

## 19: Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol. 19, 2014

Emma Curry, Birkbeck, University of London

19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century  
Volume 19 (2014)

### The Victorian Tactile Imagination

Whilst the art historian Bernard Berenson introduced his theory of the 'tactile imagination' in the late 1890s, the articles gathered here point to its flourishing much earlier in the nineteenth century. Contributors chart how reconceptualization of the touch sense in scientific and psychophysiological discourses made it a particularly important mode through which to question the distinction between mind and body, and explore issues of agency and will, and the nature of the real. A range of Victorian tactile episodes and practices are given new emphasis and attention here, including the merging of tree and human in Thomas Hardy's fiction; the figure of the fidget; the haptic turn in mountaineering; the hand in literature; the disturbing power of touch in dreamscapes; and the search for authenticity in sculpture. Special forum sections extend the reach of the Victorian tactile imagination by considering how cultural and educational commentators disciplined blind people's touch, and the importance of accounting for touch, as well as vision, in our interpretation of object culture.

Introduction: The Victorian Tactile Imagination  
Heather Tilley

Arborealities: The Tactile Ecology of Hardy's Woodlanders  
William A. Cohen

Kinaesthesia and Touching Reality  
Roger Smith

The Haptic Sublime and the 'cold stony reality' of Mountaineering  
Alan McNee

[E]motion in the Nineteenth Century: A Culture of Fidgets  
Karen Chase

The Will to Touch: David Copperfield's Hand  
Pamela K. Gilbert

Dream Touch  
Gillian Beer

Nineteenth-Century Sculpture and the Imprint of Authenticity

Angela Dunstan

Blindness Forum:

Models for the Blind

Jan Eric Olsén

Blindness, Prick Writing, and Canonical Waste Paper: Reimagining Dickens in Harriet and Letitia  
Lillian Nayder

Between the Sheets: Contagion, Touch, and Text

Vanessa Warne

Objects:

Photographs, Mounts, and the Tactile Archive

Elizabeth Edwards

Connecting the Senses: Natural History and the British Museum in the Stereoscopic Magazine

Kathleen Davidson

Charles Dickens and the Cat Paw Letter Opener

Jenny Pyke

Reports:

'Seeing Touch Anew': Clothing, Gender, and 'The Victorian Tactile Imagination'

Kara Tennant

Feeling Critically: A Report on 'The Victorian Tactile Imagination' Conference

Claire Wood

Sensory History and Sociology — Offering a Helping Hand?

Angela Loxham

To download the articles, see: <http://19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/issue/view/87/showToc>

Reference:

TOC: 19: Interdisciplinary Studies, Vol. 19, 2014. In: ArHist.net, Nov 10, 2014 (accessed Jul 8, 2025),  
<<https://arthist.net/archive/8860>>.