Introduction

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The image on the cover of this book is Louis Daguerre's *Boulevard du Temple, Eight o'clock in the Morning*. The 'photograph' (the name was yet to gain currency) was taken in Paris between 24 April and 4 May 1838.[1] The street is also known as the 'Boulevard du Crime', and it became famous as the location of Marcel Carné and Jacques Prévert's celebrated film *Les Enfants Du Paradis* (1945) just over 100 years later. Another image was captured by Daguerre on the same day at noon from the roof studio of Daguerre's Diorama building. But it is the 8 a.m. image that holds the most interest as it contains, probably, the first visible photographic image of people.

Writing in 1937, Beaumont Newhall sees only one person in the photograph:

> [T]he exposures were minutes long. During those minutes vehicles and pedestrians moved about; they did not stay still in one place long enough for the plate to record their images. In only one of Daguerre's pictures does a man appear: by chance a pedestrian on the boulevard had stopped to have his shoes shined, and had held still during most of the exposure.[2]

However, as David Bate observes,

> there are *two* figures in the picture, not one. This other figure is the worker who is cleaning the boots ... this second figure is only really seen as a blur ... Is it not interesting (even peculiar) that the first presence of human beings in photography, whether accidental or not, should be an exchange of labour, a scene of class difference? ... Perhaps, if nothing else, the exposure time of this photograph tells us that in the late 1830s it took at least 10 minutes to clean a pair of boots.[3]

One inch in from the bottom and left-hand side of the daguerreotype can be seen the two figures who remained in the same place long enough to be recorded. Daguerre's image was presented as part of a triptych to King Ludwig I and was displayed from 20 October 1839 at the Arts Association in Munich.
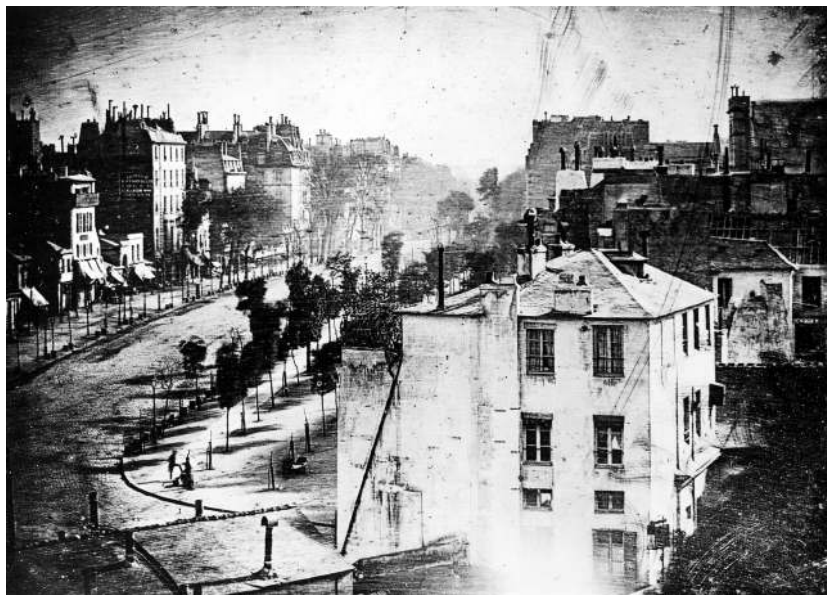
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Figure 0.1 Louis Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Eight O'clock in the Morning*.
Daguerreotype, 1838.
Source: Getty Images.

The daguerreotype in this book is, obviously, a copy. But a copy is all that it is possible to see of that first photograph of humanity: the original was destroyed when being cleaned at the Munich Fotomuseum around 1974. Only an empty wooden frame with the description remains as a record of the original.[4] Daguerreotypes (the name was coined in 1839, although the process was first mentioned in the *Journal des artistes* on 27 September 1835) were formed by plating a sheet of copper with silver, which was highly polished, before being treated with iodine, then exposure and development with the fumes from mercury. Daguerre then fixed those early images using a hot solution of sodium chloride. The daguerreotype as a process would itself be largely abandoned by the 1860s once Henry Fox Talbot's negative/positive process caught on, and it is this technology that was used to preserve an image of the original daguerreotype before its destruction. Nonetheless, these mirror-like images seem, at the right angle, to show a kind of holographic image that was lost in the negative/positive processes that followed and stuck.

Boulevard du Temple, *Eight o'clock in the Morning* seems to show one person, and two if you look carefully, but what is hidden, and unknowable,

are the hundreds of people who were moving in that street during the length of the image's exposure. Only those who remained still long enough can be seen clearly. That photograph, in those smudged traces on the road, contains people and animals who were alive at the end of the 1830s that cannot be identified. We would like to claim that *Nineteenth-Century Literature in Transition: The 1830s* brings back to visibility the full life of streets like this one in the 1830s, life that we catch only a glimpse of in this daguerreotype. It fails to do this. But it takes that frail image and its fragile traces as its methodological guide. The 1830s has long seemed to critics of English literature to be a gap: a vacant lot between two busy thoroughfares known now as the Romantic and the Victorian periods. This collection brings together fifteen chapters that suggest that the decade was, on the contrary, a crossroads of busy, jostling life. Louis Daguerre meets in these pages many others across the globe who experimented with new cultural forms that attempted, as he did, to take the pulse of an age moving so quickly they could barely make sense of it. Daguerre's image used a new technology to reimagine how a place and its people might be represented. It proved transformational to the idea of representation in ways that Daguerre can hardly have imagined. The light that he fixed on that morning in 1838 persists today, even as it persists through multiple layers of mediation. It takes an act of imagination to bring into being the life that moved too quickly for Daguerre's process to fix it; and yet that life, as the chapters in this book aim to show, can be brought before our eyes if we learn to look for it.

Literature in Transition: The 1830s, like the other volumes in this series, takes the decade as a unit of historical analysis and asks how placing literature within a ten-year span allows us to reimagine both those ten years and the literature produced in it. Every decade, not just those in the nineteenth century, can claim to be a period of transition, but the 1830s has two special claims to transitoriness. First, it falls awkwardly between the Romantic and the Victorian literary periods. Even more than the 1820s, with which it can be helpfully paired in many ways, the 1830s seems little more than an 'elegant dumpheap of factitious and overpriced trash', to borrow Jerome McGann's summary of the common critical view.[5] The decade is the site of a transition between two literary periods; or, put less kindly, it is an awkward silence between two exciting conversations. Its second claim to be an especially transitional decade is that so many in the 1830s thought of their decade in those terms. J. S. Mill and Edward Bulwer described theirs as an 'age of transition'.[6] Thomas Carlyle called it 'an Inquiry, a Doubt'.[7] It was a decade in which biographies of Lord Byron

(by Thomas Moore, 1830) and Walter Scott (by J. G. Lockhart, 1837–8), memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi (edited by Charles Dickens, 1838) and Thomas Rowlandson (in the *Reminiscences* of his associate Henry Angelo, 1830), and literary critical assessments of the age just gone began to give shape in the cultural imagination to a great flowering of literature and popular culture that followed the tumult of the French Revolution, what would later be termed Romanticism. That very capacity to identify a literary period just gone tended to provoke a persistent embarrassment about the shape that the 1830s might be said to have. This has led many in subsequent years to take the decade's literary interest in the transitoriness of culture as a condemnation of a decade that could produce only superficial, ephemeral work.

The 1830s is a decade in literary history that is not simply understudied; it has been routinely passed over with something like disdain. The status of poetry is typical. A common, if largely untrue, story is that the market for poetry collapsed. If the strong sales of poets such as Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, or the publishing phenomenon of the annuals, is introduced as a counterweight to the complaints of disappointed poets, the response is that such poetry does not count. It is seen as commercial trash that cannot be placed in a literary-historical genealogy that leads from Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth into the mature works of Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson that appeared in the 1840s. The same assumption stands for the novel: Scott and Austen are dead, and the market is stocked with Silver Fork and Newgate novels, books worth notice only for the dim view taken of them by the next generation of novelists.

Jerome McGann, who characterises so well the scholarly disdain of this 'elegant dumpheap', proposes that we need new ways of reading to comprehend work that we typically 'pre-read . . . if we turn to it at all, or [that] we mine . . . for information'.[8] McGann's approach is successful because it retains the critical awkwardness about quite how the literature of the era might be read, and it is a self-conscious awkwardness shared with several of the pioneering studies that have begun to give the 1830s a new, if still rather shaky, foothold in literary studies. Richard Cronin's *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824–1840* (2001) is the most important of these. Cronin works through a range of genres including biography, Silver Fork fiction, religious writing, poetry by writers as diverse as Felicia Hemans, George Darley, Elizabeth Barrett, and Alfred Tennyson, and periodical essays, all of which Cronin sees as being energised by an uncertainty that results from their nascent identification of a Romanticism that they knew to be over. Cronin ends his study by, rather winningly, refusing to offer a period

definition, wishing only that this semi-period between the Romantics and the Victorians would 'suddenly become militant, take on the big powers on its borders and impose on them its own vagueness'.[9] Gregory Dart's *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810–1840: Cockney Adventures* (2012) suggests that such militancy may be gaining ground. Dart's study focusses principally on poetry and periodical writing, but also takes in history painting, architecture, and museums, all of which are united by an aesthetic of awkwardness dependent on a mismatch between 'aspirations and . . . real conditions, both cultural and material'. Dart discovers in the figure of the cockney 'the misshapen "foster-child" of Romanticism and Social Realism, the crucial missing link between Keats and Dickens'.[10] For Virgil Nemoianu, 1815–48 is the European age of 'Biedermeier', a diminishment of the energies of Romanticism, an era of 'adaptation, compromise and reappraisal'.[11] David Stewart's exploration of the poetic culture in the 1820s and 1830s defines a 'period of doubt'. These 'doubts poets entertained about their art are worth holding on to' because they enabled a testing of 'new models of literary value in fascinatingly uncertain ways'.[12] Jonas Cope claims that the magazine-dominated post-Waterloo literary culture, and especially the 1820s and 1830s, explored the 'conceptual instability' of character 'more variously and popularly' than hitherto.[13] Maureen McCue, Anne-Marie Millim and Rebecca Butler present the first analysis of the literary culture of the reign of William IV (1830–7), a reign that they find characterised by 'experimentation and generic instability' in travel writing, art criticism, colonial poetry published in periodicals, and many other forms.[14] With the partial exception of Nemoianu, these critics find the period so intriguing in part because it cannot be simply accommodated to the frames provided by a literary history that has given us the more graspable formations called the Romantic and the Victorian eras.

It may be that the culture of the decade, for so long an embarrassment, has found its moment. Indeed, viewed through current critical lenses, the 1830s starts to assume the appearance not of a lacuna but of a central pivot in the nineteenth century. Scholars interested in literary engagements with ethnicity and colonialism find a rich, if troubling field: the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 and the government's vast payments to slave-owners; revolutionary violence in Jamaica; important changes in settler–colonial communities, and the beginning of the first Anglo–Chinese opium war in 1839. Contexts such as these inform several chapters in the book, most directly those by Juliet Shields (Chapter 6), Peter J. Kitson (Chapter 8), Porscha Fermanis (Chapter 7), Tom Scriven (Chapter 3), and

Valerie Sanders (Chapter 4). Andreas Malm's influential study of the capitalist roots of global warming circles repeatedly back to the 1830s.[15] It is an important decade for him not just because industrialised steam power became dominant, setting off a chain reaction that determines the current global environmental crisis, but also because that dominance was a victory won over a resistant working class. A recent special issue of *Studies in Romanticism* encourages Romantic literary scholars to return to the Marxist analysis of economic structures in light of the environmental crisis.[16] If scholars do so, the 1830s will take on a new importance. It was a decade that transformed place both materially and conceptually: the developing rail network and, by the end of the decade, the telegraph seemed to shrink distances; geological discoveries that were popularised in the press made the Earth seem newly dynamic; as we have discussed already, colonialism entered a newly accelerated period; and, as Malm shows, these changes, so powerfully present today, were driven by technology, opposition to working-class resistance, capital, and carbon, a set of connections that Peter J. Kitson (in Chapter 8) extends to include Western liberal imperialism. Ian Duncan's recent study of the relation of the novel to theories of evolution finds a point of focus in two novels written in 1830–1, Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* and Walter Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*. Both are impelled to push the limits of the novel form by the political and scientific events of their decade, such that 'history itself had become monstrous' and the stable human form of the Enlightenment had been dissolved.[17] Duncan's point is that the misshapen, unpredictable mutability revealed by the natural and social sciences needed new forms to make sense of them. Hugo and Scott, perhaps, offer one successful adaptation to these new conditions, but the decade provided fertile ground for the development of several cultural forms that attempted to evoke their decade's transitions, some of which lasted, some of which did not. The chapters in this book offer a glimpse of these, including photography, lithographs, short fiction, new kinds of novels, and, as Adelene Buckland shows (in Chapter 5), new ways of writing about the Earth's geology.

The cultural phenomena once used to condemn the decade as an unproductive gap in the literary-historical record – working-class periodicals, literary annuals, cheap lithographs, Silver Fork fiction – are, for many scholars today, less an embarrassment than the most helpful tools with which to understand print culture, working-class cultures, and the literary centrality of female writers and editors. This seemingly ephemeral activity was driven by an ever-more productive, ever-more technologically savvy print culture. The largely, if certainly not exclusively, London-dominant

publishing industry was increasingly industrial, and it was increasingly global in its reach.[18] What once provoked a bemused shrug is now ready to inspire a new generation of scholarship. Chapters in this collection by Brian Maidment (Chapter 9), David Stewart (Chapter 13), Essaka Joshua (Chapter 2), Nicola Kirkby (Chapter 14), John Strachan (Chapter 10), Robert Morrison (Chapter 11), and Sambudha Sen (Chapter 12) take some of these new roads. The 1830s has often seemed an embarrassing gap in literary genealogies. But it may be that scholars have been looking up the wrong family tree. Several of the chapters in the collection focus on genres and technologies developed or revived in the 1830s that persist, but that persist in lines of influence that tend not to be noticed. Jennifer Green-Lewis (in Chapter 15), for example, discusses the early years of photography, years that produced a plethora of techniques and a series of attempts to give a name to the capacity to fix light. The vitality of that culture lies not so much in spotting which lines became permanent (the word 'photography', elements of Fox Talbot's technique) as in the crossed lines of a discussion about a phenomenon that could not yet be fixed. It is a story that is mirrored in Robert Morrison's discussion (in Chapter 11) of *Blackwood's Magazine*'s varied and unstable influence on several 1830s writers, in Brian Maidment's account (in Chapter 9) of the phenomenon of cheap lithographs, in John Strachan's recasting (in Chapter 10) of Charles Dickens as not so much a portent of the future as an aspect of working-class print of the 1820s and 1830s, and in Sambudha Sen's parallel recasting (in Chapter 12) of Dickens's relation with 1830s visual culture that helps us rethink what the novel would become in the nineteenth century.

If the 1830s has an identity in the cultural imagination, it is the 'decade of Reform'. Indeed, 1832 is frequently used as an end or beginning point in anthologies and monographs. The *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (10th edition) marks out a Romantic period from 1785 to 1832 (though the 'Victorian Age' runs from 1830 to 1901). Theatrical history is similarly framed in *The Oxford Handbook of Georgian Theatre, 1737–1832*. The *Broadview Anthology of Victorian Prose, 1832–1901* ends with Queen Victoria's death but starts five years before her reign began. The pointedly anti-canonical *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age* covers 1776 to 1832. Even when identifying a 'Revolutionary' rather than a Romantic period, Reform, rather than Chartism or the Jamaica Rising, is the endpoint in *The Broadview Anthology of Literature of the Revolutionary Period, 1770–1832*. Recent books in Romantic and Victorian studies on topics as diverse as prayer, the agency of objects, the relation between Scottish medicine and literary culture, aristocratic women writers, and settler-colonial print

culture utilise 1832 as a historical full-stop.[19] Reform was, indeed, a major issue for many in the decade, but it was the uncertain issue of the Reform agitation that prompted Bulwer and Mill to label their age one of 'transition'. As early as 1838, the worthies of Newcastle upon Tyne raised a 41-metre-high monument to Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1830 to 1834, in the centre of the city as tribute to his efforts in enacting the Reform Bill. This monument remains at the heart of the city's public politics to this day as the usual site for rallies and protests, as well as being the most common landmark at which to arrange meetings with friends and family. While the passage of the Reform Bill truly felt epochal to many – as Kevin Gilmartin notes, it seemed precisely an end of an era, and not a happy end, to Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey – the centrality the Bill takes in accounts of the decade, and indeed of the nineteenth century, risks becoming similarly monumental.[20] The Newcastle monument was controversial from the first. It might be taken as an attempt to override the busy antagonisms of an industrial city in the age of Chartism with a simple and singular message. Reform, as John Gardner shows (in this volume's Chapter 1), was far from being understood as a uniform success. Indeed, the collection as a whole demonstrates that it often seemed a rather minor event that touched the lives of few. Newcastle's Grey's Monument was reinscribed in 1932 to celebrate a 'Century of Civil Peace'. This would have been a surprise to many in the 1830s who found their decade to be anything but peaceful. 'The Decade of Reform' is a convenient shorthand, but it imposes quiet unity on a decade that was, instead, noisy, troublesome, and difficult to map.

The 1830s began and ended with crisis and violence. The death of George IV in June 1830 saw the government fall, the first time that had happened since 1708. The attempt to pass the Reform Bill was fraught, with the established Church of England resisting and twenty-one bishops voting against. Only two were in favour and six abstained. That the bill passed at all was a consequence of fear, a fear of violent revolution that seems to have been entirely justified. The decade ended in 1839 with the first Anglo–Chinese opium war, which resulted in British rule of Hong Kong from 1841 until 1999, and the capture of Aden by the East India Company. This took place in the shadow of an epidemic of 'cholera morbus', one of several deadly epidemics that were much talked about in the press and that seemed to mirror, as Essaka Joshua shows (in Chapter 2), this political ferment. The 1830 July Revolution in France was unstable in itself, but it did not put to an end the Bourbons' colonial ambitions: the French invaded Algeria in 1830, and were not forced out until 1962. Jamaica

in 1831 saw a violent rebellion by those enslaved that involved more than 20,000 people and led to an even more violent counter-revolutionary clampdown. It was not an isolated incident of resistance to slavery, colonialism, and injustice: the same years saw a significant rebellion by enslaved people in Brazil; uprisings against Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Austro-Hungarian rule in Italy; the Merthyr Rising in Wales protesting conditions in the mining industry; and sustained resistance to colonialism by Native Americans, by the Xhosa and Zulus against Dutch colonists, by Syrian peasants against Egypt, in Sumatra against Dutch colonists, and by the Māori declaration of the United Tribes of New Zealand. In America, the publication of the anti-slavery *Liberator* by William Lloyd Garrison began in 1831, the same year as the rebellion led by Nat Turner in Virginia. The end of the decade saw the Amistad rebellion by enslaved people in 1839 off the coast of Cuba, resulting in them landing in New York and winning the right to sail the ship to Africa and freedom. This was a period of repressive government acts including the USA Indian Removal Act of 1830; the British Government of India Act (1833); and the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, which led to the rise of the workhouse. The decade also featured the last hanging in the United Kingdom for sodomy with the execution of James Pratt and John Smith in 1835 outside Newgate prison.

'Few observers of the time were able to grasp the significance of the historical events of the 1830s and 40s', writes Donald C. Holsinger. In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville responded to the Opium War, intuitively noting how the events of 1815 were being played out: 'Something more vast, more extraordinary than the establishment of the Roman Empire is growing out of our times, without anyone noticing it; it is the enslavement of four parts of the world by the fifth.'[21] As Holsinger writes: 'This metaphor of a world enslaved came to be buried under more comfortable self-images in the West; Europeans, after all, were leading the crusade against institutionalized slavery in the 1830s and 1840s.'[22] Comments like these suggest not just the importance of the 1830s but also the difficulty the decade prompted. So much was happening that it was hard to find a way of describing the shape it had; Tocqueville's attempt to frame it in terms of the Roman Empire is not so much the discovery of a serviceable historical analogy as an admission of defeat. J. S. Mill's professedly unknowing redeployment, in 1831, of Hazlitt's 'spirit of the age' only enhances the feeling of indeterminacy that Hazlitt felt in the 1820s. Mill turned to the periodical essay to attempt to work out what was happening around him, an appropriate move because the periodical was so much a genre of the passing moment, and a genre undergoing important transformations in the early 1830s. Attempts,

beginning in the 1830s by the likes of Edward Bulwer's *England and the English* in 1833 and the architects of Grey's Monument in Newcastle in 1838, to cast the 1830s as the decade of sober and successful Reform might be seen as attempts to repress the knowledge of that indeterminacy. If we wish to embrace it, we must look for other methods of imagining the 1830s.

The cultural forms of the decade articulate and are characterised by a fizzing, ephemeral indeterminacy. Media and textual forms expanded, with cheap periodicals, monthly stories, the Newgate novel, and new forms of texts, communications, and ventures. Middle-class female writers and readers began to seem dominant in ways that prompted both excitement and angry disapproval. Female poets and novelists like Felicia Hemans; Catherine Gore; Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington; and Letitia Elizabeth Landon seemed to find the success that eluded many middle-class male peers. Other female writers found audiences in quite consciously different ways, such as Harriet Martineau's remarkable success as an essayist and short story writer for working- and middle-class readers. The literary annuals built on the extraordinary appeal they had for readers, with new types of annuals appearing that made even more prominent the beauty and the technological prowess of their engraved plates and elegantly adorned bindings. In Britain, the press not only described wars but experienced one, the 'War of the Unstamped' (1831–6) that sought to undermine the 1819 'Taxes on Knowledge', leading to an exponential increase in the size and reach of the cheap press, and influencing significantly the political radicalism of the decade associated most prominently with Chartism. Edward Lloyd was one of many publishers who burst into life in the decade, producing cheap 'plagiarisms' of Dickens such as *Oliver Twiss*, radical journalism, and 'penny bloods' that exploited a fascination with violent crime. He attempted to set up a factory system of authorship, with writers producing identikit Lloyd publications and being paid with a token stamped with the publisher's name.[23] The passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 felt epochal to many, most particularly in Ireland, but it did not mean, of course, that either the place of religion or the position of Ireland in the United Kingdom was settled. The founding of the *Dublin University Magazine* and the increased interest in the Irish language are two features of the 1830s that merit further research and that we would have liked to have included in this book. The Oxford Movement had an extraordinary impact on Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and that impact was frequently worked out in poetry and popularised in cheap print in *Tracts for the Times* (1833–41). Visual culture seemed increasingly inextricable from literary culture, a fact that energised