of Erasmus’s *Lucubrationes*, telling us the “story” of “the book itself” as he takes us through lexicography, bibliography (with reference to the book’s “ancestor,” the *Lucubratiunculae*), and the biography of the man who wrote it (233).

Nearly all of the essays explore in some way the use of codicology to create in the reader an experience of the author’s presence in the text and the delicate play between that presence and the absence that makes reading possible. Minnis’s opening survey of medieval theology considers the interrelation of theological and secular modes of authorship and authority operating “outside the book,” but the fruitful connections between his piece and those that aim their focus “inside the book,” to borrow Vessey’s phrasing, are left largely for the reader to trace for herself (233). Because the dialogical aspect of *Author, Reader, Book* is one of its greatest virtues, the editors could have condensed the detailed summaries of the essays in the introduction to make room for theoretical reflection on these themes that tie the pieces together in fascinating and sometimes surprising ways. On the other hand, we might say that the omission of such unifying, theorizing commentary makes this a book that demands to be read slowly and imaginatively in the way of Christine’s *Epistre Othea* – a book that demonstrates the reading skills of its multiple authors while it respects those of its audience.

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Featuring a unique collection of rare printed material and ephemera, Victorian Popular Culture offers a glimpse into the exciting and intriguing world of Victorian-era popular entertainment. Opening with a promotional theatre poster featuring a magician and devilish character, the database produced by Adam Matthew Digital invites “readers into the darkened halls, small backrooms and travelling venues that hosted everything from spectacular shows and bawdy burlesque, to magic and spiritualist séances.” Capped by plush red curtains, accentuated by the circus-themed font, the interface uses
rich tones and faded images evoking a sense of antiquated theatrical delights.

An impressive number of libraries and archives provided access to a wide range of materials, with an emphasis on visual and rare printed texts, for this comprehensive Victorian-era popular entertainment resource. Collections were contributed by, among others, Senate House’s Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center’s Harry Houdini Collection, the Joe E. Ward Collection, the Circus Collection, the Barnum and Bailey Collection, and the National Fairground Archives. Offering a wide range of materials, this database includes rare books, playbills, posters, photographs, moving images, pamphlets, and ephemera. Ephemeral holdings include tickets, postcards, and newspaper cuttings. The collection spans 1779 to 1930, with a few notable exceptions. There are several printed books, pamphlets, illustrations, and handbills predating 1779, including a 1584 copy of Reginald Scot’s *The Discoverie of Witches*, wherein the Lewde Dealing of Witches and Witchmongers is Notablie Detected.

The collection is segmented into four thematic collections. While libraries can purchase a licence for individual collections, *Victorian Popular Culture* is perhaps most useful as a whole set as the default search aggregates all licensed content. The first thematic collection, *Spiritualism, Sensation, and Magic* (2008), features texts from the Harry Price Library of Magical Literature and includes rare journals such as *The Sphinx*, *Borderland*, and *The Zoist*. Documenting travelling entertainment in America, Britain, and Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Circuses, Sideshows, and Freaks* (2009) includes rare books, children’s literature, and celebrity memoirs. For example, the memoir of celebrated dwarf, Joseph Boruwlaski – printed in 1792 by J. Thompson in Birmingham – is a beautifully digitized printed book complete with marginalia.

The majority of this collection is visual, featuring postcards, posters, photographs, and illustrations. *Music Hall, Theatre, and Popular Entertainment* (2010) covers pantomime, exhibitions, and pleasure gardens, as well as magic lantern and diorama shows. The material, selected for its uniqueness and limited availability, includes rare books, titles from the “Dicks’ Standard Plays” series, posters, playbills, and ephemera. From the collections of the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture at the University of Exeter and the BFI National Archive, the *Moving Pictures, Optical Entertainments, and the Advent of Cinema* (2012) collection
covers the optical entertainments from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Using advanced digital technologies, the collection includes digitized clips of original archival footage dating back to 1894. In addition to the thematic collections, the database offers an interactive chronology, a series of biographies, a list of venues such as theatres, halls, and academies, and a detailed bibliography, as well as video and audio collections and online exhibitions.

The Victorian Popular Culture landing page displays the available collections and allows the user either to identify a thematic focus by selecting the desired collection from the centre of the page or to proceed to search the entire database. Selecting a specific collection retrieves the content list that can be sorted by catalogued fields. However, the basic, advanced, and popular search options are tucked away in the upper right-hand corner detracting from the overall usability of the database. It is important to note that documents are categorized as two main types: printed material and visual material. All print materials are full-text searchable, but visual material and manuscripts are keyword indexed. Results are sorted by relevance, determined by the frequency of the keyword appearing in the full-text or the record. They can be sorted by author, date, or document subtype, and may be filtered by visual or printed material. Proximity searching and stemming, or truncation, are featured as advanced search options. Given the potential terminology and spelling derivations possible, especially in a collection of ephemera that spans this length of time, stemming or truncation are essential for a comprehensive search.

Two of the best features of this database are the transcriptions and the download options. Transcriptions of printed material and the digitized originals are displayed alongside each other. The transcription allows full-text searching and highlighting of searched terms so that specific keywords are easy to locate and correlate with the associated original digitized copy. Victorian Popular Culture has a very generous download option with clearly stated terms of use and copyright restrictions. Page, image, chapter, or issue – entire documents or sections – can be downloaded or emailed as PDFs, which adds to the value of this rich database for researchers, faculty, students, and individuals with a keen interest in Victorian popular culture. Adam Matthew Digital permits unrestricted simultaneous access for users to licensed content, and high-quality digital reproductions and transcriptions further enhance the accessibility
of the content. Unique and rare holdings make Victorian Popular Culture a truly delightful resource.

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When it was first started at Indiana University in 1995, the Victorian Women Writers Project (VWWP) was intended as an expansion of the English Poetry Full-Text Database. In response to a gap scholars identified in this database, the project focused mainly on poetry written by lesser-known British women writers who were not part of the canon. The project was expanded in later years to include other genres – novels, children’s literature, pamphlets, and religious tracts – as well as women writers outside of Britain. Although work on the database stopped in 2003, it has been reinvigorated in recent years through the enthusiasm of faculty and students in the English department at Indiana University. On the updated and newly designed website, the project’s managers explain, “the VWWP is pleased to be back with an expanded purview that includes women writing in the nineteenth century in English. As before, the project will devote time and attention to the accuracy and completeness of the texts, as well as to their bibliographical descriptions. New texts, encoded according to the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Guidelines, will adopt principles of scholarly encoding, facilitating more sophisticated retrieval and analysis.” The database now includes full texts of the work of about fifty authors and new features including genre browsing based on the MLA Thesaurus; an interactive timeline situating authors, publishers, and major events in historical context; and contextual materials authored by students.

It is difficult not to compare the VWWP with the far more ambitious Orlando project, which currently has almost two thousand authors listed in its database. Where the Indiana site differs – and this is its chief value to students and researchers in Victorian literature – is in making accessible often out-of-print Victorian texts. While Orlando offers comprehensive biographical and contextual material,