

Benjamin Morgan
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EMPLOYMENT

University of Chicago

2017– Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, and the College

2010–2017 Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, and the College

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley

2010 Ph.D., Rhetoric

2005 M.A., Rhetoric

Harvard University

2001 A.B. *magna cum laude*, Literature

PUBLICATIONS

Book

The Outward Mind: Materialist Aesthetics in Victorian Science and Literature (University of Chicago Press, 2017)

—Sonya Rudikoff Award for the best first book in Victorian Studies

—Shortlist, British Society for Literature and Science book prize

—Reviews: *British Journal for the History of Science*; *British Society for Literature and Science*; *Choice*; *Configurations*; *Isis*; *Journal of British Studies*; *Modern Intellectual History*; *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*; *Nineteenth-Century Literature*; *Nineteenth-Century Studies (Vistas)*; *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*; *Studies in English Literature*; *V21 Collations*; *Victorian Studies*; *Victoriographies*

Articles and Chapters – Peer-Reviewed

2019 “Scale in *Tess* in Scale.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. (Spring 2019)

2018 “How We Might Live: Utopian Ecology in William Morris and Samuel Butler.” In *Ecological Form: System and Aesthetics in the Age of Empire*. Eds. Nathan K. Hensley and Philip Steer. New York: Fordham University Press, 2018.

2017 “Scale as Form: Thomas Hardy’s Rocks and Stars.” In *Anthropocene Reading: Literary History in Geological Times*, eds. Tobias Menely and Jesse Oak Taylor. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2017.

2016 “Scale, Resonance, Presence.” *Victorian Studies* 59.1 (Autumn 2016).

- 2016 “*Fin du Globe: On Decadent Planets.*” *Victorian Studies* 58.4 (Summer 2016).
—“Editor’s Choice” article; open access.
- 2016 “Introduction: Presentism, Form, and the Future of History.” Coauthored with Anna Kornbluh. *Boundary 2 Online*, special issue on the V21 Collective (September 2016).
- 2016 “After the Arctic Sublime.” *New Literary History* 47.1 (May 2016).
—Lead article; open access.
- 2014 “Oscar Wilde’s Un-American Tour: Mormonism, Aestheticism, and Transnational Resonance.” *American Literary History* 26.4 (December 2014): 1–29.
- 2012 “Critical Empathy: Vernon Lee’s Aesthetics and the Origins of Close Reading.” *Victorian Studies* 55.1 (Autumn 2012).
translated as 批評的共情：弗農·李的美學及細讀的起源 in *Journal of the Macao Polytechnic Institute* 21.3 (Autumn 2018)
- 2010 “Aesthetic Freedom: Walter Pater and the Politics of Autonomy.” *ELH* 77.3 (Fall 2010): 731–756.
- 2007 “Undoing Legal Violence: Walter Benjamin’s and Giorgio Agamben’s Aesthetics of Pure Means.” *The Journal of Law and Society* 34.1 (March 2007): 46–64. Reprinted in *Democracy’s Empire*. Ed. Stewart Motha. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.

Solicited Essays and Entries

- 2018 “Aesthetics.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46:3-4 (Fall/Winter 2018): 559-562
- 2017 “Harmony and Dissonance.” *Classicisms*, edited by Larry Norman and Anne Leonard. Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2017.
- 2014 “Vernon Lee.” *Oxford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Journal Issue

V21: Presentism, Form, and the Future of History. Special issue of *Boundary 2 Online* 1.2 (October 2016), co-edited with Anna Kornbluh.

Reviews

- 2017 Review of *Dead Letters Sent: Queer Literary Transmission*, by Kevin Ohi, *Victorian Studies*. *Victorian Studies* 59.2 (Winter 2017): 320-322.
- 2016 Review of *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence*, by Vincent Sherry, *Modern Philology* 114.2 (November 2016).

- 2015 Review of *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London*, by Matthew C. Hunter, *Critical Inquiry* 41.4 (Summer 2015): 902–903.
- 2012 Review of *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*, ed. Stefano Evangelista, *Victorian Studies* 54.2 (Winter 2012): 366–368.
- 2012 Review of *Gothic and Modernism*, ed. John Paul Riquelme, *Modern Philology* 110.2 (November 2012): 111–114.
- 2005 Review of Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception, Law, Culture and the Humanities* 1.2 (July 2005): 264–265.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND GRANTS

- 2017–2018 External Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center
- 2016–2018 Associated Faculty, “Studies in Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical,” Franke Institute for the Humanities/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- 2015–2017 Co-Director, “Climate Change: Disciplinary Challenges to the Humanities and Social Sciences,” Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society
- 2013–2019 Affiliated Faculty, “Climate Change Project,” Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory
- 2015–2019 Senior Fellow, Harper-Schmidt Society of Fellows, University of Chicago
- 2016–2017 University of Chicago College Research Fellows Grant (Research Assistant funding)
- 2013–2014 Faculty Fellow, Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago
- 2013 American Philosophical Society Franklin Residential Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh
- 2012 NEH Summer Seminar, “Oscar Wilde and his Circle,” UCLA
- 2009–2010 Graduate Fellow, Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley
- 2009 Arts Research Center Fellow, UC Berkeley
- 2008 Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley
- 2008 Dean’s Fellowship, UC Berkeley, 2008
- 2004–2007 Wollenberg Research Grant, UC Berkeley
- 2005 Center for British Studies Dissertation Research Fellowship, UC Berkeley
- 2003 Wang Family Fellowship, UC Berkeley
- 2001 Hoopes Thesis Prize, Harvard University

TALKS

Invited Talks

- “The Art and Literature of Climate Change.” Jilin University (吉林大学), China. April 2019.
- “British Industrialization and Ecological Utopias.” Jilin University (吉林大学), China. April 2019.
- “Carboniferous Time,” Anthropocene History Workshop, Neubauer Collegium, March 2019
- “In Human Scale: The Early Aesthetics of Climate Change.” Princeton Victorian Colloquium, Princeton University, November 2018.

- “Coal in the Victorian Imagination: Deep Time and the End of Empire.” Data Scarcity and the Human Past workshop, Stanford University, March 2017.
- “Temporalities of Coal in the Nineteenth Century.” Environmental Humanities Project, Stanford University, January 2017.
- “Carboniferous Time: Victorian Coal at the Anthropocene Transition.” Nineteenth-Century Studies Colloquium, Yale University, November 2017.
- “Classicism and Kink,” Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, May 2017.
- “In Human Scale” Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University, April 2017.
- “V21: Presentism and Victorian Studies.” English Department, Indiana University, March 2017.
- “*Fin du Globe*: On Decadent Planets.” Environments and Societies Colloquium, University of California, Davis, February 2017.
- “*Fin du Globe*: On Decadent Planets.” Victorian Literature and Culture Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University. November 2016.
- “V21 and Strategic Presentism” (Keynote). Graduate Student Conference, Loyola University Chicago, October 2016.
- “In Human Scale: Thinking Climate Change with Thomas Hardy.” Nineteenth-Century Faculty Seminar, Oxford University, June 2016.
- “Aesthetic Play in Alexander Bain and Herbert Spencer.” Victorian Psychology Now, Birkbeck College, University of London, June 2016.
- “Scale.” Midwest Faculty Seminar, University of Chicago, April 2016.
- “Keywords for Strategic Presentism: Scale, Resonance, Presence.” Plenary roundtable, Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Conference, Asheville, NC, March 2016.
- “Scales without Size in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.” History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science Workshop, University of Chicago, February 2016.
- “Feeling Anthropocene: Arctic Aesthetics in the Nineteenth Century.” University of Maryland College Park, Department of English, February 2014.
- “Victorian Neuroaesthetics.” History of Human Sciences Workshop, University of Chicago, November 2013.

“How Matter Learned to Think: Wilkie Collins, Walter Pater, and Physiological Aesthetics.”
Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, Birkbeck College, University of London, October
2013.

“Aesthetic Experience and the Embodied Mind in Victorian Science and Literature.” University
of Edinburgh, Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities, September 2013.

“Renegade Aesthetics.” Inter-Chicago Circle for Experimental Critical Theory. Newberry
Library, Chicago, August 2013.

“Critical Empathy: Reading the Movement of Form in Vernon Lee’s Aesthetics.” Eighteenth-
and Nineteenth-Century Cultures Workshop, University of Chicago, May 2011.

“On Physiology and Beauty.” Franke Institute for the Humanities luncheon series, University of
Chicago, February 2011.

“Grant Allen and the Science of Aesthetic Pleasure.” Arts Research Center Symposium, UC
Berkeley, May 2009.

Public-facing

“The Art and Literature of Climate Change.” University of Chicago Humanities Day. October
2018.

“The Fate of the Oceans.” Looking Glass Theater production of *20,000 Leagues Under the Seas*
post-performance panel, Chicago, July 2018.

“Global Thought in the Anthropocene.” Panel discussion with Ursula Heise, Bill Brown, and
Fredrik Jonsson. Center for International Studies, 50th Anniversary Series, University of
Chicago, May 2016.

“Climate Change Studies and Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration.” Transatlantic Forum: Big
Challenges, Human Solutions. Norwegian Embassy/University of Chicago, October
2016.

“Memory: Writing, Traces, and the Unconscious.” Object Roundtable, Smart Museum of Art,
University of Chicago, October 2015.

“From Clouds to Gas: Atmospheres of Industrialization.” Object Roundtable, Smart Museum of
Art, University of Chicago, March 2015.

“Darkness and Invisibility.” Smart Museum of Art Object-Based Workshop. University of
Chicago, April 2013.

Conference Papers and Presentations

- “Horizons of Expectation,” “The Return of the Nineteenth Century?” workshop co-hosted by the 18th and 19th Century Atlantic Cultures Workshop and the 20th and 21st Century Workshop, University of Chicago, April 2019.
- “From Science and Literature to Environmental Humanities.” Modern Language Association. Chicago, IL. 2019
- “Victorian Ecological Crises.” Modern Language Association. Chicago, IL. 2019.
- “Cyclical Emergency: The Political Ecology of the 1876-1878 Madras Famine.” American Studies Association. Atlanta, GA. November 2018.
- “Scaling as Critical Practice: On Size and its Values.” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference. St. Petersburg, FL. October 2018.
- “Ecological Scaling in Madras Famine Journalism, 1876-1881,” VCologies, University of Nevada, Reno, September 2018.
- “Carboniferous Time.” Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association, San Francisco, March 2018.
- “Scalar Rupture: Coal at the Holocene/Anthropocene Boundary.” Vcologies, University of Texas, Houston, September 2017.
- “Decadent World Ecologies.” North American Victorian Studies Association, Phoenix, AZ, November 2016.
- “Utopian World Ecology in Samuel Butler’s *A First Year at Canterbury Settlement* and *Erewhon*.” Vcologies Symposium, University of California, Davis, September 2016.
- “*Fin du Globe*: On Decadent Planets.” 20th and 21st Century Workshop, University of Chicago, May 2016.
- “Presentism, Form, and the Future of History.” V21 Symposium: Presentism, Form, and the Future of History. Chicago, IL, October 2015.
- “Cold Paradise: The Arctic’s Utopian Pull.” International Conference on Narrative, Chicago, IL, March 2015.
- “After the Arctic Sublime: Aesthetic Categories in the Anthropocene.” American Comparative Literature Association, Seattle, WA, March 2015.
- “The Arctic in the Anthropocene: Voyage Narratives, Deep Time, and Planetary Context.” North American Victorian Studies Association, London, Ontario, November 2014.
- “Transnational Wilde.” Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2014.

- “Living Matter in Victorian Physiology and Aesthetics, 1840–1860.” Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, January 2014.
- “Mapping the Sublime: Scientific Knowledge and Aesthetic Judgment in the Arctic and the Alps.” North American Victorian Studies Association, Pasadena, CA, October 2013.
- “Bodies as Networks in Victorian Aesthetics.” North American Victorian Studies Association, Madison, WI, September 2012.
- “Some Objects of Victorian Aesthetic Theory.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, Milwaukee, WI, September 2012.
- “How Things Look: Clementina Anstruther-Thomson and the Aesthetics of Material Vision.” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference, Montréal, November 2010.
- “Aesthetics/Hedonics: The Science of Pleasure at the *fin de siècle*.” Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference, Skidmore College, April 2009.
- “A Lot of Art is Boring: The Psychological Aesthetics of Grant Allen and Vernon Lee.” Northeast Victorian Studies Association Conference, Wellesley College, April 2009.
- “Regeneration: Evolutionary Aesthetics and the Biology of Form.” Nineteenth Century Studies Association Conference, March 2009.
- “Lucretian Aestheticism: The Materialist Flux and Aesthetic Subjectivity.” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference, Yale University, November 14–16, 2008. Also given at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference, Pomona College, November 2008.
- “The Pleasures of Sinking: Decadent Self-Loss as Sublime Immersion.” Northeast Victorian Studies Association Conference, University of Toronto, April 2008.
- “Is Bad Aestheticism Good Politics? William Morris and the Debate over Individualism.” Rhetoric Department Faculty/Graduate Student Panel, UC Berkeley, December 2007.
- “Pater’s Ethical Materialism.” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference, University of Victoria, October 2007.
- “The Aesthetics of ‘Pure Means’: Violence and the Law in Benjamin and Agamben.” Association for the Study of Law, Culture, and the Humanities Conference, Syracuse University, March 2006.
- “Spectatorship as Action: Arendt’s Lectures on Kant and the Futurist Spectacle.” “Rethinking Reception,” Graduate student conference, Duke University, March 2005.

Talks related to teaching and service

“What is Research?: Context” English Department Research Proseminar, April 2019

“Teaching in the Core,” Forum on Teaching in the Core, September 2016

“Using Special Collections and the Smart Museum in Teaching,” April 2016

“Introduction to Media Aesthetics,” Chicago Academic Achievement Program, August 2014 and August 2015

“Negotiating Early Careers,” English Department Professionalization Day, May 2013

“Pop hits and Parodies,” “Guilty Pleasures” talk for English majors, October 2012

Disciplinary discussion group leader, Workshop on Teaching in the College, July 2012

“Successful PhD Applications,” Masters of Arts Program in the Humanities, May 2012

TEACHING

University of Chicago

Graduate

Teaching Undergraduate English, Fall 2018

Science Fiction: Theories and Origins, Fall 2016

Aestheticism and Decadence, Fall 2015

Victorian Speculative Fiction: Agency, Time, and Utopia, Autumn 2014

Oscar Wilde and His Contexts, Spring 2013

Science and the Literary Imagination, Winter 2012

Psychology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century, Winter 2011

Undergraduate

Media Aesthetics: Image, Text, Sound, 2010–2019

Climate Change in Literature, Art, and Film, Fall, 2018.

Nineteenth-Century Environmental Thought, Fall 2017

Climate Change Fiction, Winter, 2016

Literary Environments, Winter 2015

Oscar Wilde’s London (Study Abroad), Fall 2012

The Politics of Aestheticism, Winter 2012

Late Victorian Literature, Winter 2011

University of California, Berkeley

Writing Courses

Science and Literature: The Two Cultures, Summer 2009

Irrationality, Madness, and Superstition in Victorian Prose, Summer 2008

Aestheticism and Decadence, Summer 2007

Introduction to Literary Theory, Spring 2007
Reading and Meaning, Fall 2005
The Aesthetics of Evil, Summer 2005
The Politics of Performance, Summer 2006
The Scientist and the Detective, Spring 2004
Violence and Persuasion, Fall 2003

Teaching Assistant

Early Modern Europe and its Others, Fall 2004
Theories of the Lie: Plato to Derrida, Spring 2005, 2008, 2009
Twentieth-Century Theories of Interpretation, Fall 2006

ADVISING

Dissertations

Jennifer Yida Pan, “By Design: Aesthetics of the Unnoticed in Literary and Mechanical Technologies” (in progress)
Caroline Heller, “The Times of the Seasons: Mediations of Climate in Eighteenth-Century British Literature” (in progress)
Jose Moctezuma, “The Three Automatisms: Labor, Reproduction, and Violence in the Work of William Morris, Mina Loy, and Wyndham Lewis” (defended 2018)
Rebecca Oh, “The Common Climate: Biopolitics, Cosmopolitanism, and Climate Instability in the Global South” (defended 2018)
David Womble, “Collectivized Flesh: Mass Bodies and the Novel, 1819–1907” (defended 2018)
Daniel Harris, “Reforming the Organism: Physiological Individuation and the Nature of Political Selfhood in Victorian Literary Culture” (defended 2014)
Chris Bench, “Mediating Autistic Worlds”
Dustin Brown, “Ambivalent Subjects: Disinterest, Affect and the Psychological Body of Late Victorian Literature”

Orals Exam Committees

Mabel Mietzfeld, Victorian Literature, Crime, and Detection
David Womble, Victorian Literature and the Social Sciences
Rachel Kyne, Sensation and Perception in Victorian Literature
Mary Gibbons, Victorian Aesthetics
James Duesterberg, Aestheticism and Decadence
Brady Smith, Victorian Children’s Literature

MA Theses

Kaitlyn Spina, “Stephen Dedalus and the Astro-Artistic Mentality: *Ulysses* as Creation Ex Nihilo”
Mallory Hitt, “The Shadow of Terrors: Trauma and Religious Doubt in Charlotte Bronte’s *Villette*”
Tasha Harris, “Woodland Natures: Knowing Vegetal Nature Through Sympathy and Anthropomorphism in Thomas Hardy’s *The Woodlanders*”
Heather Martin, “‘It’s not poetry we need in this class war’: A Poetics of Labored Breathing in Tony Harrison’s *v.*”

- Alexandra Gunnells, “‘Better in body perhaps’: Biopolitics and Embodiment in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’”
- Jared Spitz, “How the Change Came: Blasé and Profound Boredom in William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*”
- Madeleine McGann, “The ‘Will as a Project’: Determining the States and Effects of the Transitional Will in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*”
- Alena Jones, “Unfolding the Surface of the Earth: The Dynamics of Movement on Elizabeth Bishop’s Shoreline”
- Crystal Lie, “‘A Repulsive and Extraordinary Face’: (Re)shaping Disability in H.G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*”
- Amanda Ehrhardt, “Demented Temporality: Mental Illness and Lost Memory in *The Glass Menagerie*”

BA Theses

- Ella Sperling, “Play’s the Thing: Objects and Empire in E. Nesbit’s Edwardian Fantasy.” Winner of the Nicholson Center for British Studies B.A. Thesis Prize
- Chris Fincher, “Primeval Eden: Identity, Society, and Ecology in Toru Dutt’s ‘Baugmaree’”
- Kristin Zodrow, “Avant-Garde Detritus or Everyday Objects: The Black Mountain Poems of M.C. Richards.” Winner of the Janel Mueller Undergraduate Thesis Prize in English and American Literature.
- Anastasia Klimchynskaya, “The Sign and the Symbol: The Question of Interpretation in the Literature of French Romanticism and of the Late Victorian Period” (Comp Lit/English)
- John Lisovsky, “St. Sebastian Melmoth: The Political Aesthetics of Oscar Wilde’s Investment in the Figure of the Martyr”
- Jordan Reece, “Generations in the Greenwood: From Sterility to Sympathy in E.M. Forster’s *Maurice*” (Gender Studies/English)

SERVICE

Boards

- Board of the University of Chicago Press, 2018-2021
- Board of the Nicholson Center for British Studies, 2018-2021
- Advisory Board, *Victorian Literature and Culture*

Department Service

- Director of Undergraduate Studies, 2018-2019
- Third-year Undergraduate Advising Committee, 2018-2019
- Faculty advisor, English Department Graduate Student Conference, 2016
- Third-year PhD Advisor, 2015–2019
- Nineteenth-Century Search Committee, 2013–2014
- Nineteenth-Century Search Committee, 2012–2013
- Admissions Committee, 2011–2012; 2014–2015
- Program Review Committee, 2010–2011; 2011–2012

University Service

- Member, College Council, 2016–2019
- Chair, Media Aesthetics Core, Fall 2014; 2015–2019

MA in the Humanities Advisor, 2014–2016
Co-chair, 18th- and 19th-Century Atlantic Cultures Workshop, 2014–2016
Co-chair, Science, Literature, and the Arts reading group, 2013–2014
Fulbright Interview Committee, 2014
Midwest Faculty Seminar discussion leader, Winter 2013
Fulbright Interview Committee, 2012
Co-chair, 18th and 19th-Century Cultures Workshop, 2011–2013

Professional Service

Conference organizer, “VCologies 4: Disciplinary Approaches to Environmental Knowledge”
Conference organizer, “Climate Change: Disciplinary Challenges to the Humanities and Social Sciences,” June 2016
Conference organizer, V21 Symposium, October 2015
Founding member and online editor, V21: Victorian Studies for the 21st Century
Manuscript review: University of Chicago Press; Broadview Press; *ELH*; *PMLA*; *Nineteenth-Century Literature*; *Victorian Studies*; *Art Bulletin*; *Mediations*; *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*
Advisory committee, Northeast Victorian Studies Association (NVSA), 2012–2015
Sonia Rudikoff First Book Prize Committee, NVSA, 2013–2015

Professional Affiliations

American Comparative Literature Association
American Studies Association
Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association
Modern Language Association
North American Victorian Studies Association
Northeast Victorian Studies Association
Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts
V21: Victorian Studies for the 21st Century