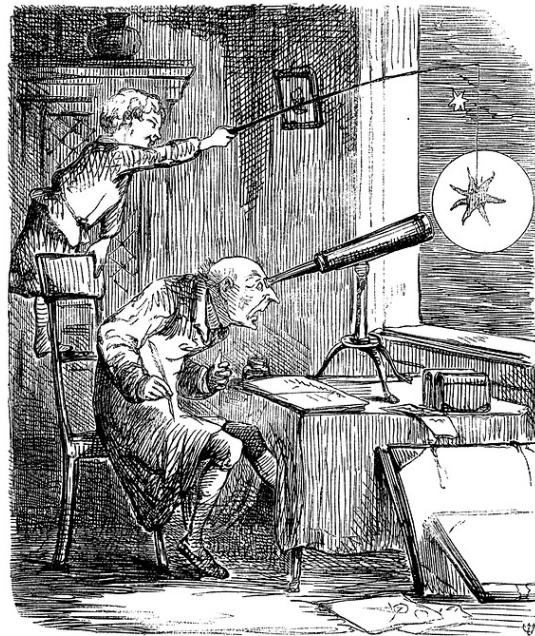




Refractions/Reflections: Victorian(ist) Ways of Seeing

October 22-23, 2021 — Charlotte, North Carolina

In *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), John Ruskin writes, “The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion, all in one.” Ruskin pushed his contemporaries to see the world for themselves plainly. George Eliot echoes this idea in *Adam Bede* (1859), writing “all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of [human] nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite, substantial reality.” In contrast, other writers of the period reveled in creating imaginative, sensational, or fantastical worlds that moved beyond the boundaries of the seen and known. This conference seeks essays that explore how Victorians saw their world, how they depicted what they saw, and the ways that modern scholars, in turn, see the Victorians. Papers or panels on poetry, prose, nonfiction, biography, digital humanities, or visual art are welcome, as are presentations on the pedagogy & ethics of teaching Victorian literature during or not during a global pandemic.



POSSIBLE TOPICS:

- Emotional, Intellectual, Aesthetic Insight
Visual Print Culture, Advertising, Ephemera
Visual Technology: Magic Lanterns, the Diorama, Binoculars, the Stereoscope
Optical Illusions/Literary Allusions
Observation & the (Scientific) Eye:
Telescopes, Microscopes, Mirrors, Glasses
Victorian Photography/Illustration
The Imagination/The Mind's Eye
Seeing Ghosts & Gothic Ways of Seeing
Seeing Disease/Illness/(Dis)ability
The Spectacle/Spectacular
The Great Exhibition
Shadows/Secrets/Surveillance
Mesmerists & Spiritualists
Performance/Performativity
Victorian Theater
The Visible/Invisible
- Detectives/Detection, Criminals/Crime
Memoir/Memory/Retrospection
Fantasy & Reality
Travel & Travelogues
Pornography/Iconography
Food & its Presentation: the Home & the Restaurant
Self-Perception/Self-Construction
Victorian Landscapes & the Natural World
Art/Art Criticism/The Art Gallery
Medieval Revival & Revisions
Erasure & Censorship
Literal/Figurative Blindness
Objects/Objectification/the Other
Neo-Victorian/Modern Perceptions
Pedagogy: Victorians in the Age of #metoo
Pedagogy: Victorians in the Age of Covid

Please send a 300-word abstract and 1-page c.v. to conference organizers Bonnie Shishko and Casey Cothran at thevictoriansinstitute@gmail.com (Word or PDF format) by **May 15th 2021**. Individual proposals should include contact information. Panel proposals should include contact information for all participants, a synopsis of the panel, and abstracts for all papers.

Confirmed Keynote Speaker: Dr. Amy M. King, St. John's University

“Folded eyes see brighter colors than the open ever do.”

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

