

# “What I Did at Vassar Stayed with Me”: Victorian Studies and Activism, a Case Study

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**I**N a Zoom meeting with alums of the Program in Victorian Studies at Vassar College, Anthony Wohl, a retired history professor and one of the program’s founders, queried those gathered if they were ever accused of being “precious or conservative” on account of their field of study.<sup>1</sup> One alum recalled fellow students labeling her an imperialist; another then confessed that she was originally attracted to the program because she loved period dramas on television; a third noted that while people are fascinated to discover she majored in Victorian studies, it occasionally prompted them to ask if she always wanted to “dress up in lace and linen and walk around with a parasol?” Her standard answer—“good god, no”—was met with laughter by the group, who universally agreed that even if they entered Vassar with “rose-colored” glasses about the nineteenth century, they quickly came to see that Victorian studies offered them a critical engagement with issues of empire, race, gender, and class. In other words, their work in Victorian studies did not confirm the period’s biases. Rather, it encouraged them to see how oppressive systems were developed and perpetuated but also that they could be (and were) challenged.

The conversation described above was part of a larger project we undertook to explore what, if any, links there are between activism and an undergraduate concentration in Victorian studies. At Vassar, we have a unique archive through which to explore this subject because the college was one of the few undergraduate institutions in North America offering degrees in Victorian studies. From 1970 until 2021, when the program transformed into Global Nineteenth-Century

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Studies, nearly ninety majors and minors passed through the program.<sup>2</sup> With the help of Vassar's Office of Advancement, we contacted those alums, inviting them to take a short survey that asked them questions about their activist engagements at Vassar and after. Encouraged by these results, we set up a series of Zoom conversations, in December 2022 and January 2023, to explore their activism more fully. In total, we spoke to and/or received responses from twenty-one Victorian studies graduates. Anthony Wohl and Beth Darlington, an emerita professor of English at Vassar who, along with Wohl, was instrumental in the creation of the program, joined us for two of the Zoom discussions. The oldest interviewed alum graduated in 1976 and the youngest in 2020. In their postgraduate years, they pursued careers in journalism, law, education; they undertook genetic research and joined marketing firms; they worked in libraries and at historical sites as well as in arts and religious organizations. When asked about their activist interests, they cited everything from fighting oppression through the legal system and engaging in political journalism to working on campaigns to legalize same-sex marriage and to improve the lives of immigrants. The presidential election of 2016 sent many Vassar graduates into the streets, as participants in the women's marches, as volunteers for political campaigns, and as community organizers. To be sure, our student body has for the last several decades skewed liberal, and we suspect that the progressive leanings of our alums' activist commitments differ little from those of their classmates or their counterparts at similar small liberal arts colleges. The argument we wish to make is not fundamentally about the wholly unsurprising politics of their activism. Instead, we discovered that the methods and mental habits they developed while concentrating in Victorian studies were just as important.

We began this research with a conventional understanding of activism—protests and reform movements—but quickly came to realize that we needed to reconceptualize and broaden our definition. Included in our working definition of activism now is not just marching in the street but also activist scholarship and journalism, working for change within institutions, and reimagining family life and child-rearing. When asked what to attribute these forms of activism to, the alums cited a range of inspirations. They highlighted Vassar's mantra "go to the source" (the college prizes an education based on primary-source research) as well as the individual attention and mentoring offered by a small program at a liberal arts college. They also spoke eloquently and movingly about the importance of their interdisciplinary training

in Victorian studies to their subsequent activism. Finally, a point our alums returned to repeatedly was the relevance of studying the nineteenth century for their understanding of the modern world. As Jennifer DeVere Brody, Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at Stanford University and one of the program's first Victorian studies majors, observed, "What I did at Vassar stayed with me."<sup>3</sup>

#### GOING TO THE SOURCE

Many Vassar alums stressed that their undergraduate training in primary-source research provided them with an expansive understanding of who populated the Victorian world and who mattered. This primary-source approach empowered students to think beyond current scholarly interpretations, and it encouraged, for example, Brody to write a transformative and activist intervention in the field. "All things that we're doing now under the sign of Global Nineteenth-Century Studies really were also being done under the sign of Victorian [studies]" at Vassar, noted Brody. Though aware that "there could have been more offerings in South Asian and postcolonial" subjects, Brody recalled questions of economics, race, and gender being central to the program's courses, such as Anthony Wohl's seminar on "Victorian Prejudices." Looking back on his career, Wohl explains that in his classes "'activism' became a theme that emerged from the sources, from *below*," as he sought to introduce students to a less "comfortably rosy" portrait of the nineteenth century by focusing on the kinds of materials he initially encountered in his dissertation research on housing reform. These "voices," Wohl found, "were largely unheard by Victorian historians" of the time. Echoing Wohl's words, Brody noted that she knew how important race was to the period "because of the training I had where you looked at primary material." "I can't tell you how much *Punch* I read," she said. This immersion in the primary sources revealed the importance of race to Victorian identities: "it was on the page," Brody emphasized, in novels like *Vanity Fair* (1848) and countless other texts, "or in Rossetti's paintings, you couldn't ignore it." Similarly, Alicia Lewis, a graduate from 2018, pointed out that the emphasis on primary sources, even with all their limitations, allowed her to discover transnational figures like Mary Seacole who were "brave enough to tell their stories" as well as to reckon with those whose "voices were left out of the archives." Lewis, herself a woman of Indo-Caribbean background, stressed the personal significance of going to the source to explore "marginalized communities and individuals under oppressed

systems.” For example, while researching global networks of South Asian indentured laborers in the Caribbean, she discovered a key primary source, Captain and Mrs. E. Swinton’s *Journal of a Voyage with Coolie Emigrants, from Calcutta to Trinidad* (1859), that has become a staple of the Global Nineteenth-Century Studies introductory course. “This experience within the Victorian studies program,” she wrote, “has influenced my activist interests,” which include working with immigrants, and has challenged “me to think about the spaces I occupy and how I use my own voice and privilege in today’s social movements.”

Just as Vassar’s “go to the source” approach encouraged students to engage a wide range of historical voices, it also raised fundamental questions about historical methodologies—such as the limitations of English-language published texts and archives, the exclusive focus on the nation-state, and the role of social history—in ways that sometimes placed alums in conflict with larger trends within the academy. Vassar’s emphasis on teaching undergraduates through primary-source research, rather than memorization of an established set of “facts,” goes back to Lucy Maynard Salmon, hired by the college in 1887 with the charge of creating the Department of History. Salmon emerged as an innovator in social history, bringing new types of sources and voices to her research and to the classroom: laundry receipts, interviews with domestic servants, the *Vassar College Catalogue*.<sup>4</sup> Some alums, like Brody, stressed how this approach expanded their understanding of the period but also how, even just two or three decades ago, it left them somewhat misaligned with overall approaches to the field. Tani Mauriello, a graduate from the early 2000s who went on to complete her PhD in Britain, expressed frustration over what felt like a never-ending battle post-Vassar to convince a “masculine history department” that certain sources and populations (“pregnant women, the poor, patients, conscripts, children, the queer community, etc.”) held “legitimate historic value.” Brody, who graduated in the late 1980s, bluntly stated that, when she entered the field, “Victorian meant white.” When she first went on the job market with a dissertation that brought together “blackness and femininity and race and gender and sexuality in Victorian England”—what would become her landmark book, *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture* (1998)—she was dismayed that some of the people interviewing her found her research “literally incomprehensible.” “They couldn’t get their heads around the fact that questions of race were so central to Victorian England” because of the “segregated academy,” or appreciate the connections she was making between African,

Caribbean, American, and British cultures. And when we asked Brody if she viewed her scholarship that centered race, gender, and sexuality as activism, she replied, “absolutely.”

#### A VICTORIANIST FRAME OF MIND

One of the unexpected results of our inquiry into activism and the study of the Victorian period was a constellation of responses in which our alums tied the interdisciplinary study of the long nineteenth century to the development of certain habits of mind, critical outlooks, ethical orientations, and reformist impulses that, for them, deeply influenced their activist engagements. At the forefront of many of our discussions was how inspiring the Victorians themselves could be. Time and again, alums cited the long-lasting impact upon them of their study of the struggles of individual Victorians. Ruth Carver Bondurant, who had trained as an opera singer after graduation but was planning on attending medical school while also raising young children, drew a direct line between her commitment to a career in medicine and her senior thesis on Isabella Bird, the pioneering woman traveler who transcended the circumscribed role assigned to middle-class women. Bird’s example of a woman “doing all this incredible stuff” and questioning what “women . . . are able to do” not only influenced Carver Bondurant’s decision to pursue a second career in medicine but also to focus on maternal health. Patricia Leigh Brown, a writer for the *New York Times*, cited her thesis work on Eliza Lynn Linton, the “first salaried female journalist” in Britain, and speculated that “it’s possible there was” a connection between her own career trajectory and Linton’s pioneering example, while Michael Fanuele, a tech and marketing executive as well as an author, recalled how all the rebellious characters, real and fictional, that he encountered while majoring in Victorian studies led him to champion the “idiosyncratic awesome humanity of people in the face of machinery.” Mauriello, who after completing her PhD labored to unionize her fellow workers at the Plimoth Patuxet historic site, wryly observed that “without Victorian studies, I might have been an activist, but I wouldn’t have had the long-term attention” and, with the example of Josephine Butler in mind, the willingness “to fail so boldly over and over again.”

The issue of attention, both the ability to pay attention and a heightened attentiveness to narrative and language, came up frequently. Echoing Mauriello, Fanuele recalled reading 800-page Victorian novels at Vassar and observed that “it’s hard to be an activist without having

developed a capacity for sustained attention.” As Carver Bondurant noted, because of Victorian studies she now reflexively asks health-care professionals, “What’s the story that’s being told?” Alum Violet Edelman attributed her decision to become a federal public defender to the fact that it was “narrative driven” and allowed her to tell the neglected stories of the accused and incarcerated people she represents. The importance of narrative, and its relationship to activism, showed up in unexpected places—even within the metadata librarians use for cataloging. Unearthing buried narratives within archives, according to Maggie Dull, who directs metadata strategies at the University of Rochester’s River Campus Libraries, depends on making “things findable.” Observing that so many of the words used for search terms come to librarians uninterrogated, she raised the case of Indigenous people who live near her university and contended that libraries like hers need to engage “with them and the language they use,” and not just impose Library of Congress search terms on their materials. By way of an example of what decolonizing metadata might look like, she cited the *Homosaurus* website, which is “an international linked data vocabulary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) terms” that serves “as a companion to broad subject term vocabularies, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings.” Unlike conventional cataloging, Dull insisted, the *Homosaurus* asks “whose history is it?” and thereby considers the “actual people” who created the archival materials rather than exclusively focusing on the scholars who wish to access them. In sum, an education that emphasizes the politics of language and narrative across disciplines seems to have encouraged our alums to ask questions that can unsettle the assumptions of the professional worlds they inhabit.

Moreover, what these examples of bringing a critical perspective into the fields of law, medicine, and information science also reveal is how many alums saw their activism as entailing the reform of institutions. Katherine Boonin Andrus, a retired lawyer for the Federal Aviation Administration, recalled a question from one of Wohl’s history exams, asking why there was never a revolution in Victorian Britain, and directly linked what she learned in the Victorian studies classroom—that change can happen incrementally—to her working “within the system” for change. This sentiment was echoed by Fanuele, who came away from studying the Victorian period with “a respect for the power of government, not at the ‘great man’ level, but at the bureaucratic (build the sewers, organize the patents, reform the franchise) level.” Or, as Mauriello succinctly put it, the Victorians taught her that “change is



achievable.” Recalling her undergraduate study of Josephine Butler’s long campaign to abolish the Contagious Diseases Acts as well as her own fraught efforts at organizing her co-workers into a union, she wrote poignantly in the survey that “the most valuable thing one can do with the life they’ve been given is to find just one issue that brings a group of people an inordinate amount of misery, and work to fix it.” Fixing something that brings “an inordinate amount of misery” is one way to characterize Brown’s battle with her bosses at the *New York Times* several decades ago, when new mothers were less visible within the workforce, to accommodate paid labor and parenting. In line with Victorian middle-class women who had to fight for the right to be in the public sphere and for public accommodations such as restrooms, Brown conducted a successful “one-woman campaign” with the *Times*, demanding that the newspaper provide a place (other than toilet stalls!) for women to pump breast milk. While Brown’s campaign was a highly visible one, sometimes the work that transforms institutions from the inside out is hidden. It is this kind of invisible activism to which Brody called our attention. Noting that much of her activism has been conducted “under the aegis of . . . or against the university,” she highlighted the enormous labor of writing recommendation letters and participating in tenure reviews that she has taken on (thirty a year, she reports) as part of a conscious effort to open up the academy to more women, people of color, and queer people. Describing herself as “one of the first out Black women in umpteen English departments,” she has throughout her career “interrupt[ed]” assumptions about “who belongs in the field,” complicating the “question of who can live under the sign of Victorian studies or be considered a Victorianist.” And while surely not every Victorian studies graduate would agree that the study of the nineteenth century led to, as Alison Lotto, an archivist and librarian, put it, the “inability to accept things as they are,” many reported working to reform the professional institutions they inhabit.

In addition to an institutionalist approach, Vassar alums expressed an abiding interest in doing the right thing that they attributed to their immersion in the program. For, as Wohl suggested, the foregrounding of moral and ethical concerns, however limited, self-serving, or even hypocritical, is one of the characteristics of the Victorians. Abby Norton-Levering, a chaplain and church pastor, declared that “activism is baked into my work as a clergyperson. I’m always trying to figure out how to bring my life into greater harmony with my religious beliefs and my dreams for a better world, and how to lead other people to do

the same. Victorian literature is chock full of examples of people doing the same work. They continue to inspire me.” In a similar vein, Sarah Rebell, who works for an arts nonprofit, linked her own activist engagements to reading “authors like John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot,” who helped her to “think deeply about moral and ethical issues.” By way of contrast, however, Mauriello claimed that her study of nineteenth-century materials provided her with a bracing model of how *not* to treat marginalized and disempowered people. She wrote that “constantly bearing witness to a century of suffering caused by the invalidation of certain groups (and its perpetuation by respected traditionalist historians) aligns your beliefs with those groups. Your focus becomes not about being heard, but making certain that someone else is heard.” Our former students registered how the study of nineteenth-century Britain asked them to encounter the good, the bad, and the ugly—the moral high ground but also the lows of Victorian prejudices. The source material could be, Amanda Forman Trejbrowski asserted, “shocking and horrible.” Nonetheless, it left Trejbrowski, a professional educator, with the conviction that we “can’t shy away from hard, difficult subjects” because there is a moral imperative to attend to them.

#### INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Many scholars have explored the interdisciplinarity of Victorian studies—the field’s innovative origins as well as its limitations. Thus, we were not shocked to find that Vassar alums emphasized the value of their undergraduate interdisciplinary training, fostered as it was within a liberal arts setting where faculty often collaborate and co-teach across disciplines. Brody remembered that she did not at first “realize how radical the work I was doing at Vassar was in terms of interdisciplinarity”; she recalled being “surprised later in my career that people didn’t necessarily interact” or “talk to colleagues who were working” in other disciplines. Something unanticipated that arose from our interviews, however, was how many alums conceptualized their ability to think and work across disciplines as a key activist tool. Lotto confessed her own discomfort, as a history major and Victorian studies minor, with being forced to take classes outside of her disciplinary home. But she believed that learning to live with discomfort proved valuable for her future activism because nothing is “less comfortable than activism,” where one must try out new roles and “do something different.” The interdisciplinary nature of Victorian



studies, and perhaps its particular structure at Vassar, encouraged students to think outside the box and not be “limited to looking at life from one perspective,” according to Carver Bondurant, in ways that align with activist work.

Additionally, the alums we surveyed and spoke with believed that their interdisciplinary training brought a depth and nuance to their activism. In her writing for the *Times*, Brown approaches her subjects with a remarkable level of interdisciplinarity. She seeks to understand the entire “cultural landscape” of every assignment, aiming to “uncover aspects of the culture that are overlooked,” always grounding her stories in their longer histories. While not defining herself as an activist per se, she identified activism “in the subjects I’ve chosen to write about”—especially criminal justice, Indigenous rights, and immigrant communities. Her article “Indigenous Founders of a Museum Café Put Repatriation on the Menu,” for example, which explores the opening of a new café at the University of California at Berkeley that specializes in Indigenous cuisine and culture, begins elsewhere, with a poignant anecdote about Native American human remains that had been “stored in the basement of a gymnasium” on campus.<sup>5</sup> This opening moment to the article is indicative of her approach that weaves together the history of Berkeley’s campus, the extractive collection practices of early anthropologists, and the celebration of the survival of the Ohlone people in the face of what the university admitted was “structural violence and racism toward Native American peoples.” What could have been a more limited piece about a new restaurant becomes in Brown’s hands an interdisciplinary exploration of food, culture, memory, social history, and the politics of repatriation.

In other cases, the links between activism and interdisciplinarity were even more apparent. For example, Fanuele, who helped orchestrate the same-sex marriage campaign in Minnesota, highlighted the value of cross-disciplinary perspectives that ultimately allowed for a less polarized approach to political divides. “Learning about Turner,” he explained, “is learning about railroads. And reading *Jane Eyre* is learning about a broken health-care system. It’s all connected. And that’s been [a] powerful understanding for my work.” In the campaign to legalize same-sex marriage, he realized that many “undecided” voters remained hesitant to “separate their ‘political’ beliefs from their ‘religious’ convictions.” Rather than dismissing or ignoring religious conviction, the campaign engaged it, asking voters, “What would Jesus do?” Politics, he stressed, is about finding connections between people; leading a successful

campaign requires one “to blur lines and to see the kinds of things that are refracted in people.” And while no doubt a career in politics and marketing honed these skills, he directly traced them to his “experience in Victorian studies, where every single issue became more complex with every class and more intriguing . . . as a result of that complexity.” Others focused on the collective nature of activist and interdisciplinary work, which often depends upon collaboration in scholarship and in the classroom. Isabel Bielat, currently a history PhD candidate at the University of Virginia researching nationalist movements in global nineteenth-century media, has recently participated in community translation initiatives that “support equitable access to local resources,” such as vaccine drives and toy donations. Interdisciplinarity in its many forms—work that crosses language and political divides, that demands collaboration, that brings together multiple perspectives, and that requires the ability to allow for different approaches that may check our own sense of expertise—proves to be a foundational skill for activism.

#### “THEY ARE NOT JUST WORDS”: HISTORICAL ECHOES

Trejrowski, who grew up in a liberal household, recalled being “stunned by the dehumanizing language” the Victorians used to describe marginalized groups: “they are not just words,” she wrote, because they had “horrible effects.” Thus, when such derogatory language was once again wielded by those in power during the 2016 U.S. elections, she was deeply disturbed “by how short collective memory is.” For Alexandra Figler, a Russian and French double major with a minor in Victorian studies now completing a MA in library science, her encounter with the brutalities of empire led to a momentous reckoning with her own subject position. She stated that her minor in Victorian studies “taught me . . . about my white privilege” because it asked her to read primary sources that revealed, in an unvarnished way, “the evils of colonialism and imperialism.” Many alums testified to the fact that the echoes they constantly heard between the present and the Victorian past influenced their understanding of the world and their activism within it. The range of contemporary issues with historical resonances is extensive. Trejrowski found herself “thinking of Dickens any time a Republican congressman suggests . . . that children work as janitors to pay off their ‘lunch debt.’” Allison Campbell, whose activism has focused on working with immigrants, refugees, and detainees, wrote that “studying nineteenth-century immigration patterns, for example, understanding historical

push and pull factors, and considering how cultures and societies are changed by demographic shifts helps me think critically about contemporary immigration issues.” Kimberley Solomon Quinn, former publisher of *The Spectator* and author of several young adult novels featuring Queen Victoria, recalled learning about “the fragmentation of time based on commerce” and how it “has changed us so much.” Other alums focused specifically on the important connections they saw between the long struggle for women’s rights in the nineteenth century and their commitment to fighting the recent erosion of those rights, the continued influence of Jeremy Bentham’s theories of punishment on our criminal justice system, and the deep understanding of class that one gains as a result of the study of the period. Lotto disclosed that her appreciation for the “historical development of class” was something she uniquely and valuably brought to diversity and inclusion meetings at her workplace, while both Mauriello and Christian Lewis, who earned a PhD in English after minoring in Victorian studies at Vassar, linked their involvement in union activity back to the Chartists. Lewis forcefully summarized the feelings of many alums about the urgency of studying the nineteenth century: “I gained a better appreciation and understanding of the context and history of race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, age, sex work, religion, and colonialism. . . . Having this thorough historical background helps me contextualize and provide nuance to conversations and debates around politics and identity today.”

#### CONCLUSION

Although Vassar’s Program in Victorian Studies no longer exists, having been transformed into Global Nineteenth-Century Studies, we hope the new program will continue to produce graduates with a diverse array of activist commitments. To borrow the metaphor Molly Turpin, a senior editor at Random House, helpfully shared, in Victorian studies, there was “one door, and a whole lot behind it,” whereas a global approach to the nineteenth century offers “many more doors” to provide many more entry points to the study of the nineteenth century. Others agreed, noting that the new Global Nineteenth-Century Studies Program should appeal to a more diverse group of students by making a broader array of research topics available to them. Whereas Victorian studies centered those who taught British history, Romantic and Victorian literature, and nineteenth-century European art history, the new program includes faculty from the languages as well the sciences. It also draws on the

expertise of colleagues in American studies, Latin American studies, Asian studies, and Africana studies in addition to scholars who focus on France, Germany, Russia, and central Europe. This globalization of the program allows it to highlight themes of revolution and slavery, industrialization and empire, migration and domesticity, and the links among them. In this sense, there are many more doors welcoming students to the study of the nineteenth century. Additionally, as we discussed in our 2022 essay, “Leaving Victorian Studies Behind,” we believe that Global Nineteenth-Century Studies honors the original aims of Vassar’s Victorian studies program: to immerse students in the most innovative and pioneering approaches to the field and teach them how to do their own interdisciplinary research by going to the source. And in decolonizing the curriculum, this reshaping of the program can also be seen as a form of intellectual and institutional activism.

But even with this change, there is one thing that will remain the same: the program’s small size that allows each student to receive individual attention and mentoring. Beth Darlington, who directed Victorian studies for decades, wrote to us in an email that “Blake reminded us that all of creation embodies Divinity and that we need to honor that spirit in everyone around us.” She honored that spirit in her dedication to every student who passed through Victorian studies. They remembered it as central to the experience of their time at Vassar and made direct connections between the intimate nature of belonging to a small interdisciplinary program and their subsequent activism. All that individual attention gave them the sense of being taken seriously as thinkers, and it helped them to develop confidence in their own voices, which they carried over into their later careers and their activism. As Edelman put it, the experience of feeling like her professors cared about “what I had to say and what I was thinking about” was “formative in a way that I didn’t understand at the time.”

In a fashion, what these alums have attested to might be taken as a defense of the liberal arts as central to the creation of engaged members of their communities. We are all aware that the liberal arts are currently besieged, particularly those disciplines with declining enrollments that are central to the field of Victorian studies, such as history, English, art history, music, and philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Especially at the undergraduate level, Victorian studies runs the risk of being confused with the historical bric-a-brac of Victoriana, and thus can be accused of filling the cozy tea-and-scones corner of the academy—niche, old-fashioned, antiquarian, and flooded with imperial nostalgia.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, our alums testify

to the ongoing relevance of Victorian studies, both for understanding our world, still living in the shadow of the Victorians, and for the intellectual tools an interdisciplinary course of study offered them. The authors of “Undisciplining Victorian Studies” end their influential essay on a grace note, with the hope of building “communities and sites of study that can both comprehend the vast intricacies of racial inequality and see that another world is possible.”<sup>8</sup> As teachers, we know that the best hope for “another world” rests with our students, and thus what we take away from our conversations about activism with our Victorian studies alums, who engaged so thoughtfully with this project, is a glimpse of the potential of our own field.

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#### NOTES

1. For more on the history of Vassar’s Victorian studies program, see Edelman, “Victorian Studies.”
2. For an account of the Program in Victorian Studies’ recent transformation into Global Nineteenth-Century Studies, see Murdoch and Zlotnick, “Leaving Victorian Studies Behind.”
3. From the early 1970s until 1986, students could major in Victorian studies through Vassar’s Independent Program, at which point

Victorian studies emerged as an interdisciplinary program in its own right.

4. Since Lucy Maynard Salmon's time, "go to the source" has become the college's motto reflecting the "boldness, breadth, and flexibility" of a Vassar education. See "Lucy Maynard Salmon" and Vassar College, "A History of Vassar College." Some contemporary critical reviews of Salmon's research on domestic labor found the topic "beneath her dignity" as a historian. Quoted in Carruyo, "Household Labor," 1129.
5. Brown, "Indigenous Founders."
6. See, for example, Heller, "End of the English Major."
7. As the authors of "Undisciplining Victorian Studies" observe, "Victorian studies . . . replicates much of the colonialist narrowness of the 'Victorian' and, as Cora Kaplan has argued, even gathers its identity from an Anglophilia alternately disavowed or embraced in a love of Victoriana." See Chatterjee, Christoff, and Wong, "Undisciplining," 375.
8. Chatterjee, Christoff, and Wong, "Undisciplining," 383.

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