In 1947, Anderson joined the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies, where he remained until retirement in 1975 (he was, concurrently, director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, 1959–1976). Thompson describes how, as decolonization accelerated, Anderson studied and shaped the legal codes of the new states that emerged from the British Empire, assuming that the West would serve as the model of development and progress for other societies. Between the late 1940s and mid-1970s, Anderson attempted, with varying degrees of success, to build a “transnational coalition of Muslim legal reformers committed to ‘liberalising,’ ‘modernising’ and codifying Islamic law” (7) in, primarily, North Africa (Libya, Tunisia), West Africa (Nigeria), and South Asia (India, Pakistan).

Thompson’s fascinating final chapter considers critical responses to Anderson’s approach to Islamic reform. In the 1960s and 1970s, some of Anderson’s research students took issue with his approach, as did prominent critics of Orientalism such as the Pakistan-based American convert to Islam, Maryam Jameelah (1934–2012) and, in Britain, the historian A. L. Tibawi (1910–1981), who attacked Anderson’s meddling in Muslim affairs and argued that attempts to transform Islam through “Westernization” or “modernization” were simply to render it as close as possible to Protestant Christianity.

Tibawi is one of the few British-based Muslims cited in the book, and it is unclear how much contact and discussion Anderson had with Muslim intellectuals or the growing Muslim communities in postwar Britain. Thompson does mention Anderson’s response to calls from British Muslim leaders in the 1970s for the formal recognition of Islamic law in Britain, which Anderson rigorously opposed. He argued that Britain had accommodated other minorities such as Jews without officially recognizing their religious laws and questioned why it should risk creating a “community within a community” at a time when Muslim-majority countries and those with significant Muslim minorities such as India were edging toward “the establishment of one secular law applicable to all citizens” (243–44).

Thompson did not set out to write Anderson’s life story, but the omission of biographical detail makes it difficult to get a feel for the man or a sense of his world outside of the church and academia and, consequently, to understand how those experiences might have influenced him. Thompson notes toward the end of the book that Anderson’s understanding about social justice was raised by his socialist son, Hugh, but does not consider, for example, the influence of Anderson’s wife of sixty years, Patricia, or the impact of the tragic and premature deaths of their three children in the 1970s. That said, this book succeeds in its aim of showing how Anderson helped to reconfigure theological responses to Islam in the twentieth century. It is meticulously researched (more than a third is taken up with endnotes and an extensive bibliography) and will especially appeal to those interested in Christian-Muslim relations, Islam, Islamic law, Orientalism, and missiology in the twentieth century, as well as in modern British intellectual and religious history more broadly.

Jamie Gilham
Independent scholar
jamiegilham1@gmail.com

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Megan Ward’s Seeming Human offers the reader a new approach to Victorian realist character that establishes a clear counterpoint to decades of scholarship on fictional individuality. Ward
proposes that instead of a character’s depth being determined by stylistic interiority, characters are only ever emergent from complex mimetic systems. These systems are actually identifiable in our own information age as early forms of artificial intelligence. Ward proposes a technological formalist method that repurposes a moment at the theoretical dawn of modern computing to fashion a close reading practice.

Ward coordinates her approach and subject around two periods of rapid technological transition, arguing that Victorian fiction was both a medium and an information system in an age of new media. In chapter 1, she explores pastoral romantic triangles such as those at the center of Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Wives and Daughters* (1866). While such plots may appear as a series of charming character vignettes, they also contain forms of realist representation complex enough to require advanced systemic models of interior and exterior reality. In the case of Gaskell and Dinah Mulock Craik’s *Olive* (1850), for example, Ward draws upon cybernetic feedback loops to explain the fundamental rhythm of domestic realism. The rhythm is likened to cyberneticist Norbert Wiener’s theory of learning in its tendency to develop both recursively and progressively. Wiener, Alan Turing, and Marvin Minsky, among others, constitute the thinkers of Ward’s second transitional period. In the mid-twentieth century, scientists and mathematicians wrestled with the task of reproducing human intelligence in a machine, what has come to be called the field of artificial intelligence. Ward considers Victorian fiction and the origin of artificial intelligence as parallel, transhistorical experiments in representing human subjectivity. Can the experience of being human seem to be fully represented on a surface like a page or an algorithm?

In using feedback loops, stochastic systems, perceptrons, and physical symbol systems to close-read Victorian novels, Ward sets herself the difficult task of introducing and explaining complicated models of simulated intelligence with brevity and clarity while simultaneously summarizing fictional techniques such as Henry James’ narrative blankness. She is largely successful, perhaps most so in her second chapter on predictability and the informatics of character. Taking *Bleak House* (1853) as her central object of study; Ward persuasively reads Dickens’s novel as orchestrating predictability via a series of relations rather than through individuation. The argument stands as a rejoinder to E. M. Forster’s edict that predictability distinguishes flat characters from round ones.

Throughout *Seeming Human*, Ward seeks to rebut the critical fixation on interiority, roundness, and depth that has been largely accepted since the Victorian period itself. These psychological models, Ward posits, confuse the artificiality of constructing character with the psychology of individuals outside of textual worlds. Likewise, Ward eschews historical readings as reifying a narrative practice of individualism. Instead, she attempts to activate twentieth-century technological theories as parallel forms of human mimesis. At times, these competing impulses obscure her arguments. For instance, in chapter 3, Ward introduces Alan Turing’s famous imitation game to read Anthony Trollope’s *Eustace Diamonds* (1871) and *The Prime Minister* (1876). While imitation and simulation are deeply interwoven into almost every one of Trollope’s stories, at times it is unclear why Turing’s mechanistic speculations serve an especial purpose in deciphering each novel’s characters. Unlike her other narrative experiments, chapter 3 does not explore a formalist structure, but instead wrestles with the ontological dilemma of seeming as opposed to being, a proposition that Turing dismissed as absurd within the first few sentences of his paper on the subject. Due to her approach, Ward is forced to align author intention, reader interpretation, character interiority (or lack thereof), narrative voice, and diegetic social reality into a complex nested version of the imitation game. The resulting reading reveals Ward’s minute attention to detail as a scholar and opens up Trollope’s novels in new ways, but can feel like a somewhat arbitrary thought experiment. While this chapter does not further contextualize Turing and Trollope’s respective historical periods, it does seem to invite further study into how social simulation is predicated upon nearly constant imitation games for both figures.
As a novel approach, *Seeming Human* relishes its departure from traditional modes of literary criticism. In its best moments, the study is a worthy evolution on Franco Morretti’s and Alex Woloch’s systemic theories of character and form. Perhaps most refreshingly, Ward offers a striking alternative to close reading practices that emphasize epiphanic moments in text, while leaving broader novelistic patterns and systems unexplored. Her work, we might say idiomatically, allows us to look past the trees and see the forest again. In doing so, Ward offers the reader the perspective of these novels as complex working machines that act as repositories for social values and hermeneutics for defining the human. “To be like a human,” she writes, “is not the antithesis of the machine but one form of its embodiment” (6). In a brief epilogue, Ward motions toward the way novelists, cognitive scientists, and technologists continue the urgent discourse on the mystery of human interiority in terms remarkably similar to the literary critical tradition on character.

*Seeming Human* ultimately reminds one of exciting interdisciplinarily inspired work like Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel” (1937), which offered an Einsteinian exploration of space-time via fictional histories and landscapes in novels. Her proposed reimagining of realism rehaibilates “flat” characters as an integral component in systemic approaches to the representational real. Every light must cast a shadow, and every form of interiority exists only as set off against exterior surfaces. But surfaces do not just offset interiority for Ward, they are central to its conceptual integrity, an entwined genetic double helix. For scholars interested in incorporating mathematical concepts like stochasticity and feedback loops into their critique, Ward offers a convincing argument for the necessity of these tools as both capable of mapping fictional realities and also revealing that novels themselves are essentially algorithmic structures.

Tobias Wilson-Bates
Georgia Gwinnett College
twilsonbates@ggc.edu

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Are dogs natural or man-made? *The Invention of the Modern Dog* suggests that the answer is less obvious than it might at first appear. Through their meticulous history of dog breeding and dog fancying in Victorian Britain, Michael Worboys, Julie-Marie Strange, and Neil Pemberton demonstrate that the dog as understood through the framework of breed was primarily a nineteenth-century construction or “invention”: “Victorian dog shows and the culture they promoted fundamentally changed the dog, leading to what we have termed the invention of the modern dog as one whose form and identity are defined by its breed or lack thereof” (221).

In a stylish flourish, Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton even point to one particular day on which they suggest that the first “modern dog” was defined, drawing on the first of a series of articles by doctor and journalist John Henry Walsh defining the conformation standards—that is, the communally agreed-upon (but there is the catch) qualities defining a particular breed—for the pointer:

Walsh put forward his proposal for agreed conformation standards and numerical points in a series of articles in the *Field*. The first was on 9 September 1865 and featured “the