

Travel and Transformation: Exploration, Tourism, and the Threat of Disease in Nineteenth- Century Travel

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Jessica Howell, *Exploring Victorian Travel Literature: Disease, Race and Climate* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014), 198 + ix pp., \$120.00 cloth.

Michele M. Strong, *Travel and the “Civilisation” of the Victorian Working Classes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 243 + viii pp., \$95.00 cloth.

Tim Youngs, *Beastly Journeys: Travel and Transformation at the Fin de Siècle* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013), 225 + x pp., \$111.00 cloth.

*T*he European “discovery” of the New World in the fifteenth century initiated a global movement of people – ordinary people as well as explorers – never seen before, although medieval Europe and the Islamic world, to be sure, saw countless religious pilgrimages in an era when, at least in Europe, serfs were bound for a lifetime to remain on the land where they were born. Voluntary travel by ordinary individuals for the purposes of education or pleasure, what we now call touristic travel, was, by contrast, largely a monopoly of the well off in Europe until the nineteenth century. The aristocratic Grand Tour was considered a necessity by those young men whose class position required them to acquire the

proper cosmopolitan polish, but it required a great deal of money and time in an age when roads were primitive and railroads did not exist. The subgenre of travel narrative known as exploration literature goes back at least to Herodotus, but by the nineteenth century it grew increasingly popular with readers in Europe and the United States, and in Britain especially after the elimination of the 1860 paper tax, which made publication significantly cheaper than it had been. While eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travelers, adventurers, intellectuals, and missionaries, such as the scientists Alexander von Humboldt, Joseph Banks, and Charles Darwin, and the explorers Johann Burckhardt, Mungo Park, and Captain James Cook, were earnestly dedicated to advancing human knowledge (as well as colonization, in some cases) by investigating and reporting on the customs of non-European people, their travels were journeys of self-exploration as well, always justified as the necessary means of enlightening a growing readership while “opening up” areas of the world, however inadvertently, to eventual European penetration. The motives for travel by the nineteenth century were multiple.

The mid-nineteenth century saw a dramatic change in the modes of travel. The development of railroads made travel across Europe and North America (and within Britain) cheaper and faster than it had ever been before and brought it within the reach of people of moderate means. While the British government still sponsored exploratory expeditions, Britain also saw the growth of private institutions taking responsibility for providing money to individual travelers and explorers to perform more systematic forms of exploration and mapping of the more remote areas of the globe (and these sometimes explicitly linked exploration with prospecting for colonization). The Royal Geographic Society, for one, was certainly the best-known of these institutions involved in sponsoring and publicizing journeys of exploration. Its sponsorship helped stoke rapid growth in readerly demand for exciting exploration narratives, a phenomenon eagerly taken advantage of by publishers such as John Murray. When private tour directors, of which Thomas Cook and Son was the first and best-known, made their appearance in the middle of the nineteenth century, inviting

middle-class tourists to travel Britain and the Continent while encouraging them to leave the details of booking transportation, arranging tours of historic sites, and hiring translators to Cook, they stoked a growing demand opened up in part by the rapid growth of the railroads.

The three books under review here offer three novel approaches to telling the story of nineteenth-century travel, and they focus on three distinct ways in which travel developed in the Victorian age (there are many others, of course): travel as mass educational experience for the Victorian working classes (Michele Strong), travel as sometimes eagerly, sometimes hesitantly, imperialist exploration of lands Europeans feared were hostile to the health and wellbeing of white Europeans (Jessica Howell), and travel as a form of "metamorphic writing" in late nineteenth-century fiction (Tim Youngs). While exciting exploration narratives of the "Dark Continent" written by such writer/explorers as Henry M. Stanley, Richard F. Burton, and Winwood Reade were bestsellers in Britain in the mid- to late nineteenth century, inviting readers to a mainly imaginary engagement with the thrills of exploration of exotic and dangerous lands, they no doubt also helped, in however indirect a way, to develop an appetite in middle and upper-middle-class Meagleses for the more familiar – and welcoming – touristic sights of "civilized" Europe. Above all, these three books testify just how broad a concept "travel" had become by the Victorian age. One wonders even if the term itself imposes a fictive unity on the disparate forms of movement examined in these three books.

1

Michele Strong's *Education, Travel and the "Civilisation" of the Victorian Working Classes* examines a little-discussed aspect of touristic travel on the Continent in the Victorian age: group travel by working-class tourists, partly for pleasure but mainly for educational benefit. Strong's history is thus a compelling, and little told, story about working-class social history in the period while also being an implicit lament for the fact that working-class travelers of modest means are today no longer considered worthy targets of

the tourist industry: “such tours helped shape working people’s perceptions about the politics of class, culture, and knowledge,” she argues, “and thus offer an unusual window into working people’s responses to modernity and their contributions to what has become one of the most lucrative travel industries today, an industry that largely excludes them” (Strong 3). Taking up James Clifford’s challenge to explore the story of “subaltern travelers” in the nineteenth century, Strong focuses initially on the Society of Arts tours of Paris in the 1860s, tours which were undertaken for the purpose of educating British artisans about working-class life outside of Britain – what is sometimes referred to as “educational” travel. In the years leading up to the passage of the Second Reform Bill (1867) and the Education Act of 1870, the question of how best to educate about-to-be enfranchised working-class voters was widely debated in Britain. Thomas Cook and Son, who had already made significant profit from leading groups of middle-class people on tours of the Great Exhibition of 1851, sensed an opportunity and organized tours of Paris in the 1860s which often included in the itinerary opportunities for British artisans to visit French work sites to inform themselves about French ways of manufacturing and conditions of work.

The strongest motives driving such organizers as Austen Henry Layard were as much political as educational: the expectation that trips to the Continent might cure British workers of their antipathy to economic liberalism by exposing them to working-class life in other countries (35). Organizers like Layard “believed in the governmental power of culture” and thus were committed to the educational ideal of travel, an ideal inseparable at the time from the political motive of creating a class of workers who would be docile voters and citizens as well as compliant workers. Indeed, one of the real strengths of this book is its focus on the inseparability of the goals of social control, education, artistic awakening, and comparative cultural awareness, and the relative absence of any emphasis on more conventional pleasures that we now associate with travel to the Continent. The “improving” motives all wash together at this time, and those who promoted working-class travel often justified it, either in very high-minded Arnoldian educational terms, or in terms of the benefits it promised for

advancing social control. It was nothing less than a transformation of the notion of beneficial "broadening" inherited from the aristocratic Grand Tour and applied to expeditions by the great unwashed. Even as early as 1851, the organizers of the Great Exhibition, with the recent memory of Chartist riots still fresh in their minds, stationed cavalry in Hyde Park in case of an outbreak of rowdiness among working-class visitors to the Exhibition. To their surprise, it was never needed (29). More than a decade later, the Whitsuntide excursion to Paris reinforced the disciplinary value of Continental travel by demonstrating that British workers could behave well abroad. In Strong's words, these excursions "bore all the disciplinary markers of the educational idea" (31).

To be sure, some promoters of working-class travel were interested in sponsoring Continental travel because they genuinely wanted to encourage independence of thought among the British working class. One sees this when one looks closely at the class dynamics that underlay the planning of working-class travel even among workers who were less compliant than the norm. No less a figure than Marx urged the efficacy of having working-class men meet one another across international boundaries to realize the goal of universal proletarian solidarity. He urged workers taking these trips to instigate a "statistical inquiry into the condition of the working classes of all countries," one to be carried out independently of any state by the working classes themselves (quoted in Strong 44). Indeed, the visit of British workers to the Paris Exposition in 1867 did initiate much useful discussion of comparative working conditions. The SA even required a number of the more articulate workers who traveled to report back on the goings on, and to attempt to measure their own job skills against those of Continental workers (62). The groups themselves were largely male, women having been actively discouraged by the organizers from accompanying the men to Paris. In discouraging women from joining the tours, the men were reinforcing a trend within British working-class culture in the heyday of Victorian economic dominance worldwide (the 1850s to the 1870s). The working-class patriarchy, whose privileges and wages had been threatened by de-skilling and the introduction of lower-paid female and child labor on the

factory floor earlier in the century, was reinforced when adult males were awarded more complex duties and higher pay. This change reinforced patriarchy on the shop floor and within working-class culture more generally and dampened – at least for a while – working-class restiveness by strengthening the dominant role of the male breadwinner (Szreter 496). One might call this practice a kind of co-opting of restive energy to put it in service of the goal of taming the working class. Hence, Strong characterizes the 1867 Paris trips as “governing at a distance.”

While some of the men’s reports on conditions in France were constrained by their desire not to annoy their employers, some of whom helped to subsidize their tours, they nonetheless observed and remarked on a wide range of interesting social and cultural differences between French and English working-class manners and ways of life (79). They noted that the French were able to restrain the size of their families and were surprised by the strikingly large role of café society in French working-class life (78). Indeed, it came as a surprise to the British workers that home was not as much the center of French life as they imagined it to be in English working-class life (76). Domestic life in France appeared to differ strikingly from the English domestic ideal. French mixed-sex conviviality contrasted significantly with the single-sex public life of the English working class (78). English observers even claimed to have seen evidence of greater social equality in France: less deference to shop foremen and less segregation in public recreation than in Britain. One of the reporters, Charles Hooper, even elaborated a contradictory vision of France as a working-class utopia, with well-behaved working-class families devoting Sundays to improving themselves by touring museums to take in artistic treasures (89). This vision launched him into an attack on the tiresome preachiness of British sabbatarian reformers he blamed for the dullness of British working-class life outside the workplace (89). To be sure, the well-behaved French workers visited in the years before the creation of the Paris Commune had little choice but to be well-behaved because they were often under observation by numerous gendarmes, the latter’s presence a form of heavy-handed, if effective, State-enforced insurance against rowdy behavior and loose talk (91).

The institutionalization of working-class travel was a central feature of polytechnic education in the late nineteenth century – at least for a while. Quinton Hogg, the founder of the Regent Street Polytechnic, made travel a regular feature of the polytechnic experience in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and eventually found himself in competition with Thomas Cook and Son as a tour leader. The trips he organized for students offered a bridge between traditional job training and the inculcation of the educational requirements of “an emerging technological class” (145). Hogg ultimately excited the interest of Walter Besant, who became an enthusiastic supporter of the Polytechnic trips, especially after the failure of the People’s Palace project in the East End to attract working-class people (1887). Heavily influenced by the social theories of Ruskin, the People’s Palace was based on a utopian model that involved introducing working-class people to transformative forms of pleasure – the reading of great literature, dancing, and art appreciation in place of the ordinary routine of a pint at the local pub. In the period from the 1870s through the turn of the century, however, the polytechnic identity became firmly established as it embraced working-class travel: polytechnics came to be seen as places for outfitting rank-and-file workers for successful competition with workers from overseas; universities, by contrast, came to be seen as institutions that inculcate leadership skills. The polytechnic ideal did not, finally, realize Besant’s high-minded aestheticist goals, however, and it lost institutional momentum soon after the death of Hogg. But in an age of rapid economic and social change worldwide, the Polytechnic, according to Strong, demonstrated

how new conceptions of liberalism in an age characterized not only by anxiety over mass democracy and international economic competition, but also by optimism over technological and social innovation, had made it possible for reformers to imagine, [...] a national curriculum that included travel opportunities for working-class and lower-middle-class students and that would serve, ideally, as both an education in and an obligation of citizenship. (156)

After the death of Hogg in 1903, however, these opportunities for working-class polytechnic students gradually disappeared, and Study Abroad became institutionalized in the twentieth century mainly in the universities as a broadening experience offered to middle- and upper-class students (160). Travel as a means of broadening working men's and women's education lost its base of support. One senses here a strong elegiac tone creeping into Strong's description of the ultimate failure of the polytechnic ideal originally articulated and put into practice by Hogg. A true opportunity to do good was lost, and what was lost was not just the opportunity to travel for pleasure but the chance to measure the British working class's international competitiveness as well, to allow working-class Britons to see themselves in global terms, occupying an important place in a larger context.

2

Jessica Howell's *Exploring Victorian Travel Literature: Disease, Race and Climate* offers a glimpse into a very different part of the broad field of nineteenth-century travel: West African exploration literature and the problem of tropical disease. In chapters on Mrs. Mary Seacole, Richard F. Burton, Africanus Horton, Mary Kingsley, and Joseph Conrad, she considers how the threat of tropical disease to Europeans in West Africa shaped explorers' travel and writing, eventually inducing doubts, voiced in their writings, about the wisdom of white colonization there.

The focus in this book on tropical disease and the causative impact of "climate" makes this study novel. While there have been other important studies of disease and empire (perhaps the most influential historical account is Philip D. Curtin's *Death by Migration* [1989]), as well as a number of influential studies of the imagination of disease in fiction (Pamela K. Gilbert's *Disease, Desire, and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels* [1997], for example), Howell's study is unusual in its focus on how the rhetoric of writing on West Africa in the late Victorian age was shaped by "meteorological explanations" that lived on despite the scientific

discovery, in the 1870s and 1880s, that many diseases were caused by pathogenic microorganisms, not geography or climate.

Howell's choice of figures to discuss is relatively novel. In discussing the work of Mary Seacole, a Jamaican creole nurse who spent time doing nursing work in the Crimea and who published the *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* in 1857, Howell is able to show one of the unique ways in which racial issues and stereotypes shaped the debate over disease and death in this period. Seacole presents herself in that book as a figure who derives her hardy resistance to disease from the advantages of her mulatto background. She assumes what one might call an aggressively maternal position in her work nursing "blond English boys" wounded in war, and using, as Howell says, "tropes of motherhood to claim for herself space at the centre rather than at the margins of British society" (Howell 40). Seacole was able to vaunt her own racial hybridity as the source of her resistance to disease in an age when the dominant explanation of disease was climatological – the most important being the miasma theory of disease transmission promulgated, perhaps most forcefully and influentially, by Edwin Chadwick. While it is biologically acceptable today to suggest that individuals of certain ethnic backgrounds may have evolved specific disease resistances over many generations of living in the same climate and locale, this claim runs strongly against Chadwickian orthodoxy in the 1850s, when the notion of "miasma" attributed the causes of disease to geographic location rather than, as we would now say, to pathogenic microorganisms and a lack of biological resistance to them in travelers from distant lands. In tropical West Africa especially, whites imagined themselves literally breathing in miasmatic infection with every breath. Moreover, Seacole's discussion of her mulatto status in this regard connected with mid-Victorian debates over the disease resistance some felt was bestowed by racial mixing, all this at a time when Britain's poor performance in the Crimean War caused many, including intellectuals such as Kingsley, Carlyle, and Spencer, to articulate the uneasy feeling that the overly "civilized" state of the Victorian middle classes might be responsible for incipient biological weakening (37).

The explorer Richard Burton was always ambivalent about the idea of colonizing West Africa at a time (the 1860s) when there was significant humanitarian support for doing exactly that, encouraged in part by the lionization in Europe of humanitarian heroes like David Livingstone. The larger political ambivalence about colonization of West Africa was quite often, at this time, expressed in terms of the vulnerability of Britons to the climate of the area (54). Indeed, Howell notes that Burton himself, a great believer in deterministic theories of climate, produced, through his many books, a veritable worldwide medical map identifying areas of vulnerability for white migrants (57). He asserts that lowland Africa is unsuited to white settlement but that highland Africa features a salubrious climate for whites (but not, apparently, for blacks). He takes climatic and geographical determinism even further – at least ostensibly – in his notorious Appendix to his 1885 translation of the *Arabian Nights* which argues that sodomy is routinely practiced in a geographic zone (very roughly corresponding with the Tropics, the Mediterranean, and all of China) where climate presumably encourages its practice – the Sotadic Zone, he called it. One wonders, however, whether one is being tone deaf in taking the provocative claims in this essay literally rather than ironically. In any event, Strong does not discuss this appendix.

The African doctor Africanus Horton published a book in 1868 that received a full-page review in *The Times* and helped establish his credentials as a tropical disease specialist. His advice about how to stay alive in the tropics was eagerly devoured by anxious white travelers. In books such as *West African Countries and Peoples* and *British and Native*, he even debated Burton and his friend, the notoriously racist founder of the Anthropological Society of London, James Hunt, over the vexing issue of racial degeneration in Africa. Horton argued that degeneration was not so much a problem with blacks as with whites: he was a monogenist Christian who believed that societies can improve over time with increasing civilization, although he qualifies that claim with the observation that, when they reach their zenith, civilized European societies can also degenerate. With extensive experience with diseases

such as malaria but himself the victim of white racist skepticism at times, Horton nonetheless neatly turns racist arguments against their promoters.

In discussing Mary Kingsley, who is best known for her 1897 *Travels in West Africa*, a narrative of a trip to West Africa she took in the early 1890s in which she depicts herself as an intrepid but proper Englishwoman, traipsing through the jungle in full-length dresses, boldly collecting fish samples while resisting climate-induced diseases that, she proudly asserts, would be "irredeemably fatal for most whites" (110). Howell usefully contests Edward Blyden's exaggerated evaluation of her by reminding us that Kingsley carefully crafts her own image as an heroically fearsome opponent of disease and even "reinforces stereotypes of feminine physical delicacy with regard to other women, but not herself" (125). She accepts Burton's claim that blacks are unsuited to living in higher elevations but goes even further than him to argue that whites are unsuited to them also – at least in Africa (120-21). By taking pride in her seemingly willed acclimatization, Kingsley violates standard representations of women in the tropics but always carefully exempts herself from the rules that, she reminds her readers, invariably apply to others. Ultimately, she goes one bold step beyond Seacole, who attributed her disease-resistance to racial hybridity, to claim that her own lack of fear of death bestowed a special resistance to disease on her (126).

Howell's discussion of the one writer of fiction she considers, Joseph Conrad, provides a new and interesting way into the very familiar text of *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad's own *Congo Diary*, which rehearses the material he would incorporate into *Heart of Darkness*, in Howell's view is a prime example of pathographic writing by an author who practiced the very same intensive self-examination, finger-always-on-one's-pulse self-presentation, that he attributes to his narrator Marlow and other whites in West Africa in that novella. In that sense, Conrad's fiction of the 1890s repeatedly invokes the idea of "tropical neurasthenia," a climate-induced condition first named by Dr. Charles Woodruff in his 1905 book *The Effects of Tropical Light on White Men*. Woodruff's popularity was certainly a sign that neurasthenic explanations of disease were still prevalent at the

beginning of the twentieth century – well after the discovery of the role of pathogenic microorganisms in disease. The general claim Howell is making here aligns Conrad, the skeptic about imperialism, with Burton and Kingsley, who both mainly supported it: whatever the political and moral value of imperialism or colonialism, West Africa is not a place for white people. Howell does not discuss Kingsley's later work, written under the influence of Frederick Lugard, a proponent of the theory of indirect rule, a theory which helped seduce Joseph Chamberlain into the belief that a West African colony like Nigeria could be held and managed with a small corps of white – preferably disease-resistant – colonial officials.

3

Tim Youngs' *Beastly Journeys: Travel and Transformation at the fin de siècle* is about mainly fictional treatments of the late nineteenth-century linkage of fears of metamorphic transformation with travel. Travel, in Youngs' case, has the broadest reference of the three books considered here: "social exploration, time travel, space travel, interior voyages, sexual adventures, journeys to and from colonies, subterranean burrowing, and forays into fairyland" (8). Compared with the other two books discussed here, Youngs stretches the meaning of "travel" to encompass meanings ranging from the everyday to the highly metaphorical.

The beastliness alluded to in the title of this book suggests that many of the transformative experiences Youngs is analyzing involve experiences of evolutionary reversion. The compelling mid-Victorian scientific case for man's kinship with other species, forcefully argued by T.H. Huxley in his 1863 book *Man's Place in Nature* and reinforced by Darwin's publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871, helped mightily to encourage this culture-wide fascination with the "beastliness" of humanity. Thus, Darwin takes a prominent role in Youngs' book as the modern era's exemplary scientific analyst of the reasons for reversion or degeneration, for perpetual metamorphosis, in fact: "The changes that many experienced in late nineteenth-century

Britain are symbolised by the obsessive display of figures of indeterminate or altered shape: beasts with human characteristics; humans who are, or who become, beastly; creatures of dubious or shifting classification" (1). The central argument of Youngs' book is that late nineteenth-century fiction in Britain expresses a wide variety of anxieties about social and economic change through the topos of metamorphosis. In his wide-ranging argument, Youngs even extends the metaphor to Victorian discussions of money and social class, such as those appearing in the work of Marx:

Karl Marx wrote of "the change in form or the metamorphosis of commodities through which the social metabolism is mediated." He used this image to describe the process by which labour transforms itself into a product, which then becomes a commodity when it is exchanged into a product, which then becomes a commodity when it is exchanged for money. (10)

This is a potentially promising line of argumentation about class and the labor theory of value that gets somewhat lost in this book because Youngs has taken on so many broad issues. He returns to this issue a number of times in discussing Jekyll and Hyde, Jack the Ripper, *The Beetle*, and Oscar Wilde, but, by then, he has linked the class theme to the metaphor of metamorphosis to the topos of travel. The reader gets somewhat lost while observing all the large meanings metamorphosis is required to shoulder in this book. Youngs yokes together disparate fears: of actual physical transformation (in, say, *The Beetle*), physical abuse and social ostracism suffered by "the Elephant Man" in late nineteenth-century London, and Wells' use of time traveling to observe what has become of a transformed humanity thousands of years in the future. The troubling fear of metamorphosis, of a loss of boundaries whether between species, individuals, social classes, nation states, and so on, is a legitimate means of access to the late nineteenth-century *Zeitgeist*. However, it clearly has a much longer history as a troubler of human sleep than just the late nineteenth century. Rebecca Stott's *Darwin's*

Ghosts: The Secret History of Evolution (published in 2013 and thus probably too recent for Youngs to have taken it into account), for example, offers an interesting, if occasionally annoyingly breathless, discussion of how metamorphosis troubled the consciences (and lives) of intellectuals and their uncomprehending opponents for centuries, ranging from Aristotle, to Leonardo, to Diderot, to Lamarck. Metamorphosis seems inherently destabilizing and thus inevitably troubling no matter when it appears. It certainly was to the Romans of Ovid's day. When Darwin's name came to be attached to the most scientifically influential articulation of the idea of species change in the Victorian era with the publication of *Origin of Species* in 1859, the reactions it inspired in the culture were, if not more intensely, at least more widely felt than before because of the growing prestige of modern science. However, Youngs probably ought to have provided a more developed argument for why fears of transformation are and ought to be seen as more central to our understanding of the late nineteenth century than of, say the late eighteenth century, the period of revolution in Europe and North America, political and economic, a period when Lord Monboddo was asserting the kinship of apes and humans and Diderot was incurring the anger of the *ancien régime* for daring to transgress conventional class as well as species boundaries. Moreover, one might argue that the bestseller that offered the most troubling picture of an actively transformative universe to the Victorians was Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), a book that annually outsold Darwin's *Origin* until well into the twentieth century and that Darwin conceded prepared the way for the reception of his theory of natural selection precisely because it was so well-written and widely read. Nonetheless, Youngs is right to note that Darwin provided the Victorian age with a scientifically durable and credible foundation for the decentering of humanity in nature by denying the human body its role as "prototype of ideal form" (18). After Darwin, the human body became a hodgepodge of inherited "survivals," indelibly marking the story of its ever incomplete evolution from "lower" types.

Nonetheless, despite the too-broad focus of Youngs' book, a number of the individual literary readings are quite insightful in their own right, at least partly because of the way in which they allow Youngs to link disparate things in novel ways. For instance, Youngs' chapter "City Creatures" reminds us that Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* emerges in a decade (the 1880s) which saw the end of private banking and thus the worthlessness of testimonies to individual character. The relevance of this dramatic change to the central problem of the book – the problem of specifying Jekyll's true character – is important. Likewise, Youngs' reading of Arthur Morrison's *Child of the Jago* examines the novel's narrative technique – specifically its use of the standard English of its intended reader – to distance the narrator coldly from his working-class hero, Dicky Perrott. Occasionally, we lose track of the centrality of "travel" to the argument because it has become an overstretched metaphor in Youngs' work. His reading of Gissing's *Nether World*, for instance, does not focus on "travel" as far as one can tell (61-62). His brief discussion of how Jack the Ripper came to symbolize working-class demands (69) is a useful reminder of how the Ripper assumed many forms for a frightened public, although, again, he might have tied it more closely to the "travel" theme by giving greater emphasis to the way the East End was constructed as *terra incognita* by a variety of "urban explorers" of the nineteenth century.

His reading of Marsh's *The Beetle* as a transformation story that constructs for its readers a "heavy air of homosexual rape" in its central scenes is a novel reading of that book (84). When he turns to fantasy literature of the time, he is also on firm ground, so to speak, especially when he discusses H.G. Wells' Time-Traveller (110). Wells' *The Time Machine* destabilizes its readers' notions of time by inspecting, "from this fifth dimension, the symbolic construction of time in relation to physical, natural time" (112). His discussion of George MacDonald's fairy tales also has much to recommend it. Notable by their absence from this book, however, are the two novels published in the Victorian era that one might argue did most to present readers with deeply

troubling fantasies of unceasing metamorphosis: Lewis Carroll's "Alice" books.

All three of the books under review here expand our notion of what constitutes "travel" and why we ought to see it in its double role as both a disruptive harbinger of a troubling modernity in the late nineteenth century and an inviting experience of exciting confrontation with cultural novelty. Travel opened the eyes of a British working class about to embrace its newfound political role as the numerically dominant social class (Strong). It also captivated a growing readership that was beginning to consider the possibility that some parts of the world are not amenable to European conquest (Howell). Finally, travel in its broadest, metaphorical sense offered, through fiction, a means of engaging threats to bodily integrity, sexual awakening, and the rapid pace of social change in late Victorian Britain – threats that are central to the experience of an oncoming modernity (Youngs).

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