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WE CALL this issue “Extending Families” as both a description and a promise.¹ The title describes what seems to us one of the most important characteristics of recent work on the Victorian family: attention to the fact that Victorian families were larger and longer than our own, comprising multiple generations and extensive kinship networks, not to mention servants, boarders, apprentices, students, governesses, nurses, and other connections. To understand how the Victorians experienced family, we have to relinquish our assumption that the small nuclear family was normative. As George K. Behlmer has pointed out, “in 1851 just 36 percent of households contained a married couple, at least one child, and no one else” (26). We hope to extend the idea of family to enable readers to appreciate what it felt like to live within such an extended network.

“Extending Families” is a promise, too, that the pieces in this issue will push against conventionally accepted notions of familial roles and their associations. It perhaps goes without saying that the celebration of heteronormative domesticity associated with the Angel in the House and Ruskin’s domestic queens was always more ideal than actual. But this issue says it and documents it, offering concrete historical examples that broaden and adjust our sense of Victorian family life. Specifically, “Extending Families” maps new ideas of the family in the nineteenth century, including explorations of adoption (a relationship that was not legalized in Britain until 1926), unions that function as alternative models to marriage, sibling relationships, perceived threats to the family, family formation in a colonial context, the effect of changing marriage laws, and cultural directives about proper romantic behaviour. We offer “Extending Families” as a snapshot of some of the most innovative work being done today on nineteenth-century family formations and ideologies in Britain, work that encourages us to think of family as a permeable, flexible, and shifting configuration.

In *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748–1818* (2004), Ruth Perry anticipates our desire to extend our notion of the family when she asserts that “social historians and literary critics often pass over sibling relationships as irrelevant to the ‘real story,’ which they assume to be the development of the conjugal family with its emphasis on romantic love between husbands and wives and strong emotional bonds between parents and children” (147). Perry’s account of the family encourages us to read the family as an institution that centres on figures we might not expect. To that end and in that spirit, then, this issue works to include the subjects that are typically excluded—the celibate couple, the family pet, aged (grand)parents,

the regimental family, the domestic servant, murderous wives—and to resist the teleological narrative (and norm) of the (heteronormative) courtship plot.

A HISTORY OF FAMILY STUDIES

Studies of the history of the family in Britain famously begin with Lawrence Stone's flawed but groundbreaking *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (1977). Stone argues that the family transitioned from an extended clan of coldly indifferent (or even actively cruel) members to a loving, small nuclear family due to the rise of affective individualism in the seventeenth century.² Thus, asserts Stone, loving marriages and caring child-rearing began with the modern period. However, it is clear that familial tenderness and marital love have existed for as long as we have had literary and historical records. Stone argues for his vision of a triumphal progression toward a superior present situation by imposing his own beliefs on a far messier history, selectively choosing sources and ignoring contradictory material.³

In spite of its problematic evidence and dubious progressivism, Stone's book did set up a grand narrative, a breathtaking sweep of history from the medieval to the modern period, that captured scholars' attention. As Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster write, "in his selective use of sources, Stone was less than a model historian, but his hypothesis about the evolution of the modern family has proved to be 'good to think with'" (8). Today, most historians of the family accept that the premodern family norm was indeed an extended kin clan, with marriage arranged by and for the benefit of the group, and that this mode shifted sometime in the early modern era to today's normative pattern of individual conjugal pairs or small, isolated nuclear families, in which marriage is a matter of participants' personal choices. Yet this shift was neither a sudden nor a clean replacement. Consensual marital relationships certainly existed in the premodern world, and the kinship model persisted for a long time in what was supposedly the modern individualist era. The earlier model of family (what Stone terms the *Open Lineage Family*, as distinct from the *Closed Nuclear Family*) was not obsolete in the nineteenth century but was rather a living residue that we often see in transition in novels including *Wuthering Heights*, in which the Earnshaw household, with its inclusion of wards and servants, its lack of privacy, and its archaic roots, exists in marked contrast to the modern, closed home that houses the Lintons' nuclear family.

The account of the family offered by *The Family, Sex and Marriage* ends in 1800 (although Stone treats the nineteenth century more fully in his later books on divorce), and that end date has led to some real confusion about post-1800 marital history.⁴ Stone argues that the major event in the history of marriage was the rise of "consensual marriage" in the seventeenth century, when people began to choose their own partners; he also argues that they ideally sought stable, trustworthy, familiar companions (hence the name often given these kinds of unions, "companionate marriage"). However,

in the nineteenth century, marrying for companionate affection gave way to marriage based on romantic passion. Although sometimes erroneously bracketed under the heading of "companionate marriage," romantic marriage needs to be treated as a separate cultural imperative. Just as the older forms of extended kinship permeated the modern nineteenth-century family structure, so too did the traditional model of companionate partnership survive into the nineteenth century, challenging and competing with its romantic rival. The fraught development of romantic marriage lies beyond Stone's chronological limits, but it is the focus of Perry's work.

Perry's magisterial *Novel Relations* avoids Stone's sweeping generalizations in favour of careful, meticulous research; it also considers changes in family structure in a literary context and in a much tighter chronological framework than Stone provides (1748–1818, as opposed to 1500–1800). Perry argues that the eighteenth century saw what she calls "the great disinheritance" (38): the economic, legal, and marital disempowerment of women. New laws made women completely financially dependent on their families, who often viewed them as a drain on their resources, and the new ideal of romantic love meant that women were traumatically ripped from those consanguineous families at their weddings. According to Perry, the eighteenth-century novel's feverish fantasies of family reunion compensated for a lived reality that was far more frightening, for it forced women to rely upon potentially resentful or neglectful male relations.

Perry performs crucial work: she takes the myth of the romantic couple and turns it on its head, reading it not as the acquisition of a partner but as the loss of a family and a world. By restoring that older point of view, Perry enables us to see how stressful, upsetting, and dangerous the rise of romantic marriage felt for women. What Stone smugly congratulates us for achieving, Perry reminds us, felt painful at the time. We do, however, need to exercise caution given Perry's decision to derive information about the costs of the new conjugal family not "from demographic sources or public records but from the novels that people were reading and writing" (2–3). Using fiction as a source of examples is not only worrisome historically but also potentially reductive, belying the real complexity of both the literature and its historical context.

Perry's study ends in 1818, challenging scholars of the Victorian family to figure out how we might follow her ideas into the Victorian period. Can we provide a vivid sense of how family functioned after 1818, avoiding the reductive schematization of the grand narrative, the disconnected proliferation of local case studies, and the tendency to rely on fiction as if it were fact? Historians of eighteenth-century family life, particularly Amanda Vickery, Joanne Bailey, and Naomi Tadmor, remind us to focus on the variability of temporal and regional change, as well as the range of differences from family to family, or, indeed, within a single family whose contours shifted over the decades.⁵ Do the studies of the Victorian family written since 2000 meet the challenges set by these perceptive eighteenth-century critics?

EXPANDING THE FAMILY

We find that the best recent studies of the Victorian family, including work by Mary Jean Corbett, Leonore Davidoff, Karen Chase, Kay Heath, Sharon Marcus, Holly Furneaux, Elizabeth Thiel, Ginger S. Frost, Elsie B. Michie, Eileen Cleere, John Tosh, Claudia Nelson, Jennifer Phegley, and Valerie Sanders, focus on one aspect of the two big issues of Victorian families: romantic marriage and family size. Corbett and Davidoff both chart the fluctuations, nuances, conflicts, and developments in family feeling. Corbett's game-changing *Family Likeness: Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf* (2008) offers a tightly argued case for rethinking love within the family beyond pat assumptions about "incest," providing a more precise sense of what family relations meant to Victorians, in all their evolutionary, economic, and affective registers. Corbett's main argument is that incest itself has a history, that it emerged as an accusation to serve political ends at particular times.⁶ Corbett thus explores how familial relations functioned in the context of property circulation, debates about breeding, and racial paradigms. Crucially, she "identifies a cultural tendency toward forging relationships with familial and familiar figures that testifies not only to the perceived perils of intimacy with strangers but also to the ambivalent attractions, for women in particular, of remaining within known or knowable first-family structures that may include sustained and sustaining relations with other women" (vii). Perry and Corbett both probe the quality of relations within the consanguineal family, a perspective elided when critics focus exclusively on conjugal relations.

Davidoff's *Thicker Than Water: Siblings and Their Relations, 1780–1920* (2012) similarly provides new insights into the emotional tenor of the consanguineous family. *Thicker Than Water* compellingly describes the difference between that family formation and our own, insisting that in this 140-year period, "as in no other time since, sisters and brothers, often in tandem with their spouses and children, shared material fortunes, social and emotional circles" (163). Davidoff introduces two particularly useful terms: the "long family," a family with at least seven children, and "close marriages," marriages between cousins or marriages in which a pair of siblings marries another pair of siblings. The consequences of the "long family," in particular, are fascinating. There could be literally hundreds of people in the extended family, with thousands of possible relationships to consider; for instance, "a family of parents and two children already implies eight possible lines of interaction. With parents and ten children, this reaches a possible 4,093 relationships, almost beyond the imagination of our one-to-three-child contemporary experience" (90).

Because elderly relatives formed part of this long family, it is particularly important to explore their cultural role, as Chase does in *The Victorians and Old Age* (2009) and as Heath does in *Aging by the Book: The Emergence of Midlife in Victorian Britain* (2009). Part of the exciting new field of age studies, inaugurated by Margaret Morganroth Gullette's perceptive interdisciplinary work,⁷ Chase's

book explores the ways in which the nineteenth century saw the elderly (re)introduced into Victorian culture as a category and into the domestic circle as persons of value, while Heath's study considers the Victorian transformation of middle age from a vital period of life to one of decline and sterile worthlessness. Chase demonstrates how the increasing number of indigent elderly at mid-century led to what she terms "the invention of the elderly subject" (102). Necessity and government legislation (as well as the novels of Charles Dickens, with their affectionate portrayals of Aged Ps) worked together to encourage Victorians to take care of their elders, and "in this manner," Chase asserts, "the definition of 'family' itself [was] enlarged, including both a wider range of relatives, as well as other 'friends' who may have been involved in the old person's life" (91).

While Chase shows how the inclusion of the elderly in the domestic sphere (and the domestic novel) testified to the Victorians' expansive notion of family, Heath reveals that the marginalization of middle age served to compress it. The consanguineal family remained large, but the conjugal family contracted. The new concept of middle age as a period of decline threatened masculinity, as at mid-century, aging (not aged or elderly) males were no longer presented as competitive in courtship plots. Similarly, the new understanding of menopause as the moment at which women become non-productive served to limit women's roles in the family: "the story of the single midlife woman, often a widow, who was expected to surrender her own matrimonial chances and cede the field to the younger generation is told over and over again throughout the century by medical theorists and novelists" (74).

While Heath reveals the strictures on heteronormative marriageability, Marcus and Furneaux challenge us to generate new understandings of intimate relationships that are not limited to the connubial. Both Marcus and Furneaux build on the foundational work of queer theory to paint an impressively nuanced picture of Victorian homosocial relations.

Marcus's *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (2007) makes the compelling argument that female friendships played a crucial role in nineteenth-century culture and should not be read merely as covers for same-sex relations or as practice for eventual heterosexual marriage. Female friendship could certainly include erotic expressions of love, as Martha Vicinus demonstrated so convincingly in *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (2004), but it could also generate marriages. One of Marcus's most original points is that it is the female friend who usually facilitates marriage in Victorian fiction. By carving out space for a meaningful relationship that could be read outside the structure of erotic desire, Marcus also makes an important intervention in the history of marriage. Instead of seeing female marriage as an alternative, forbidden arrangement, she argues that it provided an example of a voluntary, contractual, egalitarian union that may well have offered a model for marriage reformers. As Susan Zieger points out, "this trend in queer theory

and the history of sexuality...operates by dismantling the entrenched oppositions between heterosexual and homosexual desire that traditionally structure critical discussions of sexuality, but which had not, after all, emerged until the end of the century" (151–52). Indeed, Marcus and Furneaux both demonstrate that same-sex relationships, in their various (and not always sexual) forms, were prominent components of Victorian familial structures.

In *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (2009), Furneaux "rejects a false logic that places marriage and the biological family as central to thinking about the Victorian and the Dickensian, in favor of an exploration of other forms of intimacy, affinity, and family formation" (10). Furneaux thus extends the notion of family in a way that makes room for "families bonded neither by blood nor marriage" and attends to the many forms of the domestic at work in Dickens (and, it is crucial to note, that were received so enthusiastically by his readers). Her focus on "the expandability of Victorian kin in, for example, widespread practices of non-biological adoption, demonstrates that 'families of choice' and 'elective affinities' have a long and emotionally rich history" (14).

That focus is shared by Thiel in her exploration of what she terms "the transnormative family" (8). In *The Fantasy of Family: Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature and the Myth of the Domestic Ideal* (2008), Thiel draws our attention to the preponderance of "family units headed by single parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings or the state that exists in opposition to the 'natural' and 'complete' family of husband, wife and children." "These," she argues, "are not merely extended family units. They may incorporate kin, but the transnormative family is identified primarily by the temporary or permanent absence of a natural parent or parents, often by the presence of a surrogate mother or father, who may or may not be related to the child, and, frequently, by the relocation of the child to an environment outside the 'natural' family home" (8).

In directing our attention to the non-biological family, Furneaux and Thiel join Corbett and Marcus in attending to the widespread but extralegal practice of adoption in Victorian Britain. While, as Steven Mintz points out, English common law "refused to recognize adoption out of fear of undercutting blood relatives' inheritance rights," Nelson finds that what she calls "the phenomenon of the constructed family"—stepfamilies and foster families are her focus—was "atypical (but not uncommon)" (Mintz 3, Nelson 146). Similarly, Corbett describes adoption as "a pervasive (though extralegal) practice of forging familial relationships" (x). After all, Henry Sumner Maine, in *Ancient Law* (1861), argues that adoption was "central to civilization" because it allowed kin groups to expand (133). Placing adoption at the base of progress towards civilization, Maine's account reminds us how widely the Victorians accepted such non-consanguineal bonds, and how important it is to contest what Corbett describes as "the presumed preeminence of the 'blood family' at mid-century" (88).

Questioning what we might, following Corbett, call the “presumed preeminence” of the matrimonial imperative, Frost’s *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (2008) studies how and why couples cohabited without benefit of clergy. Hundreds of common-law couples eschewed legal marriage due to legal obstacles, philosophical objections, or personal preference, and their ambiguous status had multiple ramifications in the nineteenth century, ranging from their children’s illegitimacy to inheritance problems to social and status issues. Frost’s study reminds us that the conventional, idealized Victorian couple was not by any means the only type of relationship possible or even desirable.

And if Frost shows us that one could love without marrying, Michie explores what happens when one marries without love. In *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (2011), she reveals what happens to romantic marriage when it meets a woman of property. Michie points out that the rich woman becomes the scapegoat for all the fears associated with money throughout the nineteenth century: bad taste, vulgarity, and cosmopolitan rootlessness. The poverty of the poor woman confirms her virtue and underscores the disinterestedness of the man who marries her. Michie’s book reminds us that romantic love was no universal, incandescent truth but rather a difficult ideal that literary plots kept having to reach for, refining away vulgar dross, detaching it from unworthier residues.

Cleere’s *Avuncularism: Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (2004) is, like Michie’s book, concerned with the financial aspects of the domestic. *Avuncularism* is one of the most original studies of family relations, pivoting away from the patriarchal to focus on the avuncular and reading the uncle in economic and political, as well as consanguineous, terms. Cleere argues that the uncle offered an alternative to the patrilineal structure of Victorian capitalism. Bringing something “to my uncle” was slang for pawning something, a neat twist that signals how avuncularism named other ways of bringing money into the family, including colonial trade, inheritance structures, and anti-governmental bureaucracies. As a member of the family who was not the patriarch, the uncle offered what Cleere calls “alternative ideologies of kinship: systems of signification that exceed the theoretical possibilities provided by nuclear family paradigms” (4). Cleere posits that the avunculate could be a rebellious alternative to the patriarchate. “As figures at the threshold of family life,” Cleere sums up, “uncles could perpetually signify the flimsiness and permeability of the private nuclear family, suggesting, through their very ubiquity, the sentimental fiction of the paternal family itself” (205).

However, lest we assume that the kind and friendly (that is, avuncular) uncle was a respite from the stern paterfamilias of Victorian fiction, Tosh’s *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999) and Sanders’s *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood* (2009) both ask us to think

anew about masculinity, paternity, and domesticity. Tosh memorably argues that “for two generations—from the 1830s to the 1870s—didactic writers in Victorian England were almost at one in declaring that bourgeois men not only had time for a domestic life, but a deep and compelling need of it” (6). The Victorian home became coded as a sentimental, social, and emotional space rather than a productive economic realm, a change that had enormous ramifications for men, who had to negotiate what Tosh so accurately calls “a central experience of daily life—the separation of home from work” (8). Sanders extends Tosh’s findings, offering case studies of men who memorably negotiated between their public and private roles, including Prince Albert, Charles Darwin, and Dickens. The Victorian father had to embody a nurturing role in an increasingly sentimentalized domestic family while still functioning as a ruthless capitalist competitor and a participant in homosocial male social networks outside the home. He was “pulled three ways,” as Sanders puts it, “between biological, social and legal definitions” (9). Victorian fatherhood, Sanders argues, “was in all aspects of its performance a seemingly stable idea under persistent attack” (9).

Finally, two recent books from the Greenwood series of exceptionally useful reference works for students are worth noting, for in both cases, the authors do more than simply summarize Victorian family studies. Nelson’s *Family Ties in Victorian England* (2007) offers a clear, precise, and detailed account of familial dynamics. It is perhaps most valuable for her discussion of why endogamous relationships pleased Victorians so much. Marrying a cousin or cohabiting with a sibling offered (hopefully) companionate, comforting, egalitarian affection, the kind of supportive relationship an exogamous relationship might not offer. *Family Ties* thus delivers a sympathetic account of why Victorians continued to cling to the consanguineous family even in the era of romantic marriage.

Phegley’s *Courtship and Marriage in Victorian England* (2012) provides a wealth of information about the various contexts of Victorian marriage: courtship, marriage laws, the legal status of wives, the changing role of the Victorian husband, and the ways in which some Victorians (and sometimes even the institution of marriage itself) resisted the “era’s obsession with love, marriage, and domesticity” (27). Looking not only at novels but also at conduct books, etiquette manuals, journalism, “personal marriage advertisements, professional matrimonial offices, and matchmaking correspondence clubs,” Phegley provides a much deeper body of archival evidence about Victorian courtship and marriage than has heretofore been available (70).

Cleere’s uncles, Davidoff’s siblings, Marcus’s friends: Victorian endogamous life was profoundly shaped by figures we minimize when we focus on the conjugal or nuclear family. All of these critics share an understanding that the conventional verities of Victorian family were not universally shared, either in actual practice or in the literature that celebrated these visions. What Thiel terms “the domestic ideal” was painstakingly performed, reconstructed,

challenged, and extended. Using queer theory, historical case studies, court records, anthropology, Victorian legal theory, close reading, archival finds, and the periodical press, these scholars show us that the Victorian family was a complicated organism whose feelings and forms reached across barriers of age, biology, gender, and class. The forum section of this issue thus focuses on some of those unexpected members of the ever-extending family.

THE FORUM

This section provides cutting-edge work by many of today's leading scholars of Victorian family studies. It endorses what we are coming to understand was the Victorian norm of messily diverse family structures and focuses on what it felt like to belong to a family that did not accord with what was gradually becoming the dominant, if still mythic, ideal. In determining the categories for the forum, we thought carefully about what actually constituted the/a Victorian family. While we were certainly tempted to construct an entirely alternative family (consisting, say, of foster fathers, divorced wives, and bea-dles) in order to extend the family in a most pointed way, we realized that to do so would be to construct a marginal family, not to extend our notion of the familial to include all of the distant relations and alternative structures of kinship that are so crucial to a complete understanding of the Victorian domestic. Further, we very much wanted the categories to speak to each other and to make clear how and why one category necessitated another.

Our first group of forum pieces, "Coupling and Uncoupling," casts a skeptical eye on the centre of the idealized Victorian family, the happy couple. Indeed, these pieces register the stresses of, the risks to, the anxieties about, and the alternatives to monogamous domestic bliss. Marlene Tromp describes the most extreme version of marriage gone wrong—unions that culminate in murderous violence—and speculates about Victorians' fearful fascination with the idea of the violent woman. Vicinus tells us about reformers who advocated celibacy as a way of evading violent domination, medically dangerous childbirth, and gender inequity. In a relationship in which desire was sublimated into higher feeling, they believed, happiness and harmony were easier to attain.

Of course, celibacy would not help if the marriage contained a third person. In Maia McAleavey's account of the literature of bigamy, we see how the cozy bliss of the Darby-and-Joan couple might be seen, agonizingly, from the outside; how the rejected or lost first partner might return to trouble the domestic nest; and how profound a threat bigamy posed to Victorian monogamous norms. That third person might even be of the same sex. Richard Kaye has discovered records of an early custody trial involving a male-male relationship, and this account provides vivid insight into the changing conceptions of love in the nineteenth century. If love was understood as marital and reproductive, what name could be given to a same-sex extramarital relationship? Even the most hallowed form of Victorian familial

affection, maternal love, caused anxiety, as Dara Rossman Regaignon shows in her piece on "the emotional and practical work of motherhood" (34). The Victorian mother's hunger for advice manuals and her mingled resentment of and gratitude for their urgent, contradictory advice demonstrate both the supreme importance of mothering in the Victorian period and the feeling that mothering was a painfully learned behaviour, not natural in the slightest.

The "Children and Parents" cluster picks up Regaignon's sensitivity to maternal advice manuals to show the range of ways in which nuclear family relations were actually depicted. One theme in this section is the helplessness of women. Frost tells us that in unmarried couples, women were usually the working-class members, with male middle-class cohabiters (hopefully) supporting the children and raising them into his higher class. Thus, although the children generally lived with their mothers, they came under pressure to eschew her classed lifestyle and, indeed, her sexual misbehaviour. Similarly, Michie describes the pressure on the heiress to keep her fortune within the family. Unable to control the disposition of her own wealth, the heiress had to marry properly, in both literary and anthropological narratives, and she could thus rarely marry for love.

If the heiress's marriage was dubiously disconnected from her desires, the sibling's love, by contrast, might be problematically passionate. Sanders describes sister-brother relationships that were "widely represented in the language of infatuation" (54). The sibling bond provided an alternative quasi-marital couple, a lifelong partnership. And whereas Sanders discusses a biological bond intense enough to trouble normative conceptions of family life, Nelson focuses on an affiliative bond that did not seem intense enough. To middle-class critics, impoverished families instilled deleterious ideas in their children, who could only be saved if fostered by middle-class families or institutionalized in quasi-military reformatories. Meanwhile, poor foster parents or caregivers were seen as the "dark inversion" (58) of reputable middle-class adoption, dismissed as child-murderers, self-interested and dangerous.

The final section, "Beyond the Nuclear Family," looks at servants, grandparents, pets, and cousins to show how much the Victorian family resembled the extensive eighteenth-century household family that Tadmor has reconstructed, with its shifting cast of participants, visitors, employees, and residents.

Eve Lynch reveals a perplexing collapse of the iconography of working womanhood; from the Queen to the maid-of-all-work, women came to be understood in terms of the service they provided. Public service could collapse into domestic service, providing an image of women working for others that was then naturalized and internalized. What happens, though, when the woman is served instead of serving, as in the case of *David Copperfield's* Mrs. Gummidge? Mrs. Gummidge is an example of a group that Chase calls "outsiders within" (68), an aging widow whose role in the family is unclear. The widow's indeterminate status and depressive mien requires reformation; finding a new life of hard work and adoptive mothering in Australia,

Mrs. Gummidge discovers a happiness that helps to hold the affiliative family together. Such coziness would often be signalled, Ivan Kreilkamp argues, by the family pet, and indeed the pet itself constitutes the sentimentalized space of the domestic home. Instead of wild animality, the pet signifies nature tamed and miniaturized, made cozy. "Proof of the power of domestic feeling," Kreilkamp observes, is whether it draws in outsiders (73); pets thus become "an especially potent symbol and proof of the inclusivity of family feeling" (74). But the domestic space might not reach out to include the non-human; it might rather reinforce itself with endogamous repetition, with the consolidation of consanguineous ties by conjugal connections. Corbett brings Victorian family structures into the twentieth century by looking at the shifting representation of cousin marriage. Seen as "natural" and advantageous in the nineteenth century, cousin marriage made possible the great alliances and extensions of Victorian families, but in the twentieth century, women's greater autonomy allowed them, increasingly, to make their own way in the public sphere. Marriage and reproduction could become private choices rather than the only possible vocation for women.

With this recognition, our survey of the great Victorian family structure and its messy, permeable, strategic, self-replicating, anxious, repetitive, riven state—bookended by celibacy and by the privilege of not having to reproduce or even to marry—comes to an end. The forum pieces thus provide a kind of devil's dictionary, defining the shadow-side of the Victorian family. Happy marriage depends on managing violence, erotic desire, previous entanglements, same-sex desire, financial need, and legal status; that cozy couple can only exist because so much has been pushed out of sight. Interestingly, what most threatens the idea of domestic bliss are the families who do it almost right, but whose divergence from the norm reveals how easy it is to deviate from that standard: families that are too poor, families that mother incorrectly, families that engineer marriages. Meanwhile, what supports and maintains the ideal of "Home, Sweet Home" is the spectacle of the outsider, craving inclusion, whether that outsider be a pet, a widow, a servant, or a first husband. These figures testify to the powerful appeal of domestic bliss, a feeling that others envy and an experience that, we are encouraged to believe, can transfigure those brought within its reach.

THE ARTICLES

The articles in this section teach us about family structure as it pertains to war, missionary work, non-normative sexuality, scientific thought, serial publication, the business of courtship, and the legal status of wives. Furneaux provides a fascinating new perspective on fatherhood by revealing how enamoured Victorian readers were of narratives of paternal soldiery. In the imagined figure of the sentimental, nurturing military man, they could distinguish British soldiers positively and separate them from supposed perpetrators of war crimes in other nations. And if the soldier and the baby

girl seem like an odd conjunction, Matthew Ingleby presents an even more unexpected composite: elected families. Focusing on Dickens's Christmas story "The Haunted Man," Ingleby draws our attention to the ties formed between unrelated individuals—especially between a childless woman and a lonely orphan, but also between surplus children and single men—who have affection to give that the nuclear family cannot contain.

While the characters in Dickens find one another by lucky chance, the family that Vicky Simpson describes is created out of an act of sheer self-serving will. In Collins's *No Name*, Magdalen's intense determination to generate the idealized Victorian family ironically leads to a better family, but one she never recognizes as such. In her association with the Wragges, performance, pretence, mutual admiration (and mistrust), as well as shared economic interest, create more sustained bonds than Magdalen ever has with the men she might marry.

Magdalen's grim determination to control her marital fate would fit right into the remarkable history of matrimonial advertisers that Phegley has uncovered. Her essay reveals that Victorian women were not always demure wallflowers waiting to be courted but could in fact be savvy and aggressive marketers of their own marriageability. Tracing the vicissitudes of the flourishing (but anxiety-producing) genre of marriage ads, Phegley shows how periodicals attempted both to control and to cater to readers whose behaviour exceeded what editors (and our own normative notions of Victorian femininity) might have expected.

Some families practiced a gentler kind of inclusiveness. Meghan Rosing discusses the "serial family," which is both an extended, open, affiliative network and also a family modelled on the structure of serial fiction itself: participatory, open-ended, episodic, and collaborative. Juliana Horatia Ewing's *Mrs. Overthway's Remembrances* (1869) tells the story of a lonely child and an elderly neighbour finding each other, but the elderly neighbour's stories also open up extended connections, looping all the characters into the chatty, inclusive, loving network of storytelling. Conversely, the missionary family that Esme Cleall analyzes must learn to maintain ties in spite of the stresses of international missionary family life, as the family stretches across the globe, becomes permeable, loses track of its original culture, and redefines its idea of home. The missionary family has an original home in England, a daily home in the region in which it actually serves, and a spiritual home in heaven, and negotiating those allegiances for itself and its children, while still remaining bonded as a single unit, was uniquely difficult.

Finally, Carolyn Tate discusses the remarkable case of Michael Field, reclaiming both incest and biological family as potentially liberatory sites of queer identity. Precisely because same-sex and incestuous relations remained vague in the Victorian imagination, Tate argues, the family could be a place for queer kinship to be established, and the professional, affectionate, biological, and conjugal union of Michael Field—lesbian lovers, aunt and niece,

adoptive mother and daughter—challenges us to historicize the kinds of family structures that made that “family” possible.

CONCLUSION

Putting these articles together, alongside the major works of family scholarship we describe at the beginning of this introduction and the forum pieces that focus on specific elements in and categories of the Victorian family, allows us to see that the ideal of the domestic nuclear family was not so much under attack as it was carefully pieced together in the face of all the discouraging evidence of its impossibility. What actually existed were radically different families: the “transnormative families” that Thiel describes (qtd. in Straley 205), the “serial families” that Rosing examines (147), the performative families that Simpson analyzes, the marketed conjugality that Phegley has discovered, the families formed through elective affinities that both Furneaux and Ingleby trace, the queer connections that Tate describes, the permeable missionary family that Cleall recovers.

The Victorian construction of family occurred in the wake of a long history of networks of affiliation that included cousins, friends, servants, neighbours, and connections, as amply attested to by historians of the pre-modern era. The gradual growth of the notion of a normative nuclear family was a fraught one. Imagined families, as we see from Dickens, Ewing, and Collins, could be composed of yearning individuals—deaf gentlemen, widowed women, homeless urchins, criminal schemers, lonely children, elderly survivors—who bond with one another. Families could consolidate around missing members: vanished parents, mysterious aunts. In short, the notion that a biologically-connected nuclear family was the norm was true neither in actuality nor in literature. Actual families were widely diverse, and literary families created the language to describe and justify that diversity.

The traditional place to begin thinking about the family is, as we note at the outset, the grand narrative of Stone, in which the Victorian family is characterized as the epitome of the modern, affective, loving, nuclear configuration. But in the last twenty-five years, family history of the Victorian era has challenged every assumption of Stone's. The Victorian family was not always loving, and it was never nuclear. It consisted of extended, substitute, affiliative, and shifting members, and its most cherished principles—maternal adoration, conjugal bliss—were painstakingly produced against an array of dangerous circumstances (abuse, financial pressures, abandoned children) and surprisingly non-normative compositions (cohabitation, same-sex couplings, asexual unions). In other words, the story of the Victorian family we have inherited is just that, a story. True, it is one of the stories that the nineteenth century loved to tell, in novel after novel. But if Victorian literature constructs this model of family, it also reveals its internal shakiness. As Nelson reminds us, the Victorians wrote about family “by blending what they had observed with what they longed for” (14). It is those narratives—showing us

that the Victorian family was in every way a careful and exceedingly difficult discursive construct, and one that needed to be upheld at every moment—that this issue interrogates.

Notes

- 1 This project began with a conversation at the 2010 Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Conference (INCS), “Family/Resemblance,” during which we noticed that many of the papers—like Talia’s examination of versions of the courtship plot, and Kelly’s exploration of adoption and the self-made family—were invested in extending ideas of what constituted a family and how it was constructed. Our thanks, then, to Elsie Michie and Jennifer Phegley, who were part of that first conversation; to INCS; to the host institution, the University of Texas at Austin; and to the conference organizers—Alexandra Wettlaufer, Chris Bryce, Alexandra Vlahodimitropoulos, and Susan Floyd—for an inspired and inspiring conference.
- 2 A much more nuanced and sophisticated account of “the integration of love and marriage” and the role of the novel in “providing instruction and orientation in affairs of the heart” can be found in Niklas Luhmann’s *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy* (1982) (10, 11).
- 3 Stone did modify his claims ten years later. See “Love” in *The Past and Present Revisited*.
- 4 See Stone’s *Road to Divorce: England, 1530–1987* (1990) and *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660–1857* (1993).
- 5 See Joanne Bailey, “Favored or Oppressed? Married Women, Property, and ‘Coverture’ in England, 1660–1800”; Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage*; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England*.
- 6 For instance, “incest” became a way of naming the poor as bestial figures, grappling in dark hovels, while in the Deceased Wife’s Sister controversy, it was idealized as a way of maintaining maternal and domestic order with a perfect substitute mother.
- 7 Gullette began her important work in 1988 with *Safe at Last in the Middle Years: The Invention of the Midlife Progress Novel* and has continued to study representations of aging and ageism in *Declining to Decline: Cultural Combat and the Politics of the Midlife* (1997), *Aged by Culture* (2004), and most recently, *Agewise: Fighting the New Ageism in America* (2011).

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