

QUEER NETWORKS:
THE PAGEANT, YELLOW NINETIES 2.0, AND AESTHETICISM

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In their discussion of a move towards a queer digital humanities, Bonnie Rubert, Jason Boyd, and James Howe argue that queer theory “directs DH researchers more generally to understand computing not as outside of social issues but rather as shaping and indeed being shaped by cultural determinants” (para. 14). Following the work of Johanna Drucker on “speculative computing,” they argue for the digital humanities to place attention and pressure on “the destabilisation of categories, including taxonomies of entity, identity, object, subject, interactivity, process and instrument” (para. 20). Like the little magazine movement of the 1890s it presents, the *Yellow Nineties 2.0*, a digital humanities project from the Centre for Digital Humanities at Toronto Metropolitan University under the leadership of the project’s General Editor Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, is not outside of culture, but a product of today’s cultural landscape. It does not produce an unbiased or pure version of the late-Victorian periodicals it houses. Instead, it reflects our current moment in literary scholarship and how that moment reads literary history and the late nineteenth century.

Co-editing and preparing *The Pageant: A Digital Edition* for the *Yellow Nineties 2.0* provided me with an opportunity to engage queer discourses of aestheticism with contemporary queer theory and 2SLGBTQIA+ cultures. Mikhel Proulx, however, warns against the myth of the “Internet as liberatory,” calling such perceptions “ideological” (114). “Being linked into social media,” Proulx argues, “means being always connected, always participating in the unceasing assembly of digital information for which we are constantly performing. Performing in social media means subjecting oneself to self-regulation and data management” (115). That means that our engagement online is tracked, monitored, and imposes presumptions and expectations on the user making queer encounters online a public performance with multiple audiences, not all welcoming of queer or dissident cultural content. It also means