

affects without offering transformative potential. See Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Berlant. Even for Kathleen Stewart, who evokes with great nuance an “ordinary affect” that constitutes “a surging, a rubbing, a connection of some kind” that makes “the world . . . still tentative, charged, overwhelming, and alive,” nonetheless, “this is not a good thing or a bad thing” (*Ordinary Affects* [Durham: Duke University Press, 2007], 128).

9. See Anderson, “Therapeutic Criticism,” 323.
10. Rachel Ablow, *Victorian Pain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 116. See also Benjamin Morgan, *The Outward Mind: Materialist Aesthetics in Victorian Science and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); and Jesse Oak Taylor, *The Sky of Our Manufacture: The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016).
11. See Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
12. See Amanda Anderson, *Bleak Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), which makes an argument about the Victorian realist novel that resonates with Isobel Armstrong’s account of the double poem in her *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996).



Anachronism

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IT is timely to be untimely these days. Anachronism, long understood as an error to avoid, has become a key dimension of diverse historicist methods. Postcolonial and queer theorists, in particular, celebrate anachronism as a visible site of dislocation that calls what counts as timely and what constitutes history into question.¹ Espousing what Bliss Cua Lim calls “temporal critique,” postcolonial theorists show that the homogenous, empty time upon which Western history depends relegates non-Western people and practices to a previous historical moment.² In turn, queer theorists question the “straight time” of history—the way linear time reinforces heteronormative patterns of development and

depends upon reproductive futurity.³ For both fields, embracing anachronism becomes a way to rethink contemporaneity as untimely coexistence and to claim lived relationships to the past that dominant forms of historicism obscure.

While several Victorianist scholars have theorized the productive potential of anachronisms, many scholars still associate Victorians with uniform, shared time that understands untimely interruptions as chronological mistakes.⁴ Victorians, the story goes, sought to organize time, integrate social difference, manage anachronisms. Take, for instance, Dipesh Chakrabarty, who turns to John Stuart Mill to explain the forms of European historicism that he critiques. For Chakrabarty, Mill's sense of a shared developmental path—a universal but uneven pattern of development—“consigned Indians, Africans, and other ‘rude’ nations to an imaginary waiting room of history.”⁵ Mill's shared time, according to Chakrabarty, becomes a way to measure supposed cultural backwardness. In turn, Lee Edelman draws on Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner* to show reproductive futurism's integrative force. According to Edelman, these Victorian texts assimilate queer figures like Ebenezer Scrooge and Silas Marner into communal forms through temporality. Their narratives replace Scrooge and Marner's anti-social pleasure in and from the past—what Edelman calls “the closed economy of the backward gaze”—with the normative social structure of futurity.⁶ Chakrabarty and Edelman suggest, in quite different ways, that Victorian writers integrate social difference into shared time in order to prevent the unruly possibilities of untimely orientations, to close down alternative ways of being in the world.

But although the Victorian period was a time of temporal and historical standardization, it was also a time of anachronism. In fact, one of the first stories of time travel, “An Anachronism, or Missing One's Coach” (1838), suggests that anachronism conceives of temporality as a mode of relation that encourages social and historical difference rather than a sequential order that disciplines and ultimately integrates this difference. “An Anachronism” is a story about radical historical discontinuity. The narrative follows an antiquarian whose unease with the present leads him to seek comfort in reflecting on the forgotten past and speculating about the unknown future. He misses his coach, travels back in time, and meets the venerable Bede, who asks him to describe the future (the antiquarian's present). Although the antiquarian greets Bede's “well-known and smiling face” with familiarity and recognition, the story reveals that they do not even share a language.⁷ Bede has never heard of Leeds, does not understand what “printed” means, and fails to grasp the

nineteenth-century man's irony.⁸ More importantly, Bede cannot understand what the modern man means by "improvement."⁹ As the modern man describes the discovery of new continents, the expansion of the British empire, and the growing triumph of reason, he concludes that selfishness, ignorance, and poverty have actually increased. Over the course of their difficult conversation, the venerable Bede confronts a future that fills him with both wonder and horror.

Because their conversation defamiliarizes assumptions about history and progress, it also raises questions about the "anachronism" that the story's title refers to. Does the antiquarian become an anachronism when he travels back to the "wildness of another age?"¹⁰ Or, is he an anachronism from the outset because he finds comfort in "retrospective or anticipative" thought but resents the intrusion of the present?¹¹ Or is the venerable Bede the anachronism insofar as he appears in what was previously an 1837 landscape but cannot understand the stories of the present? I suggest that the story's title introduces anachronism as a singular noun—"an anachronism"—only to resist locating anachronism in just one person or landscape to highlight how the encounter between times unsettles assumptions about shared time and continuous development. When the nineteenth century and the eighth century collide, there is no correct chronology and no easily identifiable historical error: time is out of joint. And, precisely because there is no proper chronology, the alterity of the past cannot be safely located in the past—it pervades both the present and future.

Although anachronism is an explicit concept within this story, we do not need to turn to stories of time travel to see Victorians grappling with anachronism: it is a feature of canonical, metropolitan realist novels. Just think of Miss Havisham who dramatically stops her clocks in *Great Expectations*, *Cranford's* old-fashioned Amazons, and George Eliot's narrative movement between past and present, story and discourse. In Victorian novels, time is decidedly not uniform and certainly not shared. It is a mode of relation that highlights the discordance of the present moment and invites untimely forms of historicism.

NOTES

1. Also see Jacques Rancière, "The Concept of Anachronism and the Historian's Truth," *InPrint* 3, no. 1 (2015): 13–48; Harry Harootunian, "Remembering the Historical Present," *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 471–94.

2. Bliss Cua Lim, *Translating Time: Cinema, the Fantastic, and Temporal Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 12–13.
3. See, for instance, Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) which connects the “stubborn lingering of pastness” to queer affect, 8.
4. See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 40; and Jay Clayton, *Charles Dickens in Cyberspace: The Afterlife of the Nineteenth Century in Postmodern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 113–15.
5. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8.
6. Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 53–54.
7. “An Anachronism; or, Missing One’s Coach,” *Dublin University Magazine* 11, no. 66 (June 1838), 701–12, 705.
8. “An Anachronism,” 707.
9. “An Anachronism,” 709.
10. “An Anachronism,” 705.
11. “An Anachronism,” 702.



Animal

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HOW did the Victorians define and conceptualize the “animal”? The term allowed—as it still does today—a strictly scientific definition, along with a more loosely colloquial one. Richards Owens wrote in 1860 that “When an organism receives nutritive matter by a mouth, inhales oxygen and exhales carbonic acid, and developes [*sic*] tissues, the proximate principles of which are quaternary compounds of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, it is called an ‘animal.’” But in his 1873 *Talk of Animals and Their Masters*, Cambridge Apostle Arthur Helps specified, “When I use the word ‘animals’ I mean all living creatures except men and women.”¹

More than a simple slippage between scientific precision and idiomatic flexibility, though, this difference points to a fundamental instability and multifariousness in the term. “Animal” is at once a biological category that