Series Editor’s Preface

Both Victorian studies and publishing in the field of Victorian studies are facing enormous challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century. The field of Victorian studies today is not only multi- and interdisciplinary but also encompasses an ever widening variety of critical and theoretical interests, with no single methodology or theoretician predominating. Scholarly publishing too is changing dramatically as it begins to question traditional definitions of the “book” and to explore new and wider audiences for research-based publications. Reflecting these changes, Victorian Critical Interventions is a series of diverse, theory-based contributions to the broadly defined field of Victorian cultural studies, encompassing (but not limited to) literature and the arts, philosophy and religion, economics and empire, popular and political history, medicine and science, racial/sexual/gender identity, and even the text of “Victorian studies” itself. Uniquely, the series focuses on brief, accessibly written manuscripts that make brash and revisionary claims.

Until now, there has been no regular publication venue for works of critical analysis that need more than the space of a long article, but significantly less than that of a customary book. Indeed, nothing beyond professional convention defines a book as 250 or more printed pages. Victorian Critical Interventions provides a venue for publishing rigorously argued, scholarly books whose critical lenses are more sharply focused and whose arguments are more tightly constructed. Series entries also follow a specific, reader-friendly format: Each opens with an introduction that sets out the book’s interventionist claims and surveys the context in which it is intervening, followed by three or four body chapters that cover its topic thoroughly, and then concludes with a clear, succinct assessment of the book’s desired impact on the field of Victorian studies. Series entries are written to appeal to a diverse set of scholarly and student readers interested in clear delineations of the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, as well as one critic’s attempt to reveal its omissions and add provocatively to it. Individually and as a group, series volumes work to redefine what we know and do as “Victorian studies” in the twenty-first century.

—Donald E. Hall