We are excited to be publishing this roundtable, a response to Peter K. Andersson's recently published *Journal of Victorian Culture* article ‘How Civilized Were the Victorians?’ Andersson's piece invites scholars of the nineteenth century to rethink the ‘civilizing process’ and to reconsider the disciplinary parameters of Victorian Studies more generally.1 We have been overwhelmed by the number of people who have engaged with this article. To date, over 3600 people have downloaded it, making it our most read article of 2015–16.2 This roundtable captures some of the dialogue that has emerged in response to the article. Many of the pieces that appear in this roundtable were first published on our accompanying site, the *Journal of Victorian Culture Online*.3 Invited respondents have been asked to expand their initial replies. Taken together, the essays offer an interdisciplinary conversation around the constitution of Victorian Studies, a conversation that we at the *Journal of Victorian Culture* have been proud to promote in our journal's pages.

Andersson's article comes at an important juncture in Victorian Studies. As a field, we are increasingly trying to consider how we should study our Victorian past. We are engaging with an increasingly vibrant public interest in the past which is introducing new audiences to Victorian Studies. At the same time, there is a growing unease around the value of the humanities in universities and more widely in both the US and UK. A bold (and at times controversial) assertion from the US-based Victorian Studies collective V21 tells us that we should move in the direction of a more theoretical and politicized Victorian Studies.4 The thought-provoking pieces in this roundtable invite readers to think more about the direction and future aspirations of our field. Rather than seeing Victorian Studies in flux, these stimulating and wide-ranging reflections point to the successes and methodological diversity of our subject area.

The publication of Andersson's article also coincides with a wider aspiration we have to unite our digital activities with our journal's printed content. By asking authors to

expand on their initial piece we are illustrating the ways that academic publishing can fully incorporate digital tools. Lucinda Matthews-Jones’s recent contribution to our Digital Forum, for instance, noted that we are keen at the *Journal of Victorian Culture* to explore ways in which we can create a reciprocal relationship between the online site and the journal. Academic publishing arguably needs to shift to enable fuller synergies between the print and the digital realm. The *Journal of Victorian Culture Online* responded quickly to Andersson’s piece – more swiftly than the print journal could have done. It offered the journal and the authors of these online pieces the chance to engage with Andersson’s ideas and arguments as the piece was initially read by the Victorian Studies community. By developing these responses for full publication, we hope to show how important these conversations are and that we need a variety of platforms to be able to stimulate the dialogue and the exchange of ideas that will enable Victorian Studies to thrive.

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