



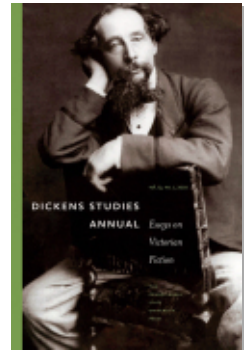
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## Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

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This issue of *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* is appearing in the sesquicentennial year of Dickens's death. As Jagers would say, "Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence." Or as Joe would say, "What Larks!" Dickens's genius certainly continues to be proclaimed by his posthumous productivity (to borrow a phrase from Goethe), and we continue to contribute appreciatively to it.

2020 . . . 1970 . . . 1870 . . . Sesquicentennial. Fifty years ago, there was much ado about the centenary of Dickens's death. This journal was born in 1970. Energetic Robert B. Partlow's productive and promotional engine was on full throttle, editing and publishing *Dickens the Craftsman: Strategies of Presentation* and convincing its publisher, Southern Illinois University Press, to also publish *Dickens Studies Annual, Volume 1* that same year. In that first volume, he attracted essays by Harry Stone, Margaret Ganz, John R. Reed, Duane DeVries, Louis James, Jane Rabb Cohen, Angus Easson, Jerome Meckier, Henri Talon, Michael Steig, J. Miriam Benn, Trevor Bount, Lance Schacterle, Leonard Manheim, Robert Barnard, Annabel M. Patterson, and Paul Gottschalk. An impressive who's who of Dickensian scholars and critics to go along with those equally distinguished in his volume of collected essays: Philip Collins, Robert L. Patten, James R. Kincaid, Richard J. Dunn, K. J. Fielding and A. W. Brice, Richard Stang, Sylvère Monod, and again Harry Stone.

And then there were the books on Dickens that year: Angus Wilson, *The World of Charles Dickens*; Barbara Hardy, *The Moral Art of Dickens*; Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*; F. R. and Q. D. Leavis, *Dickens the Novelist*; John Lucas, *The Melancholy Man: A Study of Dickens's Novels*; Harvey Peter Sucksmith, *The Narrative Art of Charles Dickens: The Rhetoric of Sympathy and Irony in His Novels*; plus another collection of essays, Michael Slater's *Dickens 1970: Centenary Essays*.

Slater's collection included essays by Walter Allen, Barbara Hardy, John Holloway, Raymond Williams, Michael Slater, C. P. Snow, M. Lane, P. H. Johnson, and Angus Wilson. Add to that the major exhibitions of his works in libraries and museums, the founding of the Dickens Society of America, the launch of the then *Dickens Studies Newsletter* (now the *Dickens Quarterly*), the special session on Dickens at the Modern Language Association Convention chaired by J. Hillis Miller, and it is safe to call it, well, a Dickens of a year.

We are humble yet proud to help kick off this sesquicentennial year with the first of our two issues to be published in 2020. As we look back as well as forward, we have the pleasure of giving special thanks to fifty volumes of contributors to this journal and to those members of our profession who through the years have served as readers. The principle of peer-evaluation is at the heart of maintaining standards of excellence in research and publication. Those scholars and critics who give freely and generously of their time and expertise render an important service for which we extend our gratitude on behalf of the academic community.

For this current volume, we once more express our gratitude for important and practical assistance received from the following administrators at CUNY's Graduate Center: James Muyskens, Interim President; Interim Provost Julia Wrigley; Program in English Executive Officer Kandice Chuh; and Nancy Silverman, Academic Program Coordinator, PhD. Program in English. Anna Metreveli in the Business Office continues to be the ablest of facilitators.

In addition, we extend thanks to Professor John O. Jordan, Director of the The Dickens Project at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Renee A. Fox, Co-Director; Courtney Mahaney, Assistant Director of The Dickens Project. See also <<http://dickens.uscs.edu>>.

We gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Wei Wu, a doctoral student in English at the Graduate Center, who has been our editorial assistant for much of this number, and his successor, Paris Shih, for their reliable, timely, and indispensable contributions.

Finally, we thank the following members of the Journals Department at Penn State University Press for their guidance and support: Diana L. Peske, Journals Manager; Julie Lambert, Production Coordinator; Rachel Lynn Ginder, Production Assistant; and Astrid Meyer, Journals Managing Editor.

—The Editors