papers published by the top five publishers (1973-2013)

B   Social Sciences and Humanities

Legend:
- □ Reed-Elsevier
- -- Springer
- ✳ American Chemical Society
- ◇ Wiley-Blackwell
- ● Taylor & Francis
- △ Sage Publications
- + Other Publishers

Percentage of journals (y-axis: 0%–100%); x-axis years 1970–2020

Adapted from Larivière V, Haustein S, Mongeon P (2015)
doi:10.1371/ journal.pone.0127502.g001 (CC-BY Larivière et. al)

Commercial Bank of China (29%) and far above Hyundai Motors (10%), which comprise the most profitable drug, bank, and auto companies among the top 10 biggest companies respectively" (Larivière et al. 10).

between 1973 and 2013, percentage of papers
published by "other publishers" goes sharply
down from around 90% to less than 50%. Each
of the big five publishers' percentages go up
during this span, although the rate is shallower
for all of them.

**Percentage of papers published by the
top five publishers (1973-2013)**

C   Social Sciences and Humanities

Percentage of citations

□ Reed-Elsevier
-- Springer
✕ American Chemical
   Society
◇ Wiley-Blackwell
● Taylor & Francis
△ Sage Publications
+ Other Publishers

Adapted from Larivière V, Haustein S, Mongeon P (2015)
doi:10.1371/ journal.pone.0127502.g001 (CC-BY Larivière et. al)

'Big Five' publishers have a low market share in the social sciences and humanities compared to
the STEM fields, but their influence has been rising in the years since digital publishing and the
internet have arrived on the scene (Larivière et al., Bergstrom et al. 9425).

As publishers' profits from scholarly publications increase, a similar consolidation of power is
occurring for educational texts. Profit margins for textbooks far exceed the profit margins that
exist in most other businesses. As we will explore shortly, corporations use similar strategies to
achieve these profit margins in research and educational publishing. For content distributors,
there is a significant incentive to maintain control over the publishing landscape, as this is a
profitable industry. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the consumer
price index for college textbooks increased by 88% between 2006 and 2016. By way of contrast,
when we omit college textbook prices, the average price index increase for college tuition and
fees, elementary and high school tuition and fees, childcare and nursery school, technical and

business school tuition and fees, and housing at school (excluding board) combined was 50%. During this 10-year period, the price index increase for all items the CPI measures was 21%[2]

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2. The Bureau of Labor Statistics website features an interactive version of the graph below as well as a machine-readable table of chart data.

United States Consumer Price Index Increases for Textbooks 2006-2016)

Consumer price indexes for tuition and school-related items, not seasonally adjusted, January 2006–July 2016

January 2006=100

— All items
····· College tuition and fees
— Elementary and high school tuition and fees
— Childcare and nursery school
— Technical and business school tuition and fees
— Housing at school, excluding board
— College textbooks
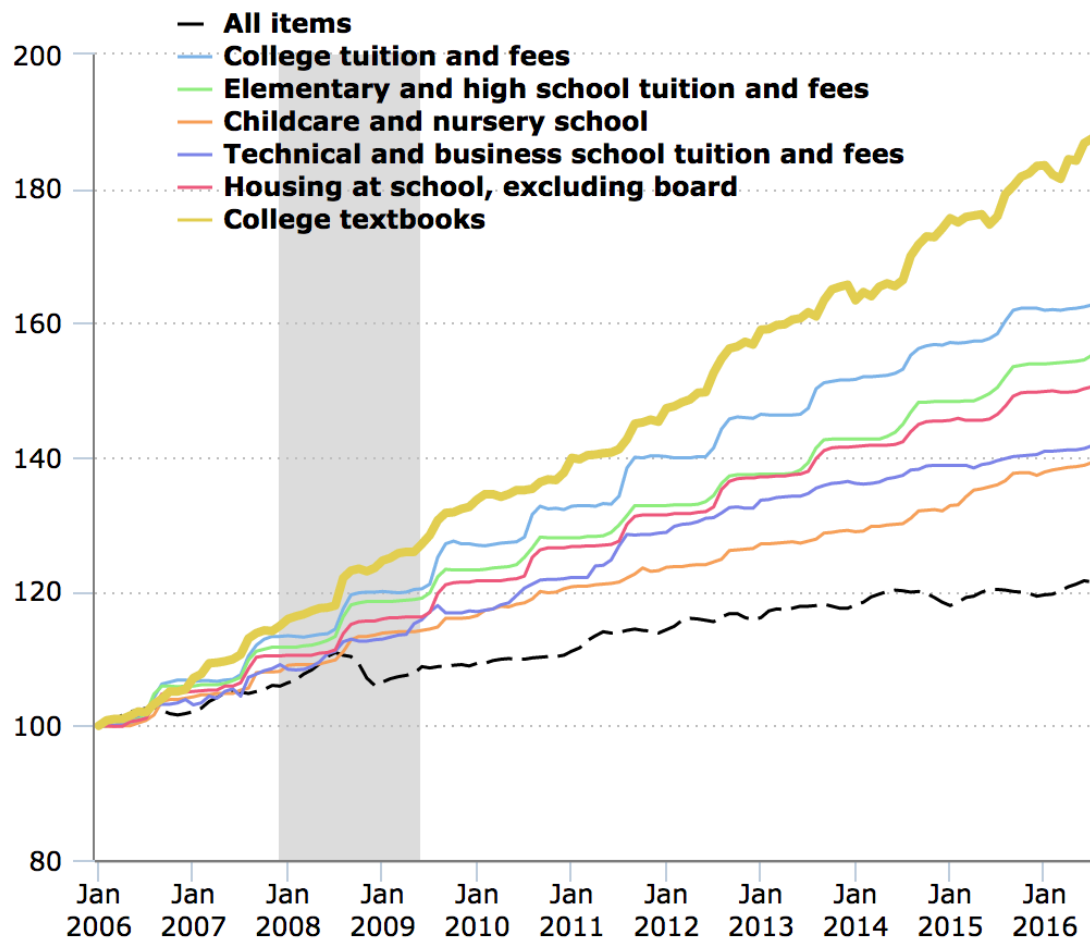
Shaded area represents recession, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A major site of publishers' growth is in digital sales, an impact that is so significant that educational publishers are beginning to identify more with ebook, database, and courseware production than print publication. To some degree, digital objects are desirable because they

often have lower production costs: industries simply pay for software development and server storage rather than for the cost of printing and physical distribution. Yet for the most part, digital publishing is an asset because it allows companies to exert continued power over a piece of media even after readers have purchased it. As industry giant Cengage itself boasts in its March 2018 report to shareholders, "In contrast to print publications, our digital products cannot be resold or transferred. We therefore realize revenue from every end user" ("Annual Report" 6). In keeping with larger trends in the industry, Cengage explains, "Our sales, marketing & services teams have shifted over the last few years from a textbook to a software sales & support model" ("Annual Report" 6, as cited in Wagstaff).

Forms and Platforms After the Digital Turn

The digital technologies that continue to reduce publishers' overheads for production and circulation are a source of anxiety for those same publishers. Just as occurred during the nineteenth century, forms of mechanical reproduction in the present day are rapidly increasing audiences' ability to access and redistribute texts on their own account. And, as is often the case, anxiety and influence combine to inspire innovative new forms of policing content. Publishers have felt the need to change their own distribution channels as well as the forms of texts that users can access, thereby reducing users' ability to alter or share media. This has implications for our reading and writing practices and for the public institutions that sustain them.

Digital Rights Management In Practice

One way that publishers have sought to maintain control over texts is by shifting away from an ownership model to a mediated access model for articles and textbooks (Kenneally 1180-81, 1188). Rather than selling an object to purchasers, many companies offer the temporary ability to download a piece of media or view it within a rights-restricted reading platform.

A key advantage of this approach is that it allows companies to redefine our legal relationship to content. When companies sell licenses to *access* texts rather than transferring ownership of those texts, they can compel users to agree to 'terms of service' contracts as a precondition for viewing the media. Indeed, legal scholar Michael Kenneally notes, among other things, licensing agreements often require readers to relinquish

Purchase *   Save for later

Online   ⌄

Article Purchase
24 hours access for USD 50.00

* Local tax will be added as applicable

Paywalls in practice: if an instructor whose institution does not provide access to Taylor & Francis Online is interested in reading the 2010 article "Investigating the Capacity of Self and Peer Assessment Activities to Engage Students and Promote Learning," their only advertised option is to rent article access. For $50, they can receive access to the article for 24 hours. (Screenshot captured 6 February 2019.)

even their right to fair use of that media (Kenneally 1206). This means that users are no longer permitted to do things such as reproduce images or text in educational resources or to create derivative works for the purpose of critique.

Kenneally points out the absurdity of such a requirement, observing that it is very difficult for people to accurately estimate their likelihood of using media before they access that media in the first place (1206). By the time a user can recognize how they might criticize an artifact or draw from it in their own work, it is often too late for them to do so without great difficulty. Rather than simply deciding how to best approach their critique or reuse, they must "weigh the hassle of renegotiating with the commandeering rights-holder (or the risk of proceeding with the fair use despite the contractual prohibition) against the difficulty of internalizing the benefits that the fair use would create" (1206). Kenneally concludes that when companies impose licensing agreements of this type, they can "chill value-creating fair uses in a way that affects society and not just the parties to the argument" (1206). Ultimately, licensing arrangements allow publishers to exert more authority over readers' practices, create an incentive for readers or libraries to continue subscribing to the publisher's services, and allow publishers to monitor data about user interactions.
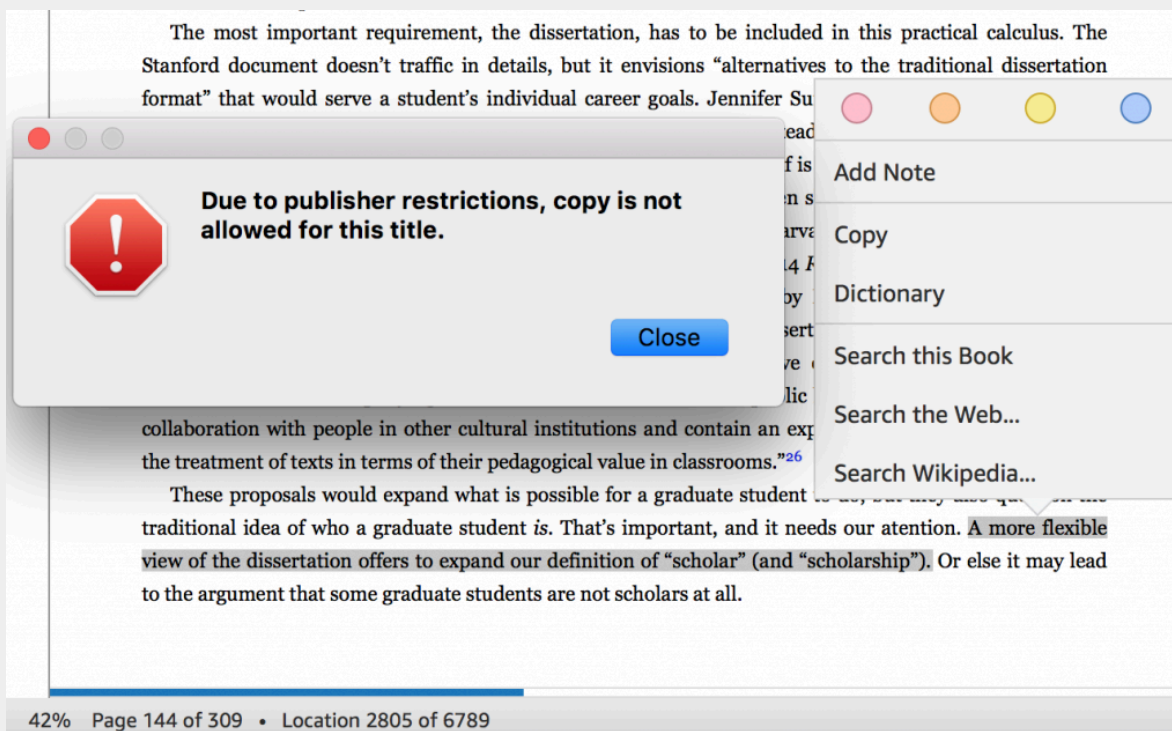
Licensing agreements not only affect the way we integrate content into our articles or YouTube videos, but they also affect our everyday reading practices before we ever pick up our pens to write. This is particularly noteworthy at a time when technological developments are allowing scholars to interact with texts in new and productive ways. For one thing, the reading platforms and file formats that publishers offer are often deliberately limited by **Digital Rights Management** (**DRM**) technologies. Yet as we're reminded by the Rebus Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports open educational resource creators, "the issue when it comes to scholarly reading is that it is a much more dynamic, active, and interactive process that is simply not supported by existing platforms ("Considering Librarians"). The librarians that Rebus interviewed suggest that the large size and profit motivations of the corporations that sell aggregator services actively reduce the level of creativity afforded to readers. When vendors design proprietary platforms for licensed content, "because that vendor is having to work with so many different publishers with so many different levels of risk that they're willing to take, they end up going with the lowest common denominator" ("Considering Librarians").

Limited reading platforms are especially frustrating at a time when new trends in application development are expanding how writers can speak to one another in the margins, extra-illustrate their notes, or reorganize and juxtapose quotations in a dynamic network. These developments often arise from many different collaborators building on one another's tools for the sake of improving them for everyone. But our largest academic content providers have an incentive to bind readers to the kinds of "closed-silo systems" that are the least friendly

to piracy and most pleasing to shareholders ("Considering Librarians").[3] Such limitations are antithetical to creative forms of scholarly reading and to collaborative authorship.

3. Later in this project I will outline ways for humanities scholars to actively improve platforms for reading and writing even if those scholars do not have coding skills. To support my case in the present moment, I'll simply quote from the "Restrictions and Requirements" section in the Software License Agreement for Adobe Digital Editions, the platform of choice for ProQuest's Ebook collection as of 2019. Item 4.2 in the agreement states: "Customer agrees that it will not use the Software other than as permitted by this agreement and that it will not use the Software in a manner inconsistent with its design or Documentation." Item 4.3 states: "Except as expressly permitted in Sections 2 or 16, Customer may not modify, port, adapt, or translate the Software." In other words, no one is allowed to improve upon the current design by adding additional functionalities without Adobe's permission. Item 4.4 warns against reverse engineering: "except as otherwise expressly permitted in Section 16.1, Customer will not reverse engineer, decompile, disassemble, or otherwise attempt to discover the source code of the Software." Translated: don't try to get into Adobe Digital Editions's code, and absolutely don't borrow code snippets to use in other projects ("4.5.10 Software License Agreement"). This exists in stark contrast to the open-source ethos that fuels many software projects online.

Platforms in Action

The most important requirement, the dissertation, has to be included in this practical calculus. The Stanford document doesn't traffic in details, but it envisions "alternatives to the traditional dissertation format" that would serve a student's individual career goals. Jennifer Su...

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Dictionary

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Search Wikipedia...

collaboration with people in other cultural institutions and contain an exp... the treatment of texts in terms of their pedagogical value in classrooms."[26]

These proposals would expand what is possible for a graduate student ... traditional idea of who a graduate student *is*. That's important, and it needs our atention. A more flexible view of the dissertation offers to expand our definition of "scholar" (and "scholarship"). Or else it may lead to the argument that some graduate students are not scholars at all.

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This is a book I purchased through Amazon and can only access as a MOBI file within the proprietary Kindle app. The publisher has restricted even small amounts of copy-pasting in the text. (The text pictured here is Leonard Cassuto's *The Graduate School Mess.*)
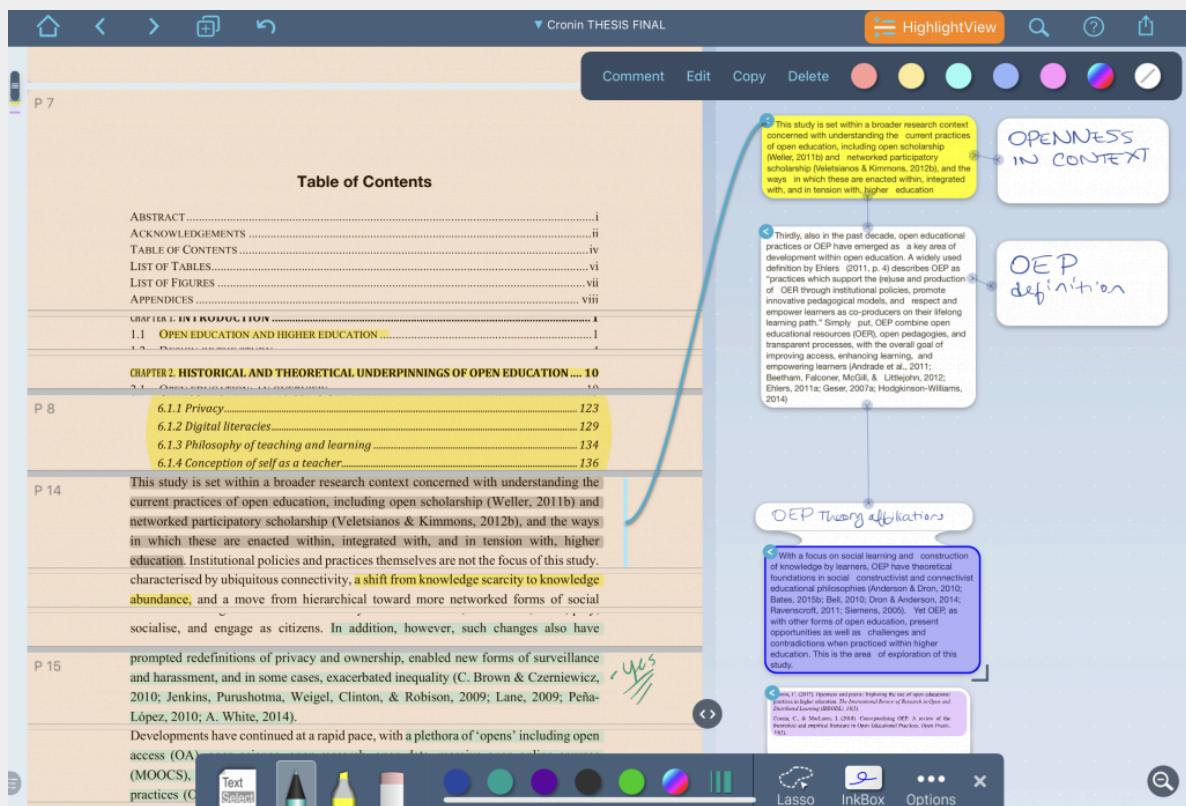
For *unrestricted* PDFs, apps such as LiquidText (pictured) allow scholars to view all of their highlights within a document at once, quickly copy-paste for notetaking, organize their notes into a mind-map, and draw on all of these notes using a stylus. (Here, I am reading Catherine Cronin's excellent thesis, *Openness and Praxis.*)

Freewheeling and Big Dealing

In addition to artificially restricting the forms we use to read and write, academic content distributors use legal contracts to maintain and elevate their already-high profit margins. This disrupts the broader knowledge ecosystem and has disproportionately negative effects on the students, scholars, and institutions who are already at a financial or infrastructural disadvantage.

Steep journal prices are indirectly handed down to researchers, students, and the public through what are called "Big Deal" or "bundled" journal packages. In theory, these packages

offer university libraries greater access to a wider range of journals, and this is technically true. However, in practice, 'big deal' contract markets are distorted, something that has a marked effect on literary scholars' archives. Market distortions across different institutional contexts are particularly striking. Indeed, after making a series of **FOIA** requests and analyzing the resulting contract data, Bergstrom et al. argued: "There is ample evidence that large publishers practice price discrimination and that they have been able to set prices well above average costs" (9428). They add:

> even with the institution-specific discounts resulting from bundled purchases, the prices per citation charged to large PhD-granting universities by major commercial publishers are much higher than those charged by major nonprofit publishers. Among the commercial publishers in our study, Elsevier's prices per citation are nearly 3 times those charged by the nonprofits, whereas Emerald, Sage, and Taylor & Francis have prices per citation that are roughly 10 times those of the nonprofits. (9429)

Put a different way, if I received grant funding from the University of Wisconsin to do archival research, the journal contract that would allow UW–Madison affiliates to read the fruits of my state-funded labor might cost three times more if I published with Elsevier than if I published the same paper with a nonprofit academic publisher.

Statistics such as these are beginning to rankle academics, legislators, and the public,[4] and this is heralding some dramatic sea-changes in the scholarly ecosystem. More institutions are refusing to accept the agreements brokered by highly profit-driven publishers and aggregators. However, the largest publishers and aggregators are responding to these changes by shifting their approach to scholarly journal publishing, library licensing, and textbook distribution. Their strategies for doing so should concern scholars, instructors, and students alike: these corporations seek to redirect the conversation about open publishing in ways that maximize their own profits as well as expand their control over other aspects of the academic process.

To attach these claims to specific strategies, let's consider a case study. In late February 2019, the University of California system rocked the world of scholarly communications by deciding that its libraries would not renew their contract with Elsevier for online journal access. This decision was partly motivated by the burden Elsevier placed on the system. The contract the university had signed with Elsevier in 2014 amounted to more than fifty million dollars spent on Elsevier's services over the course of four years, and Elsevier's prices continue to rise. In a 2019 UC-Berkeley news bulletin about the decision not to sign a new contract, Librarian

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4. Some people occupy more than one of these designations at once, of course.

Jeffrey MacKie-Mason informed the community that during renegotiations, the university had expressed an interest in reducing their Elsevier subscription fees, which were by this point "25 percent of UC system-wide journal costs" (Kell).[5]

Elsevier Subscription Fees – University of California (2014-2018)[6]

Year	Total Cost
2014	$9,505,109.42
2015	$9,742,737.43
2016	$9,986,305.91
2017	$10,260,928.63
2018	$10,568,756.54

Source: Elsevier Subscription Agreement – Regents of the University of California, 9 April 2014.

While this was certainly a dispute over pricing, at its heart, it was a battle over how freely university faculty's publications would circulate and how willing Elsevier would be to shift its business model to accommodate this. In Mackie-Mason's telling, a key priority for the University of California was to ensure "default open access publication for UC authors: that is, that Elsevier would publish an author's work open access unless the author didn't want to" (Kell). Elsevier was willing to consider the open-access agreement for UC authors, but only

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5. This number is interesting in part because the University of California system has historically done an excellent job of negotiating their contract down from what Elsevier proposes for them. In contrast with Elsevier's traditional 5% price increase policy for R1 institutions, the university was able to reduce their yearly increase rate to about 1.5% by 2013, a rate that was to increase to about 3% by 2018 (Bergstrom et al. 9429, "Elsevier Subscription Agreement" 8). According to Bergstrom's estimations, "If they had acceded to Elsevier's requests for annual increases of 5%, their annual subscription price in 2013 would have been nearly $13 million instead of the $9.3 million that they contracted to pay in 2013" (9429).

6. Some states require publicly funded agencies to disclose information about their financial contracts upon request, effectively restricting publishers' ability to require that libraries sign nondisclosure agreements. This is why we are able to dig deeper into the kinds of costs and restrictions associated with the University of California system's Elsevier contract for the previous four years.

if the university agreed to an 80% increase in payments, which amounted to "an additional $30 million over a three-year contract" (Kell). After an exchange of proposals and counter-proposals, the UC system let Elsevier know that they believed that the latest terms Elsevier had offered still did not address their own priorities for open-access publishing, and Elsevier pivoted to a new strategy. In MacKie-Mason's words, despite knowing that the UC negotiators were dissatisfied,

> [Elsevier] approached our faculty directly — faculty who are editors of Elsevier journals, who they have working relationships with — and also the media, and presented a rosy view of the offer they'd made to us. Their characterization of the offer left things out, and they didn't mention what we'd proposed as conditions. They went public with it. So, we announced the end. (Kell)

Given the information available, it is difficult to pinpoint Elsevier's exact motivations for this strategy. What is clear, however, is that Elsevier has a massive financial stake in directing the terms under which academics pivot to open forms of publication.

Their PR approaches reflect this. In public statements, major distributors such as Elsevier consistently try to paint a rosy picture of their investment in a knowledge commons, but there are strings attached. (Or rather, there are purse strings attached, and the beneficiary is typically the publisher rather than the public.) In her 2013 exploration of scholarly communication economics, Heather Morrison puts this in context by explaining the philosophy and strategy that Elsevier continues to pursue in the present day. When Elsevier describes its visions for "universal access" to content, she notes, it has a very specific business model in mind: "the basic idea is that if everyone who can afford to subscribe for pay–per–view to Elsevier's resources does, and this is supplemented by a little bit of charitable access, then everyone has access" (Morrison). What should trouble us is that 'open access' models of this variety centralize power in the hands of the organizations which have the most to gain from ensuring that they are the only conduit for content. Morrison explains:

> The major problem with this [model] is who owns the information. Elsevier is a corporation, an organization with a mission of maximizing profits to shareholders. As long as Elsevier continues a policy of full copyright transfer by authors [who publish in its journals], Elsevier is free to define the payment terms of its universal access. That is, everyone can have access — provided that they are willing to pay on Elsevier's terms. Or, Elsevier could abandon this approach altogether in favor of another seen as more profitable. (Morrison)

Because maintaining content marketability depends on restricting access, publishers have every incentive to continue limiting fair use by placing restrictive licenses in between the public and scholarly materials. Despite its optimistic rhetoric, little about Elsevier's mediated

and highly-commercialized model addresses the underlying power differentials that perpetuate unequal access to research and educational resources. More than this, providing conditional access to content actually increases the power differential between public and for-profit institutions and gives publishers more marketing power to boot.

Morrison's take on Elsevier's motivations may be cynical, but Elsevier's strategies during and after the University of California dispute do not lend themselves to a charitable interpretation. Of special note is the Open Access Strategy Manager job posting that appeared on Elsevier's Careers website on or near March 2, 2019.[7] We learn that the three primary reasons for the position are to:

- "promote a <u>positive policy environment</u> through engaging closely with leading research organisations and <u>helping the business develop</u> and deliver impactful solutions and flexible policy frameworks"
- "<u>support commercial goals</u> by working closely with other teams to develop win/win Open Access (OA) solutions for the <u>business and for the customer</u>"
- "<u>change the image</u> of Elsevier, so that we are <u>viewed as</u> an organisation which supports OA" (Open Access Strategy Manager, emphasis mine).

Commentators were quick to notice how Elsevier's description places emphasis on the "business" and the "customer;" the "commercial goals" of the publisher and the importance of "compliance," "upward reporting," "extracting data, and "deliverables." Likewise—in this listing, at least—being "*viewed as* an organization which supports OA" appears to take priority over actually supporting OA. While "previous employment for a commerical [sic] organisation" is listed as a requirement, on paper, the job description places little value on past involvement with open access organizations.[8] The company's response highlights the need for us to be on the lookout for moments when distributors present their goals as being the same as our goals. It also hints at the motivations we might fail to see if we do not put our formal and rhetorical analysis skills to work in these moments.

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7. The actual posting does not include a date, but <u>Google's first cache of the posting</u> appeared on March 2, 2019 at 17:49:40 GMT.
8. An active discussion emerged in the margins of the job posting as Hypothes.is annotators critiqued the description. Due credit goes to annotators *danamcfarland*, *ShorterPearson*, and *actualham* for their close-readings of this posting, and especially Dana McFarland for questioning the commercial credentials requested in the post ("Open Strategy Manager - CrowdLaaers").

In raising these points about Elsevier's commercial strategies, I am not arguing that it is wholly impossible for for-profits to advance educators' and researchers' goals. What I am saying, however, is that it is built into the soul and structure of commercial systems to work toward profit, and publishers' and distributors' goals don't consistently align with the primary goals of humanities scholarship and education. In the present moment, many publishers' financial motivations actively work against humanists' motivations to create inclusive classroom spaces and scholarly dialogues. For these reasons, we need to be more intentional about *where* and *under what conditions* we invite for-profit institutions into our conversations and classrooms. We need to pay more attention to *which rights* and *whose rights* we are signing away when we engage with our research platforms. We also need to think more carefully about the ripple effects associated with changes in our scholarly ecosystem.

In the closing sections of this chapter, let's consider some of these ripple effects in action, paying special attention to the changes that impact scholars of the long nineteenth century.

The Library, the Archive, and the Privatization of the Public Domain

As media piracy becomes more sophisticated and public sentiment shifts toward open access, major publishers are looking to diversify their market strategies. In addition to publishing monographs or providing access to articles, these institutions have begun to incorporate themselves into academic and educational workflows in new ways. They are embracing "vertical integration" strategies such as offering platforms, curated archives, and data analytics to appeal to customers (Posada and Chen 1, 8). One such vertical integration strategy is to direct traffic to company-held primary resources in addition to secondary ones. Scholars have taken note, and their warnings about "the privatization of the public domain" have taken on increased urgency in recent years.

The first thing we should recognize is that the privatization of the public domain is most feasible when financial pressures place archives and libraries in a bad position to bargain with the corporations who offer to digitize their collections. Evelyn Bottando's investigation of Google's library partnership program provides an apt illustration of how large organizations profit by directing the public's access to the digitized media they collect. Bottando explains that even when user access is 'free,' Google profits from hosting artifacts like Youtube videos and public domain resources because of the way this content enriches their data-gathering efforts and advertising revenues (Bottando 25, 114). Because Google is an established, private institution with a profit incentive for becoming a go-to research hub, it is able to offer

digitization services at a lower price and faster speed than other digitizers who might be bidding for a digitization contract (87). Yet because of this, the negotiating power is Google's. The result is that publicly-funded agencies face pressure to limit public access in ways that work against their mandate to increase public access. When, for instance, Bottando was speaking to Patrick Bazin of the Bibliothèque Municipal de Lyon, a library that had partnered with Google, she asked whether he was in a position to give Google's digital scans of his library's public domain books to another institution (86). Bazin's response: "No, because this is a *partnership*. Another institution could take this [these files] and it would hurt Google's business model" (86). Libraries aren't often in a position to demand that corporations grant them circulation rights over digitized resources with no strings attached. And so they compromise.

Faced with tight budgets and ever-increasing journal costs, libraries turn to digitization to preserve and circulate texts, a practice that allows them to host archives of fragile public domain texts off-site or deaccession them entirely.

Here's the rub, however: when public institutions like the Bibliothèque Municipal de Lyon are not in a position to grant open access to the public-domain scans of their works and when those same public domain texts are becoming increasingly more difficult for the everyday person to access, for-profit institutions become the most robust sources of public domain scans. Organizations like ProQuest (which owns the *British Periodicals Database* beloved by Victorian print culture scholars) have a seller's market for their resources. For a library that wants to provide users access to ProQuest's content, high subscription rates become one of the financial burdens that drain money away from the library's budget for stack maintenance. As a result, libraries have more incentive to jettison texts that are delicate or have low mainstream popularity.

Within Victorian studies, material culture scholars have called attention to digitization's repercussions for our archive, lamenting this vicious cycle of high database prices and shrinking stacks. Andrew Stauffer distills these concerns especially poignantly, arguing that to reduce the number of physical nineteenth-century texts in circulation is to lose the opportunity to read these texts for traces of their own past audiences (340). The dedication on the flyleaf, the flowers pressed between pages, and the sewing needle stored in a book for safekeeping—we lose the lion's share of these idiosyncratic traces when a few digital "surrogates" replace access to a much wider range of physical texts (336-37). The most strident skeptics of the digitization economy argue for material preservation, or at the very least, for the creation of high-quality and stable photographs of each individual text that is relocated out of the reach of archive visitors.

I'm persuaded by these concerns about the value of keeping a varied physical archive within reach of visitors, but I would also like us to think more strategically about access issues within the economic structures we cannot escape. It is an unavoidable truth that many libraries simply cannot afford to maintain collections of nineteenth-century texts if they even have them in the first place. Likewise, nor not all libraries are able to subscribe to repositories such as the *British Periodicals Database.* Although material copies of texts offer insights that cannot be gained through virtual surrogates, digitized primary source texts expand people's ability to explore at least *some* of the material traces Stauffer and others describe. This is especially a boon for poorly-funded libraries or people who cannot travel to visit physical texts for any number of reasons—finances or physical ailments among them. More than this, with new digital platforms and soaring storage capabilities, we have the opportunity to develop new ways of thinking with readers' material traces. Imagine, for instance, a platform that superimposed the marginalia from multiple copies of the first volume edition of *The Woman in White!* Imagine if libraries and individuals could contribute their scanned copies of the same edition for inclusion in the collection. What an interesting thing it would be to look at the patterns that might emerge in the margins...

Unfortunately, one of the things stopping us from exploring texts in this way is that the most centralized collections of nineteenth-century media exist behind paywalls that many students and scholars struggle to breach. Given what we know about the factors that foster or forestall access to institutions of higher education, we can see that the privatization of the public domain disproportionately restricts access to nineteenth-century primary sources for people who lack financial or institutional resources. It also confines a large proportion of our primary source encounters to the forms and platforms that publishers create rather than those that we design for our own research purposes.
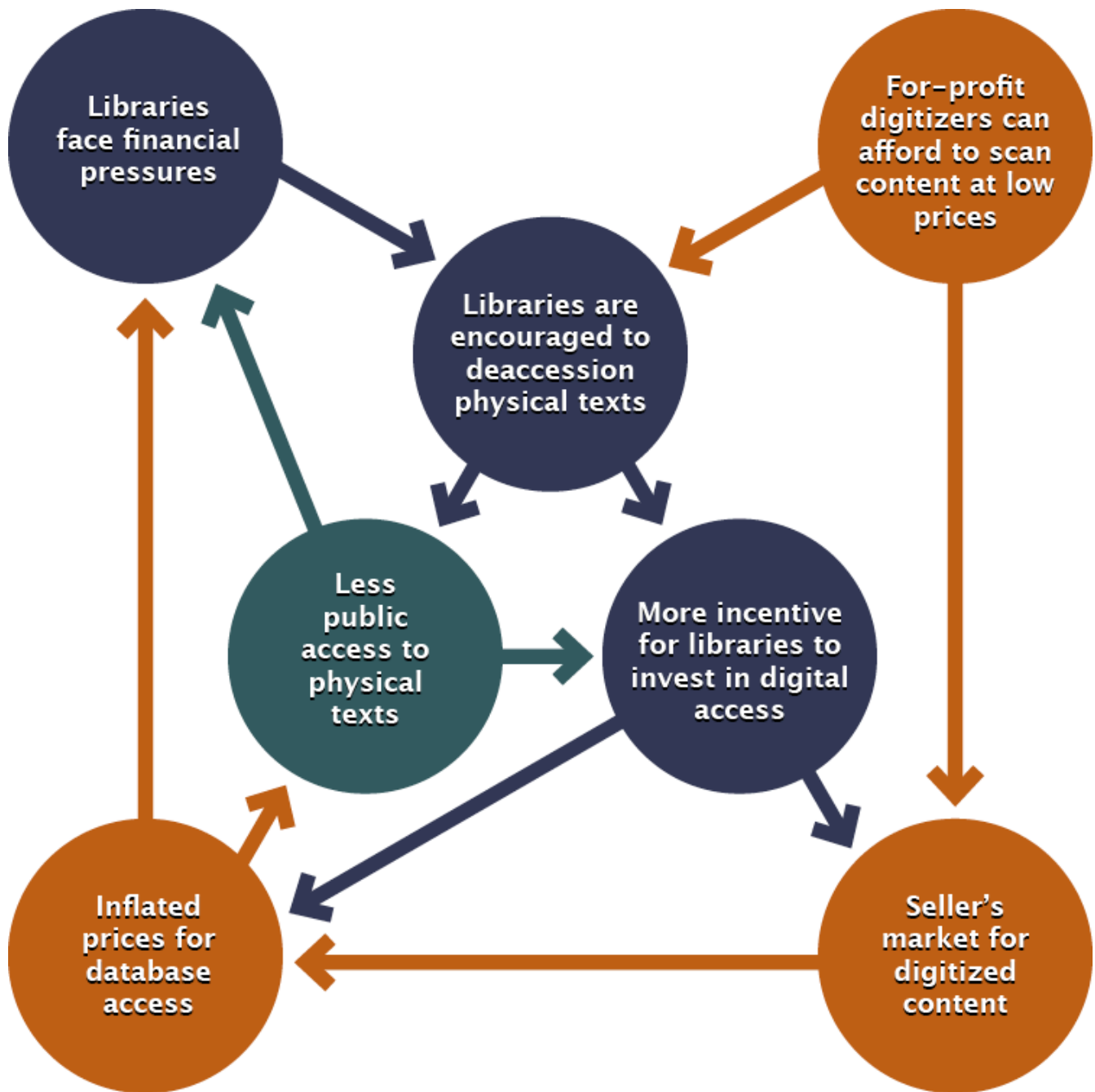
A tangled web: the privatization of the public domain reinforces the conditions that make the public domain susceptible to privatization. [Media transcript available.]

Reading With The Basilisk: Primary Research in a Post-EULA Era

"*But wait!*" an imaginary choir of colleagues cries out. "*Not all digitized texts are locked away in for-profit databases. Haven't you heard of the [HathiTrust Digital Library](#)? It is a massive treasure trove! It is well-organized; it has permalinks; it is freely accessible and searchable online.*"

The imaginary chorus is correct. The HathiTrust collection is a thing of wonder and beauty. It matters that it is freely accessible. It matters that it is stable. It is extremely important that it is so well-organized compared to other free archives of public domain content.

Yet I'm afraid that it is also the best example I can provide of a resource where all of the broad and troubling threads I've outlined in this chapter intertwine. HathiTrust may be an excellent resource for research, but it is hardly exempt from the profit motives and restrictive licenses that characterize much of the scholarly ecosystem today. It too has a role to play in redefining which nineteenth-century publications readers can most easily reuse in their work.

So far, I have suggested that corporate interest in commodifying access has changed our legal relationship to our primary and secondary sources. In my last section, I called attention to the statement that HathiTrust provides on its [public domain texts that have been Google-digitized](), noting that these texts feature the stern but ambiguous caveat: "Google requests that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially." I also explained that when it is attached to a public domain text, this firm but vague language is only persuasive in an environment in which organizations can legally impose restrictions on our public domain and fair use rights by using licenses as a precondition of accessing media. HathiTrust's public-facing documentation does not make it clear whether Google is simply asking us to do it a polite favor or if its "request" has legal teeth.[9]

But to some degree, the precise meaning of the word "request" is irrelevant here. To achieve its desired effect, all Google needs to do is suggest that it *might* be able to leverage its lawyers against those who rehost or remix these scans. One reason for this is that when litigating licensing disputes in the United States, courts have generally supported companies who have sought to enforce "clickwrap" and "browsewrap" licenses (Clark and Chawner). Clickwrap licenses are the pop-ups that prevent you from using a service until you click "I have read and agree to the terms of use." Browsewrap licenses are even more pernicious. In Michelle Garcia's succinct explanation in the *Campbell Law Review*," many Browsewrap contracts center

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9. Digging into [HathiTrust's "Datasets" page]() does yield some results, informing us that many "volumes were digitized by Google and are available through an [agreement with Google]() that must be signed on the behalf of researchers by an institutional sponsor" under the conditions that they "(1) can only be used for scholarly research purposes, (2) May not be used commercially, (3) May not be re-hosted or used to support publicly available search service, and (4) May not be shared with third parties," but this hardly clarifies what would actually happen to me if I were to remove the Google Watermark from a Victorian advertisement and include the image in this project.

on a "Terms of Service Agreement" whereby a user visits a website and by viewing the website, using the website or even *just navigating to* the website, the user agrees to be bound by the Terms of Service located elsewhere" (Garcia 35-36). Garcia points out the improbability of users actively consenting the these 'agreements,' noting that in some cases, the very act of navigating to the page on which the terms exist constitutes agreement with the terms (36). Whether or not Google's "request" is a formal browsewrap license, it resembles one enough to stymie readers who encounter it.

What all of this suggests is that in our current information ecosystem, the very act of *looking* at some of our primary sources enters us into an implied legal contract not to use them in ways that would otherwise be protected by law. We can think of these scans as basilisk texts, objects that freeze us into inaction when we merely set eyes on them. These books also resemble basilisks in another sense: they are "monstrous hybrids" that disrupt our ability to create new works because of their twin pulls toward two different species of content– common and commercial property. Here I've slipped into another jargon, borrowing from the language of sustainable design. In sustainability discussions, the term monstrous hybrid refers to "a product, component, or material that combines both technical and organic nutrients . . . in a way that cannot be easily separated, thereby rendering it unable to be recycled or reused be either system" ("Monstrous Hybrid"). How like a text that we can peer at and link to, but not excise from its restrictive license without labor and expense.

The proliferation of basilisk texts has implications for how we interact with HathiTrust and other archives like it, potentially reducing the variety of texts we can 'reuse and recycle.' As one case in point, in a 2013 study, Alex Clark and Brenda Chawner sought to understand the influence of platform limitations and EULAs on the accessibility of digitized New Zealand public domain texts.[10] In their research, they selected one hundred public domain texts and searched or each of them in six repositories (Google Books, Hathi Trust, Internet Archive, Early New Zealand Books, New Zealand Electronic Text Collection, and Project Gutenberg,) turning to Google and Bing searches if they found no copies in these archives (Clark and Chawner). Their results give us cause for concern:

> Out of a sample of 100 public domain books, only three are hosted by repositories that did not seek to restrict any form of subsequent use. Many repositories also impose significant barriers

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10. Clark and Chawner also provide an illuminating overview of some of the legal conversations related to copyright and the public domain in both the United States and New Zealand. Their article, "Enclosing the Public Domain," is worth reading for those interested in a more detailed and less US-focused account of the publishing landscape.

to access, with 48 percent (24) of all digitized books being hosted by at least one repository that restricts access. An exploratory study into the paid market for public domain books also revealed that 72 percent of digitized books within the sample are offered as paid downloads on at least one merchant Web site, with prices as high as US$9.99.[11]

Clark and Chawner found HathiTrust to be the most use-limited of the six repositories they used in their search. Out of the books surveyed, the authors found twenty-three in HathiTrust, but twenty-one of these—that is, 91% of the available HathiTrust texts—were restricted in some way. Restrictions included "[blocking] the cut and paste function, as well as the ability to download books as a single PDF file (a feature that is only available to users with login credentials from an institutional partner)" (Clark and Chawner). Like the proprietary platforms that ProQuest and other for-profit publishers impose over scholarly articles, HathiTrust's default settings for some public domain texts restrict creative forms of reading and scholarship.

The main reason for these restrictions is that much of the public domain content in HathiTrust is limited by the terms and conditions imposed by digitizers like Google. This is not especially surprising: HathiTrust came into being as a response to Google's library partnership program (Elkiss). Unfortunately, the ripple effects of HathiTrust's content limitations may be significant. Libraries under financial pressures may choose not to shoulder the cost of digitizing a text before deaccessioning it based on the availability of other digitized copies online. In this environment, a high percentage of Google-digitized resources represents a low percentage of texts that allow for creative autonomy over the nineteenth-century public domain. The 'monstrous hybrids' that make up this archive can only be repurposed under very specific circumstances that are often difficult for students and researchers to navigate.

An Aside:

Anecdotally, as one component of my critical edition project, I attempted to locate unrestricted

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11. The study's findings reflect a combination of licensing restrictions directed toward all internet users who seek to access their sample text and New-Zealand-specific public domain law. This means that if you were to replicate their study in the United States, Britain, or Europe, some of your percentages of accessible texts might be different. However, both the study's generalities and particulars are of significance to humanities scholars regardless of the countries in which they work.

public domain scans of all of the primary sources I referred to in my work. This took a significant amount of time, and it was only partially successful. For example, HathiTrust includes [multiple copies of the first volume edition](#) of *The Woman in White*. [Princeton's copy](#) is Google-digitized and thus use-restricted. Only one of the two copies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is listed as being unambiguously [in the public domain](#).

I found that it was much easier to locate unrestricted copies of texts that are already well-known in Victorianist circles—multiple libraries were likely to have scanned and shared them under a range of licensing conditions. However, what eluded me were re-hostable versions of lesser-known works such as [bowdlerized editions of Shakespeare](#). This was discouraging because texts like these seem uniquely ripe for student analysis. If students were creating an open-pedagogy project based on such texts, they would have ample opportunities to close-read two texts alongside one another as well as to contribute original research writing to the field. Yet content reuse restrictions make this adaptation process much more complicated.

If you've written an article or research paper that refers to multiple pre-1923 texts, I recommend looking for unrestricted copies of your sources as an exercise—it was eye-opening.

Scale and Scope: Where Do We Go From Here?

Another of Clark and Chawner's findings brings this essay back to the place where it began: the intersections between localized media institutions and legal policies writ large. But while I began this work by inviting us to look at more localized policies in our scholarly communications landscape, this last finding pushes us to think in much bigger terms—in scopes that far exceed national boundaries.

As they searched for their public domain texts, Clark and Chawner were concerned to note that both Google and HathiTrust restricted New Zealanders' access to many of them. The reason for this is that HathiTrust and Google have responded to different countries' legal systems in excessively-conservative ways. In New Zealand, the authors note, public domain permissions begin 50 years after an author's death (Clark and Chawner).[12] In an excess of caution, HathiTrust and Google limit New Zealand IP addresses to works for which 140 years

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12. This number is somewhat generous in comparison to many other countries' allotment of 70 years after the author's death (Clark and Chawner).

have passed since publication or the author is known to be dead (Clark and Chawner). This is despite the fact that "a fifteen-year-old author would need to live beyond the age of 105 for copyright to last 140 years" (Clark and Chawner). The researchers pointedly note that seventy-seven of the hundred books in their study had identifiable authors, and it was possible to tell when the author had died for sixty-six percent of these books in one minute or less (Clark and Chawner). Yet, presumably because of the vast array of texts in these databases (and possibly the limited impact of country restrictions on profit,) the digitizers tended to leave this public-domain-identification step out of their process, simply limiting access by default. When Clark and Chawner looked for ways to let HathiTrust know that some of its scans could legally be displayed within New Zealand, they found that while provisions existed for reporting whether a *copyrighted* text is in the collection, HathiTrust and Google Books lack a "standardized procedure to report incorrectly restricted books" (Clark and Chawner).[13] Regardless of these corporations' intentions, some of the most powerful and best-organized collections of primary sources respond to national policies at such a scale that significant swathes of the archive are artificially inaccessible to scholars working with digitized texts.

Let's think about these findings in terms of participation in Victorian studies research. Does it not seem strange to you that in the age of digital publication and multinational corporate interests, I, as a scholar in the United States, have more access to many public domain texts written in other countries than those who work in those countries in the first place? What does it mean for nineteenth-century scholarship that this is the case? How do such dynamics shape who takes an interest in nineteenth-century literary culture or who can publish in our field?

Digging into the institutions and policies associated with scholarly publication and digitization raise these types of questions around every turn. Clearly, it is time for us to integrate attention to public access and stewardship of the public domain into our writing and teaching processes. Although we may not be able to reshape larger publishing systems single-handedly, we can take more intentional actions to confront the factors that reduce access in our field. By diversifying our efforts in a range of large and small ways, we may be able to shift the needle toward more inclusive access to our field's conversations.

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13. HathiTrust, at least, has been working to identify public domain texts from 1870-1949 within its collections, an effort that has resulted in 314,398 additional texts from the UK, Canada, and Australia being re-labeled as public domain resources between 2008-2018. This work continues thanks in large part to grant funding ("Copyright Review Program").

Ongoing Questions

What might this values-integration look like for us as researchers?

Perhaps it is time to read those insufferable terms of service agreements after all. We should raise our voices in protest when media providers—and especially those funded by institutions we work within—demand that we relinquish our rights to fair use. We should also find ways to contribute to others' knowledge in our field by intervening in the digital archive, providing unrestricted public domain scans where possible and pressuring digitizers to do the same. Where multiple archived scans of a primary source exist, we can choose to link to unrestricted public domain scans over 'basilisk texts.'

Within this project, I have tried to reflect these values by taking the time to search for unrestricted public domain scans and open-access versions of each of my cited articles. Where possible, I have cited these in lieu of more restricted content.

What might this look like for us as writers?

Perhaps it means acknowledging our own positionalities within broader educational systems. We need to understand that not all of our peers who are interested in studying the long nineteenth century can do so on equal terms. Depending on where and who we are, some folks can participate more than we can, others less. We should recognize the power structures that make it riskier for some participants in the academy to choose how they publish than others. As we identify our own privileges within this system, we should leverage them to address the power imbalances in our disciplines.

One strategy for doing this is for those of us with stable employment to be more selective about the journals we choose to publish in, incorporating open-access publication into our personal categories for success. Another is to draw upon our social networks and encourage influential journals to shift to open-access publishing models. Where open-access publishing isn't possible, we should become familiar with journals' attitudes toward self-archiving, towards preprints, and towards postprints.

Within this project, I have tried to reflect these values by exploring circulation options for my work that are not under paywall. My institution provides instructions that say that we ought to deposit completed dissertations to Gale-Cengage's ProQuest database, and while the repository does now offer the option for people to publish their dissertations OA by paying the company more money, I have viewed it as my duty to research all of my options. Among the hidden labors of this project are the hours I have spent

researching UW-Madison's open repository involvement and seeking information from the graduate school about exceptions to the ProQuest policy. Spoiler: as of 2019, there aren't any exceptions to the ProQuest policy.

What might this look like for us as educators?

Perhaps it means recognizing that teaching students how to do the work of literary studies also means teaching them how to navigate our beleaguered archives. It means telling them about tools like UnPaywall or the Open Access button, resources that allow internet users to identify versions of scholarly texts that are not locked away within a proprietary database. It means striving to provide legal access to affordable learning materials when possible, recognizing that this makes the most difference to students with the largest financial burdens. It also means paying very careful attention to the tools we bring into our classrooms and how they shape how our students interact with our archive.

Within this project, *I have sought out platform providers who have demonstrated a commitment to student privacy, ethical uses of data, and open-source infrastructure, namely Pressbooks, H5P, and Hypothes.is. I have also ensured that readers have multiple modes of accessing my project. Recognizing that different media formats provide different affordances, I have ensured that users may access this project via a web browser as well as offline in the form of an ebook reader file or printable PDF document. In the portion of this text that addresses learners, I have also provided instructions about how to access open versions of academic texts.*

In the spirit of reducing potential barriers to the redistribution and remixing of my work, I have appended licenses to each project section that are as open as my institutional context will permit. As soon as I am able to do so without risking the ability to deposit this dissertation with my institution, I will change my projects' license designations from CC-BY-NC-ND to CC-BY, the Creative Commons license that permits the most forms of reuse while still requesting that others provide attribution statements to accompany adapted versions of this work.

In The Woman in White: Grangerized, I have also composed a [research resource for students](#) in order to outline the strategies they can use to locate paywalled resources through legal channels.

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FROM CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA TO CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS: SCHOLARS, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND... SURVEILLANCE CAPITAL?

In their 2016 update to the *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*, the American Association of College and Research Libraries stresses that [information—both *for* and *about* media consumers—has value](). In the "[Publications and Provocations]()" chapter in this project, I have explored some of the ways that institutions can extract value from academic journal articles, public domain texts, and educational editions. But to assume that avoiding partnerships with the most overtly profit-oriented publishers will address the access inequalities in our scholarly and educational systems is to ignore how data operates in the present day. No matter how openly a text is circulated and no matter how community-minded we believe our motives are for writing it, we still have a responsibility to consider how the media formats we use might detract from our goals for our work.

In this section, I consider how reading platforms can shape how individual people can gather information about readers using media publishing and circulation tools. By reflecting on hypothetical approaches to designing an interactive teaching project like [*The Woman in White: Grangerized*](), I unpack opportunities for connection but also the potential for exploitation in such work. Ultimately, I argue that literary scholars and instructors have an obligation to reflect on the new forms of power available to us—and to intermediary parties—by virtue of the platforms we write within. As critical pedagogy theorists and rhetoricians remind us, the relationship between teacher and student, writer and reader, isn't egalitarian by default. Disrupting inequalities in our teaching and communication requires us to analyze how we deploy our writing in these contexts.

Recognizing this leads me to the following questions:

- What advantages and opportunities might arise for me as a scholar and educator by virtue of controlling my projects' digital formats and hosting locations?
- What are the deeper 'hidden profits' I could exploit even if I freely circulate my texts? How might a person extract information and value from a digital dissertation or critical

edition?

- Recognizing that not all commodification is bad, how can I nonetheless reduce others' ability to profit off of my scholarly or student readers without their informed consent?
- What value trade-offs am I making by circulating my work in the open and digital formats I have chosen for this project?
- What are the broader implications of these trade-offs? How might they make me complicit in larger systems of hegemonic domination?
- How, finally, might nineteenth-century studies practitioners and other educators work together to build resistance to oppressive systems into our work?

An Apt Backstory

In many ways, the story of the nineteenth-century print boom and the increasing popularity of serial fiction is also the story of early data analytics, so my two texts' questions about media of the past and present are once more in sync. Thanks to changing print circulation norms, Victorian authors could use reviewers' responses in the press as well as day-to-day interactions with readers as tools for shaping their texts-in-progress. This allowed authors to increase the attention they gave to the most popular characters in future chapters and to frame themselves as being in tune with their readers. Indeed, serial culture scholar Jennifer Hayward identifies the "ability to (at least pretend to) respond to its audience while the narrative is still in the process of development" as a "defining quality of serial fiction" (23). Victorians' own fascination with the responsiveness of contemporary print is one of the themes I highlight in the introduction to my dissertation's critical edition, _The Woman in White: Grangerized_.

As someone composing texts in the present—and more significantly, as someone releasing these texts in serial installments online—I share Victorian novelists' ability to respond to readers' opinions as I draft and revise. The platforms I use to publish my work as well as the social media networks through which I circulate this work enable me to push beyond what would have been possible in a pre-digital era. By sharing chapters on Twitter, I can see whether a particular discussion garners attention in the form of comments, likes, or retweets. By enabling Hypothesis annotations as a default on my Pressbooks text and providing instructions on how to use the annotation tool, I can gather direct feedback about the passages that spark a response. Google analytics, Twitter analytics, and—if I ask our network administrators nicely—Pressbooks analytics information can show me other metrics for engagement: navigation clicks, external link clicks, reader country of origin, and more. As I revise, I can do so with this information in mind, modifying my text to align with the tone and topics that I believe my target audience finds most engaging.

When I realized that writing a web-based dissertation allowed me immediate insights into how others respond to my work, I thought delightedly to myself that Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins would probably approve. (Each Victorian author was especially skilled in gleaning information about how audiences felt about their serial novels in progress.)[1] Viewed in this light, one argument for writing a web-based monograph and releasing it serially on social media is that it can allow scholars insight into a readership outside of their university or social circle.

Then I thought about another favorite Victorian serialist, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and a different dynamic piqued my interest. In this dissertation's past life, one of my chapters had focused on Braddon's knack for using the press to kindle controversy—and thus more buzz for her novels. Braddon had access to the world of journalism through her own editorial role and her partner John Maxwell's publishing network. She also had a keen eye for sensational plot twists that allowed her to draw attention to herself: she and Maxwell penned anonymous letters to major publications (some even in the guise of fictional characters from other Victorian authors!) to attract more eyes. Surely, had she been a writer today, Braddon would have been at the forefront of viral advertising and data analytics. To what ends might she have turned these tools?

Because this *Undissertation* is interested in the changing roles of publishers, textbook providers, and product developers in shaping academic interactions around texts, my mind turned next to the profit motives that might intersect with projects like mine. Since one of my goals is to minimize my and others' ability to commodify information about my readers without those readers' informed consent, I realized that I needed a better understanding of digital circulation platforms.

Putting On a Market-Minded Thinking Cap

My first task in assessing the marketable elements of an open text was to take on a different persona: that of an educator-capitalist. Happily, a computer engineer in my life was willing to think deviously with me. I sat down with Mike Kellum, a full-stack software developer, to talk

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1. I explore some of the ways that Dickens and Collins addressed audiences throughout their publication cycle in my participatory edition's brief précis about serial fiction, "Reading in Parts."

about how I might go about gathering as much user data as possible from my text and turning it to personal advantage.[2]

As a starting point, we imagined that I was extremely tech-savvy and wanted to develop a web platform of my own to host each component of my dissertation. In a world where I controlled both the code of my project and the avenues through which my readers were accessing it, I asked him, what could I infer about the people reading my work? If I were interested in extracting value from this text even while circulating it at no cost, what could the digital turn allow me to do that print-only texts would not?

Mike explained that browsers and apps are able to log a wide range of user engagement events such as clicks, scrolling, or points when users' cursors travel over a particular place on the page. If I wanted to make inferences about my digital readers, I could approach their data in the aggregate or individually. For instance, he continued, if my goal was to maximize how many sections of my project people consumed in one sitting, I could track and correlate user interactions with the text to see what patterns were associated with their decisions to stop reading my work (Kellum). Put more concretely, I could say to my dissertation project: "*Hey, show me where the largest number of users clicked away from the project and didn't return.*" If my dissertation told me that people tended not to make it past the introduction, I could tweak that introduction until this pattern shifted. Even better, I could use cookies to do A/B testing on my own text, assigning two different versions of a chapter to different populations at random in order to measure which version was most effective. As I learned about this ability, I imagined Charles Dickens salivating at the thought of his novels reporting back to him about his own readers' habits.[3]

I also discovered that if I wanted to know how people were interacting with my writing on an individual level, I could do so with shocking precision. Say I wanted to know more about the people who had interacted with the text for a moderate amount of time—you, the person reading this section, for instance. Mike informed me that I could either write some code or pay for a third-party service that would create a kind of instant replay of how fast you're scrolling

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2. Mike also happens to be my partner, and I couldn't be more grateful for his enthusiasm when I insist on having conversations about reading platforms at the drop of a hat. Thank you, Mike.
3. Maybe Dickens really did imagine this! The fantasy of objects telling tales about their interactions with people was common in eighteenth-century 'it-narratives,' a genre which persisted in some forms during the nineteenth century.

through this very page, whether you click on footnotes, and more.[4] While your keyboard focus is on the page,

> [the product] will extrapolate mouse movements between tracked events, so they may not be perfectly accurate, but you'll get something very close to the actual [interaction]. It knows your screen size, the position of your mouse, where you've scrolled, and what you're doing with your mouse and keyboard. That's all there is—except eye-tracking. (Kellum)

If you were required to log in to the website or app before you were able to read this work, I could even trace your interactions with this project across multiple public and private computers, phones, and tablets. I would naturally be tempted to interpret your behavior as an indicator of your opinion, and I'd have an automated leg-up in doing so. Some products will assign emotions to patterns of behavior, such as Full Story's "rage clicks" tracker.[5] I could use these resources to devise hypotheses about your attitudes toward my work.

Now to protect my bottom line. "In this alternate universe where I'm an entrepreneur," I asked Mike, "do I have to worry about pesky things like letting people know that I'm tracking them like this?" Luckily, I don't. In Mike's words:

> There is no legal requirement for disclosure. Developers typically, in my experience, see it as obvious that this information would be available to the developer. It would be like being shocked that there's a camera in a Walmart. I can see what aisle you're in, what items you're touching. The difference is that I can collate that information more effectively. (Kellum)

Excellent, I thought.

Stroking my imaginary goatee like a Bond villain, I mused that I might even be able to work eye-tracking and audio recording into the mix after all. Perhaps I could make headway on this front if I presented you with a complex enough terms-of-service agreement and convinced you to enable a computer camera and microphone. Heaven knows that online exam-proctoring software already allows for this kind of tracking. My own institution, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has a [ProctorTrack](#) integration [in its Canvas Learning Management](#)

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4. To be clear: I do not have this granular ability to track Javascript events in the text you're currently reading.
5. The company informs users that "while session replay can't pick up on mouse slamming, keyboard pounding, exasperated muttering, or other physical abuse of computer hardware, clicking multiple times on a specific element on your site is the nearest digital equivalent. [Rapid-fire clicks on your site can be a clear signal of a frustrated computer user](#)" (Owings).

System that will use your webcam (if you have one) to record your take-home exam sessions and algorithmically flag moments where you seem to be looking off-screen.

Maybe I could note where your eyes are glazing over or when you've snorted aloud at some inelegant turn of phrase. . . My, that's a nice shirt you're wearing.

Applying Analytics

Dystopian Dissertation Data

In the era of Cambridge Analytica, the ability to use data to maximize interest in a scholarly or educational text may seem fairly prosocial. But what are the unseen benefits that an entrepreneurial academic might reap from a project like this one?

To begin to answer these questions, we can look to the things that carry the most professional currency for scholars of various stripes.

First, of course, there's the desire to successfully make it out of a Ph.D. program and position oneself as a promising job market candidate. If my alternate-universe self were being really mercenary, I might use the data analytics my platform provided to identify my highest-profile readers. If I required a log-in, for instance, I could track my committee members' interactions with my project across devices. I could then use the information I gleaned to pander to the advisor I felt would best advance my career if I made a good impression on them. I might also be able to triangulate information about users, reach out to my highest-profile site visitors, and network beyond my university. Frankly speaking, there is a limited audience for dissertations in Victorian studies, so if I knew that one of the most celebrated scholars of Victorian scrapbooks lived in Woonsocket, Rhode Island and saw internet traffic from Woonsocket on my scrapbooking discussion, I might take a risk and reach out to her by email. Perhaps she'd like to co-author something together—a great boon for my C.V.

Of course, any Ph.D. candidate should really be thinking several steps ahead of the game in writing their tenure-eyed text. To secure a prestigious job, I'd want to write a first book that could appeal to the flashiest academic publishers. So, let's imagine that my A/B testing and strategic circulation of my project has been wildly successful and I'm generating quite a buzz. In order to woo Cambridge University Press, I might make it known that I'm seeing astronomical web traffic to my scholarly blog. If the bigwig scholars in my field show up in the comments, all the better for my chances of securing an elite publisher for future work.

Teaching Texts

We can assume that like the real me, Alternate-Universe Naomi is also passionate about creating critical editions that other Victorianists can use in their classrooms. But recognizing that information has value, I asked Mike Kellum how this mercenary version of me might design a critical edition that provided personal gain while still being published at no cost.

Together, we imagined that I was writing an online critical edition called *Hard Times: Interactive.* An obvious place to turn to for profit would be advertising revenue. As Mike and I talked, I realized that monetizing the edition in this way might change the modes of reader interaction I seek as well as the very structure of my text. Imagining that he was trying to sell my readers to third-party advertisers, Mike mused, "I'd want to maximize time on a page if there were ads in the margins, which may counterindicate things like useful links that speed up navigation" (Kellum). With pride, I realized that could do him one better. Henry James once referred to Victorian novels as "loose, baggy monsters," but in the digital era, long texts are simply not great for selling ads. Although [my critical edition in *this* universe](#) splits a novel up into its original serial installments, the alternate-universe Naomi might prefer to split up Charles Dickens's book into many more pieces so that I could fit ads in at the top of each page. Each time a student clicked back through a chapter, I could have their browser load a new commercial and pull in those advertising pennies accordingly. Since the text would be free (and potentially a compulsory edition for class), students might be willing to put up with the sidebar ads for the sake of their grades.

Companies want to advertise content based on users' interests, so advertising might also give me an incentive to collect more data from students. Thinking like a textbook company once more, Mike reflected: "I'm not going to be advertising Rogaine; I'm going to be serving the students as a particular demographic to advertisers, so I'd want as much information about the students as possible—what device they're using, et cetera" (Kellum). The idea that advertisers might find it desirable to target specific messages to students in a Victorian Studies class seemed a bit far-fetched to me at first, but I soon learned that there is already an existing market for this information: "I think Piazza gets a lot of money from industry for presenting job postings—so that's advertising, but it's highly specific," Mike told me (Kellum).

Lucky for Alternate-Universe Naomi, Piazza provides a playbook for this type of multidirectional advertising.[6] As a specialized discussion platform that allows students to

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6. Piazza literally calls this resource a "playbook."

ask and answer questions, Piazza is a free tool that professors often embed into a learning management system such as Canvas. When a student answers a peer's question correctly, the professor can endorse that response, granting it more weight for all of the other students in the class. This makes it an appealing resource for instructors because it saves time and allows them to commend students who help their peers. Knowing about students' educational backgrounds and performance is valuable for third parties, so Piazza has paired up with companies to provide an opt-in job post notification service for students. Piazza can thus market students to companies as hyper-targeted advertising demographics open to companies' recruitment emails. On its information page for the companies who advertise through the platform, Piazza exhorts employers to "use the power of our network and data to reverse engineer your star hires and find more like them" ([Piazza Playbook](#)). Its recruiting playbook provides additional detail:

> With Piazza, every student you hire has a high probability of having a Piazza account. And we have rich information on our students – which classes they've taken, which classes they've TA'd, and which classes they've received professor endorsements in. We're able to provide you with a list of academic traits for any of your past interns or recent grads.
>
> Say Shelby was that star intern; just pop her name into the Find Students Similar To feature and see a list of her traits – she's a top student in Machine Learning, a TA to an algorithms class, a college-level varsity athlete, coding since the age of 13, and a top student in at least 5 classes. Now I run a search by selecting the traits that I care most about, and *within seconds, I find hundreds more like her.*
>
> I can then send a highly personalized note to a student who matches Shelby's profile: "Hi Melissa, I noticed your profile looked a lot like one of our past star interns – she was a TA in algorithms and had been coding since a young age, not to mention involved in varsity-level sports... do you have time to hop on a call? I'd love to tell you more about what we're doing." (Piazza Playbook, emphasis mine)

As I delved deeper, I learned that it's not just business, computer science, or STEM students that Piazza frames as valuable advertising targets. It would seem that academic departments' efforts to market the humanities as business-relevant is working. Piazza even highlights an English major as a trait for employers to search for in its promotional materials.

One of the examples of student data searches that Piazza provides on its recruiting page for advertisers is the search "Show me English majors who have taken Programming."
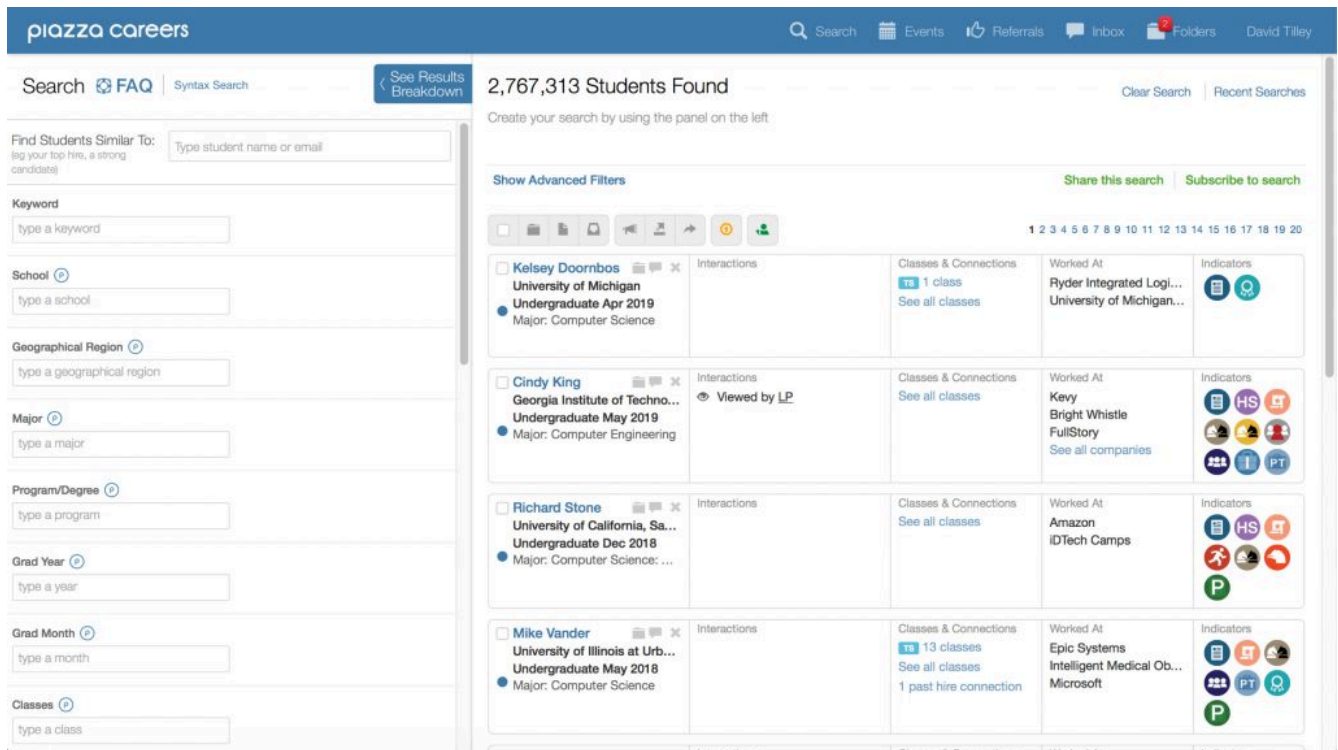
If you're an employer, this is your Piazza dashboard. It features search parameters for student characteristics such as majors or minors and a "Find Students Similar To" search bar. The product suggests that you use the search bar to find students like your top hire or a strong candidate. Yet it occurs to me that if the strong job candidate in question has already applied for your position, she might be displeased to know that her educational data has led your company directly to the person you hired instead of her... Source: Piazza Recruiting.

At this point in my reflection on third-party advertising, I realized that I was stretching the bounds of what I could imagine a version of myself doing even in an alternate universe. But as I thought more, I began to see how the same tools that ed-tech companies market to advertisers would translate into the strange value systems that emerge in competitive academia.

Say I am an ambitious professor with a penchant for coding, a fully-functional critical edition of *Hard Times: Interactive,* and a class of 400 undergraduate students. I'm kind of a big deal,[7] and so a portion of my class is desperately hoping to work with me on their honors thesis so they can get a name-brand letter of recommendation to include in their grad school applications. Obviously, I have limited time to spend working with undergrads, so I'll only want to work

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7. This is an alternate universe, remember!

with the people I consider to be the best and the brightest.[8] To determine who these students are, I might log into the admin panel of my critical edition authoring platform. I would next ask the platform to display the students who have spent the most time actively reading *Hard Times: Interactive* and have taken the most private and public notes in the text. Assuming these qualities to be proxies for real commitment to our craft, the top five students on this list would receive primary consideration for honors thesis advisee. Alas, the students who can't afford internet access at home might screen-shot the text for later reading offline. This would mean that my dashboard's time estimates for them would show no engagement whatsoever, so I'd be less likely to accept those students as advisees because of my mistaken assumption that they were work-shirkers. But no matter—there are always more students than opportunities anyway.

As that same kind of ambitious professor, the stakes are higher for me when I consider grad students to work with. In an economy of scarcity where I only have so much time to devote to mentorship, the choice of grad student advisees matters all the more. Ideally, all of my handpicked graduate students will move on to become the next Judith Butler, and perhaps algorithms will help. (Ah, the joy it will be to sit down to dinner with other scholars and nonchalantly tell them about the *sweetest letter* I've received from my old protégé, Jacques Derrida Jr!) So perhaps I'll code my own version of Piazza's "Find Students Similar To" function into *Hard Times: Interactive.* I'll track prospective graduate students' interactions with the text. Those whose patterns of highlighting and annotation most closely *resemble* and innovatively *depart from* those of my most successful advisees might have what it takes to make it in the big leagues.

Because I don't yet know what kinds of data will be the most relevant to my future work, it will behoove me to gather as much information from my readers as is feasible given my university's level of oversight and my project's storage constraints. Perhaps some unknown patterns of behavior will emerge as striking correlates for professional school success! Perhaps there will be unforeseen ways for me to monetize this data years from now! Either way, it can't hurt to engage in a little bit of data-speculation. Like a mining company purchasing land rights, I'll leave plenty of wiggle-room to hedge my bets on the data I collect.

Don't worry: I'll include an opt-in function. Students will have a choice to have their data collected analyzed in this way. But considering that the new science of close-reading analytics

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8. The idea that instructors should be elevating only the (so-called) 'best and the brightest' in their classes is pernicious, but we'll move on for the sake of the narrative.

is all the rage right now and that people in the humanities are reputed to be the good guys, most students will probably say yes.

True, there may be some students with more reason to fear surveillance culture than others. Perhaps they've been the subject of one too many racial-profiling-inspired airport searches and would prefer not to accept my tracking cookie. That's just fine: they'll simply not be included in the analysis; no harm, no foul.[9] This would be unfortunate for those who opt out and might lead to a more homogenous pool of advisee contenders for me. "But then again," a person who used information in this way might say, "it's not like I would be *deliberately discriminating* against anyone. It's just an unfortunate proxy variable for lack of privilege and proximity to state violence."[10]

Brain-Reading: Reader Analytics and Educational Neurotechnology

Once Alternate-Universe Naomi has handpicked the cadre of undergrads and PhD advisees who will carry forth my legacy, I can expand further. Perhaps these students and I will work together on some exciting grant-funded projects at the cutting edge of pedagogy and the postdigital humanities.

Say my whole team is fascinated by research on the differences between expert and novice ways of thinking within disciplines. Maybe we'll want to gather data on how different readers' minds and bodies react during an encounter with a Victorian text. Our reasoning is that there may be analyzable patterns of difference among undergraduate students, graduate students, and elite scholars as well as among folks within different subdisciplines in literary studies. Brain and body sensors are becoming more widely available in many forms, so if we can gain funding, we have a good shot at acquiring some tools to help us.

We apply for a prestigious grant. In our application, we hint that the data we obtain could help us to speed up the process of educating undergraduates as well as future faculty. We'll

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9. Piazza's playbook includes some interesting elisions that follow this line of reasoning. On the one hand, they take pains to stress that students in the employer search have all opted in. And yet on the same page, they sell employers the fantasy of having *all* worthwhile candidates at their fingertips, saying: "the best part is, you *don't have to worry about overlooking anyone* since over two million students at 2,000 schools and 90 countries use Piazza and have opted-in to be discovered by employers" (Piazza Playbook, emphasis mine).

10. This is the kind of person who pointedly ignores Safiya Umoja Noble's *Algorithms of Oppression* when they encounter it on a bookshelf.

stress the words 'efficiency,' 'machine learning,' and 'artificial intelligence.' It will all sound very impressive, and when they read our dossier, the grant committee will fantasize about reducing time-to-degree numbers and streamlining faculty development using these tools.

Lucky for us, people in high places in the United States education system already have brainwave analysis technologies on their radars, and we have a hunch that this will help our funding case. My hypothetical team will delve deep into research on educational **neurotechnology**. We'll be delighted to find Ben Williamson's 2019 article, "Brain Data: Scanning, Scraping and Sculpting the Plastic Learning Brain Through Neurotechnology," and read the following lines: "Head of the US Department of Education, the private-education advocate Betsy DeVos, is a major investor and former board member of Neurocore, a brain-training treatment company specializing in neurofeedback technology development and application" (78). Our hunch proves correct. The day we receive our grant, our team will celebrate with a cake shaped like a brain.

Next to assemble our tools. All of our project participants will spend two hours a day reading the *Hard Times: Interactive* edition I've created.[11] To measure whether our subjects' hearts beat faster during parts of the novel, we'll have them wear electrocardiogram (ECG) electrodes whenever they interact with the web edition. Using insights gleaned from research on affect recognition technology, we hope to use the electrocardiogram to identify moments of emotional arousal that occur while people are focused on the text.[12]

To record participants' measurable brainwaves, we will tap a company already working on educational neurotechnology devices. Originally devised at Harvard, BrainCo's Focus EDU tool combines an electroencephalogram (EEG) headband with data analytics displays for instructors as well as students:

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11. To reiterate, *Hard Times: Interactive* is a hypothetical edition used for the sake of example. It doesn't exist in the present universe.
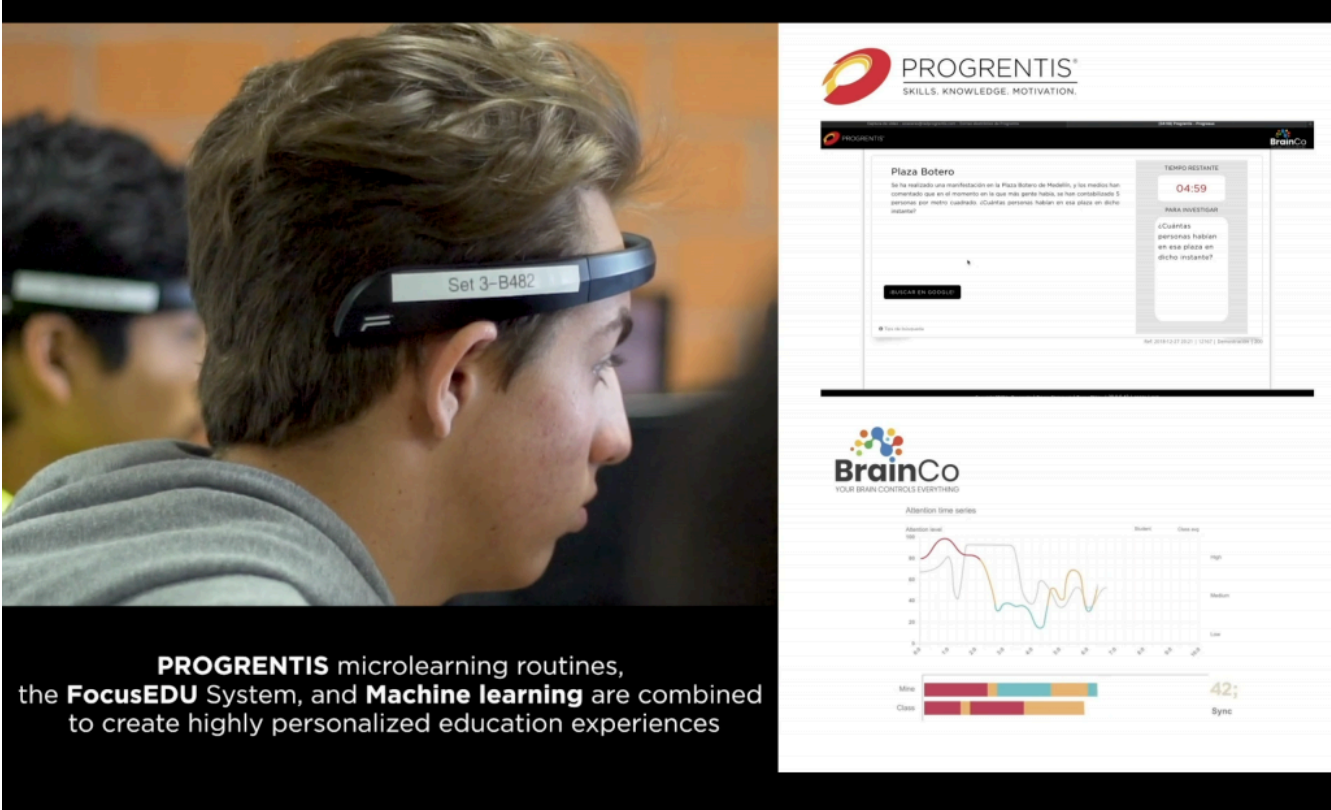
12. For an example of recent hypotheses and datasets related to affect recognition, see Katsigiannis and Ramzan's article, "DREAMER: A Database for Emotion Recognition Through EEG and ECG Signals From Wireless Low-Cost Off-the-Shelf Devices.")
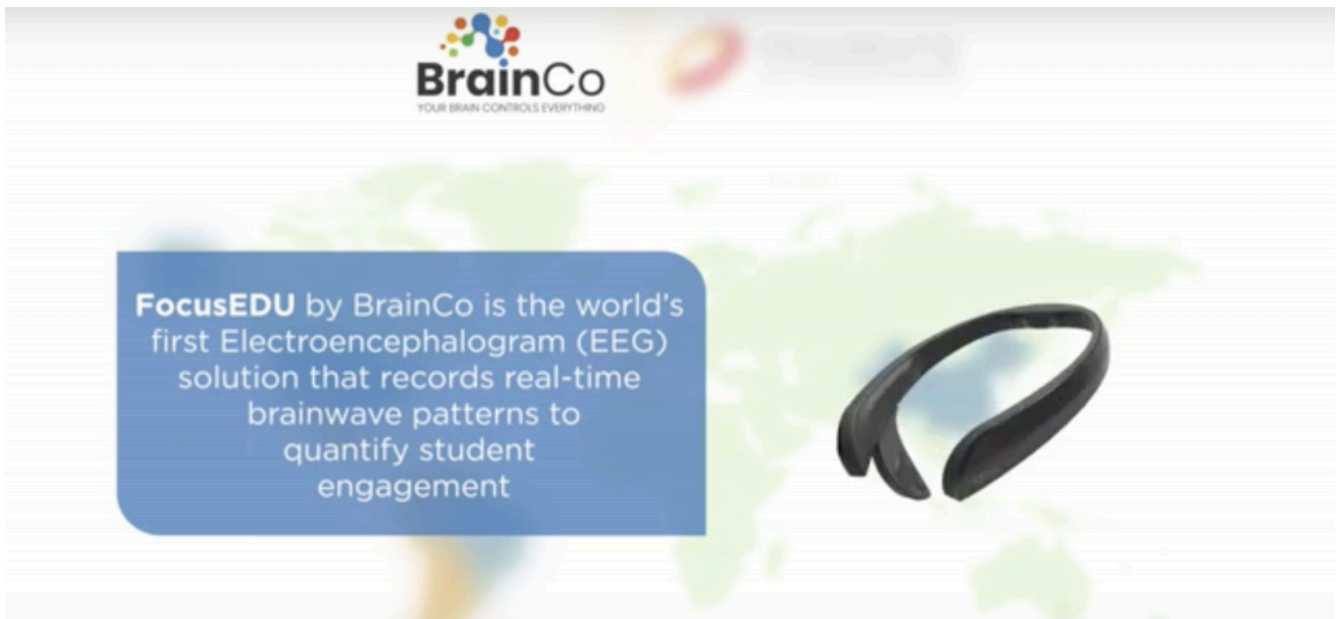
This is a screenshot from a BrainCo promotional video. The text reads: "FocusEDU is the world's first Electroencephalogram (EEG) solution that records real-time brainwave patterns to quantify student engagement." Source: BrainCo.
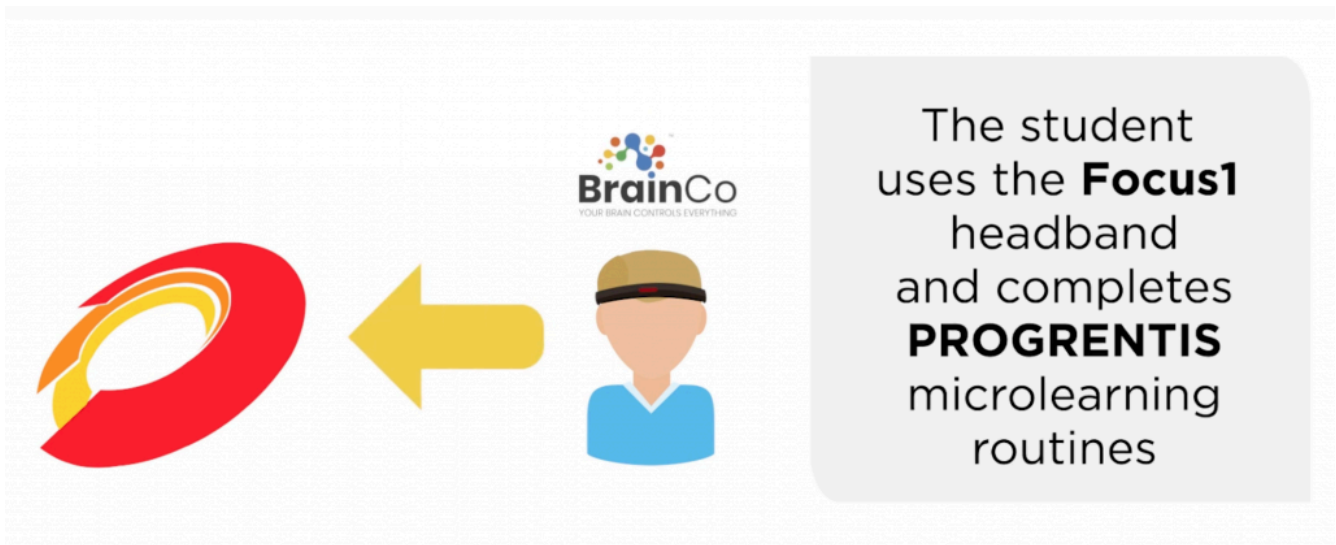
The company has a history of partnering with other educational technology companies such as Progrentis, so they may be amenable to a digital humanities partnership with our (imaginary) scholar-student team.

BrainCo also emphasizes the use of machine learning to "create highly personalized education experiences." This language is very popular right now: we're sure to woo some grant funders and perhaps even private investors with this rhetoric. Source: BrainCo.

With the help of software developers, our team will combine the biological information we get from the EEG and the ECG, the eye-tracking data we get from students' webcams, and the screen interaction data we track from students' browsers as they scroll through *Hard Times: Interactive.*

Looking at such data in combination could play a huge role in how we adapt *Hard Times: Interactive* and how we teach it in classes. Successful learning requires student attention, and FocusEDU emphasizes its ability to quantify student attention and display it to instructors and students in actionable ways. BrainCo alleges that instructors are able to compare students' levels of attention in the aggregate and individually using a real-time course dashboard. Presumably, we could use the data we collect over time to create a record of students' responses chapter-by-chapter, page by page, and sentence by sentence. If a majority of our readers seem to be losing focus at a point in the novel that we feel is important for them to pay attention to, we can devise supplemental interactive activities to include at that point in the text.

We might use this data to help individual students develop college-level reading and notetaking skills! This could involve presenting them with attention-feedback reports each

time they finish a chapter of our text. BrainCo already advertises similar reports about EEG-recorded attention during class periods, so customizing this kind of feedback report for our purposes could be fairly simple.

Screenshot from a promotional video: BrainCo's student-facing Attention Level Report display.

Once we've gathered and analyzed data about successful students' emotional reactivity and attention levels while interacting with different points in our text, we can start to work on a 'nudging' system in our version of *Hard Times: Interactive.*

Put in concrete terms: imagine that our critical edition's records suggest that a large percentage of successful students read the descriptions of Thomas Gradgrind's schoolroom in *Hard Times* with great attention, but students who received lower grades in class were more likely to skim through these sections or navigate away from the page. If I'm a reader whose focus pattern begins to deviate from those of my most successful peers, *Hard Times: Interactive* might 'nudge' me toward more desirable behavior by popping up a required short-answer reflection question, video, or quiz to call my attention back to the text.

A Nudge

"Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!'" – Thomas Gradgrind, *Hard Times* Ch. 1.

What philosophical tradition does this speech of Gradgrind's parody?

○ Utilitarianism

○ Economics

○ Andragogy

○ Constructivism

✓ Check

One stumbling block:

Our team recognizes that there are many things we may fail to consider, misinterpret, or devalue if we *uncritically* rely on our assumptions about the data we gather from our readers:

- Maybe one of my students *appears* to have lost focus on our text, but only because a description in the novel has so sparked her interest that she's taking a break to research the Victorian education system rather than interacting with *Hard Times* narrative in a continuous way.

- Perhaps knowing that their reading process is being digitally analyzed exacerbates stereotype threat for some students from minoritized groups. This may affect these students' emotional responses and degrees of focus, thus reducing their self-efficacy and disrupting the accuracy of the program's analysis to boot.

- Perhaps a student who has a visual impairment is using a screen-reader to interact with the text. Our program might flag her as an outlier because of the way that screen-readers are able to navigate nonlinearly through the text, jumping from heading to heading or hyperlink to hyperlink. If I've been inspired by the Piazza model and have decided to give potential employers access to student interaction data, this student may not show up in a recruiting search for candidates who have strong humanities profiles simply because her modes of reading don't easily align with other successful students'.

- Perhaps a student who is an English language learner appears to be scattered in his approach to the text because he is translating words in Dickens's prose that are no longer common in American English. He may be just as reflective in his approach to the text as other students, but he is also learning an additional layer of information through this reading experience. Unfortunately, the added benefit of this experience may be difficult for my algorithms to quantify. The time this student takes to write down the new words he has learned may tell against him on my dashboard.

- Perhaps the interaction patterns correlated with the highest number of successful students in the class fail to account for neurodiverse approaches to reading that nonetheless lead students to a clear understanding of the text.

- Perhaps a student in the class intermittently stops reading or goes into a reverie because he's spotted a scene in the text that would lend itself well to a creative retelling on *Archive of Our Own*, a fanfiction archive where he has a large following of his own readers. [13] If they were his instructors, scholars such as Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall would celebrate the ways that writing fanfiction can involve many forms of critical analysis that conventional literary studies assignments also strive to teach. Yet to the algorithm, this student would appear to be unfocused.

In each of these cases, a student's modes of reading *Hard Times: Interactive* may differ from what

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13. As of September 2019, there are three pieces of *Hard Times* fanfiction in *Archive of Our Own*. FanFiction.net has an umbrella category for stories written with Dickens's narratives as points of departure, but there is currently a whopping 493 stories in that category. *Archive of Our Own* also includes five pieces of *The Woman in White* fanfiction in English and one in French, while Fanfiction.net includes 30 stories set in the world of the novel.

I or my algorithms interpret to be indicators of successful engagement. In each case, these students are held up against a normative concept of reading that doesn't allow for multiple approaches to learning, styles of engagement, or students' other learning needs. If our nudging system relies on the small subset of learning behaviors it can measure, some of its interventions could be unhelpful or even detrimental for students.

Because we're scholars of reading and literacy, my team and I will be sensitive to these limitations. As we gear up for our next round of grant applications, concerns about one-size-fits-all algorithms will prick at us. A composition and rhetoric graduate student in my department will suggest that this time around, we apply for funding not for platform development or more electrode headsets, but for a large-scale qualitative research project. To understand the unexpected ways participants learn as they read *Hard Times: Interactive,* she will insist, we need to interview a diverse pool of students. We even have a leg up in identifying interview candidates—our dataset already flags interaction patterns that appear idiosyncratic! Why not ask these apparent outliers if they'd be willing to talk more? Why not speak with students who use screen readers or other accessibility devices and ask them how new options in our interactive text could better support their modes of reading? Why not listen to readers as they describe discussions with their peers in the annotation layer that helped them feel supported and enthusiastic as they moved through the novel? What else would we learn if we designed an open-ended interview process, coded these interviews, and looked for patterns that could change our authorship and teaching practices?

As a scholar, I'll be faced with a quandary. I want to continue to create cutting-edge, interactive critical editions of nineteenth-century novels and share them at no cost to students and colleagues. To make this feasible, I will need funding for technology and for graduate student stipends as well as support from my university administration. Unfortunately, in my experience, cold, hard numbers tend to be far more appealing to grant committees than qualitative data. I strongly suspect that if we propose the interview project idea to the big grant committees, I'll be less likely to receive funding. Likewise, my attention will be divided between the interview initiative and keeping up with the cutting edge of learner data analytics. My team and my project will suffer for it. If we apply for support to purchase the latest ed-neurotech and student engagement tools instead, I may even be able to start a new data-sensitive critical edition this year and support yet more students at universities the world over. I see this as an opportunity to triage a system in which many students are not otherwise able to afford high-quality editions in my field.

My university also has a stake in the direction my team decides to pursue. Just as the BrainCo headband was a project that began at Harvard and extended into industry, so too could the code

my team develops move outside of my Nineteenth-Century Studies silo. As of 2019, textbook companies have moved away from the book-selling business and embraced the business of selling interactive reading platforms in their place.[14] My project is on these companies' radars. We have plenty to offer: my team's background in pedagogy, literary studies, and the history of reading has led us to make creative advances with our interactive editions, and the data suggest that students are thriving. My university would love to strike a lucrative deal that would allow textbook companies to incorporate some of my reading platform's student engagement processes into their own products. Continuing to pursue the digital learning analytics and advertising angle will ultimately be more profitable for my school.

With one part regret and two parts jaded pragmatism, I'll explain my triage mentality to the graduate student who proposed the idea. As a new research direction for my team, a large qualitative interview project is simply not realistic. Perhaps she can do some of these interviews at a much smaller scale as part of her dissertation project, albeit without funding support. Her project could make a difference, I'll tell her, especially in a world where we're learning so much more about supporting diverse students' needs rather than privileging a small subset of undergraduates. I'll even chair her dissertation committee if she decides to do so. I'll dearly hope that she agrees.

Data-Mining and Platform Takeaways

Integration Obligations in Our Classrooms

Lest this is lost on anyone: I'm not advocating for the hypothetical scenarios I've just described. These narratives are flippant, grim, and pragmatic in turns, but they don't represent inevitabilities. In the universe that you and I share, I'm deeply concerned about the ways that emerging reading platforms could distribute the most benefit to the most privileged and the most risk to the most minoritized. I see it as a core responsibility of scholars and instructors to pay attention to the unintended consequences of these tools. It's also our duty to ask educated questions when others express concerns about them. I believe that we can help bring about important course-corrections if we make these discussions more central to our work.

But I'm also torn. While I don't recognize the alternate-universe-me that I've described here as

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14. For more information on textbook companies' shift to selling digital platform access rather than traditional volumes, see the Publications and Provocations" section of this project.

being particularly similar to the version of me writing this essay—(not least because I am not burdened with tenure advancement pressures)—there are still some aspects of these scenarios that touch on questions I hold dear. On the one hand, I feel a wave of discomfort when I imagine looking at a chart of my students' eye-tracking data or standing in front of a class filled with students wearing EEG headbands. But on the other hand, I'm someone who genuinely loves experimenting with creative reading and teaching technologies. When I imagine getting to see what my *own* EEG feedback looks like as I read a chapter of *The Woman in White* or a critical article, I'm fascinated. When I imagine being in a room with others who feel the same fascination about new reading technologies (but whose data is somehow safely protected from appropriation), I'm intrigued. Where would our discussions take us, I wonder? What would we learn about our own unexamined assumptions about data correlation versus causation or about others' experiences of reading that we might not have uncovered otherwise?

I think that this cognitive dissonance is familiar to many of my teaching colleagues. I'd like to lean into it together.

Here's just one reason why: we don't actually have a choice. What strikes me the most when I consider the first two scenarios, at least, is just how realistic they seem when I consider the tools that are *already* available to me within my current institution. Elsewhere in this project, I argue that it's important to create educational resources that are **interoperable**.[15] But to make a text that can be easily read by or imported into another program is to lose (the semblance of) control over others' uses of that text.

As it stands, I've chosen to use Pressbooks as a platform for hosting my project. I appreciate that the company presently includes people who are passionate about open publishing and student data privacy.[16] I also appreciate that the platform's developers care about ease of

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15. In broad strokes, interoperable tools can work within or in concert with other tools. For more detailed information on platform interoperability, see the brief "[Interoperability and Exports](#)" explanation in this text.

16. As just one example, Pressbooks's Community Manager, Steel Wagstaff, recently teamed up with Billy Meinke-Lau to present a session at the Open Education 2018 Conference titled "['Open' Education and Student Learning Data: Reflections on Big Data, Privacy, & Learning Platforms:](#)" In it, Wagstaff and Meinke-Lau stress the importance of gaining informed consent from students about their data use as well as ensuring that there's an ongoing opportunity for students to review their data and change what is collected from them in future. Full disclosure: I worked closely with Steel at UW-Madison as an Open Educational Resources Teaching Assistant. In addition to being an incredible mentor, Steel frequently modeled how to ask difficult questions about ed tech and its impacts on students.

incorporating texts into existing teaching workflows: another student-centered impulse. Thanks to a Pressbooks integration, my critical edition, *The Woman in White: Grangerized*, can be easily imported into my Learning Management System (LMS) to better align with many educational contexts. This, in turn, reduces students' and instructors' barriers to entry for this text. [17]
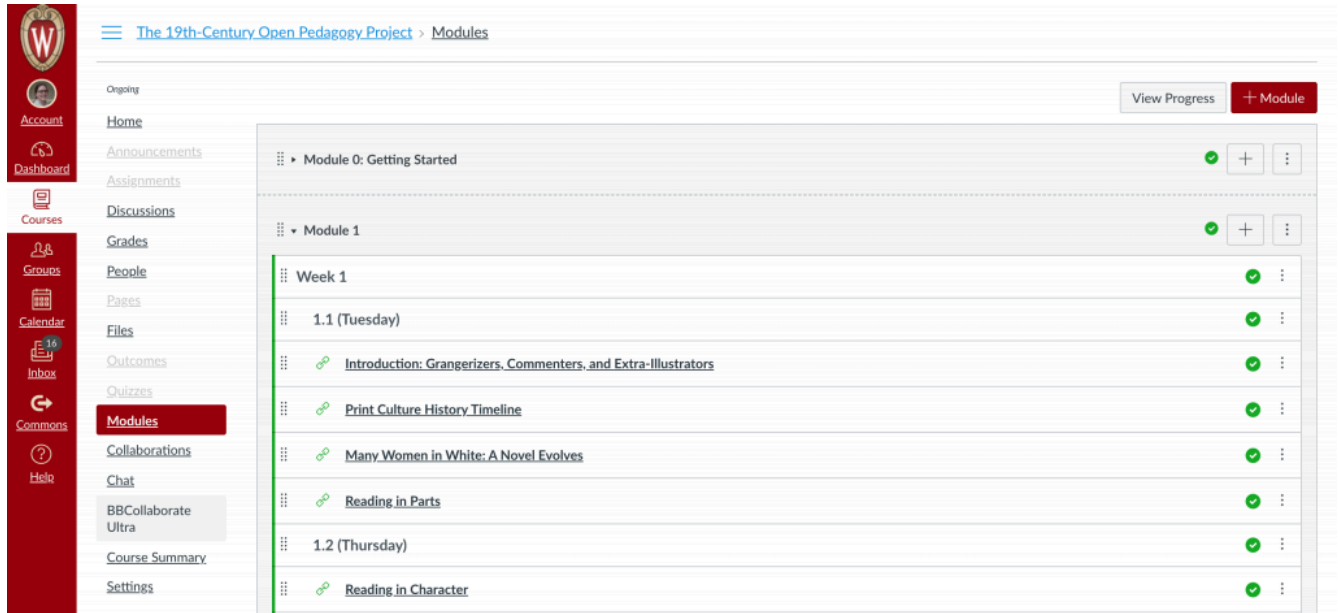
Chapters from the critical edition embedded as Canvas modules.

17. For more on how embedded content within the LMS can serve as a strategy for inviting students to participate in online knowledge production, see William Beasley's reflection, "Infiltrating the Walled Garden."

The introductory chapter embedded as a Canvas page.

Interoperability is an advantage, and yet the moment I imported the text of my critical edition into a Canvas course, I *also* gained the ability to track the amount of time that individual, named students spent on our course's Canvas site and on each separate course page. Here's what that looks like in practice as of 2019:
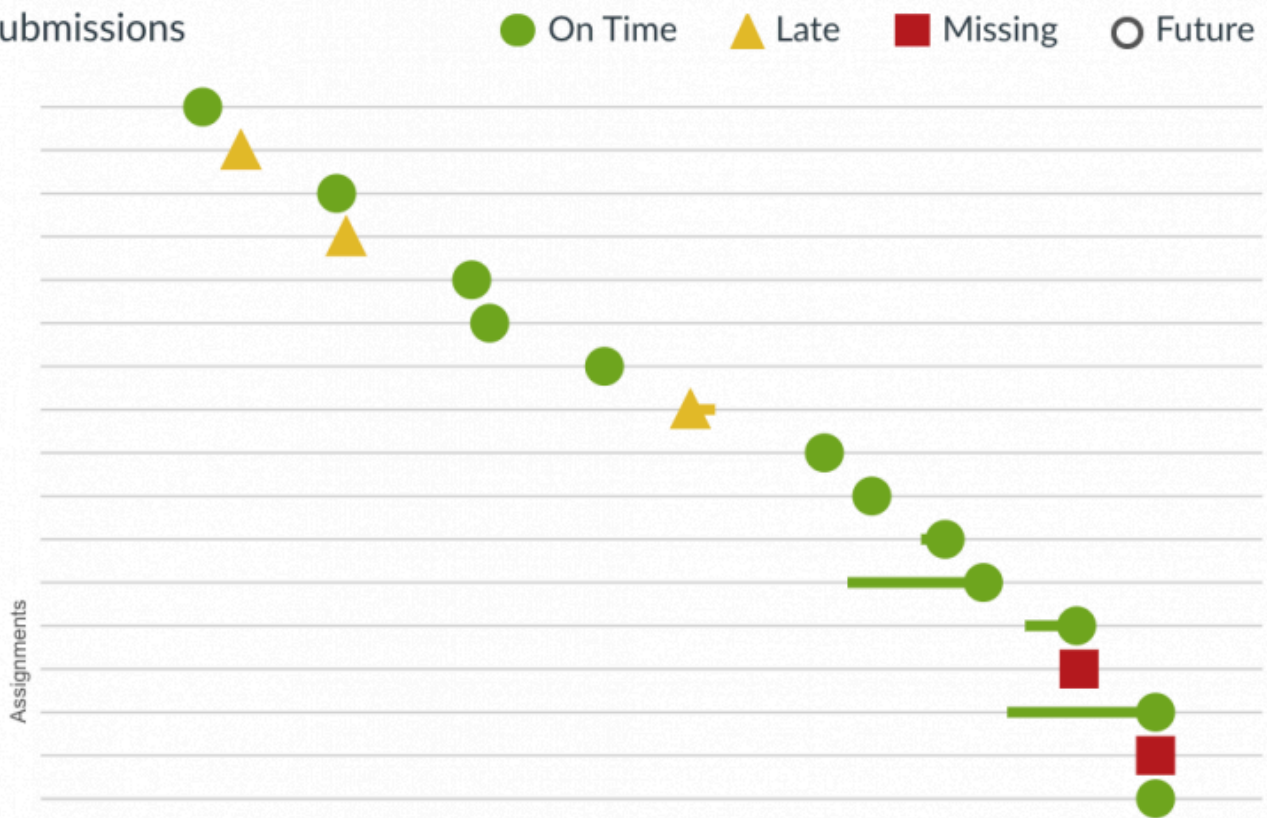
Activity by Date
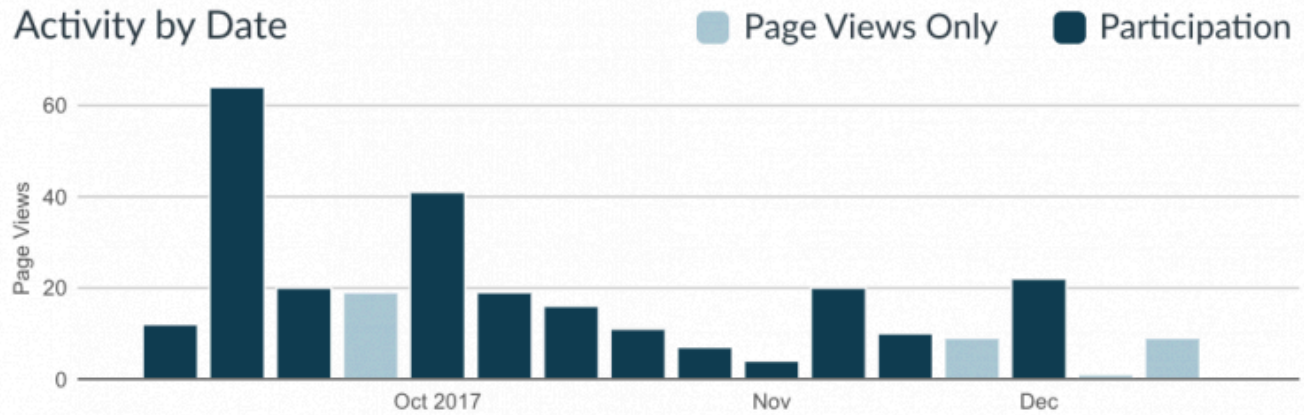
Communication
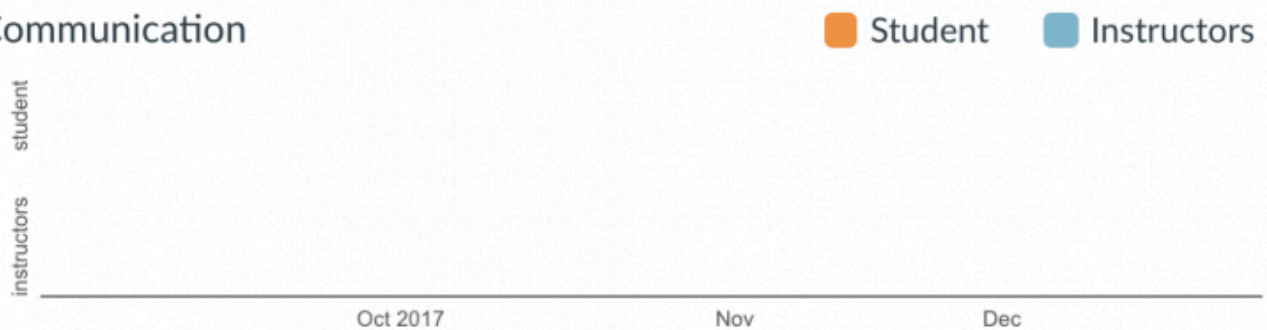
Submissions

These images depict Canvas's user analytics for three different students' Canvas interactions in a composition course I taught in 2017. (Is it ok that I'm sharing this here? Is this information appropriately anonymized for the present? For the future? These are the things I can't stop thinking about. I'm happy to discuss them together.)

Activity Compared to Class

Participation

★☆☆

Low

Page Views

★☆☆

Low

If I click on a student's name in the "People" section of my Canvas page, I'm presented with an "Activity Compared to Class" rating system for each student.

Content	Times Viewed	Times Participated	Last Viewed
Portfolio 3	4	1.0	Dec 27, 2017 11:37pm
Course Home	54		Dec 27, 2017 11:37pm
Course Assignments	31		Dec 27, 2017 11:37pm
Course Grades	7		Dec 27, 2017 10:53pm

I can also click on a student's "Access Report" to see how they interacted with individual course pages as a logged-in user online.

Here, the interoperability of my platform has plugged my project into a tool that can be used to start conversations with students about how they're doing in our course (a good thing), but also to compare students with one another using potentially-misleading information (a bad thing). Framed in concrete terms: the charts in the screenshot above *may* approximate how engaged a student was with our course content, but it's risky to assume that this is always the case. Although it *appears* that my student dropped off the map for a short while in early November and early December, for all I know, he was spending every waking moment

committing passages from our course texts to memory or composing a brilliant peer review response for another student in our class. Nothing about this data compels me to conclude that this student was disengaged from my course during these periods of time, but nothing about this dashboard leads me to reflect on other ways he might have been engaging with the course either.

This isn't a reason to rid ourselves of this dashboard, but it *is* a reason to consider how we might proactively offset the assumptions we may make about student engagement across all of the platforms we use to teach. Knowing that a reader interaction dashboard offers us a very limited insight into students' experiences should sharpen our attention to company rhetoric that implies otherwise. This knowledge also increases our responsibility to find other means of asking students about their experiences and making course resources available to them on their terms.

Let's anchor this once more in the example of a digital critical edition. Say I'm an instructor who is excited at the thought that the teaching text associated with this dissertation, *[The Woman In White: Grangerized](#)*, is available at no cost to students and includes a number of interactive elements. This project's openness and interoperability mean that I can incorporate it into my course in a range of ways.

One route is to follow in the footsteps of the textbook companies who are moving away from a text production model for educational materials and toward a [software distribution model](#).[18] In this 'vertical integration' approach, I'll use the digital tools at my disposal to maximize my control over the book. To mine data as effectively as possible, I'll want my students to read the text only in its digital format and *only* within our learning management system. Unfortunately, the fact that the edition is an OER text means that my students can access it for free on the open web and also download it as a Kindle, iBooks, or PDF file, so students who don't like reading on their computers or don't have steady internet access may find ways to read that I can't track. But because this text is an open resource, I also have the ability to make a cloned version of that text and then click a button marked "Restrict content to LTI Launches." The contents of my cloned text will only be accessible if my students access them through the embedded text in my learning management system. Using in-class statements and some strategic design decisions, I can try to compel my students to access the text through channels I maintain. This will allow me to compare their interactions with one another more comprehensively.

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18. This is a topic I discuss in "[Publications and Provocations](#)."

A better route, I believe, is for me to engage my students in a discussion about how they read for class. I can make sure that they not only have access to but also *know how to use* different formats of the text and different note-taking affordances within the text. To the extent that I have incorporated interactive elements into the text—quizzes, required discussions, and audiovisual content—I can describe ways to *start* with one preferred form of reading and return to the embedded version of the text that lives in our classroom platform. This latter approach offers learning benefits for students. Providing access to media in multiple forms accommodates students' diverse abilities and life circumstances. Offering both PDF and print exports, for instance, improves screen-reader accessibility and accommodates handwritten as well as digital notetaking. This is in line with best practices for Universal Design for Learning, which can be distilled as providing students with multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression.[19] In a similar vein, when instructors have conversations with students about how they might diversify their reading strategies in different contexts, they call students' attention to student's own learning processes and give students the opportunity to refine them.

Easy peasy, yes? To address some of the power imbalances infused into our teaching platforms, we can be clearer and more deliberate in the way we describe texts' affordances. We can create viable options for people to engage with writing and teaching materials in a variety of ways. Built into this process are useful checks on some of the ways that my use of a digital platform could lead me to make assumptions that compromise my goals for student learning.

Higher Stakes

But of course, it's not so simple, and this is why we need to marshal the efforts and voices of the scholarly community as a whole.

As I narrated the scenarios above, I briefly described some of the unintended consequences that might arise from the way my alter-ego was implementing digital platforms. If I had access to information about individual readers' interactions with my dissertation, I might be tempted to tailor my writing to appeal to the people with the most gatekeeping authority in my field. If I used a free discussion platform that lets students opt in to have their data sold to third parties, decontextualized data that was scraped from my students' interactions with my edition could *help* or *hurt* them on the job market. If students had the chance to benefit in class by releasing

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19. The [Center for Applied Special Technology](#) (CAST) unpacks these concepts in detail.

their interaction data to me, those students who had legitimate reasons to be uncomfortable with such tracking might be pushed behind the curve in small but significant ways.

If we look once more into the potential effects of these acts, we can see some of the mechanisms through which power is consolidated along lines of privilege in the academy. Being more transparent and providing different media formats for students to engage with is a necessary step, but this alone isn't going to address some of the deeper concerns we need to grapple with.

One last time, let's delve deeper into a hypothetical path forward in my discipline. This time, however, we'll incorporate only tools that people like me can *already* access without grant funding. We'll consider what these tools can accomplish and how they can exacerbate oppressive, exclusionary dynamics in my field.
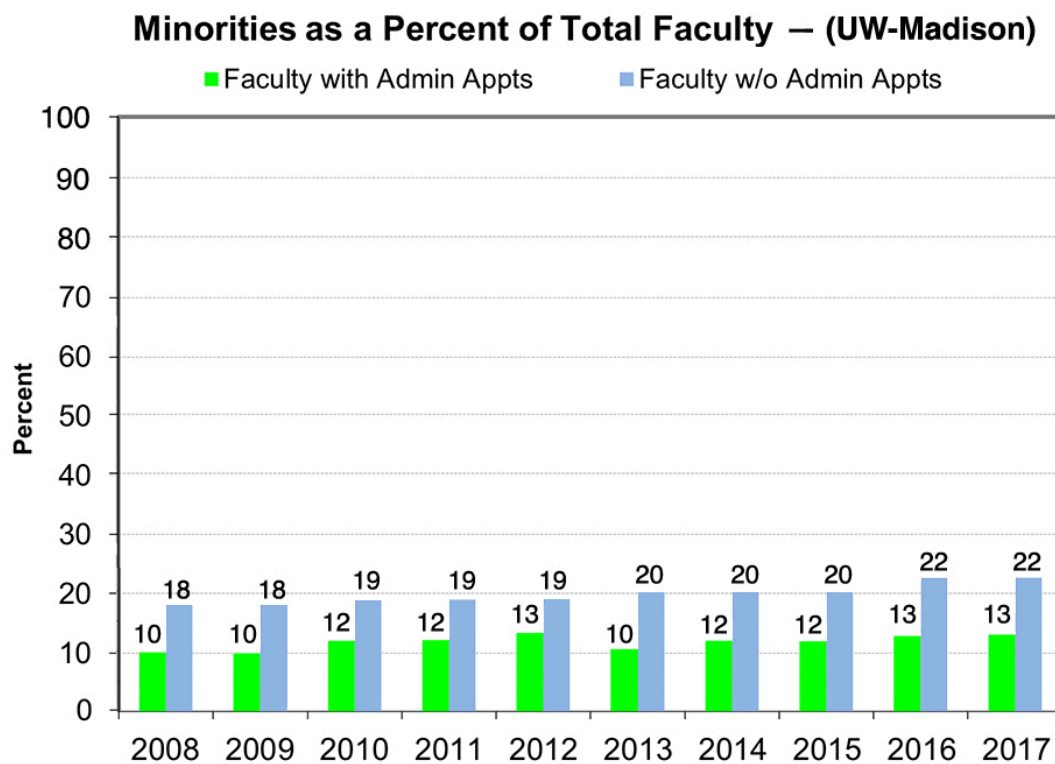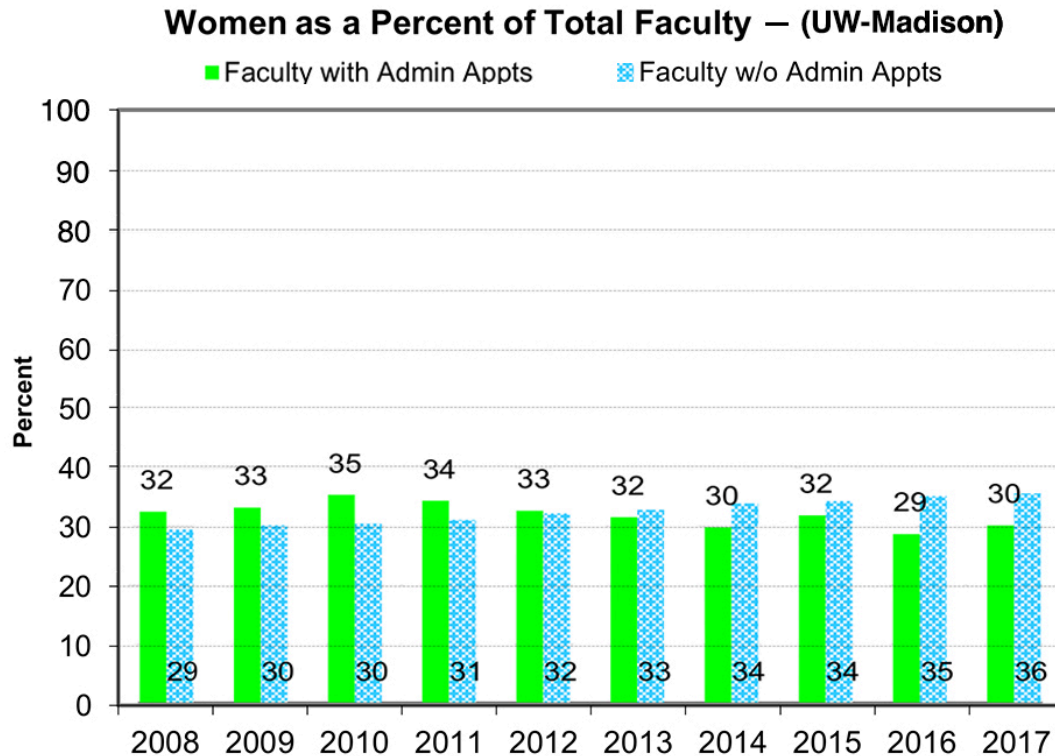
Imagined Audiences

We'll start by considering what it is that my not-so-secret urge to track my dissertation readers' responses reveals about my institutional context. Obviously, the idea of designing digital tools that would allow me to analyze individual dissertation committee members' feelings about my work is a little extreme. However, the factors that *motivate* this desire to analyze these readers' interactions are real. My committee members' opinions already carry far more weight than other readers' opinions do because of the nature of a dissertation advising relationship. I already write with them in mind as a primary audience, and I do so for many good reasons. For one thing, my committee is made up of excellent scholars who are well-versed in my area of study. For another, they determine whether I move forward in my field.

Conveniently, I already have ways to tailor my writing for these readers *without* the intervention of technology. When we meet in person, my advisors provide me with their critiques and preferences. Most of the time, I incorporate their suggestions because these suggestions are genuinely useful. However, I'll admit that sometimes, I will incorporate suggestions that don't seem like an ideal fit for what I am trying to accomplish. I value my advisors' perspectives, and if sometimes it feels like these perspectives carry more weight than my own, that is because within the institutions I inhabit, they often do. On an individual level, the guidance of established faculty in my field helps me progress from being a novice in the discipline to being well-versed in the conversations and writing conventions that my field most values.

However, when we consider the ways that addressing a localized imagined audience like this one is likely to shape my approach to scholarship going forward, we can recognize a troubling

limitation. Over the course of several years, I'll spend a significant amount of my time viewing my work through the eyes of colleagues who—taken as a collective group—do not resemble my future students or the range of people in my hoped-for reading audience. The demographics of faculty at my institution hardly reflect the demographics of the country in which I work. For one thing, as of 2018, white faculty members significantly outnumbered people who identify as being Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Hispanic. Of 2,140 total faculty, 1,667 people—that is, 78%—identified as white only or didn't identify their race or ethnicity ("Data on Women and Minority Faculty and Staff 2009-2018"). In contrast, in that same year, the United States Census Bureau estimated that 60% of Americans are white alone (not counting people who identified as Hispanic or Latinx). 50.8% of people in the 2018 US census were identified as female compared to 35.8% of people identified as women in our faculty demographic data at UW (United States Census Bureau, "Data on Women and Minority Faculty and Staff 2009-2018.).

Women as a Percent of Total Faculty — (UW-Madison)

■ Faculty with Admin Appts   ▨ Faculty w/o Admin Appts

Year	Faculty with Admin Appts	Faculty w/o Admin Appts
2008	32	29
2009	33	30
2010	35	30
2011	34	31
2012	33	32
2013	32	33
2014	30	34
2015	32	34
2016	29	35
2017	30	36

To share a longer-term view of employment demographics, I've drawn these charts from the September 2018 edition of the "Data on Women and Minority Faculty and Staff at UW-Madison" report, which is compiled for the Committee on Women in the University each year. I have edited these charts to better reflect the fact that each bar represents a percentage out of 100. The original document truncates the y-axis on each of these charts. (In the original document, the top percentage listed on the y-axis of the "Minorities as a Percentage of Total Faculty" chart is 25%. The highest for the "Women as a Percentage of Total Faculty'" chart is 70%.) Source: "Data on Women and Minority Faculty and Staff – 2008-2017."

Let's pause to acknowledge that yes, there are problems with using these national and local data without contextualizing them in more detail. Yes, we need to approach any comparisons with nuance. And yes, the faculty demographic information I have is an aggregate of people from departments across the university, so it doesn't account for the makeup of my specific English department.

But it's significant that there is a lack of representation of this scope within my institution and beyond it: research on faculty employment suggests that broader structural factors in the US academy limit access to faculty positions for underrepresented minority scholars. These factors also create a harmful working environment for many of the minoritized scholars who accept a faculty position. To explain the scope of some of these larger trends, medical sociologist Ruth Enid Zambrana points out that "social status identity inequality (race, gender, ethnicity, and class background) influences mentoring, discrimination, work-family balance, and coping strategies and in combination potentially adversely impacts physical and mental wellbeing" (Zambrana). This lack of representation and the institutions that support it influences how my field constructs its scholar-subjects.

In broader strokes, the fact that employment demographics at other educational institutions reflect these same structural inequalities suggests that a significant number of my fellow literary studies scholars have *also* cut their teeth on dissertation projects that disproportionately address an imagined white audience. There are echo chambers here, and the traditional, closed-door PhD dissertation format does little to disrupt them. This is a problem because it shapes the way the field's conversations evolve and is a marginalizing force besides. As a PhD student, I'm expected to share my work at conferences and in journal publications in order to get my name out there and to be exposed to other academics' opinions about my work. But if I'm only writing for paywalled journals, my primary audience is embedded in privileged institutions. If I'm piloting my work at conferences, it will be to people who can afford to travel, who can afford to take off work to attend those conferences, and who feel like they belong in those academic spaces enough to get something out of their interactions.

So, within and outside of my institution, my writing context leads me to prioritize an audience that disproportionately enjoys dominant-group privileges of various sorts. Zeus Leonardo connects this process to broader patterns of exclusion and resistance to necessary change, explaining that "when scholars and educators address an imagined white audience, they cater their analysis to a worldview that refuses certain truths about race relations. As a result, racial understanding proceeds at the snail's pace of the white imaginary" (Leonardo 141). Without sufficient discussion of these dominant echo chambers and without analog and digital structures *designed* to resist them, I will continue to uncritically replicate white supremacist perspectives in my writing and my teaching.

Student Engagement

We don't have to stop there! Next, we'll consider my (semi-)hypothetical early experiences in the classroom. I genuinely love teaching, and I just as genuinely need to make ends meet over

the seven-plus years I spend in graduate school. So I spend six of those years working as a graduate student instructor. For a few of these semesters I am a teaching assistant, but most years, I work as an instructor of record in introductory composition courses. I design my own syllabi, set up my own Canvas pages, and determine what students read and how they access course materials. When I click on each student's name in Canvas, I'm automatically presented with a three-star rating visualization that compares their page views and 'participation' levels to their peers. I can't help but roll my eyes when I look to see which student has spent the least amount of time on our course page. Of *course* it's that guy who always falls asleep in class. Only later do I learn that unlike the other students in his section, he works a night shift. (I'll also learn that falling asleep in class can be one of the warning signs of food insecurity. No one will have taught me that in my TA training sessions before. Likewise, no one will have invited me to think critically about the course data dashboard I'm presented with each semester.) For years, the automated three-star student rating system doesn't make me bat an eye.

When I write my first book, it is peppered with references to secondary scholarship that the majority of the population cannot access without [significant difficulty](). I'm able to write my book in the first place thanks to the existence of paywalled primary source archives. Despite the fact that these sources are in the public domain, corporate interests have [artificially locked-down reuse permissions for the periodicals I study](), but I'm lucky enough to have the institutional, financial, and social capital to reprint these primary sources in my scholarly work. Over the course of my career, as libraries deaccession fragile texts and corporations swoop in to cache them, my ability to navigate increasingly labyrinthine click-wrap and browse-wrap terms-of-service agreements becomes an essential part of my scholarship. This, coupled with an institutional travel budget that allows me to take unrestricted photos of public domain texts, increases the gap between how I'm able to engage with primary sources and how the 'general public' is able to do so. Scholars and students without these rarified resources? Not so much.

Troubled by the access disparities woven throughout my field as well as by the need for a student food pantry on my campus, I take the time to compose a freely-accessible critical edition of a Victorian novel: I want to make it easier for students to afford to take my class. This volume, too, is peppered with references to paywalled resources, but because I teach at an R1 university and my students can access these texts, I'm not concerned. Students at other institutions who want to use or adapt this text may not have this access, but that's something I can't really help.

Once it's finally complete, I'm delighted to be able to integrate my interoperable, interactive text into my Canvas course. Although I do use a third-party resource such as Piazza as a student discussion platform, I do everything right. I discuss privacy considerations with students in

a transparent and caring way. I let them know that they have the opportunity to opt-in to be included in recruitment searches through the platform, but they're under no obligation to do so. I tell them that they can come to my office hours to talk about job-search resources and application strategies outside of this platform.

I've worked hard to ensure that the edition students are using is carefully constructed. Having forged connections with other nineteenth-century researchers at conferences, I've been able to include short essays about the novel written by some of the most influential scholars in my field.[20] But there are significant gaps in the stories that researchers in my field focus on the most. Although I've tried to appeal to student imaginations by inviting them to read my text with an eye to the range of ways that nineteenth-century readers interacted with fiction, I've failed to connect with many of my students. It is the readers who enjoy the most privilege who are best able to see themselves and their families' history represented in the supplemental essays in the text. In contrast, a genderqueer student in my class won't see that part of hir experience represented in these contextual overviews, each of which draws on primary and secondary sources that represent gender in binary terms. (This despite the fact that such perspectives on gender weren't universal during this period.) A student of color won't learn much about what his day-to-day interactions could have looked like in Victorian Britain: these details are missing in my text as well as in my in-class lectures.[21] These students have excellent imaginations, but the activity seems inauthentic—yet another moment where to participate, they need to look through the eyes of white, straight, cisgender people.

Unfortunately, because I've made much of the fact that our class's critical edition is filled with essays from the most elite writers in the field, I've unwittingly reinforced the idea that these are the voices that have the most value in our classroom. My students recognize that they don't have a PhD, a professorship, or a book deal with Cambridge University Press. Maybe they're not English majors to begin with. If they wanted to help correct the record, who would even listen? These students can write an essay for class, but they know that I will skim it once to

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20. This, again, is hypothetical. The critical edition I've composed for this dissertation invites student and scholar contributions openly rather than soliciting contributions individually.

21. Although I am working to change this, the critical edition that I have composed as a component of this dissertation is still *rife* with these gaps. And while I recognize that it's not feasible to represent all possible identity categories, I acknowledge that I have a long way to go to shift the aggregate focus of my critical essays away from the experiences of overrepresented groups. This is research I'll continue to do to improve this text after my dissertation is deposited. A necessary step in this process is to invite critiques and contributions from wider audiences.

leave comments on it and then it will wither and die in their learning management system. Why put forth the effort—especially when that effort will be higher for them because secondary sources will resist their attempts to find nondominant perspectives at every turn?

So What?

Each one of these more realistic narratives reflects a process that causes privileged people to be overrepresented in the field. We can borrow language from Zeus Leonardo to put this in a different, more pointed way: these are what we might call the "material preconditions that make possible a social condition" in which people who inhabit dominant identities gain resources to the direct, material detriment of minoritized people (140).

In other words, this is the process of white supremacy in action.

Taking my cue from critical race theory, by "white supremacy," I'm not talking primarily about *individual* people who are consciously or unconsciously biased. Instead, I'm referring to the array of systemic structures and practices that grant one group unearned advantages over others by default. Here, the term "white supremacy" certainly invokes the subordination of people of color within a racist system, but it also refers to broader patterns of discrimination besides race alone. As Zeus Leonardo explains, the process of domination emerges "not . . . out of random acts of hatred, although these are condemnable, but rather out of a patterned and enduring treatment of social groups." As writers and teachers, we need to accept that these problems are pervasive and structural if we want to move forward.

This need is all the more critical because media and communication technologies are changing in ways that will reshape our disciplines, books, and classrooms whether we like it or not. Profit-oriented corporate vertical integration strategies and the deeply-flawed power dynamics in our educational institutions will continue to infect our work. These forces intersect in ways that are far too complex for any one person to understand, and this makes it all the more important for us to work together to examine the impacts of our genres and platforms more rigorously than we have been doing thus far. It is impossible to operate in an unjust system without replicating inequality, but without more attention to how we are replicating these inequalities, the decisions we make about new media will continue to compound white supremacy in much more serious ways.

Luckily, scholars in the humanities are in the business of studying media, analyzing rhetorical contexts, and teaching different kinds of literacies. We can apply these skills to help student- and non-student audiences navigate this landscape in informed ways. Likewise, we can direct

our gaze inward toward the ideologies present in our field, taking a more critical look at the narratives that take precedence when we make decisions about teaching and publishing. This, in turn, will help us to promote more socially just platforms for education and scholarship.

Calling All Strategic Presentists

We *all* have an obligation to self-reflexively resist structures of oppression and violence regardless of our institutional and professional affiliations. However, there's a special place for this kind of work in nineteenth-century studies. As I've argued in "Where We Stand," one reason for this is that our field's primary source materials offer us unique insights into legal, institutional, and historical forms of exclusion that are ripe for examination and collective resistance.

Exploring the ways our institutions make us complicit in inequality and violence is all the more important for people who identify with strategic presentism as an orientation toward research and teaching. If you'll recall from the "Critical Orientation" section of this text, many literary scholars have embraced this perspective because of the ways that it frames the research we do as intertwined with the changes we hope to see in our current environments. As we've heard in this project, Tanya Agathocleous describes strategic presentism as "a stance that rejects specific visions of the future in favor of illuminating the persistence of the past in the present," and Anna Kornbluh urges us to consider how the past can "embolden us to say what must be said, in the present tense, now" (Agathocleous 93, Kornbluh, 100). It's apt, then, that the long nineteenth century provides us with such good examples of new media forms being deployed to centralize control for the sake of profit: this is one of the ways that the past persists into the present. Just like in the Victorian era, to "say what must be said" in order to resist pervasive stratification requires us to speak truth to powerful institutions in ways that may not always lead to professional advancement.

Where do we need to turn next? I wholeheartedly agree with Andrew Miller's argument that to approach strategic presentism productively, we need to spend more time thinking about the question, "What, in a course taught by one of us, faculty or graduate student, would lead [an] undergraduate to think 'Yes, I can effectively address the things that matter most to me, in my historical moment, by reading Victorian writers?'" And to his point, I'd suggest that one of the necessary *preconditions* for that undergraduate beginning to look for a resonance between their own life and nineteenth-century studies is to feel included, respected, and not exploited by the structures of writing and teaching that Victorian Studies embraces.

To provide a basic example, a strategic presentist might explore how ableist discourse operates

in *Jane Eyre* and draw connections to the narrative strategies that still pervade popular media. In this scenario, a scholar's writing might sensitize readers to injustice in their present. A teacher might help students reflect on the ways that language 'others' people with disabilities. But this strategic presentist approach fails to enact its own values if the person advancing this stance doesn't examine whether their communication platforms reproduce the very inequalities they attempt to highlight. Without a more robust conversation around access to scholarly materials and open platforms, the article writer in question might well circulate their work using a platform that is unfriendly to accessibility devices, meaning that people with visual impairments will not be able to access this text on equal terms.

Recognizing the complexity and complicity of our communication systems, a necessary question for the field, I believe, is "***what about our platforms, written genres, subject matters, and pedagogies needs to change if we want nineteenth-century studies to be relevant to a wider range of participants at all levels?***" We need to ask this question just as earnestly and just as often as we ask questions about narrative structure, metaphor, and character. And we need to discuss these questions not just using the academic genres and circulation platforms that are already entrenched in the system, but also—and especially—by exploring new ways of constructing arguments and inviting response.

What might this mean for us as writers and as teachers?

It means that we need to do more to recognize the hidden labors of inclusive scholarship and teaching. It also means we need to devote more of our critical mechanisms to improving the systems in which we operate.

What does this look like? We could provide feedback on one another's teaching materials just as carefully as we provide feedback on our articles and monographs, paying careful attention to the ways that these teaching materials invite or forestall participation for different audiences. We can direct our writing, media analysis, and argumentation skills to the task of resisting policies that create disparate access to educational experiences and research tools. We should carefully examine the ways in which new forms of data mining can influence our work, and we should leverage the power we do have to resist the exploitation of our students and peers. Even if it means relinquishing some of the control we have previously enjoyed over our writing, we should turn to digital tools to think of ways to invite more people into our conversations than we currently admit. And we should build all of these values not solely into our lives as individuals, but into our *systems*, honoring this work as scholarship in our conversations and advancement structures alike.

In closing, I'll take my cue from student-centered instructional design and propose a series of metaliteracies for nineteenth-century studies. Let's expand them together.

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METALITERACIES FOR NINETEENTH CENTURY STUDIES

By the end of their PhD studies...

OR

By the time they teach their first course....

OR

By the time they write their first article...

OR

By the time they publish their first book...

OR

As soon as possible....

... Scholars should be able to (SSBAT):

- outline the social, economic, and institutional factors that determine who is able to engage with their scholarship
- analyze the ways in which the policies and practices that surround them may contribute to systemic inequality and white supremacy
- describe the potential for others to rehost or reuse the primary-source scans of the texts they work with
- provide citations for primary sources in ways that reduce barriers to entry for other readers
- assess policies related to article-sharing, preprint publication, postprint publication, and self-archiving of scholarly work and take this information into account when they submit articles to journals

- advocate for policy changes that reduce barriers to access to scholarship and education in our disciplines
- describe how a student or colleague might gain access to paywalled secondary sources without an institutional affiliation
- identify the ways in which a specific scholarly or educational platform might allow third parties to use data from readers without their informed consent
- compose a handout or in-class statement explaining what student data instructors and institutions have access to, how each party uses it, and how to opt out of data collection
- create an assignment prompt that addresses students as co-participants in the process of knowledge creation

What would you add to this list?

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THESE PROJECTS

In the following pages, I unpack some of the more technical design principles for my twin projects. I welcome thoughts about alternative approaches as well as expansion suggestions.

INVITING PARTICIPATION

Forms Of Interaction

The *Undissertation* text and the *Woman in White: Grangerized* edition both seek to invite contributors to interact with the text on multiple levels.

To facilitate interaction on an **individual level,** I've built notetaking affordances into this project on the web and in digital export formats, allowing users to highlight and comment on the text in the margins as a way to take individual notes. In *The Woman in White: Grangerized,* I have described different ways to access take notes on, and teach with the project in sections titled "Using This Web Text," "What Can I Do With This Book?" "Commenting in the Margins," and "The Annotation Layer, A How-To Guide."

To facilitate **social interactions in the margins of the text**, I incorporated a Hypothes.is annotation layer as a default sidebar in both the *Undissertation* and the *Woman in White: Grangerized.* In the former text, I described some of my goals and commitments to participants in "What Is An Open Dissertation?," which includes a direct invitation and appeal to readers who may want to critique the text.

In the critical edition, I provided students with descriptions of many of the different moves they could make in a public annotation in the "Commenting in the Margins" section. In this student-facing description, I took care to provide context about how other readers might be interacting with the novel, reminding annotators that some of their peers may not know what happens at the end of the tale and urging participants to keep that in mind when they post anything to do with plot details. (Whether this suggestion will be successful is a mystery, but there are a range of strategies I can adopt to help new readers avoid spoilers should this become a problem. I should also add that while the current design doesn't allow me to moderate comments at an individual level, I can flag any comments that violate Hypothes.is's standards of appropriate behavior, so this mitigates some of the typical risks of an open commenting platform.)

To **facilitate contributions to the critical edition**, I've provided a range of structured engagement prompts in the "Take Part in This Project" section of *The Woman in White: Grangerized*. Many potential participants may not know how to conduct research about the

nineteenth century or how to communicate intentionally with other readers of a critical edition, but my goal is to provide the kind of detail and support that will help contributors feel the confidence to share their work with others in this text. For this reason, I have also composed a [research guide](#) that outlines expectations for source engagement and provides links to relevant primary and secondary resource databases.

I want to make the contribution process as transparent as possible, and so have provided a "[Contribution Guidelines](#)" section of the critical edition in which I describe what the submission process will look like. I have also provided potential participants with a [participant contribution rubric](#) that outlines some of my expectations for essays or footnotes that people submit. I want participants to know that I'm invested in helping them take part in this project. I've framed my participant contribution rubric developmentally, so I've used rubric headings to stress that just because a submitted draft doesn't quite address the critical edition's learning outcomes doesn't mean that it's not under consideration for future inclusion. These headings span from "Well-Developed (Ready for inclusion in the text)" to "Opportunities for Development (May be ready for inclusion, but revisions recommended)" and finally to "Requires Further Development (Not yet ready for inclusion in the text)." In all cases, my goal is for writers to understand that my feedback is intended to help them participate.

Teaching Techniques

Recognizing that instructors may find it useful to embed the critical edition into their Canvas page or adapt this project into an interactive critical edition of their own, I've provided instructors with guidance on these approaches in the sections "[For Instructors: Sharing and Embedding This Project](#)" and "[For Instructors: Cloning and Remixing This Text](#)."

To make embedding this text in Canvas easier for some instructors who are uncomfortable with Common Cartridge uploads, I've also shared a Canvas-embedded version of this project on Canvas Commons.

Philosophical Underpinnings

One of my reasons for devoting so much attention to these modes of interaction was that I wanted to create a participatory resource that would complement excellent open Victorian Studies projects that already exist on the web. Sites like the Central Online Victorian Studies Reader (COVE) provide high-quality, free, and peer-reviewed scholarly commentary on texts. I appreciate that COVE and projects like it prioritize participant access to scholarly work.

COVE outlines many values I share in the [COVE Constitution](). I share the organization's commitment to being an "open-access alternative to any press or commercial provider that seeks to profit from the work of Victorian academics" and to "[embrace] the expanded global nature of today's research communities and changing dynamics of scholarly production" (COVE Constitution).

While I see a value in sharing the work of the most celebrated scholars in the field outside of paywalled databases, I also see the value in making a deliberate space where students of all levels (as well as non-students!) can, in the words of Rajiv Jhangiani, "shape the public knowledge commons of which they are a part" ("Open Educational Practices"). Given the range of voices not adequately reflected in nineteenth-century scholarship, it felt important to me to create a text that invited, facilitated, and supported widespread participation regardless of status.

Works Cited

"[COVE Constitution]()." *The Central Victorian Online Educator (COVE),* editions.covecollective.org/content/about-cove. Permalink: [perma.cc/3UX2-7NJ8]().

Jhangiani, Rajiv. "Open Educational Practices in Service of the Sustainable Development Goals." Open Con, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 2018. Recording and transcript: [http://thatpsychprof.com/open-educational-practices-in-service-of-the-sustainable-development-goals/](). Permalink.: [https://perma.cc/9ENN-PEQE]().

INTEROPERABILITY AND EXPORTS

Exports

My goal is to provide multiple means of accessing and adapting both the *Undissertation* text and the *Woman in White.* For this reason, I've used the open-source Pressbooks platform to share this text on the web. I've also created digital export files in multiple formats so that people can work with PDF files, Kindle (MOBI) exports, EPUB, learning management system Common Cartridge files, and WordPress export files.

Interoperability

Both Pressbooks and the Hypothes.is annotation layer attached to my web book are interoperable, meaning that their contents can be ported into or work in concert with a number of different tools. One of the reasons why it is useful to work with interoperable tools is that doing so expands the ways that other people can engage with a person's work. Another reason why interoperability is so important is that it makes it more difficult for third parties to claim control over content that a creator has produced in one platform.

The fact that the annotation platform in this project is interoperable is noteworthy in a digital landscape where annotation tools are often proprietary. Alexander Naydenov and Heather Staines unpack why this is valuable in their 2018 *Scholarly Kitchen* post, writing:

> Interoperable, standards-based annotation will allow researchers, students and readers to read and respond to each others' annotations even if they are using different platforms and clients — in much the same way that email works today. Interoperability of annotation tools should also allow users to port their data from one tool to another or to archive their annotations securely for use later in another context. Most importantly, interoperability is a safeguard against providers who would try to lock-in users to a specific implementation, or worse, to a monolithic service.[1]

This interoperability is one of the features that makes it easy for me to export even my Hypothes.is annotations into a written document I can submit with my dissertation text.

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1. For more details on web standards for digital annotation, see the [W3C Web Annotation Data Model](#).

Not only are they written in the common digital language MultiMarkdown (and thus easily transferrable across platforms,) but they can be easily collected using an external tool called CrowdLaaers. This latter resource wouldn't exist if not for the openness of Hypothes.is's platform. In a similar fashion, the fact that Pressbooks follows commonly accepted (IMS Global) standards for designing educational tools is what makes it so easily embeddable within Canvas and other learning management systems..

This interoperability also sets this project apart from other prominent platforms for Victorian Studies on the web. One example of this is the Central Online Victorian Educator (COVE) which has its own interactive annotation layer. COVE's annotation layer doesn't appear to follow the W3C web annotation data model, but it does provide a range of additional functions including color-coding annotations by theme. This distinction illustrates the ways that that sometimes, working to a broader standard complicates the customizations it would be compelling to design.

All told, however, the ability to adapt, recirculate, and integrate my open text's open annotation platform into other digital humanities contexts made prioritizing interoperability a key value in my project's design.

Works Cited

Naydenov, Alexander and Heather Staines. "The Time for Open and Interoperable Annotation is Now." *Scholarly Kitchen,* 28 August 2018. https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2018/08/28/all-about-open-annotation/. Permalink: perma.cc/PH3Z-PKNK.

WC3 Web Annotation Data Model. *World Wide Web Consortium (W3C),* 23 February 2017. https://www.w3.org/TR/annotation-model/#annotations. Permalink: perma.cc/N5T4-7R7N.

CITATION PRACTICES

Underlying Principles and Goals

In-text and works cited references are anchor points that can invite readers into a conversation about the text from an informed position. Not all readers have the information privilege or information literacy to acquire primary and secondary sources easily. Making it simple for participants to access a work's referenced materials smooths others' path to participation.

Striking a Balance

Increasing Access Efficiency, Longevity, and Transparency

In the *Undissertation* and *Woman in White: Grangerized*, my goal is to reduce the number of steps or archive-navigation skills that a participant must depend on to access primary and secondary sources. Where it is possible for me to locate an open-source or unrestricted public domain scan of a referenced text, I've made the effort to locate and link directly to this media in place of texts in closed databases. I see this as a form of welcome and inclusion.

Works Cited Considerations

To make user navigation more efficient, I've made some adaptations to the *Modern Language Association's 8th-Edition Style Guide*. When I have a decently reliable hyperlink that can provide users with immediate information about a book or article, I've included it in some form regardless of whether the MLA style guide requests a URL.

My desire to make this text as inclusive as possible for those using screen readers affects where I place my hyperlink within a citation. MLA requests that authors include a hyperlink at the end of a citation where appropriate, so my initial inclination was to make each hyperlink I included clickable. Yet best practices for accessibility suggest that when writers create hyperlinks, they should attach those hyperlinks to semantically meaningful phrases rather than ambiguous verbiage or nonsemantic URL text. The Web Accessibility in Mind team explains this as tied to the ways that screen-readers facilitate nonlinear navigation of a text: "Screen reader users often navigate from link to link, skipping the text in between. Tabbing from link to

link is a way of skimming web content, especially if users are trying to find a particular section of a web site" ("Links and Hypertext"). Because I want screen-reader users to access sources of interest to them easily, I've attached primary web address links to sources' titles rather than attaching them to the hyperlink text or identification numbers later in a citation.

Recognizing that some readers may have limited access to paywalled resources, I've also included bracketed notes to indicate when a source I have linked to is paywalled or, conversely, when the author has published it as an open-access or Creative Commons licensed resource. My primary motivation for including this addition is to help users see when a text is easily accessible to them. However, in the context of my *Undissertation's* discussion of academic inclusivity, these additions have a rhetorical purpose as well. Those readers who have a great deal of information privilege may not recognize how many resources are locked away from other scholars behind paywalls without a clear reminder of that fact. Those readers who have felt jaded because of their lack of information privilege in the past may feel empowered by seeing that many of the authors I cite in these projects make deliberate efforts to share their work openly.

Example:

Kezar, Adrianna. "Examining Non-Tenure Track Faculty Perceptions of How Departmental Policies and Practices Shape Their Performance and Ability to Create Student Learning at Four-Year Institutions," *Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 54, Issue 5, pp. 571-598. DOI: 10.1007/s11162-013-9288-5. [Paywalled.]

Hyperlink quandaries: should I point participants to a DOI link, an OCLC link, an ISBN, or something else?

In the internet era, digital metadata and web caching tools can help readers access sources more efficiently and freely as possible. However, the decision to use one identifier over another in a source's titular hyperlink is not neutral.

Three common forms of text identification are Digital Object Identifier (DOI) numbers, Online Computer Library Center Control Numbers (OCN), and International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN).

Digital Object Identifiers (**DOI**) provide stable links to media. They emerged in the late

1990s as publishers and library organizations recognized that media was becoming available in multiple physical and digital formats ("DOI Introduction"). Because MLA 8th Edition encourages writers to use DOI in place of standard hyperlinks for journal articles. This is one way to avoid link-rot: a DOI link is typically a redirect link that is kept up-to-date. (To illustrate this dynamic using concrete examples, when I click on the DOI link "https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9288-5" in September 2019, my browser automatically redirects to the Springer website page "https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11162-013-9288-5." If Springer eventually hosts this article on a different webpage, the old DOI address would be connected to a new redirect link (DOI). Many, but not all, articles have a DOI. Some, but not many, books have a DOI.

DOI links are intentionally maintained and widely recognized, making them a useful resource for scholars. A DOI hyperlink provides a useful point of reference if my target audience includes scholars who lack the institutional ability to access many sources but who do have the information literacy or personal network to acquire that source through other channels. Yet because my intended audience also includes students with less information privilege and who are developing information literacy, a DOI link alone may be of limited use. Many DOI links redirect to paywalled article pages owned by publishing companies rather than open-access resources.

International Standard Book Numbers (**ISBN**) are commonly used in commercial contexts, so they have the advantage of a wider nonscholarly and non-US recognition than DOI or OCN. However, ISBN are closely anchored to publication format and platform, meaning that they have less utility for my projects than many other object identifiers.

The ISBN Users' Manual (2017) highlights the range of ISBN that could be linked to a text, stipulating:

- Where a specific qualifying e-book is available in different underlying file formats such as EPUB, .pdf etc., each different format that is published and made separately available should be given a separate ISBN. If the publication is migrating to a new version of the file format (e.g., EPUB2 to EPUB3), then a separate ISBN is essential if both versions are available simultaneously or if retailers and customers need to distinguish the versions. (ISBN Users' Manual 18)
- Where a proprietary file format or DRM is used that ties a version to a specific platform, device or software (reading system), separate ISBNs should be used for each such version. However, where digital publications are being supplied by a retailer that is the sole provider of e-books in a proprietary format that can only be bought through their own

websites (e.g. Amazon Kindle, Apple i-books) and that retailer does not require ISBNs, it may not be necessary to assign ISBNs to those versions. However, it may be useful to do so for tracking sales or for listing publications in third-party databases of available e-books. If ISBNs are assigned, they should be unique to that version. (ISBN Users' Manual 18)

When I include a supplemental identification number in a citation, my goal to provide my readers with an easy way to access my source material. The proliferation of different ISBN for different file formats could challenge this use case. To provide a concrete example: if I were assigning an ISBN to a monograph, I would need one number for the EPUB file version and different numbers for the print version and pdf versions respectively. If I wrote a citation that included the ISBN for the EPUB version of the book but for some reason the EPUB version had been largely removed from the internet, a reader who didn't understand how ISBN worked might not realize that a PDF version of the text was still easily available elsewhere.

OCLC Control Numbers (**OCN**) are numbers that the Online Computer Library Center assigns to texts within WorldCat, a large-scale database that helps users see which nearby libraries carry a text they are interested in.

Linking Decisions

Ultimately, I chose to prioritize DOI links first, then OCN numbers, and to leave ISBN numbers out.

Works Cited

"DOI Introduction." *DOI Handbook,* www.doi.org/doi_handbook/1_Introduction.html. Permalink: perma.cc/K7WJ-SGQQ.

"The DOI® System." *Doi.org,* Updated 5 March 2018, https://www.doi.org.

"ISBN Users' Manual, International Edition (7th Edition)." *International ISBN Agency,* London, 2017. ISBN: 978-92-95055-12-4.

"Links and Hypertext." *WebAIM,* https://webaim.org/techniques/hypertext/. Permalink: perma.cc/2L8B-WT2U

APPENDIX A: MEDIA TRANSCRIPTS

Critical Orientation

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's "Shadow in the Corner" sold as under copyright

HathiTrust [Access and Use Policies Statement](#)

Publications and Provocations

Libraries and the Privatization of the Public Domain

This diagram includes multiple factors that each play into other factors on the diagram (indicated by arrows).

FACTOR	... CONTRIBUTES TO
Libraries face financial pressures.	Libraries are encouraged to de-accession physical texts.
Libraries are encouraged to de-accession physical texts.	Less public access to physical texts.
	More incentive for libraries to invest in digital access.
More incentive for libraries to invest in digital access.	Seller's market for digitized content.
	Inflated prices for database access.
Less public access to physical texts.	Libraries face financial pressures.
	More incentive for libraries to invest in digital access.
For-profit digitizers can afford to scan content at low prices.	Libraries are encouraged to de-accession physical texts.
	Seller's market for digitized content.
Seller's market for digitized content.	Inflated prices for database access.
Inflated prices for database access.	Libraries face financial pressures.
	Less public access to physical texts.

APPENDIX B: FEES FOR PAYWALLED ARTICLES IN THIS PROJECT

The tables below include a representative sample of the access prices displayed on some of the paywalled articles linked in the *Undissertation* and *The Woman in White: Grangerized.* There are often ways to access these resources through other legal channels, something I emphasize in my critical edition's participant guide "Using Primary and Secondary Sources for Your Research." However, for people who are in the process of developing these research media literacies, the journal publishers and database archive pages present pricing options that may seem too out-of-reach to pursue, especially at a larger scale. The numbers below reflect the articles' statuses as of September and October 2019.

# Excerpted Articles from the *Undissertation*

ARTICLE	ACCESS PRICE
Adema, Janneke. "Practise What You Preach: Engaging in Humanities Research Through Critical Praxis." *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 5, 2013, pp. 491-505. DOI: 10.1177/1367877912474559.	Purchase article — 24-hours of download access: $36 Purchase Issue: $354 Rent with a DeepDyve subscription ($49 per month / $360 annually)
Evans, Teresa M., et al. "Evidence for a Mental Health Crisis in Graduate Education." *Nature Biotechnology*, vol. 36, Mar. 2018, pp. 282–84. DOI: 10.1038/nbt.4089.	Rent or buy article: $8.99 Subscribe to the journal for one year: $250
Leonardo, Zeus. "The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of 'White Privilege.'" *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2004. DOI: 10.1111/ j.1469-5812.2004.00057.x.	Purchase article through Taylor & Francis — 24-hours of download access: $43 Issue Purchase — 30 days to view or download: $145.00
Terranova, Tiziana. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." *Social Text,* Issue 63, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2000. pp. 33-58. DOI: 10.1215/01642472-18-2_63-33	Purchase article — 48-hours of download access: $15
Veletsianos, George and Royce Kimmons. "Networked Participatory Scholarship: Emergent Techno-Cultural Pressures Toward Open and Digital Scholarship in Online Networks." *Computers in Education*, 2 October 2011. DOI: 10.1016/j.compedu.2011.10.001.	Purchase article — 48-hours of download access: $15 Reuse permissions: The article page provides a link to the Copyright Clearance Center's price estimates for reusing elements from this article. If I were affiliated with an academic entity, if the article had figures, and if I wanted to reproduce two of them in an electronic/print government publication, the CCC's price estimate would be $96. If I were affiliated with an academic entity and wanted to post this article's abstract on a website, the CCC's price estimate would be $32.

Excerpted Articles from *The Woman in White: Grangerized*

ARTICLE	ACCESS PRICE
Allen, Robert. "Perpetually Beginning until the End of the Fair: The Paratextual Poetics of Serialised Novels." *Neohelicon* 37.1 (June 2010): 181–189. doi: 10.1007/s11059-010-0061-x.	Purchase of PDF download access to the article: $39.95.
Huett, Lorna. "Among the Unknown Public: *Household Words, All the Year Round,* and the Mass-Market Weekly Periodical in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Victorian Periodicals Review,* Vol. 38, 2005, pp. 61-82. DOI: 10.1353/vpr.2005.0006.	To the right of this issue available for purchase at Project Muse is a note that states "Purchase/Rental Options Available at JHUP: $20." However, as of September 2019, clicking on the purchase button leads to a Johns Hopkins University Press page with the message: "The specified issue was not found in our database, or is not actually available for purchase."
Leighton, Mary Elizabeth and Lisa Surridge. "The Transatlantic Moonstone: A Study of the Illustrated Serial in *Harper's Weekly.*" *Victorian Periodicals Review,* vol. 42, no. 3, 2009, pp. 207-243. DOI: 10.1353/vpr.0.0083.	To the right of this issue available for purchase at Project Muse is a note that states "Purchase/Rental Options Available at JHUP: $20." At the Johns Hopkins University Press page, purchasing the journal issue costs $20. Purchasing access to the back-issues of the journal for one year costs $45 and for two years costs $81.

APPENDIX C: CRITICAL ORIENTATION VENN DIAGRAM

This is the static version of the interactive Venn diagram from the Critical Orientation section of this project.
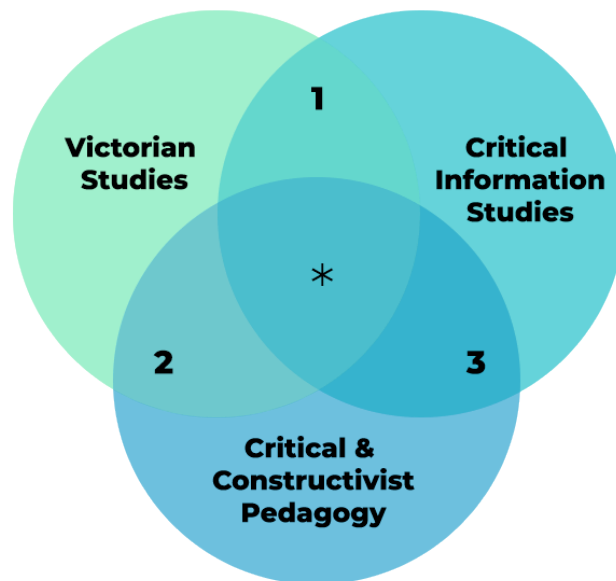
1. Victorian Studies + Critical Information Studies

Recent work at the intersections of Victorian Studies and Critical Information Studies (CIS) examines the interplay between the 19th-century world of letters and networks of power and influence. Many authors who take this approach also look to the ways that 19th-century media ecosystems and present-day reading formations may resemble, shape, or differ from one another.

Some examples of work that combines an attention to 19th-century literary forms with an investment in exploring how these forms intersect with current information networks:

- In her work on the consumption and production of the novel in colonial India, **Priya Joshi** registers the influence of her surviving corpus on her own readings. During the time when British colonizers were facilitating an influx of print and English literary

forms into India, "*preprint* forms of textuality and cultural transmission. . . contested the supremacy of print in India in numerous ways" (39) Her work is sensitive to the ways in which research that registers only on the printed trace–and specifically, the English printed trace, can miss the mark in its conclusions (39).

- **Emily Steinlight** explores the ways in which advertisers in the front and end-pages of Dickens's serial installments sometimes riffed on elements of the emerging novel to appeal to customers among Dickens's fan-base. Steinlight describes research like this as an opportunity to "[rethink] not only the Victorian novel's relationship to the mass culture of industrial production from which it emerges, but also its discursive, formal and material interdependence with the modern system of print advertising" (133).
- **Lauren Cameron** explores digital marginalia in contemporary copies of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, observing this practice's resonance with the social reading practices of the Victorians who first consumed Doyle's texts.

2. Victorian Studies + Critical & Constructivist Pedagogy

Increasingly, scholars of the long nineteenth century are celebrating the value of shared teaching materials and distributing teaching and learning content outside of corporatized publishing spaces.

Examples of projects that facilitate students' and instructors' participation in Victorian Studies:

- Dino Felluga is the editor of the **Central Online Victorian Reader** (**COVE**) which includes openly-accessible digital editions of works such as Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" that are accompanied by introductory material and critical annotations contributed and peer-reviewed by established scholars in the field. COVE also allows instructors and students to obtain access to private annotation toolsets for a small fee. COVE pointedly situates itself against "avaricious business practices" and "seeks to present an alternative, sustainable model for knowledge production."
- Victorian studies scholars have contributed articles or chapters in edited collections that share the teaching practices or conceptual frameworks they have used to facilitate conversations with their students. For example, in the edited collection*Teaching Victorian Literature in the Twenty-First Century,* **Tamara Ketabgian** described her "Victorian Garbage" course structure, learning goals, the prompts for course papers, and reflections on student responses.
- The **V21 Collective** has created a space for shared Victorian Studies syllabi, noting that

"a finely crafted syllabus is one of the best antidotes to positivist historicism, because instead of just doing the default period-driven grabbag ("Mid-Victorian Literature") it can create a narrative or make an argument, and focus on conceptual or formal concerns ("Mid-Victorian Experiments in Omniscience and the Science of Mind").

3. Critical Information Studies + Critical & Constructivist Pedagogy

Work at the intersection of CIS and critical-constructivist pedagogy often seeks to explore new ways of facilitating student access to meaningful learning experiences while reducing barriers to educational access.

Examples of work that blends an awareness of different genres' teaching affordances with a dedication to learner agency:

- **Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall** merge theories about fanfiction with a commitment to expanding the forms of engagement available to students in the classroom. In their work, they explore how assignments that invite students to creatively re-imagine Shakespeare can facilitate an "alternative form of both close-reading and contextual criticism" (27). Drawing from examples of student work on such assignments, they argue that by expanding modes of engagement with literature, instructors can facilitate a more inclusive classroom.
- A broad premise of **Games for Change** is that it is possible to design playful interactions that can promote participants' civic engagement in the real world. As one example, **Jason S. Wu and Joey J. Lee** explore climate-change games' formats and potential positive impacts or trade-offs as educational tools.
- **Chris Gilliard and Hugh Culik** highlight some of the potential negatives of an educational sphere that is becoming increasingly digitally-oriented. They argue that many digital tools and institutional approaches have the potential to further marginalize vulnerable populations who do not have consistent access to computers or to the internet. They also express concern at the forms of digital surveillance that are often disproportionally directed at minoritized students. They refer to these processes as forms of "digital redlining."

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MEDIA REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

In this page, I include additional reference information for some of the materials I have referred to in this project's main text or in supplemental comments in the annotation layer.

Multimedia Attributions

Cover image remix elements

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1. And just for fun, the text of "A Terrible Tiger." "A TIGER who signs himself T / Is a gourmand most dreadful to see; / He eats and he eats / All possible meats, / And all kinds of sweets, / Then fears they will not agree."

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GLOSSARY

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bowdlerization

A bowdlerized text is a text that has been adapted to be more 'appropriate' for audiences the author believes would benefit from this censorship. Often, elements considered to be sexual, nonnormative, or irreligious are removed from the original text.

digital redlining

Chris Gilliard and Hugh Culik use the term "digital redlining" to describe a limitation of access to digital tools or information that disproportionately affects minoritized people. They stress that "digital redlining arises out of policies that regulate and track students' engagement with information technology." ([Gilliard and Culik](#))

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

DRM is an abbreviation of"digital rights management." DRM technologies "limit what a reader can or cannot do with a given work" (For more detailed information, see "Considering Publishers" in McGuire et al., "An Open Approach to Scholarly Reading and Knowledge Management.")

disposable assignments

The term "disposable assignments" was coined by David Wiley

fair use

In the United States, fair use assessments are always made on a case-by-case basis by weighing the following four factors:
1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

FOIA

"FOIA" is an abbreviation for the Freedom of Information Act. In some states, public institutions are required by the state to reveal the details of their commercial contracts when asked.

HEFC and RCUK

The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) and Research Councils UK (RCUK) have combined as of April 2018 - UK Research and Innovation.

interoperable

A term used to describe a tool that can work within or in concert with another tool.

neurotechnology

"Neurotechnology" is a term that Benn Williamson defines as "a broad field of brain-centred research and development dedicated to opening up the brain to computational analysis, modification, simulation and control. It includes advanced neural imaging systems for real-time brain monitoring; brain- inspired 'neural networks' and bio-mimetic 'cognitive computing'; synthetic neurobiology; brain-computer interfaces and wearable neuroheadsets; brain simulation platforms; neurostimulator systems; personal neuroinformatics; and other forms of brain-machine integration" (Williamson 66, citing the Nuffield Council on Bioethics [2013]; Rose et al. [2016]; Yuste et al. [2017]).

OA

Abbreviation for "open access"

OEP

OEP stands for "OER-Enabled Pedagogy." Coined by David Wiley, it refers to educational practices that are impossible without the permissions granted by open licenses"--that is, the explicit permission to remix, revise, reuse, retain, and redistribute a particular learning resource.

OER

Open Educational Resources are essays, infographics, movies, schematics, simulations, and other forms of media that are freely shared for educational purposes. OER creators

provide explicit permission to others to remix, revise, reuse, retain, and redistribute a particular learning resource.

RCUK

Research Councils UK is now UK Research & Innovation.

reading formations

"Reading formations" are socially-situated practices for engaging with and interpreting texts. Or, as Andrew Bennett expands on the term: "Meaning is a transitive phenomenon. It is not a thing that texts can have, but is something that can only be produced, and always differently, within the reading formations that regulate the encounters between texts and reader" (Bennett 8).

scholarly community

I use the term 'scholarly community' to describe people who are active participants in scholarly discussions in a range of formal or informal contexts. This includes--but is not limited to--researchers, instructors, and students affiliated with a higher education institution.

SoTL

SoTL is the acronym for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, a field of inquiry that explores instruction and assessment strategies using evidence-based research methods. Osman and Hornby describe SoTL as a set of practices that "[provide] an opportunity to re-examine and in some instances confirm one's epistemological and philosophical orientation as teachers as well as recognise the political nature of our work" (Osman and Hornby 7).

V21 Collective

A group of scholars whose motto is "Victorian Studies for the 21st Century."