



Imperial Media: Colonial Networks and Information Technologies in the British Literary Imagination, 1857–1918

Aaron Worth

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Imperial Media: Colonial Networks and Information Technologies in the British Literary Imagination, 1857–1918 brings together two of the most dynamic and productive approaches to the study of nineteenth-century literature in recent years—media studies and colonial studies—to illuminate the rich and enduring symbiosis that developed between information technologies and Empire. Over a century before Facebook and the iPhone, Britons relied on the electric media of their day for information about their global empire—but those media, which during Victoria’s reign stretched out its tentacles to form a true “world wide web,” not only delivered information but provided conceptual frames as well, helping to shape the way their users thought.

Ranging in space from the telegraph offices of Kipling’s India to the wireless transmitter on H.G. Wells’s Africanized moon, and in time from the Sepoy Rebellion to the Great War, *Imperial Media* reveals the extent to which British conceptions of imperial power were inflected by the new media of the nineteenth century: the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, radio, and cinema.

While focusing on the fiction of Kipling, Wells, Marie Corelli, H. Rider Haggard, and John Buchan (“the last Victorian,” in Gertrude Himmelfarb’s phrase), Aaron Worth also argues that the “imperial media” of the Victorians retain much of their imaginative life and power today, informing such popular entertainments of the twenty-first century as Bollywood cinema and the BBC’s science-fiction franchise *Torchwood*. This is a vital, engaging study that will shape future discussions of both colonial and information systems, as well as the relationship between the two, in Victorian studies and elsewhere.



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