




19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century, No 7 (2008)

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Introduction: Minds, Bodies, Machines

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Abstract

This issue of 19 brings together a selection of essays from an interdisciplinary conference on 'Minds, Bodies, Machines' convened last year by Birkbeck's Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, University of London, in partnership with the English programme, University of Melbourne and software developers Constraint Technologies International (CTI). The conference explored the relationship between minds, bodies and machines in the long nineteenth century, with a view to understanding the history of our technology-driven, post-human visions. It is in the nineteenth century that the relationship between the human and the machine under post-industrial capitalism becomes a pervasive theme. From Blake on the mills of the mind by which we are enslaved, to Carlyle's and Arnold's denunciation of the machinery of modern life, from Dickens's sooty fictional locomotive Mr Pancks, who 'snorted and sniffed and puffed and blew, like a little labouring steam-engine', and 'shot out [...]cinders of principles, as if it were done by mechanical revolvency', to the alienated historical body of the late-nineteenth-century factory worker under Taylorization, whose movements and gestures were timed, regulated and rationalised to maximize efficiency; we find a cultural preoccupation with the mechanisation of the nineteenth-century human body that uncannily resonates with modern dreams and anxieties around technologies of the human.

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