

Welcome to the latest issue of the *BAVS Newsletter*, which is packed with news, book reviews, recent publications, reports, and CFPs.

In 2024, BAVS will not hold its usual annual conference. Instead, we're collaborating on **EVENT** (<https://www.event2024.org/>), an international conference with online sessions held during 2024 and seventeen in-person hubs spread across four continents in September. See overleaf for further information and the UK hub CFPs – please note that **the deadline for EVENT 2024 proposals has been extended to Thursday 1 February**.

This issue of the *BAVS Newsletter* includes Sarah Parker's wonderful review of the exhibition 'Reimag(in)ing the Victorians' at the University of Nottingham's Djanogly Gallery (p. 19). We are open to pitches for reviews of all sorts of things that might be of interest to members of BAVS – from digital collections to theatre productions, as well as books – so if you've got an idea, please do get in touch with us at [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com).

We have seven reports about research and events that BAVS have funded over the past year. We're delighted that we've been able to support so much exciting Victorianist work, and BAVS has recently increased the funds available for all our schemes: <https://bavs.ac.uk/funding/> (biannual deadlines: 30 November and 31 May).

BAVS is also looking for two people to join the Executive Committee as postgraduate and post-doctoral representatives – see p. 3 for details.

Clare Stainthorp & Sarah Wride  
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### **Committee Members**

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Carolyn Burdett

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## EVENT 2024

In 2024, BAVS will not hold its normal annual conference. Instead, BAVS, NAVSA, AVSA, VI and DACH-V are collaborating on EVENT (<https://www.event2024.org/>), an international 'flightless' conference, with seventeen hubs across four continents. As a result, in place of a large-scale annual conference, delegates will instead attend the hub that is geographically closest to their home and work. This structure will contribute to sustainability by reducing air travel and the running costs of larger centralised conferences. With less packed schedules, and more intimate settings, the smaller-scale hubs will also support networking, collaboration and scholarly dialogue.

The conference will also include monthly zoom events throughout the 2024 calendar year open to all delegates. The first of these will be free to attend: 'Vcologies: an Event 2024 Virtual Panel', Friday 26 January 2024 (16:00 EST, 9:00 GMT) – save the date, registration open in January! For further details of this and other digital EVENT 2024 sessions, see <https://www.event2024.org/digital-events/>

The UK will have five hubs: 1) Belfast, 2) Cardiff, 3) Hawarden, 4) Lancaster and 5) Stirling. Each hub will host independent face-to-face events in September 2024. Papers can be shared through COVE Conferences (coming soon), a password-protected annotation platform that allows delegates from across the world to read and comment on papers delivered at other hubs.

### Extended Hub CFP Submission Deadline: 1 February 2024

Proposals for papers at any hub can be submitted via the Event website: <https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>

#### 1) Stirling (University of Stirling) – 4-5 September 2024

The Stirling hub, titled 'Victorian Events', will take place over 4th-5th September 2024. We welcome 20-minute paper and panel proposals that speak to any aspect of the general CFP on the Event 2024 website and we would also encourage proposals focused on: exhibits, exhibitions and openings; lectures and public performances; imperial events; local/national events or incidents; literary events – scandals, sensations and bestsellers; occult meetings and séances; celebrity and press events; protests and gatherings; tourism; anniversaries, centenaries and jubilees; legal trials; and Victorian events in contemporary culture/Neo-Victorian events. Given the international form of the conference, we also welcome proposals that focus on global Scotland in the 1830-1910 period. 20-minute paper and panel proposals can be submitted via the Event website (<https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>).

#### 2) Cardiff (Cardiff University) – 10-11 September 2024

The Cardiff hub, held at Cardiff University on 10-11 September 2024, is interested in explorations of all the 'Events' topics, including proposals that investigate the Victorian in relation to the contemporary. This could involve crises in the representation of gender, sexuality, diversity and difference; environmental concerns, now and then; social and political movements, upheavals, war and peace time; narrativity, historicity and temporality; 'events' in the broadest sense that shaped aspects of art, culture, music, book history; material, visual, and reading cultures; print and other media; leisure and consumption. We welcome submissions on these and other inflections of the Flightless Conference theme in the form of 20 minute papers, two paper panels (1 hour), three paper panels (1 hour 30), creative projects (as individual contributions or for a paired panel session). Visit the Event website (<https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>) for our CFP and to submit a proposal.

#### 3) Hawarden (Gladstone's Library) – 11-12 September 2024

At the Gladstone's Library hub in Hawarden, surround yourself with the books, journals, and papers of one of the most prominent Victorians, William Gladstone, in our beautiful Reading Rooms, and have the chance to sleep at a library. In addition to talks, The Gladstone hub will be hosting a Heritage Afternoon with workshops on finding and using Victorian collections and opportunities for public engagement and research connections with libraries, archives, and museums in the North West. Visit the Event website (<https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>) for our CFP and to submit a proposal.

#### **4) Belfast (Queen's University Belfast) – 12-13 September 2024**

The flightless conference invites papers on all aspects of Victorian culture, but encourages proposals that reflect on the theme of 'event' interpreted broadly. The Belfast hub, held at Queen's University on 12-13 September 2024, invites papers on any 'event' – at any scale – in the period spanning 1789-1914. Acknowledging the porous boundaries between the Romantic, Victorian and Modern, our call is open to researchers working in and across these fields. We aim for geographical as well as temporal breadth, inviting scholars with interests in nineteenth-century Ireland, Britain or any other (inter)national context. Submissions on any aspect of the literary, artistic, political, and scientific culture of the long nineteenth century – read as 'events' – are welcome. We invite proposals for individual 20 minute papers, panels of 3x20 minute papers, or roundtables of up to 6x10 minute position papers. Visit the Event website (<https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>) for our CFP and to submit a proposal.

#### **5) Lancaster (University of Lancaster) – 19-21 September 2024**

Nestled between the Lake District and Manchester, the Lancaster hub will be held 19th–21st September at the Victorian Storey Institute, next to the city's medieval castle. Lancaster seeks proposals for individual 20-minute papers or pre-formed panels (3 x 20-min or 5 x 10-min papers). The Lancaster hub is interested in work that relates to any of the conference 'Event' topics. We also encourage proposals that investigate the Victorian period in relation to: the working classes; religion; the environment; and adaptation. We look forward to welcoming Victorian scholars of all career levels and to hearing from our two keynote speakers, Professor Ruth Livesey (Royal Holloway) and Professor John Bowen (York). Alongside the programme of talks there will be spaces and events to enable connection and collaboration among attendees. Visit the Event website (<https://www.event2024.org/call-for-papers/>) for our CFP and to submit a proposal.

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### **2023 BAVS Executive Committee Vacancies**

The BAVS Executive Committee currently has two positions open: one for a postgraduate representative and another for a postdoctoral representative. If you would like to be considered for one of the roles below, please send the Secretary, Dr Claire Wood, an email with a Statement of Interest (indicating your suitability for and interest in the position and how you propose to contribute) of 300 words maximum by **5 January 2024**. (Contact: [claire.wood@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:claire.wood@leicester.ac.uk)). Members will be able to vote (online) once all Statements of Interest have been published, after the deadline. It is anticipated that those in new roles will be appointed in time for the Spring Committee Meeting.

#### **Information for applicants**

BAVS Executive positions are usually held for a 3-year term (except the Postgraduate Rep roles which are a 2-year term).

The BAVS Executive Committee usually meets for c. 3 hours, 3-4 times per year (one meeting usually takes place in conjunction with the annual Conference), and an AGM (also usually in conjunction with the Conference). The majority of meetings take place online, apart from those held in conjunction with the Conference.

#### **Responsibilities**

- All members of the BAVS Executive Committee (with the exception of the President, Treasurer and Secretary) will review funding applications (usually 1 x round per year) as part of their responsibilities, and participate in other ways in the standard business of the organisation. This might include the review of applications beyond the typical Funding streams, participation in mentoring events, involvement in the annual Conference organisation, participation in a sub-committee (e.g. the Rosemary Mitchell BAVS Book Prize panel), and other types of support.
- All named officers should submit a report to the Secretary at least one week before each Executive Committee meeting for pre-circulation (reports can be shared when there is more than one person active in a role, e.g. PG - Reps submit a single report, as do ECR reps), and reports will also be due for circulation to members prior to the AGM.
- BAVS is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- All members of the Executive Committee must be members of BAVS.

## Specific responsibilities related to vacant roles:

### 1 x Postgraduate Rep (2-year term)

BAVS Postgraduate Reps are responsible for: running 'The Victorianist' WordPress site, which includes promoting and editing posts for the PGR blog and posting CFPs and other notices; running the @BAVS\_PGs X/Twitter and @bavictorianstudies Instagram account; organising annual BAVS conference workshops aimed at postgraduates and/or early career researchers (usually 2-3 workshops); and attending and contributing to committee meetings. The PG reps may share some of these duties with the ECR reps (e.g. the PG/ECR workshops). Those standing for the role of PG Rep are encouraged to discuss the demands of the role with their supervisor before applying.

### 1 x Early Career Researcher (ECR) Rep

Develop ECR initiatives and find ways to provide support for the ECR community with both an academic and alt-ac focus, working with the PG Reps, the Careers Officer and the Digital/Social Media Officers on BAVS social media presence and various initiatives relevant to ECR Members.

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## BAVS Funding

The deadline to apply for BAVS funding to support events, research, and public engagement activities is 17:00 GMT on **30 November 2023** (the following round's deadline is 31 May 2024). Full details and application forms can be found on the BAVS website at <http://bavs.ac.uk/funding>

### Events Funding (up to £1000)

This scheme is intended to support BAVS members in arranging events (e.g. conferences, workshops, etc.) relating to projects of relevance to Victorian Studies. The Association and its Executive remain committed to the development of postgraduate students, and it is anticipated that two postgraduate-organised/led events will be funded each academic year.

### Research Funding (up to £625)

This scheme is intended to support BAVS members in undertaking research of relevance to Victorian Studies.

### Public Engagement and Outreach Funding (up to £300)

This scheme is intended to support BAVS members in arranging public engagement activities relating to projects of relevance to Victorian Studies. These might include an exhibition or display, a public lecture or a community project.

Please direct all enquiries and application forms to the Funding Officer, Dr Amelia Yeates, [yeatesa@hope.ac.uk](mailto:yeatesa@hope.ac.uk).

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## Free COVE Access for BAVS Members

BAVS members are reminded that access to **COVE** is included as part of your membership. COVE is Collaborative Organization for Virtual Education, a scholar-driven open-access platform that publishes both peer-reviewed material and "flipped classroom" student projects built with our online tools, including timelines, maps, galleries, and annotated editions.

Access usually costs \$10 per person, but BAVS membership provides access for you and your students.

Login with your BAVS credentials here: <https://bavs.covecollective.org/>



## Reviews

*The BAVS Newsletter is always looking for writers, particularly among postgraduate, early-career, and independent researchers, to review recent works on any aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture. To express an interest in reviewing, please email your name, affiliation (if applicable), five research keywords, and any titles or digital resources that you are interested in reviewing to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com). You will also find a list of books currently available to be sent out to reviewers on the [Newsletter webpage](#). Reviewers must join BAVS if they have not done so already. We also encourage authors, editors, and publishers of recent works to suggest titles or digital resources for review by emailing the same address.*

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***The Happiness of the British Working Class*, by Jamie L. Bronstein (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2023), 288pp., £25.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781503633841**

Building upon her previous historical research on nineteenth-century industrialisation and workplace experiences, Jamie L. Bronstein's *The Happiness of the British Working Class* offers detailed, qualitative insights into working-class experiences of feeling happy, reflecting on happy memories, and working for, longing for and chasing happiness between 1750 and the start of the First World War. Throughout the book, *The Happiness of the British Working Class* refuses to predicate its findings on absolute economic, social, or cultural markers of historical happiness, nor on just one of the myriad of definitions which the term *happiness* yields. At the same time, Bronstein precisely and emphatically acknowledges the difficulties of attaining various states of happiness for those experiencing material and economic destitution in recent British history.

Bronstein begins by reframing a question asked by working-class autobiographer William Hutton in 1817: 'What is a happy life?' (p. 1). While Hutton describes himself as being content with success, independence, and a choice of leisurely reading material, Bronstein's response is more expansive and reflective. She asks: how do we define happiness? who measures it? is it a feeling or an emotion (or both)? to what extent is it contingent on the happiness of others? and does writing about happiness alter our perception of happiness itself? Bronstein investigates such questions via an in-depth thematic analysis of at least 363 autobiographies or autobiographical materials, and in conjunction with twenty-first-century critical theories on happiness (including 'emotions history' by Peter and Carol Stearns (p. 3), and the 'world of familiar things' by Sarah Ahmed (p. 6)).

While the first and final chapters of the book see Bronstein meticulously outlining her methodologies and justifying her overall approach, the more compelling material is situated in the middle of the volume. In Chapters Two through

Seven, she adroitly considers ideas and conceptions of working-class happiness in relation to childhood, work, community, the natural world, self-cultivation, and social, domestic, and religious duty, while Chapters Eight and Nine are set aside to contemplate the absence of happiness for others, and the feelings of sadness, anger, and fear that might be experienced in happiness' stead.

Throughout the work, the consistent and frequent use of working-class autobiographers' forenames helps to foster an intimacy between subject and reader, gently bringing evocative memories to life, while Bronstein's penchant for providing multiple yet distinct perspectives builds a rich and illuminating tapestry of experiences. If many of the autobiographers' tales have a Dickensian lightness of touch about them (particularly in the discussions of childhood adventures and workhouses in Chapter Two), this by no means detracts from Bronstein's argument that understandings and accounts of happiness varied considerably across the working-classes into and beyond the end of the nineteenth century.

The chapters on happiness in relation to the natural world and aspects of self-cultivation are perhaps the most enlightening. Despite Bronstein acknowledging that there were 'few untouched landscapes in Britain' by the early 1800s (p. 92), she emphasises working-class walks in the countryside (as experienced by the shoemaker and poet John Askham), the gathering of wildflowers, and wild fishing as vital sources of working-class happiness. An additional section on the poetry produced by the working-classes (including by footman John Jones, educator Mary Smith, and milkmaid Ann Yearsley) proves both instructive and moving in equal measure. Famous working-class names such as John Clare and Robert Blatchford (future editor of the *Clarion*) also crop up with assiduous regularity, integrating the volume within the existing canon of scholarship which addresses working-class writing.

Bronstein explicitly credits John Burnett's *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (1974) and Carolyn Steedman's more recent *An Everyday Life of the*

*English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (2013) as inspirations – and invaluable resources – for her research into working-class happiness and how it connects to questions of social mobility, family estrangement, *eudaimonia* (internal well-being), and Victorian notions of consumption, theology, and community. Emma Griffin's research on the British Industrial Revolution is also regularly cited to support claims about gender imbalances in working-class autobiographical writing, and, while the volume might have occasionally benefitted from a less heteronormative approach (as in the reading of teacher Fred H. Spencer's 'closest friendship' with an unnamed male colleague (p. 79)), Bronstein generally provides a balanced and considered assessment of working-class happiness over the course of the nineteenth century. Most importantly, she carefully and repeatedly articulates the differences between the poor locating happiness in their lives, and happiness being robbed from others altogether – never failing to acknowledge that 'without a certain economic minimum, human dignity was impossible' (p. 198).

The book closes with the recognition that personal ruminations on working-class happiness say something about the human need to reflect upon what constitutes a life worth living. If, as Bronstein earlier suggests, 'the nostalgia for the freedom of childhood points back at the difficulty of being impulsive [...] as a Victorian working-class adult' (p. 36), then working-class autobiographers' inscriptions about their (happy or unhappy) lives are symptomatic of an urgent need to make sense of their preceding years, or of a desire to leave a lasting legacy. In this final respect, Bronstein's analysis more than justifies her qualitative approach. *The Happiness of the British Working Class* is an accessible, informative, and affecting account of multiple lives worth living.

John D. Attridge (University of Surrey)

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**Joseph Bristow, *Oscar Wilde on Trial: The Criminal Proceedings from Arrest to Imprisonment* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2023), 568pp., £65.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780300222722**

Drawing on recently digitized newspapers and previously unpublished archival material, Joseph Bristow's *Oscar Wilde on Trial* is a comprehensive reconstruction of the events which led to Oscar Wilde's incarceration in May 1895. Across six chapters, Bristow re-examines the contexts of Wilde's arraignment, pretrial hearing, and gruelling criminal proceedings. He pieces together key events from a huge archive of primary material and demonstrates in impressive detail that Wilde was 'by no means tried

fairly' (p. xxiv). Indeed, *Oscar Wilde on Trial* is perhaps best described as a timely and passionate defence of a wronged queer man. In our present moment of deepening anti-queer prejudice and anti-queer violence, it has never been more important to tell a story like this. Thoroughly researched and engagingly written, *Oscar Wilde on Trial* is an invaluable resource for Wilde scholars, undergraduate students, and all those committed to building a kinder, queerer world.

Both the Introduction and Part I outline the social, legal, and cultural contexts which informed Wilde's 1895 trial. Bristow begins by tracing the history of British anti-sodomy legislation, before giving a detailed, and highly accessible, introduction to both the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1885) and the Cleveland Street Scandal (1889). He then situates Wilde within a broader network of male sex workers, pimps, telegraph boys, and homosexual blackmailers, making these initial chapters an excellent resource for students of nineteenth-century London and its queer subcultures. After discussing Wilde's marriage and developing homosexual interests in Chapter One, Bristow offers an important reassessment of Wilde's relationship with Lord Alfred 'Bosie' Douglas in Chapter Two. He suggests that Wilde and Bosie's relationship was 'more intricate and textured than it might first appear' (p. 87). Wilde admired both Bosie's physicality and his literary talent. Through a close reading of *De Profundis* (1905), the long letter Wilde wrote while incarcerated at H.M. Reading, Bristow also highlights how Wilde himself contributed to Bosie's negative reception in the twentieth century. *Oscar Wilde on Trial* then turns to the ongoing tensions between Wilde and Bosie's father, John Sholto Douglas, the ninth Marquess of Queensberry, which resulted in Wilde suing the Marquess for libel. By comparing various press reports, Bristow is able to reconstruct the daily sessions of this first trial in extraordinary detail. This chapter, and the three that follow, give a sense of what it must have been like to watch these events unfold in real time. *Oscar Wilde on Trial* is both a rigorous academic monograph and a compelling work of narrative non-fiction.

Part II focuses on the criminal proceedings against Wilde and Alfred Taylor. In Chapter Three, Bristow reconstructs the pretrial hearing, which was held at Bow Street Magistrates Court in April 1895. Following this, Chapters Four and Five explore the first and disastrous second criminal trial, which took place at the Central Criminal Court (otherwise known as the 'Old Bailey'). In all three chapters, lengthy quotations from cross-examinations are interspersed with courtroom sketches, newspaper reports, and Bristow's insightful commentary. These chapters offer fascinating insight into the myriad ways

ordinary Victorians, the legal system, and the periodical press conceptualised sex and intimacy between men. Part III focuses on Wilde's final years. Firstly, Chapter Six explores his incarcerations at H.M. Pentonville, H.M. Wandsworth, and H.M. Reading, where, in cell C.3.3, he penned his famous *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898). Bristow outlines Wilde's daily activities (bookbinding and gardening) and the reading materials he requested from the prison commissioners (works by Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Carlyle, and Henry Hart Milman). He also discusses the horrific cruelties inflicted upon Wilde and his fellow inmates, a handful of whom were children, as well as the great kindnesses of some, but unfortunately not all, of Wilde's prison guards, who regularly smuggled in magazines and passed messages through the bars. Wilde was a popular prisoner. In one moving passage, Bristow notes that there was 'competition among the convicts "as to who should get beside him [Wilde] on the exercise ring or in the prison chapel"' (p. 429).

*Oscar Wilde on Trial* then closes with a short Coda, which explores Wilde's final years living on the continent under an assumed name ('Sebastian Melmouth'). In the powerful final paragraphs, Bristow turns his attention to Wilde's cultural legacy. He calls on the British government to exonerate Wilde by 'mak[ing] an explicit pardon for the acts of gross indecency that he was deemed to have committed' (p. 460). *Hear, hear!* Bristow's *Oscar Wilde on Trial* is a thorough, rewarding, and deeply compassionate study of a dark and significant chapter in Victorian queer history.

Ethan Evans (Cardiff University)

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***Textile Orientalisms: Cashmere and Paisley Shawls in British Literature and Culture*, by Suchitra Choudhury (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2023), 242pp., £72.00 (hardback), ISBN 978021425008**

***The Significance of Fabrics in the Writings of Elizabeth Gaskell: Material Evidence*, by Amanda Ford (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 212pp., £120.00 (hardback) and £38.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781032341637**

In their fascinating, recently published studies on textiles, fabric, and dress in the long nineteenth century, both Amanda Ford and Suchitra Choudhury acknowledge the nexus of complex systems and competing ideological discourses within which dress and fashion operate. They each draw attention to the manifold meanings and symbolisms, the gendered significances, and the imperial and industrial histories and narratives to which clothes give rise in

the period. As Choudhury engagingly argues in *Textile Orientalisms*, Cashmere and later imitation Paisley shawls, which provide the joint foci of the book, are not merely fashionable or utilitarian articles of clothing, but rather are 'resonant object[s] grounded in contemporary politics, gender, and culture' (p. 2). Similarly for Ford in *The Significance of Fabrics in the Writings of Elizabeth Gaskell*, the titular author's life and literary works are rooted, both geographically and emotionally, in textiles and fabric; Gaskell's domestic, social, and political identities are therefore inextricably bound up in and expressed most clearly through the clothes that she wears and writes about. Offering original, interesting, and timely interventions into the analyses of dress and fashion, both Choudhury and Ford show how the study of clothes can enrich and challenge our understandings of history.

While each of these monographs begin, interestingly, with references to Gaskell, they soon diverge: Choudhury to delve into the rich history of the Indian shawl from 1785 to 1931, and Ford to immerse the reader in the emotional and sensorial aspects of cloth and fabric in Gaskell's life writing and novels. Following Elaine Freedgood's methodology in *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (2006), Ford adopts a clear metonymic approach to analysing fabric and textiles in Gaskell's literary oeuvre. The book's central claim is that the increased industrialisation and urbanisation of Victorian Britain, along with the expansion of empire, dramatically impacted women's wardrobes, as well as influencing processes of self-fashioning and the construction of class and gender identity. In making this argument, Ford demonstrates the multiple ways in which dress informs, and was informed by, socioeconomic and political change.

The structure of the book is intriguing. With the exception of chapter three, which examines the various fabrics of mourning wear, such as crape, bombazine, cotton, and silk, in *Mary Barton* (1848), the other four chapters focus on distinct fibres and fabrics. Chapter one examines woollen fabrics in their different guises – worsted, stuff, merino, and paisley – in *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) and *Mary Barton*. In tracing the shift from stuff to merino wool, and from red woollen cloaks worn in the eighteenth century to the Cashmere and Paisley shawls popular in the nineteenth century, Ford charts the technological developments that helped transform Britain's industrial landscape. Chapter two looks to cotton, calico, and muslin in its analyses of female agency and expression in *Ruth* (1853), *Wives and Daughters* (1864-65), and *Cranford* (1853), and chapters four and five examine the production, dissemination, and democratisation of elite fabrics such as lace in 'My Lady Ludlow' (1858) and *North and South* (1855) and



silk in *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Wives and Daughters* (1866). The industrial, imperial, and material histories of muslin, Paisley shawls, and silk and lace may not be new topics, having been discussed at length in previous studies of dress and fashion (Madeleine C. Seys, *Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature*, 2018) and material culture (Freedgood 2006), but Ford adds nuance to these conversations by describing some of the more sensory aspects of cloth. Drawing upon the biographical details of Gaskell's life and paying especial attention to her time spent in Manchester, or 'Cottonopolis' as it was popularly known, Ford persuasively argues that in her life and literary works, Gaskell enjoyed a vibrant and complex 'embodied' knowledge of fabrics and textiles (p. 194).

This strand of Ford's argument is one of the volume's most engaging aspects. However, given the focus on Gaskell's material life and her embodied and tactual engagements with the cloth and fabrics, which are central to both her domestic situation and literary craft, it does seem a shame not to include images and analyses of her extant clothing, some of which is currently on display at Elizabeth Gaskell's House in Manchester, on loan from the Gaskell family collection. Examining the garments that Gaskell wore against her body and touched during the course of her everyday life would add weight to the book's intriguing discussions about her literary and more literal encounters with textiles in the period. Nonetheless, Ford brings to life Gaskell's rich sartorial history. This stimulating study provides the first in-depth analysis of Gaskell and her treatment of clothing, from the intimate letters she wrote to her daughters advising them on matters of dress, to the detailed, emotional references to fashion in her most notable literary works. Ford makes a strong case for the analysis of women's historical dress and fashion in Gaskell's literature, adeptly weaving politics, social history, industrialisation, and imperialism into such discussions. There is much here to engage and satisfy Victorianists' interest.

Unlike Ford's monograph, which deals primarily with female dress, Choudhury's book encompasses both the male and female wearing of shawls from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. This beautifully illustrated and engagingly written monograph surveys a wide range of materials including poems, plays, novels, and artistic and illustrative material. In doing so, it argues that the vogue for wearing shawls 'served not only as an explicit marker of fashionability and social hierarchy but also sometimes as an image that powerfully recalled the East and its ongoing history of colonization' (4). Choudhury's book will thus be of interest to Victorianists and scholars of dress and fashion more generally, not only because it examines

the craze for Cashmere, and later Paisley, shawls in the long nineteenth century, but also because it aptly recasts such discussions in the light of orientalism. While such shawls have already attracted much scholarly criticism, Choudhury is the first to provide a full-length analysis of these evocative items of dress through the interlocking lenses of gender, feminism, and postcolonialism. She therefore complicates and enriches previous discussions of the shawl, fleshing out its (pre-)histories of production and consumption.

The first chapter offers a thorough and detailed account of the shawl prior to its introduction to Britain. Although this opening section gives necessary contextualisation and interestingly discusses the shawl's early masculine and courtly connotations, it relies quite heavily on previous scholarship and thus tends to cover some familiar ground. Nevertheless, the following chapters provide nuanced and original insights into the production, dissemination, and reception of the shawl within British society. Chapter two turns to Elizabeth Inchbald's play *Appearance Is Against Them* (1785). A comical sketch that deals with the gifting and subsequent theft of an Indian shawl, Choudhury reads the play through the lenses of feminism and gift theory to show how it advances an implicit critique of the corruption inherent in the East India Company. The following chapter is also interested in systems of fair governance; with reference to Walter Scott's two early nineteenth-century novels, *St. Ronan's Well* (1823) and *The Surgeon's Daughter* (1827), Choudhury foregrounds material production in her analysis of the novels' dealings with original shawls and those made in Paisley, Scotland. Chapter four turns to the Cashmere shawl, reading it in relation to masculinity and politically locating both it and the production of William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) within the Anglo-Sikh Wars of 1845–49, while the final two chapters focus on imitation shawls in *Armada* (1866) by Wilkie Collins and Frederick Niven's *The Paisley Shawl* (1931). Because of the chronological structure of the book's chapters there is some necessary oscillation between original and imitation garments and the feminine and masculine connotations of shawls. However, what this book does exceptionally well is highlight and hold in balance the many competing discourses that surrounded Cashmere and imitation shawls in Britain during this period. Drawing upon the literary shawl as both a locus, representative, and even occasionally a tool of empire, Choudhury's engaging monograph sets up and excitingly explores 'the interface between Britain and India during the colonial period' (p. 159).

Together, Choudhury's and Ford's monographs each make compelling cases for the study of historical dress and fashion practices in literature and culture.



Both are richly detailed, informative, and engaging studies that provide illuminating insights into the material culture of the long nineteenth century. They are essential reading for anyone working on dress, fashion, material culture, and consumption/production across the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Ford's work will be of especial interest to scholars of Gaskell, along with (dress) historians, and those interested in the history of the senses and emotion more widely, while Choudhury's will engage all those working at the vibrant intersections of material culture and (post-)colonialism.

Danielle Dove (University of Surrey)

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***Pet Revolution: Animals and the Making of Modern British Life*, by Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange (London: Reaktion Books, 2023), 256pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781789146868**

*Pet Revolution* provides a panoramic and yet detailed history of pet-keeping in Britain from the eighteenth-century to the present, drawing upon a multiplicity of academic perspectives: social, economic and colonial histories, animal ethics, and even, in some respects, affect theory. It deftly articulates a human perspective and a careful concern for animals, as well as economics and emotions, and sheds light on the inter- and intra-species power dynamics that regulate pet-keeping. This allows the book to inscribe pets in a complex human-animal social order powered by an entire industry (figurative and literal) of pet-keeping. The book documents processes of domestication, the market of pet-keeping, the interspecies ecology of the Victorian home, the role of pets in the Victorian ideologies of education, and ends with a chapter dedicated to pet death and mourning rituals.

The history of Victorian pet-keeping has been a point of fascination for many in the last decade. First of all, it resonates powerfully with the current culture of pet-keeping, whence, as Donna Haraway has shown (*The Companion Species Manifesto*, 2003), love and industry go hand in hand to satisfy the needs of increasingly numerous pet-owners, who become more obsessed with the care of their animal companion. I was initially surprised by Hamlett and Strange's decision to use Covid and the massive surge in animal adoption that it caused as a focal point for the history of pet-keeping. It seemed too anecdotal. And yet, they usefully underline the continuing problems caused by pet-keeping, thus shedding a very urgent light on their historical work, and helping the reader get a glimpse of the dynamics that underwrote the sudden growth of the pet market in Victorian England.

Of course, Hamlett and Strange are preceded in their undertaking by Erica Fudge, Kathleen Kete, and Harriet Ritvo, among others, who have also studied the history of pet-keeping, the cultural context in which it boomed, and what human conceptions of animality have revealed about the ideology of the British Empire. Yet, Hamlett and Strange make a unique and important contribution to this already existing body of works. A striking aspect of their research is the number of personal testimonies it brings to the history of pet-keeping. Like Katherine Grier's *Pets in America: A History* (2010), *Pet Revolution* brings out the very personal relations people had with their pets, how they reshaped the domestic space, undid couples and families, or provided support in already failing human pairings. While remaining critical of these testimonies and providing a full view of the abuse that existed in pet-keeping, Hamlett and Strange give texture and nuance to the cultural, financial, and affective phenomenon. For instance, they have recovered from the Victorian-era newspaper articles, non-fiction books, and personal testimonies telling stories of pets actively 'help[ing] uphold domestic order' (p. 90). They cite a particularly quaint anecdote about Dickens's cat putting out candles at night to preserve his master's sleep and sight. Those charming tales reveal an intense personal investment in pets, the influence of the domestic ideology on the narrativisation of animal lives, and even the agentive role animals did have in the house (although, as Hamlett and Strange show, it was more often about wreaking havoc than about preserving any kind of order).

The greatest achievement of the book is, surely, its panoramic approach to its object. Hamlett and Strange provide the reader with as much historical depth as the topic affords them. And, of course, the multi-faceted discussion of pet-keeping, from domestic ecologies, to education, regulations, personal behaviours, and market economies makes this book an excellent introduction to the vast topic. This book will prove invaluable to both newcomers to the field and scholars more familiar with the history of pets. In the theories it mobilizes, it is an excellent synthesis of other works published so far, and in the historical documents it analyses it brings fascinating new material to examine. Lastly, Hamlett and Strange's frequent inclusion of working-class pet owners in their study is a welcome improvement on some other histories of pet-keeping, which have tended to focus on the upper-classes. *Pet Revolution* not only provides historical depth to the topic, but also social depth.

Emma Thiébaud (Université Paris Cité)

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***Opera and British Print Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Christina Fuhrmann and Alison Mero (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2023), 392pp., £76.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781638040422**

*Opera and British Print Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century* examines a kaleidoscopic multiplicity of material, delineating ‘a disconnect between the fluid performance practices and the fixed media of print’ (p. 4). Throughout this volume, editors Christina Fuhrmann and Alison Mero present the plurality of the voices populating nineteenth-century print culture.

Part I, ‘The Interdependence of Print and Opera’, opens with Peter Horton’s biographical sketch of William Hawes, music publisher for the Regent’s Harmonic Institution, who played a central role in introducing German romantic composers to Georgian London. Hawes’s ‘frequently cavalier attitude toward ethics’ enables Horton to shed light on larger questions of copyright contention across the Continent (p. 17). Fuhrmann’s chapter, ‘Giovanni in Print’, details London’s obsession with Don Juan following Mozart’s 1817 British premiere. ‘With no performing rights until 1833, any manager who could access printed material for *Don Giovanni* could stage a version’ (p. 42) and consequently Giovanni was transported to Botany Bay and Gretna Green in satirical spectacles or sequels, sometimes completely stripped of Mozart’s original music. These pastiche performances drew on plots from popular novels and responded to political events, all reported on by the periodical press, actively blurring the boundaries between the interlocking, cyclical cultures of print and performance.

In Part II, ‘Shaping a Public Persona’, Jennifer Hall-Witt explores the first book-length managerial memoir published in Britain. John Ebers’s son-in-law, novelist William Harrison Ainsworth, created the largely fictional text to ‘burnish Ebers’s reputation in the aftermath of his bankruptcy’ (p. 66). Interestingly, Ebers purchased and sublet boxes to highest bidder for the aforementioned *Don Giovanni* premiere, demonstrating an interconnection between essays in this collection which are otherwise not illuminated. Ainsworth was invested in vindicating his father-in-law’s reputation, as well as marketing a successful text in the growing genre of opera histories that contained peeks behind the scenes. Matildie Wium explores the depiction of the vocal trauma of contralto prima donna, Mary Shaw. By analysing sources propounding the theory that Shaw’s emotional distress caused her voice to fail, Wium argues that, in braving tragedy and gracefully retiring from the stage, this patriotic heroine provided a public example of domestic virtue.

Part III, ‘Shaping National Identity,’ begins with Jennifer Oates’s reconstruction of Edinburgh’s local operatic and print culture via *The Scotsman*. While most touring productions premiered in London, ‘opera in English was standard in Edinburgh and the provinces’ (p. 115), which proved an encouraging boon to Scottish composers like Hamish MacCunn. Reviews of his opera, the libretto of which was based on Walter Scott’s *The Heart of the Midlothian* (1818), ‘remarked on the significance of the premiere by a Scotsman in Edinburgh to a full house’ (p. 119), celebrating it as an event of national pride and importance. Timothy Love’s chapter explores the vibrant scene in Dublin, in which he argues that ‘To the native Irish, the art music of the towns and cities was essentially foreign, the domain of a colonial minority’ (p. 132), having little in common with traditional Gaelic music. Where most Irish tunes were orally transmitted, ‘the act of printing attempted to enforce a degree of uniformity’ (p. 144), speaking to the volume’s larger concern about capturing the ephemeral nature of performance. Maria McHale’s chapter ‘Opera as *Gaeilge*’ studies the impact Gaelic revivalism had across operatic subject matter in the 1890s, for example the reclamation of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*’s Hibernian inspiration.

Part IV, ‘Shaping Taste’, opens with Michelle Meinhart’s chapter ‘Fashioning New Femininities’, which focuses on how prima donnas’ ‘uneasy combination of fame, scandal, and the potential for positive moral influence’ drew public attention (p. 172). Women’s magazines both reflected and shaped discourse on the changing social role of the opera theatre as a place to be seen, and domesticity as a space for feminine display. This essay ties into social distrust of ticket resellers like Ebers and the role that a prima donna like Shaw played in constructions of class and gender. Meinhart describes the *nouveaux riches* ‘infiltrating’ opera theatre patronage, causing the retreat of the aristocracy into domestic, private entertainments that maintained performative displays of elite femininity. Charles Edward McGuire’s chapter on taste education at British musical festivals traces the British press’s paternalistic argument that ‘Wagner was more appropriate in a cathedral than in a concert room, because the work (implicitly) had sacred connotations’ (p. 191).

Part V, ‘Operatic Literature, Literary Opera’, opens with another essay on Wagner, in which Julia Grella O’Connell traces George Moore’s assessment of Wagner’s music as ‘embod[y]ing all the spiritual and moral decay of the post-Romantic world’ (p. 223), and therefore sensual rather than sacred. James Grande’s ‘Dissenting from Opera in the Print Public Sphere’ returns to *Don Giovanni*, reframing the crowd as nonconformist Protestant Cockneys. Phyllis Weliver’s

chapter studies *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) within its original mode of publication in *Bentley's Miscellany*, where Dickens's novel appeared within 'a merry song-and-dance framework for the novel's serious corrective goals, of social ills and the lure of the picaresque ballad opera' (p. 251). This merry framework of a multiplicity of voices in the nineteenth-century press is reflected in the variety of viewpoints throughout this collection of essays. Without an overarching argument from the introduction or afterword, the reader is left to connect the dots between the collected essays and draw their own conclusions as the curtain closes on *Opera and British Print Culture*.

*Elizabeth Grimshaw (University of Buckingham)*

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***Letters and Lives of the Tennyson Women*, by Marion Sherwood and Rosalind Boyce (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 225pp., £85.00 (hardback) and £76.50 (e-book), ISBN 9781350168244**

The (for the most part unpublished) correspondence of four women makes up the subject of *Letters and Lives of the Tennyson Women*, all Alfred, Lord Tennyson's Lincolnshire forebears: Mary, Tennyson's 'Grandmamma Tennyson', her daughters Elizabeth and Mary, and her daughter-in-law Frances. The woman who remained most central to Tennyson throughout his life – his mother Elizabeth – is absent from the study, her life and letters having already been examined in detail by the poet's biographers. The book, which aims to contradict perception of these women as simply footnotes in Tennyson's career, includes annotated extracts from the women's letters, interleaved with narrative context.

The poet's paternal grandmother Mary Turner Tennyson is particularly significant to the study, placed at the centre of three discrete chapters and an important presence in the remaining chapters. In the early years of her marriage to George Tennyson, Mary started writing often-anxious letters to her mother, a correspondence that lasted nearly thirty years. Her letters are informative and revelatory. She says little if anything about world events, although a letter of 1816 refers to the 'Winterly summer' of 1815, when Mount Tambora on Sumbawa Island in the Dutch East Indies erupted causing huge loss of life (p. 94). Multiple pregnancies are a source of distress. Mary travels to London but is unimpressed by the city. The birth of her third child George Clayton is not recorded in the letters of 1778, unlike her ongoing problems with servants. She is subservient to her husband but grows more assertive as the years progress, albeit

largely in relation to her choice of clothes. Mary likes to read, a passion she passes on to her grandson.

Elizabeth Tennyson Russell, known as Eliza, was Mary and George's first child and Alfred's favourite aunt. She maintained an affectionate correspondence with the poet, bestowing on him an annual cheque of £100, equivalent to £100,000 today. The Tennyson women lived 'under the conditions of coverture', which 'made a husband and wife one under law and gave husbands financial and legal control over their wives' (p. 8). Elizabeth's husband Matthew was actively involved in contemporary politics and colonial exploitation. His letters reflect the patriarchal society in which he lived: a letter to his brother-in-law Charles Tennyson urges the recipient to disregard women's advice about 'Inns & Post Houses' (p. 90); he writes that married men may have 'playfellows' yet women's sexuality is the subject of salacious comment (p. 90). After her husband's death Elizabeth's nervous excitability, from which she had suffered as child, was displaced by depression. She shared the family's "'spell against concord'" (p. 75, quoting *The Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam*), choosing to absent herself from her father's funeral and challenging two of the executors of Mathew's will, 'her son William and her brother Charles' (p. 75).

Mary Tennyson Bourne was the Tennysons' younger, less-favoured daughter. Alfred's biographers generally caricature Mary as a 'gloomy, pessimistic Calvinist' (p. 172) and 'an addict of dramatic quarrels' (p. 195). Her letters reveal her as thoughtful and independent, enjoying travel and social life. She writes with wit and humour. Like her mother, Mary has an acute eye and a gift for vivid imagery. She and her husband fostered a young boy called Hugh, a possibly illegitimate child of 'an unnatural parent' (p. 187).

Frances, an aunt by marriage of the future Poet Laureate, gave birth to eight children in the first ten years of her marriage. She wrote frequently to her husband Charles, Alfred's uncle, to whom she remained married for fifty-three years. Her letters are spirited but she lacks the Tennyson sisters' gift for language; most of her letters, around eighty in total, revolve around children, the household, servants, food, recipes, friends, and general gossip. The poet's grandson Charles Tennyson dismissed young Frances as pretty but of limited intelligence. Yet, using previously unpublished material, the book reveals Frances to be an educated, intelligent, and capable woman in her own right who became the manager of a wealthy political household.

The narrative collaboration between Marion Sherwood and Rosalind Boyce works well, but the repetition of biographical information across chapters is often unnecessary. The book makes a major contribution to Tennyson studies, however,



expanding what we know of the biographical influences upon Tennyson's work, whilst simultaneously allowing the poet's talented and resourceful female relations to speak for themselves. *Letters and Lives of the Tennyson Women* also provides fascinating insights into eighteenth-century life. Who can forget the image of Mary and George in the early years of their marriage travelling on horseback 'riding double' (p. 58)?

Jayne Thomas (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

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***Victorians and Numbers: Statistics and Society in Nineteenth Century Britain*, by Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 448p., £40.49 (hardback), ISBN 9780192847744**

Numbers held a special allure for Victorians, as Lawrence Goldman demonstrates in this magisterial book. In particular, the collection and analysis of large quantities of numerical data using statistical tools lay at the heart of the ameliorative credo of liberal-minded contemporaries, animating their 'crusading zeal' for social reform for at least half a century (p. xxv). At a time of dramatic changes backgrounded by industrialisation, growing governmental requirement for data, and a concomitant profusion of numbers, Victorians conceptualized statistics as the necessary foundation for a new science of society, the keenest proponents of which believed could lead to the betterment of human life.

In *Victorians and Numbers*, readers find themselves guided by the assured hands of an expert in nineteenth-century British history, possessing an encyclopaedic knowledge of the era's vibrant intellectual life – something reflected in his command of primary sources and extant secondary literature. It is thus no surprise that the book engages more with the statistical movement's 'intellectual aspirations' than its institutional expressions (p. xxvii). This focus makes for a compelling read. Divided into five parts comprising thematic chapters and case studies, the book charts the history of the movement from its origins in the 1830s to its devitalisation in the 1880s and the reinvention of statistics – through the rise of mathematical statistics, as well as the development of the pseudo-science of eugenics and its intimate theoretical bedfellow, Social Darwinism.

Goldman traces the beginnings of the Victorian 'data revolution' in a meeting of natural scientists, mathematicians, and political economists at Trinity College, Cambridge in June 1833, which led to the creation of the statistical section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. 'Section F', as it was known, directed its efforts towards 'the inductive study of society by statistics' (p. 48). This

paved the path for the establishment of the Statistical Society of London in 1834 (which became the Royal Statistical Society in 1887), the aim of which was less 'intellectual' and more practical: the collection of information necessary for policy and public administration. The number of short-lived provincial statistical societies and of more active groups, including the Manchester Statistical Society (1833) and the London Statistical Society (1825), demonstrated the social, geographical, and intellectual spread of the statistical movement, although their founders had different conceptions about statistics and their social role.

A succession of chapters focusing on individual thinkers uncover the intellectual influences of the statistical movement: Charles Babbage, the polymath who attempted to construct a mechanical computer for the processing of numerical social data on a large scale, and his expositor and 'enchantedress of numbers', Ada Lovelace (p. 120); Richard Jones and William Whewell, who challenged the deductive reasoning of Ricardianism and orthodox political economy, and sought to test its doctrines 'against the actual economic behaviour' in order to 'broaden the study of economic interactions into a genuine "science of society"' (p. 126); and the influential savant Adolphe Quetelet, who left an indelible mark on the intellectual foundations and institutional expressions of the statistical movement. Goldman expertly illuminates the Humboldtian ethos of the intellectual founders of the statistical movement, but does not neglect also to give voice to critics – Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, and Thomas Carlyle – of the 'statistical way of thinking' (p. 172). The book's pace slows down in a rather dense Chapter 10 on William Farr, but Goldman picks it up in a superbly written chapter on H. T. Buckle and his conceptualization of history as 'philosophical' and Comtean, which he synthesized with science and statistics to reveal the uniformity and regularity of social and intellectual development in the progress of civilization. European warfare and conservative nationalism later began to undermine the liberal internationalism of the statistical movement, but its most significant challenge, as Goldman compellingly shows, came from the eugenicist Francis Galton and his 'nature over nurture' philosophy, which used statistics to uncover variation amongst individuals rather than homogeneity.

In some parts of the book, readers might get the impression that Goldman goes off on tangents, but this is certainly not the case: a proper understanding of the ideas of Goldman's protagonists necessitates the consideration of the wider intellectual context in which they operated. Rendering Victorian Britain's complex intellectual culture intelligible is not an easy task, but Goldman succeeds in doing so by following



this methodological approach. Even in such a commanding book, there are some places where the reader might have expected a bit more. The religious census of 1851 is treated only in passing in Chapter 10. The voice of Benjamin Disraeli, one of the opponents of statistics, is barely heard in a regrettably short Chapter 9, which would have also benefited from a more expansive analysis of critiques of political economy and industrial society in relation to statistics. But these are only very minor criticisms. The book as a whole is a triumph, demonstrates historical scholarship at its finest, and deserves to be read widely.

*Petros Spanou (University of Oxford)*

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***The Gothic Forms of Victorian Poetry*, by Olivia Loksing Moy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 304pp., £90.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781474487177**

Olivia Loksing Moy's first monograph, *The Gothic Forms of Victorian Poetry*, is a vibrant and vital contribution to Victorian studies. Moy's ambitious aim is to expose the Victorian poetical afterlife of the forms of Gothic romance, rather than simply observing the reappearance of Gothic tropes towards the end of the nineteenth century. She identifies a number of these forms, including what she terms Gothic overhearing, Gothic confinement, Gothic 'shock and swap', and Gothic wavering. Moy's highly detailed exploration of these forms explicitly focuses on 'a wholly separate category of texts than the usual suspects of nineteenth-century literature', looking at poems normally considered serious, canonical, and far-removed from the likes of Ann Radcliffe's popular novels (p. 5).

While Chapter 2 does briefly examine the poetry composed in-text by some of Radcliffe's heroines, Moy initially identifies these forms within the 'ample space' of the long Gothic romance, before showing how they were adapted/adopted by Victorian poets (p. 7). Instead of perceiving the length of the Gothic romance as limiting its quality, Moy identifies that it is this which allows the Gothic romance to 'serve as a testing lab or Petri dish for incubating poetic innovations' (p. 7). Each of the first three chapters begin with Moy neatly illustrating the origin of a particular Gothic form within romances of the 1790s, before tracing its replication across the long nineteenth century. While the range of Victorian poetry explored is vast, moving from Robert Browning to Gerard Manley Hopkins, each form is precisely explained and demonstrated.

In Chapter 1, three examples from Radcliffe's works and one from Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) are used to illustrate the triangulation of

speaker, hearer, and overhearer, and the resultant mishearing and misinterpretation, a form that Moy labels 'Gothic overhearing'. Particularly comical are Moy's examples of failed love confessions, including one where the intended hearer is simply absent, leaving the attempted suitor loitering disappointedly. Moy then identifies the recurrence of this form in the Victorian dramatic monologue, looking at more obscure works from Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning's oeuvres. The fascinating exploration of Browning's *Pippa Passes* (1841) through a legal framework reveals an authorial anxiety over having one's speech misinterpreted, which harks back to the Gothic tradition of being incorrectly overheard.

Chapter 2 deftly explores how the Gothic heroine contributed towards the Victorian Poetess figure, through her pursuit of creativity even in confinement. In particular, the sonnet form is shown to have provided a 'formally confining, yet safe and thus liberating' space for fictional Gothic poetesses, mirroring how they were often literally imprisoned or forced to hide for their own protection (p. 96). Christina Rossetti's novella *Maude: A Story for Girls* (1897) is shown to experiment with the image of the self-imposed prison, through its games of *bouts-rimés*; however, it is Rossetti herself who is forced to play the game multiple times, for each of her characters. The chapter's sizeable exploration of *Maude* also highlights that the female poet's work is often read only biographically, another form of specifically gendered confinement.

Chapter 3 inspects the Gothic 'shock and swap', which is where 'moments of mistaken visual interpretation [...] compel readers' to suspend their powers of judgement and interpretation (p. 150). Emily St. Aubert's misinterpretation of a waxwork as a rotting corpse in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) provides a Gothic example, with Moy then examining how similar interpretative difficulties are faced by viewers/readers of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's double works. Moy's nuanced analysis reveals how, in both situations, heightened anticipation of an aesthetic object is followed by expectations being inverted, and then further inverted, situating viewers/readers within an unpredictable and ever-evolving Gothic world.

Having charted Gothic forms across multiple Victorian poets, Chapter 4 and the monograph's conclusion emphasise the merits of re-examining specific poets' bodies of work as building upon these Gothic forms. Putting her model of Gothic readership to the test, Moy meticulously examines Hopkins as a 'missing figure in any study of English or Irish Gothic' (p. 212). She posits that his poems enact a Gothic wavering that requires a similar flexibility of mind in his readers as is invoked by the Gothic 'swap and

shock' form (p. 246). The conclusion then looks at Emily Brontë's Gothic poetry to show how 'Gothic forms remained a consistent force in British poetry' across the entire nineteenth century (p. 262).

This book is highly recommended for anyone exploring the location of the Gothic in the Victorian era, as Moy successfully draws 'lines of influence that reach across a continuous long nineteenth century,' making it clear that the Gothic did not vanish after the 1790s only to be revived at the *fin de siècle* (p. 11). Rather, it contributed through its form to many canonical Victorian texts. Additionally, Moy's references to the Gothic persisting in periodicals and annuals demonstrate that more attention still needs to be paid to the popular fiction of the period. A final triumph of this monograph's approach is how it identifies a new method of analytical practice – the classification of Gothic forms – and demonstrates how this can be implemented. I look forward to seeing how these (and other) Gothic forms can be identified within different poets' work in future research.

*Scarlette-Electra LeBlanc (University of Hull)*

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***A Space of Their Own: Women, Writing and Place 1850–1950*, edited by Katie Baker and Naomi Walker (New York and London: Routledge, 2023), 179pp., £120.00 (hardback) and £38.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781032218090**

An intentional misquote of Virginia Woolf, the title introduces the key claim of Katie Baker and Naomi Walker's essay collection: that in writing about *place* – physical, social, cultural – they inhabited, women were able to evade the restrictions imposed by contemporary gender norms and shape a *space* 'of their own'. Divided into four sections, each of which explores one theme chronologically, the collection shows the recurrence and development of concerns around women's embodiment, perception, and reclamation of space between 1850 and 1950, a period of tumultuous change in women's lives; these concerns are effectively, if briefly, summarized by the editors in the Introduction and Conclusion.

The first section 'Women Writing the Domestic Space' opens with Baker's essay on Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854-5). Baker introduces the concept of 'extended domesticity' by which she refers to the plurality and heterogeneity of domestic spaces represented in the novel, and to how they cultivate Margaret Hale's growing class awareness enabling her to play an active and resolute role in the public sphere. Similarly, and developing Susan Fraiman's argument about the need to separate 'domesticity from conformity' (p. 32), Emma Liggins examines the 'plurality of meanings attached to the

drawing room' (p. 42). Stretching across time and genres, her analysis convincingly positions this gendered space as a locus expressive of far more than women's emblematic entrapment. The closing essay by Geraldine Perriam considers three interwar authors' – Angela Thirkell, Elizabeth Cambridge, and E. M. Delafield – different, but equally nuanced, representations of the conflicting demands, professional and domestic, weighing on their characters: women for whom *home* is both the place where they write and the household which they must manage day-to-day.

The second part, 'Women Writing the Rural Space', looks at how the experience of walking through open, natural spaces is memorialised, made lyrical, and fictionalized. It suggests that through both walking and writing women experienced and nurtured a sense of well-being and empowerment. This was clearly the case for Elizabeth Le Blond, the subject of Kathryn Walchester's fascinating essay. Dismissing contemporary medical advice, the consumptive Le Blond exchanged rest for winter mountaineering in the Alps, an activity that both restored her health and inspired eight memoirs of her expeditions. In the following chapter, Walker effectively employs Guy Debord's concept of psychogeography, a concept usually applied to urban spaces, to describe Mary Webb's 'dreamlike' immersion in and representation of Shropshire's rural landscape (p. 80). Helena Duncan explores 'watchfulness' as a dominant characteristic of rural Scottish modernism, evident in the work of Willa Muir and Nan Shepherd (p. 87). It is through 'spanging' and 'stravaiging' – wondering aimlessly – that their female characters evade the claustrophobic restrictions of the 'rural panopticon', and are able to 'reclaim agency, (re)conquer space, and [...] access deeper self-understanding' (p. 91).

Although just two chapters make up 'Women Writing the Public Space', they offer analyses of particular originality and depth. Cigdem Talu contributes a reading of spatiality in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* (1894). Talu accounts for the novel's anti-*dénouement* by claiming that 'the freedom to be unhappy' represents the ultimate achievement for the protagonist, whose pursuit of social, political, and personal emancipation is described in terms of her emotional engagement with the urban environments (p. 104). Louise McDonald looks at two collections of essays authored by British and American women in the interwar period: *The Women's Side* (1926) and *The More I see of Men* (1932). The essays cover topics of concern to women, weighing both the advantages and the risks brought about by their economic, social, and political emancipation in nuanced and at times contradictory, or even unsupportive, terms.

The chapters in the final section 'Women Writing New Interpretations of Space' highlight the originality of representations of space that intersect with and revise time-linear narratives. Josie Billington compares the descriptions of emotional displacement experienced by the characters of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853) and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) to the temporal and spatial fluidity of Christina Rossetti's lyric poetry and suggests that these points of comparison anticipate Modernists' predilection for the 'lyric or transcendent moment' (p. 136). Silvia Mayasari-Hoffert shines a new light on Indonesian national hero R. A. Kartini by framing extracts of her letters within the literary paradigm of the *bildungsroman*. She describes Kartini's growing awareness of her place within what Homi Bhabha has described as a 'third space' – one where her social and cultural advantages clash against the limitations imposed on her as both a woman and a colonial subject. Similarly concerned with the parallelism of patriarchal and colonial discourses is Annie Strausa's acute analysis of Woolf's *Orlando* (1928). Through sophisticated close readings of key scenes, Strausa demonstrates the relevance of 'spatiality' to the 'sensory aesthetic' of the novel, and to the forging of a new, radical language which both denounces the limits of imperial and anti-Feminist discourses, and effectively reclaims for women a 'space of their own' (p. 158). This insightful chapter is both one of the highlights of and the apt conclusion to a collection that, whilst slim, has both range and depth, and makes a valuable contribution to both Victorian and Modernist studies.

Gloria Hoare (*Independent Researcher*)

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***Monstrous Women and Ecofeminism in the Victorian Gothic, 1837–1871*, by Nicole C. Dittmer (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2022), 227pp., £77.00 (hardback) and £30.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781666900798**

Since the publication of Ellen Moers's seminal work on the 'Female Gothic' in *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (1976), a substantial body of scholarship has located female monstrosity within the literary canon. Dittmer's monograph offers a refreshing contribution to this saturated field of study by eschewing the Cartesian dualism that Western thought typically affords, instead framing nineteenth-century monstrous women as monistic figurations, drawing upon the Spinozian theory that 'nothing can take place in the body without being perceived by the mind' (p. 3). Through a monistic analysis, Dittmer encourages a sympathetic reading which unifies female ontologies, locating monstrous women

beyond binaries of mind *or* body, and nature *or* culture. Transgressive women are reoriented as material-semiotic figurations whose psychosomatic responses through hysteria (Chapter Two), criminality (Chapter Three), and lycanthropy (Chapter Four) express both a rejection of social repression and a 'desir[e] to return to nature' (p. 4); it is through these mind-body responses that monstrous women reclaim agency.

Chapter One provides a well-researched contextual foundation for the following chapters. Dittmer writes of the nineteenth-century medical, cultural, and educational discourses which regulated and repressed middle and upper-class women's sexuality, perpetuating its threat to marital, familial, and, ultimately, social stability. Medical and scientific rhetoric, disseminated by figures such as Thomas Laycock and Charles Darwin, as well as popular literature and conduct books by Coventry Patmore and Sarah Stickney Ellis (among others), encouraged an essentialist view of female behaviours and biology. This rhetoric constructed ontologies which emphatically structured womanhood around subordination and acquiescence, repressing women's carnal instincts and generating a polarized ideology of female sexuality; this, Dittmer persuasively argues, encouraged 'an emergence of the figuration of the female gothic monstrosity' (p. 54).

In Chapter Two, Dittmer pays close attention to contemporaneous psychosexual theories to explore the disordered mind-bodies of gothic madwomen, which, she contends, arise from repressed sexuality and environmental disconnect. In *Wuthering Heights* (1847), this repression causes Cathy's transgression into hysteria. Her eventual return to the surrounding moors signifies a 'reconnection to her natural self' (p. 73) and a reclamation of agency. In *Jane Eyre* (1847), Bertha similarly embodies women's sexual repression and typifies Victorian fears of women's sexuality through her animality. Ultimately, Dittmer writes, for Bertha 'the only option for female independence is death' (p. 90). In an engaging move away from canonical texts, Dittmer also explores how James Malcolm Rymer's *The Wronged Wife* (1870) uses Agatha's character to manifest repressed carnal instincts in the surrounding environment.

Chapter Three begins by establishing how Darwin, Lombroso, and Ferrero encouraged an essentialised view of women's aberrant behaviour. However, gothic narratives illustrate how women rationally manipulate social conventions through mimetic identities and affectations, rather than possessing innate criminality. Dittmer begins with an analysis of Mrs Lovett from *The String of Pearls* (1846–47), who, whilst superficially adhering to ideals of female domesticity, perverts the private sphere through her criminality. Linda, the anti-



heroine of the lesser-known penny dreadful *The Dark Woman* (1861), similarly corrupts Victorian ideals of womanhood through her juxtaposed identities as both criminal and lady, using mimetic adaptation and environmental affection to assume various ontologies. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Lucy's criminality in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), viewing her fragmented ontology as a conscious rejection of social pressures. In this chapter, Dittmer highlights 'the migrating shift of female gothic identities as connected to their environmental surroundings through affective experiences' (p. 100).

Dittmer's most compelling argument is unveiled in Chapter Four, through her nuanced analysis of she-wolves, whose rejection of social confines and return to nature exhibit a display of feminist resistance. In Frederick Marryat's 'The White Wolf of the Hartz Mountains' (1837–39), the eponymous she-wolf, Christina, embodies fears of unregulated female sexuality. Dittmer views Christina as an antecedent of the New Woman through her psychosomatic transgression, which unifies both woman and nature, and mind and body. George W. M. Reynolds's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (1846–47) follows an anti-heroine, Nisida, whose sexual engagement with a werewolf and direct affiliation with nature inform her monstrosity, initiating a desire to return to a physical and psychical natural state. Finally, Dittmer discusses the unnamed she-wolf of George MacDonald's 'The Gray Wolf' (1871) whose carnal hypersexuality reflects a threat of primitivity and degeneration, functioning as a material-semiotic response to the early-to-mid Victorian fear of female psychosomatic instability.

Dittmer offers a new and insightful reading of monstrosity and the Gothic mode through the unification of female ontologies. Particularly noteworthy is Dittmer's ability to lucidly analyse canonical gothic novels alongside lesser-known ephemeral penny bloods and dreadfuls. By placing these narratives in dialogue with one another, Dittmer opens up the possibility of a re-evaluation of the interplay between class, gender, and literary representation within the field of monstrosity; although her analysis might have benefited from a greater consideration of the social implications of these disparate publication mediums. *Monstrous Women and Ecofeminism in the Victorian Gothic, 1837–1871*, despite some minor grammatical slip-ups and its, at times, verbose writing style, is a compelling and enriching addition to Gothic literary studies. Its interdisciplinary methodological approach is commendable and will be an asset to those in the fields of feminism, ecocriticism, and the medical humanities.

Millie Morton (University of Oxford)

***How Victorians Took us to the Moon: The Story of the Nineteenth-Century Innovators who Forged the Future*, by Iwan Rhys Morus, (London: Icon Books, 2022), 399pp., £11.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781837731022**

The nineteenth-century was an age of significant transformation as a result of the industrial revolution. The world was becoming smaller with advances in transport such as railways and steamboats. Developments in telegraphy, radio, and telephones were generating new possibilities for long-distance communication. So many wonderful devices were being manufactured, such as cameras, electric lamps, and typewriters, that there was a genuine belief that Victorian science could achieve anything. Even the idea that Victorians could fly to the moon did not seem so unbelievable. It is these stories and more that Iwan Morus examines in *How Victorians Took Us to the Moon*. For most Victorianists, this history of science has become familiar. And yet, despite being well-trodden intellectual territory, Morus still manages to unearth some little-known stories about science's past in the Victorian age. The heavy-hitters like Charles Babbage and Michael Faraday feature, but so too does an eclectic cast of other fascinating Victorian characters. As a primer on the history of Victorian science, Morus's new book is perfect reading for anyone interested in gaining a broad knowledge of the topic.

Morus's overarching argument is that science and innovation were changing rapidly during the century, and these changes profoundly shaped the Victorian world. Each of the book's eight chapters focuses on a major theme or topic. Chapter 1, 'Science Wars', looks at the changing of the guard that occurred within nineteenth-century science after the passing of Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, in 1820. As the younger generation of scientific figures were rising to prominence, the older generation were losing their cultural authority, and the structure and function of science came to be redefined. Morus explores this story, starting with the establishment of the Royal Society during the closing decades of the eighteenth century straight through to the 1840s. Chapter 2, 'Practical Men', looks beyond the activities of elite scientists at places like the Royal Society to those innovative practitioners hard at work building engineering marvels like the Thames Tunnel. So often the history of science only features the big-name theorists like Charles Darwin or Lord Kelvin, William Thompson. However, figures like Marc Isambard Brunel also made significant contributions to Victorian innovation, even if he's rarely mentioned in history of science scholarship. Thus, Morus



expands our view of the history of science through the stories of these 'practical men'.

In chapter 3, 'Measure for Measure', the focus shifts to the laying of the trans-Atlantic cable. Its construction ushered in a new age of communication, one that was deeply connected to British imperialist expansion. Chapter 4, 'Showing Off', covers more familiar territory by discussing the birth of scientific exhibitions. Morus examines a wealth of fascinating examples ranging from well-known exhibits such as the Crystal Palace to smaller displays such as those at the Royal Polytechnic Institution. In chapter 5, 'Fuelling the Future', attention moves to the new machinery of the Victorian age, especially the steam engine and its broad application across British industry. Chapter 6, 'Surveillance', is about the telegraph. The reader is introduced to a cast of historical actors both well-known and forgotten. All of them made important contributions to telecommunication in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 7, 'Calculating People,' is my favourite. In this chapter we learn about the figures behind incredible inventions such as automatons and mechanical counting machines. For example, we learn about a chess-playing automaton known as "the Turk", which was created by the Hungarian writer and innovator Wolfgang von Kempelen. The cabinet was opened as part of the performance to demonstrate to audiences that there was no room for anyone to hide inside and operate the automaton's movements. "The Turk" seemed to operate without any human agency. However, this was a well-curated illusion: the cabinet contained a secret chamber for an operator. From 1770 onward, this mechanical sensation toured around Europe delighting audiences. One British figure to be wowed by von Kempelen's marvellous device was Babbage, who would later invent his own mechanical contraptions. Finally, in chapter 8, 'Flying High', we learn about the early history of aviation. Victorians never managed to take us to the moon, but their efforts to carry us there laid the groundwork for success during the twentieth century.

At first glance Morus's *How Victorians Took Us to the Moon* may appear to be a classic narrative about scientific triumph in the nineteenth century. However, Morus provides a far more complex and textured picture. Yes, we learn about the success stories, but we also learn about the trials and tribulations. Morus has produced a meticulously researched book with comprehensive referencing that will allow other scholars to break open the field even further and find more stories about Victorian science. Written with a highly accessible style, *How Victorians Took Us to the Moon* is not weighed down by unnecessary jargon and will become a valuable resource for undergraduate and postgraduate

teaching. Even with so much to praise, there are some areas that could have been stronger. It would have added more to the overall narrative if there was some critical discussion about empire. Moreover, while the role of women in science is present, it is very much pushed to the side. Morus does explain in his introduction why women do not feature heavily in the book and provides some historical reasoning that gestures toward the endemic sexism of the Victorian period as a key explanation. However, this rationale is not particularly convincing, and more space should have been given to women's stories. These issues aside, I greatly enjoyed *How Victorians Took Us to the Moon*, and I hope to see more trade books like it in the future so that broader audiences can learn more about the history of science.

Efram Sera-Shriar (University of Copenhagen)

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***Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper: Representing the People*, by Carolyn Vellenga Berman (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 353pp., £98.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780192845405**

Carolyn Vellenga Berman, in *Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper: Representing the People*, considers comparisons made between the representation of the people in government and in writing or art. Such comparisons were implicit in the seventeenth-century phrases 'Republic' or 'Commonwealth of Letters', but (the subject of research by Betsy Bolton, Georgina Green, and myself) they only became explicit after 1772. In Vellenga Berman's account, while Members of Parliament (MPs) represented/were elected by approximately 3.6% of the population between 1832 and 1867, writers represented/portrayed both electors and the disenfranchised in print publications. Building on the theory of print capitalism Benedict Anderson developed in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Vellenga Berman argues that writers imagined into being an alternative national community. But the question at the heart of this study is what, for Charles Dickens, were the effects of Parliament elbowing in on the writer's part? In 1835, Parliament started to publish and to sell its committee and royal commission reports – the Parliamentary Papers or 'Blue Books' – which included eyewitness testimony from or about children, women, lower-class men, and 'emancipated' slaves.

In Chapters One and Two, Vellenga Berman finds in *David Copperfield* (1849-50) clues relating to Dickens's learning and use of shorthand to report parliamentary proceedings for the *Mirror of Parliament*, *True Sun*, and *Morning Chronicle* between

1830 and 1836. Such reporting was permitted in Parliament from 1775, with the assistance of notes from the 1820s, but publication remained a breach of parliamentary privilege until the twentieth century. Dickens, Vellenga Berman argues, did not consider shorthand notation to be 'representative' or democratic; its characters were often arbitrary and had to be decoded into Roman letters to be understood and printed. But such notation did enable people with or without the vote to scrutinise proceedings and, in turn, a more metaphorical breach of privilege: parliamentary reform. Vellenga Berman ingeniously recommends the practice texts used by Dickens or by David Copperfield to learn shorthand as models for this reading; for example, excerpts that legitimised the authority of the King or God, nonsensified by being 'Spelt as written in the Shorthand', in Thomas Gurney's *Brachygraphy* (1825) (qtd p. 71). Vellenga Berman goes on to read the crowd which ultimately storms Parliament in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) as a figuration both of popular opposition to the Catholic Relief Act 1829, that which 'prompt[ed]' the Parliamentary Reform Act 1832, and of journalists in Parliament (p. 76). Vellenga Berman starts to address in Chapter Three what else would be facilitated by shorthand notation, Parliament's drive to kick-start reforms after 1832 by gathering and publishing data. *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37) centres around the Pickwick Club, whose members met to share 'authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations, of their observations of character and manners' (ch. 1). The Pickwickians sometimes come under threat from data-providers; Dickens predicted that so too might Lords and MPs who intended to legislate against their interests.

In Chapter Four, Vellenga Berman argues that Dickens fictionalised the subjects of the Poor Law Commission Report (1834) and Newgate Gaol Report (1836) in *Oliver Twist* (1837-39). Her focus is the interconnection Dickens sets up between free trade of cotton, facilitated by enslavement in America, and forced apprenticeships in Britain and British colonies. Vellenga Berman draws on the links between paper, book-bindings, and cotton twist to suggest that *Twist's* relationships with (a) Mr Gamfield, (b) Fagin, and (c) Mr Brownlow and the Maylies allegorise Dickens's relationships with (a) Richard Bentley, in whose periodical *Twist* was first serialised, (b) pirate imitators in Britain and reproducers in America, and (c) authorised book publishers more regulated by copyright laws. Vellenga Berman's attention turns, in Chapter Five, to the Court of Chancery – and Krook's 'shop [...] called the Court of Chancery' (ch. 5) – in *Bleak House* (1852-53) as 'a knowingly warped mirror image' of the House of Lords and, by the control its members exerted over MPs, the House of Commons (p. 177). This inexact resemblance

emerges from how Esther Summerson's (unspecified) Blue-Book-like testimony disrupts and subjectivizes the history of the people's representation in Parliament told by a 'journalistic narrator' (p. 187). It was used by Dickens to expose Parliament's unwillingness to effectively reform Chancery, urban public health, and, what was therefore necessary, itself.

The remaining three chapters are less concerned with Dickens's mimicry of the Blue-Book form. Vellenga Berman first claims that in *Hard Times* (1854) Dickens sought to problematise the idea of educating the lower classes into 'good', law-abiding citizens, that they should be educated, as children, according to (Committee of the Privy Council on Education) Blue Books and, as adults, by reading (all) Blue Books. He wanted, in particular, to target how in this syllabus Parliament and employers (in Stephen Blackpool's words) 'considers of us, an writes of us, an talks of us', suppresses us (bk 2, ch. 5). But Dickens was also self-aware about his own and other novelists' failure to practice a viable alternative. *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), the focus of Chapter Seven, is positioned as a critique of Parliament and of the Office of Circumlocution for freeing-up international trade, a project 'presented as a disease or poison' (p. 258). Vellenga Berman finds in this a critique of Parliament and of the Treasury for enabling smaller investments in/'democratising' corporations and trade with China, resulting in debt and opium addiction. For her, Dickens implicates his own writings (and, I assume, Blue Books also) as participating in the same problematic system of distribution and exchange. In the final chapter, a study of *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), Vellenga Berman finds in Noddy Boffin's Bower and dust heap – that included by-products of collieries under the House of Lords' protection – an ersatz Parliament, in which Silas Wegg, like a parliamentary journalist, hunts down saleable information, then power. But another figuration is also in play here: the house and heap as all writing (on paper milled from cotton rags or, after 1861, waste esparto grass or wood pulp), Wegg functioning as an access point to 'literature' of value to its writer and their country.

Vellenga Berman's argument is not always clearly stated, nor are many of its loose ends tied-up. Analysis can also be hurt by too-simple equations, like 'elected by = representing' or 'House of Commons = aristocratic monopoly' – and even the odd error, for example, Frances Burdett was not politically active (but ten) in 'the early 1780s' (p. 66) and (though the tea would smell as sweet) Charles Grey was an earl, not a lord (ch. 2). *Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper* is nevertheless an extensive, fascinating, and important study – a complex ecosystem of recovered contexts – and essential reading for scholars of

Dickens's life and writing and of the intellectual history of culture, reform politics, and Parliament in Britain during the long-nineteenth century.

Sarah Wride (University of York)

**'Reimag(in)ing the Victorians', 23 September 2023 – 7 January 2024, Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham, free admission**

While Neo-Victorianism is perhaps most readily associated with literature, film, and television, this fascinating exhibition explores the ways in which nineteenth-century legacies have inspired contemporary artists. By placing Victorian artworks in dialogue with late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century productions that remould Victorian legacies, the exhibition, curated by Isobel Elstob, encourages the viewer to reflect on the inclusions and exclusions of the past and the mythologising processes of history.

The first room focuses on 'Colonial Afterlives', confronting the racism and imperialist violence at the heart of the Victorian empire. Two large sculptures immediately catch the eye. Andrew Gilbert's installation *Major General Andrew Gilbert calls a Drone Strike on his Leek Phone (tm)* (2020) is both terrifying and comical, portraying an imposing figure dressed as a Highland Regiment General, holding a banner that lists British colonial 'victories' on one side and defeats on the other.



'Colonial Afterlives' room with Yinka Shonibare *Earth* (2011) in the centre

In the centre of the room, Yinka Shonibare's *Earth* (2011), with a globe for a head, dressed in bright wax-printed Ankara fabric, strides along with frilled train dragging behind. A British-Nigerian artist, Shonibare combines Victorian tailoring with Ankara prints to encode the material histories of imperialism, such as the Dutch East India appropriating this Indonesian-derived fabric to sell to West Africans. Shonibare's striking series of colour

photographs, *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* (1998) blown up to the scale of epic nineteenth-century paintings, dominate one wall. These portray the artist himself engaged in gambling and debauchery, inspired by William Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* (1732-4). By placing a Black man at the centre of aristocratic excess, Shonibare challenges viewers' expectations and addresses historical omissions.

Heather Agyepong's photographic series *Too Many Blackamoors* (2015) engages in a similar project, inspired by an 1862 carte-de-visite of Lady Sarah Forbes Bonetta (originally Aina), Queen Victoria's adopted goddaughter (Agyepong's title is derived from Elizabeth I's complaint in a letter to the Lord Mayor of London of 1596). In these images, Agyepong poses as an archetypal Victorian muse, yet also deconstructs this performance, anxiously examining her reflection in a mirror in one photograph and lost in thought while reading Peter Fryer's *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1984) in another.

The exhibition continues with 'Unnatural Histories', placing women's overlooked contributions to nineteenth-century science under the microscope. BAVS members will be fascinated to see Florence Nightingale's meticulous shell collection, accompanied by tiny, neatly handwritten labels. Dorothy Cross's film *Come into the Garden Maude* (2003) is projected on the wall, reflecting on the life and work of late-Victorian naturalist, Maude Delap (1866-1953), the first person to successfully breed jellyfish.

My favourite item was the quirky photographic series *The Ladies Field Club of York* (1998), a collaboration between Mark Dion, J. Morgan Puett, and Claire Sancroft. This series pays homage to women's natural history field clubs, imagining fictional naturalists (from palaeontologists to lepidopterists) posed by leading women in the British art world, including museum directors, curators, and art critics. These images chime with another small section of the exhibition, focusing on 'Females Beneath the Lens'. Reflecting on women's representation in the nineteenth century and today, this gallery features works by Julia Margaret Cameron and Sally Mann. These juxtapositions are so thought-provoking that I think they could have benefited from a little more space and expanded commentary.

The focus on the natural world extends into 'The Animal Body Remade'. If you don't like taxidermy, you might prefer to skip this part of the exhibition... Displayed alongside examples of Victorian taxidermy and ornithological studies such as John Gould's *The Birds of Great Britain* (1862-73) are contemporary artworks, from Mark Fairnington's large oil paintings of museum specimens to Debbie Lawson's *Persian Tiger* (2011), a tiger's head rug



created using eco-friendly artificial materials alluding to the violent display of animal bodies as Victorian home decoration. Contemporary art incorporating (ethically sourced) taxidermy is here in abundance. Most impactful, and disturbing, for me were Tessa Farmer's four installations, all of which feature taxidermied creatures attacked by hordes of 'skeleton fairies'. These fairies ride on taxidermied bumblebees and butterflies, armed with hedgehog spines, aggressively forcing nature to succumb to their will, whether that be harvesting eggs on the belly of an unwitting fox, or colonising a book in *The Intruders* (2022). Farmer's fairies borrow from the sinister Victorian fairy art of Richard Doyle, John Anster Fitzgerald, and Richard Dadd. They also call to mind the mercilessly competitive world uncovered by Charles Darwin. These fairies are not evil, Farmer's work suggests, they are simply better adapted to use – and abuse – other creatures when it suits them.

In conclusion, this innovative, fascinating exhibition will, I'm sure, be of interest to many BAVS members and I urge you to visit before it closes on 7

January 2024. As the quotation from Oscar Wilde on one wall proclaims: 'The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.' As scholars of the nineteenth century, it is our duty to engage with these rewritings and reimag(in)ings, displayed in all their complexity in this memorable exhibition.

*Sarah Parker (Loughborough University)*



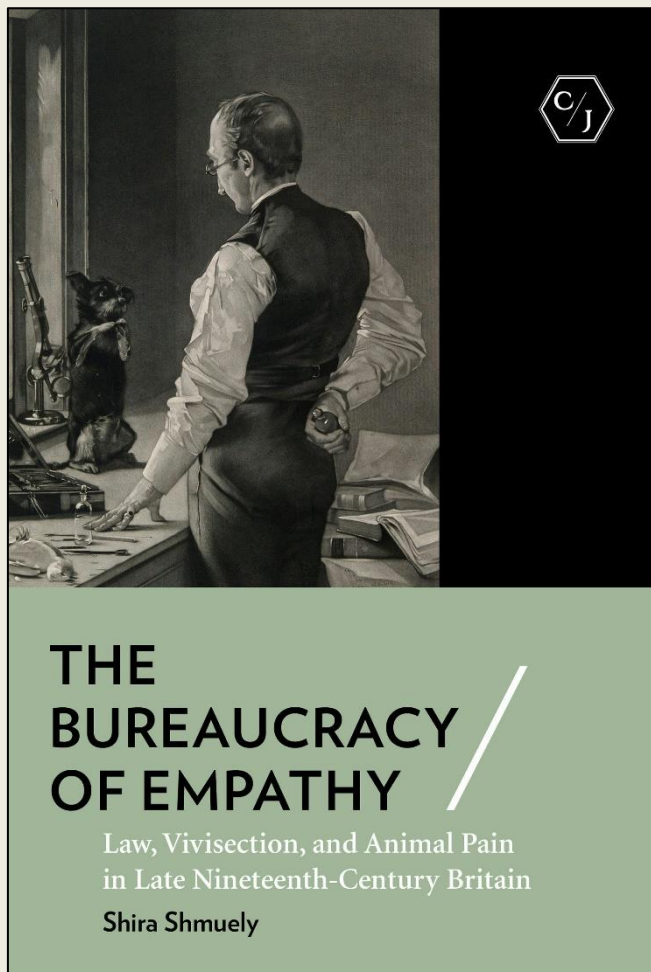
Tessa Farmer, *Swarming Fever* (2021)



## Recent Publications

Are you an author, editor, or publisher of a recent or forthcoming book on an aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture? Please email a JPG image of the cover to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com) for inclusion in a future issue. If you are interested in reviewing one of the titles featured below, please get in touch at [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com).

***The Bureaucracy of Empathy: Law, Vivisection, and Animal Pain in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain*, by Shira Shmuely (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2023) 270pp., £27.99 (paperback) and £17.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781501770395 (paperback) and 9781501770401 (e-book)**



*The Bureaucracy of Empathy* revolves around two central questions: What is pain? And how do we recognize, understand, and ameliorate the pain of nonhuman animals? Shira Shmuely investigates these ethical issues through a close and careful history of the origins, implementation, and enforcement of the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act of Parliament, which for the first time imposed legal restrictions on animal experimentation and mandated official supervision of procedures "calculated to give pain" to animal subjects.

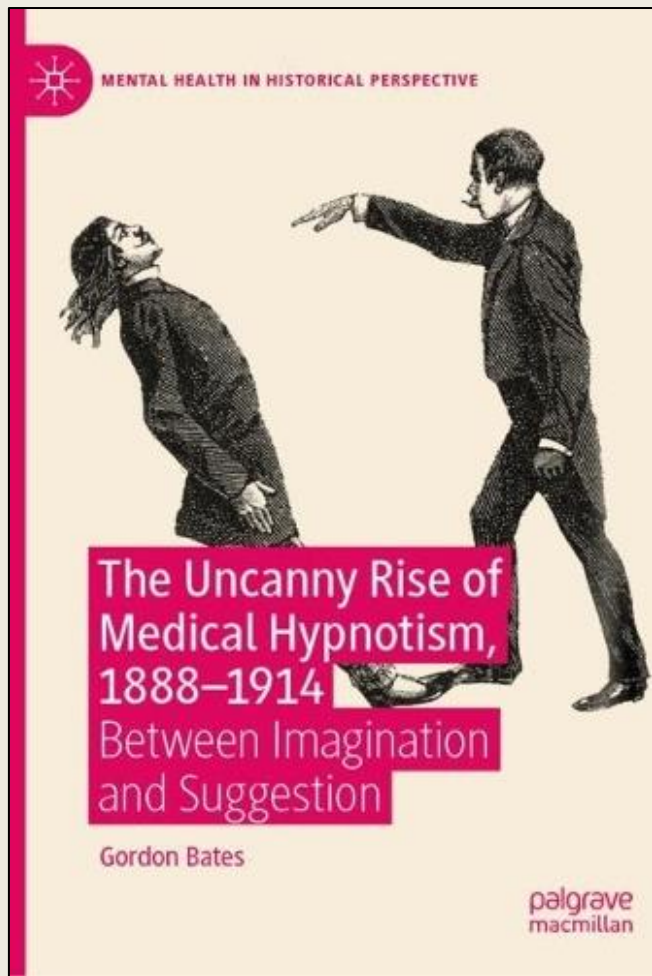
Exploring how scientists, bureaucrats, and

lawyers wrestled with the problem of animal pain and its perception, Shmuely traces in depth and detail how the Act was enforced, the medical establishment's initial resistance and then embrace of regulation, and the challenges from anti-vivisection advocates who deemed it insufficient protection against animal suffering. She shows how a "bureaucracy of empathy" emerged to support and administer the legislation, navigating incongruent interpretations of pain. This crucial moment in animal law and ethics continues to inform laws regulating the treatment of nonhuman animals in laboratories, farms, and homes around the worlds to the present.

***The Uncanny Rise of Medical Hypnotism (1888-1914): Between Imagination and Suggestion*, by Gordon Bates (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xxii+265pp., £44.99 (hardback), ISBN 9783031427244**

This book explores the improbable rise of medical hypnotism in Victorian Britain and its subsequent assimilation and neglect. It follows the careers of the 'New Hypnotists': Charles Lloyd Tuckey, John Milne Bramwell, George Kingsbury and Robert Felkin. This loosely knit group all trained with the Suggestion School of Nancy and published books on hypnotism. They had to confront the many public and medical prejudices against the trance state which had persisted after the scandalous disgrace of John Elliotson and medical mesmerism, fifty years before.

Hypnotism was a highly contested technology and in the 1890s the debates about safety and utility were fought in the national newspapers as well as the medical journals. The new hypnotists took on the might of the medical institutions personified by Ernest Hart, Editor of the *British Medical Journal*. However their timing was propitious, as the rise of faith-healing forced the medical profession to confront the non-physical therapeutic aspects of the doctor-patient relationship. The hypnotic discourse was shaped by these developments, but also by the fascination of the general public, novelists, occultists, psychic investigators, educationalists and spiritualists in the myriad possibilities of the trance state.

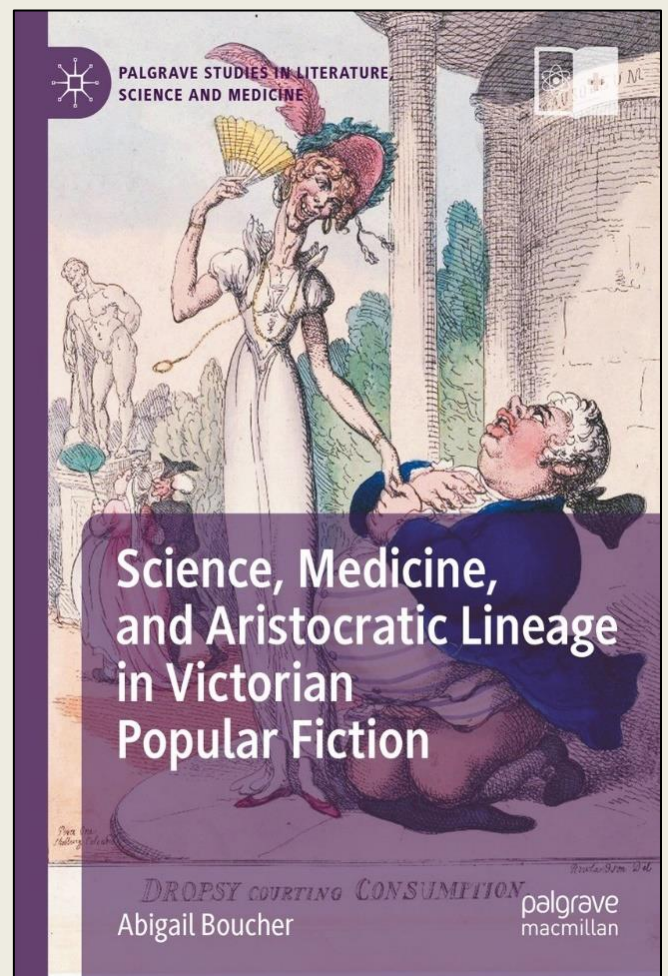


Despite growing interest in the prehistory of British psychology and talking therapies, and the recent challenges to the primacy of Freudian histories, there are few accounts of the development of British 'eclectic therapy'. This book uses the New Hypnotists as a lens to examine Victorian medicine and society, exploring their role in establishing the term 'psychotherapy,' and legitimising medical hypnotism, a precursor of psychological therapies.

***Science, Medicine, and Aristocratic Lineage in Victorian Popular Fiction*, by Abigail Boucher (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), x+237pp., £99.99 (hardback) and £79.50 (e-book), ISBN 9783031411403 (hardback) and 9783031411410 (e-book)**

*Science, Medicine, and Lineage in Popular Fiction of the Long Nineteenth Century* explores the dialogue between popular literature and medical and scientific discourse in terms of how they represent the highly visible and pathologized British aristocratic body. This book explores and complicates the two major portrayals of aristocrats in nineteenth-century literature: that of the medicalised, frail, debauched, and diseased aristocrat, and that of the heroic, active, beautiful 'noble', both of which are frequent and

resonant in popular fiction of the long nineteenth century. Abigail Boucher argues that the concept of class in the long nineteenth century implicitly includes notions of blood, lineage, and bodily 'correctness', and that 'class' was therefore frequently portrayed as an empirical, scientific, and medical certainty. Due to their elevated and highly visible social positions, both historical and fictional aristocrats were frequently pathologized in the public mind and watched for signs of physical excellence or deviance. Using popular fiction, Boucher establishes patterns across decades, genres, and demographics and considers how these patterns react to, normalise, or feed into the advent of new scientific and medical understandings.

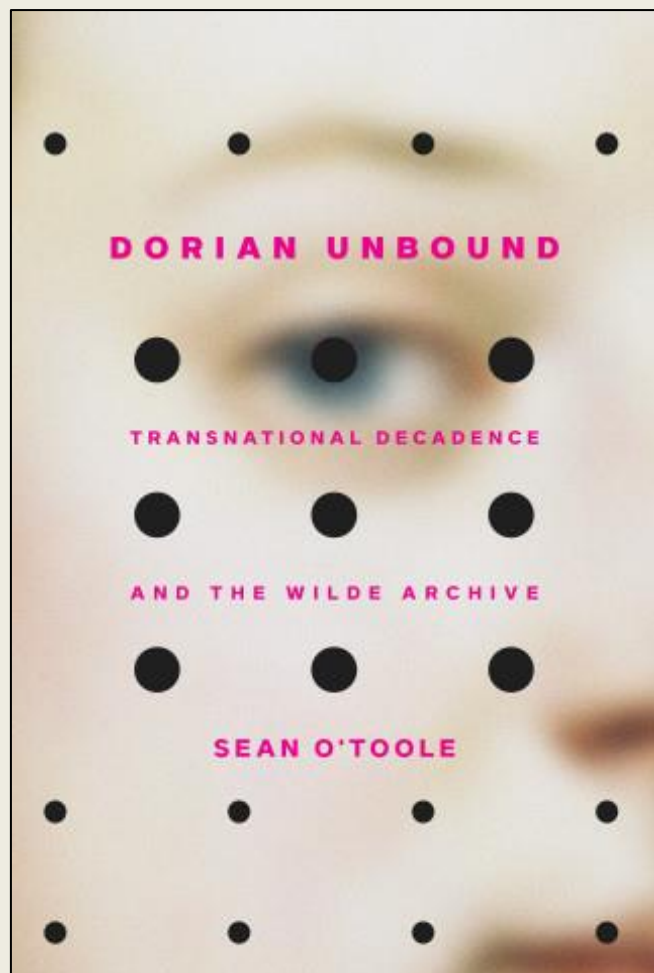


***Dorian Unbound: Transnational Decadence and the Wilde Archive*, by Sean O'Toole (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023), 192pp., £34.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781421446530**

Building upon a large body of archival and critical work on Oscar Wilde's only novel, *Dorian Unbound* offers a new account of the importance of transnational contexts in the forging of Wilde's imagination and the wider genealogy of literary Decadence. Sean O'Toole argues that the attention



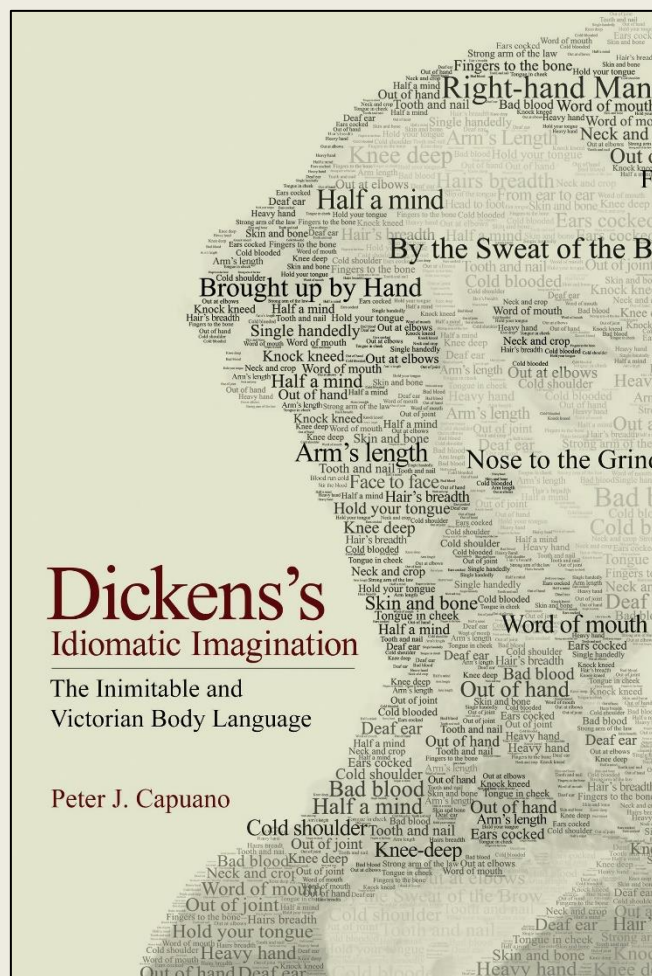
critics have rightly paid to Wilde's backgrounds in Victorian Aestheticism and French Decadence has had the unintended effect of obscuring a much broader network of transnational contexts. Attention to these contexts allows us to reconsider how we read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, what we believe we know about Wilde, and how we understand literary Decadence as both a persistent, highly mobile cultural mode and a precursor to global modernism.



***Dickens's Idiomatic Imagination: The Inimitable and Victorian Body Language*, by Peter J. Capuano (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2023), 288pp., £27.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781501772863**

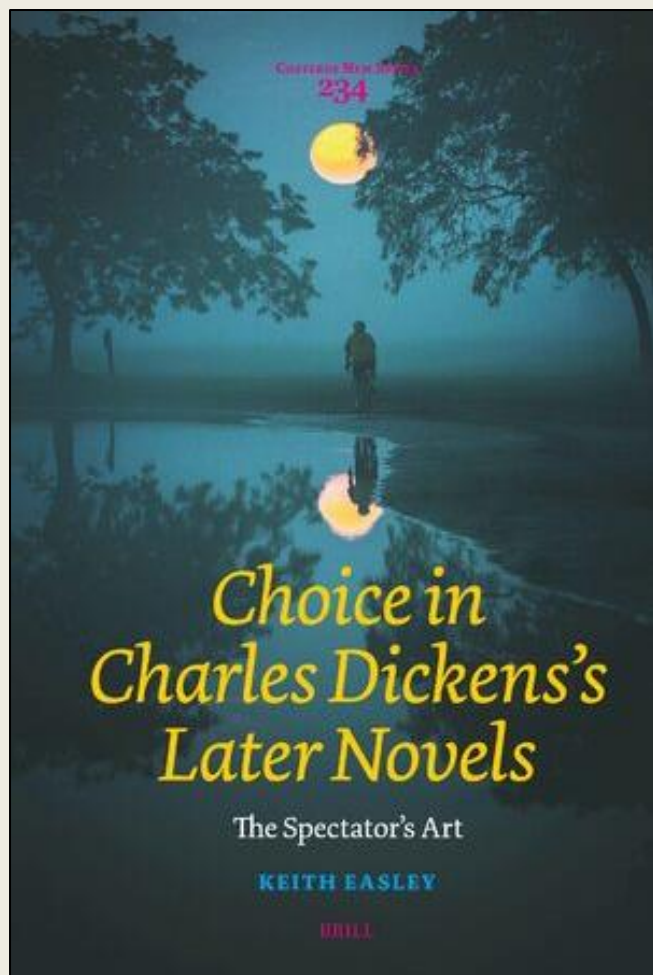
*Dickens's Idiomatic Imagination* offers an original analysis of how Charles Dickens's use of "low" and "slangular" (his neologism) language allowed him to express and develop his most sophisticated ideas. Using a hybrid of digital (distant) and analogue (close) reading methodologies, Peter J. Capuano considers Dickens's use of bodily idioms—"right-hand man," "shoulder to the wheel," "nose to the grindstone"—against the broader lexical backdrop of the nineteenth century.

Dickens was famously drawn to the vernacular language of London's streets, but this book is the first to call attention to how he employed phrases that embody actions, ideas, and social relations for specific narrative and thematic purposes. Focusing on the mid- to late career novels *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend*, Capuano demonstrates how Dickens came to relish using common idioms in uncommon ways and the possibilities they opened up for artistic expression. *Dickens's Idiomatic Imagination* establishes a unique framework within the social history of language alteration in nineteenth-century Britain for rethinking Dickens's literary trajectory and its impact on the vocabularies of generations of novelists, critics, and speakers of English.



***Choice in Charles Dickens's Later Novels: The Spectator's Art*, by Keith Easley (Leiden: Brill, 2023), €119.00 (hardback), ISBN 9789004528499**

In his later novels, Charles Dickens uses the interaction between characters and their audiences within the fiction to dramatize his growing understanding of the pivotal role of spectatorship and

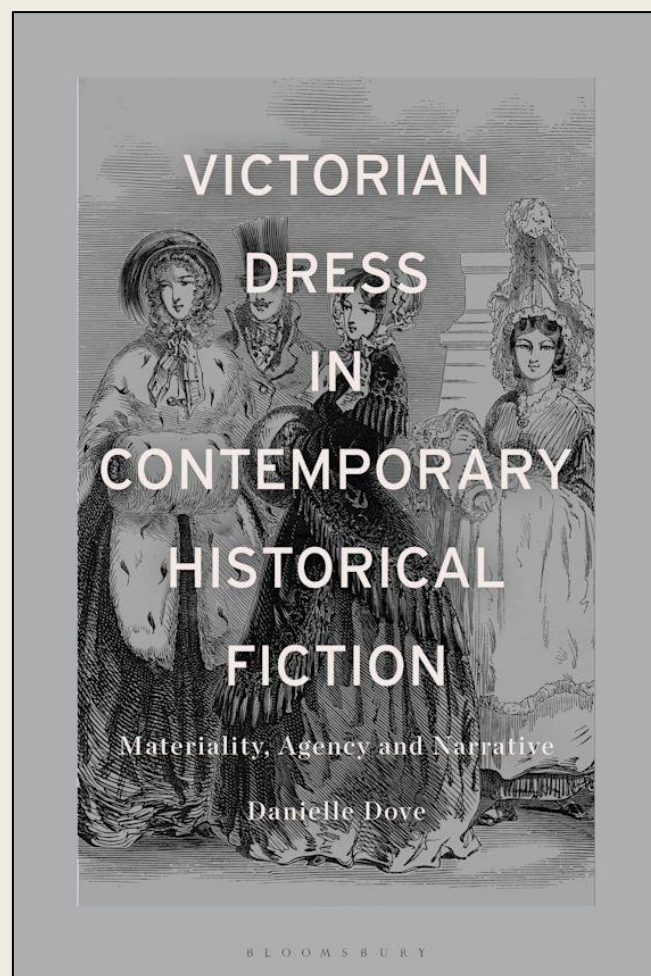


choice in a more democratic society. Dickens's pluralistic art of sameness and difference redefines that detachment, and liberates choice both inside and outside the novels, for the relationship between characters and their audiences within the narratives actually inscribes our own relationship with them in the performance of reading, a reflective doubling of the fiction upon the reader across time with moral consequences for our spectatorship of our own lives.

***Victorian Dress in Contemporary Historical Fiction: Materiality, Agency and Narrative*, by Danielle Dove (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023), 210pp., £85.00 (hardback) and £76.50 (e-book), ISBN 9781350294684 (hardback) and 9781350294691 (e-book)**

*Victorian Dress in Contemporary Historical Fiction* is the first full-length study to investigate and attend to the deeply suggestive and highly symbolic iterations of Victorian women's dress in the contemporary cultural imagination. Drawing upon a range of popular and less well-studied neo-Victorian novels published between 1990 and 2014, as well as their Victorian counterparts, 19th-century illustrative material, and extant Victorian garments, Danielle Dove explores the creative possibilities afforded by

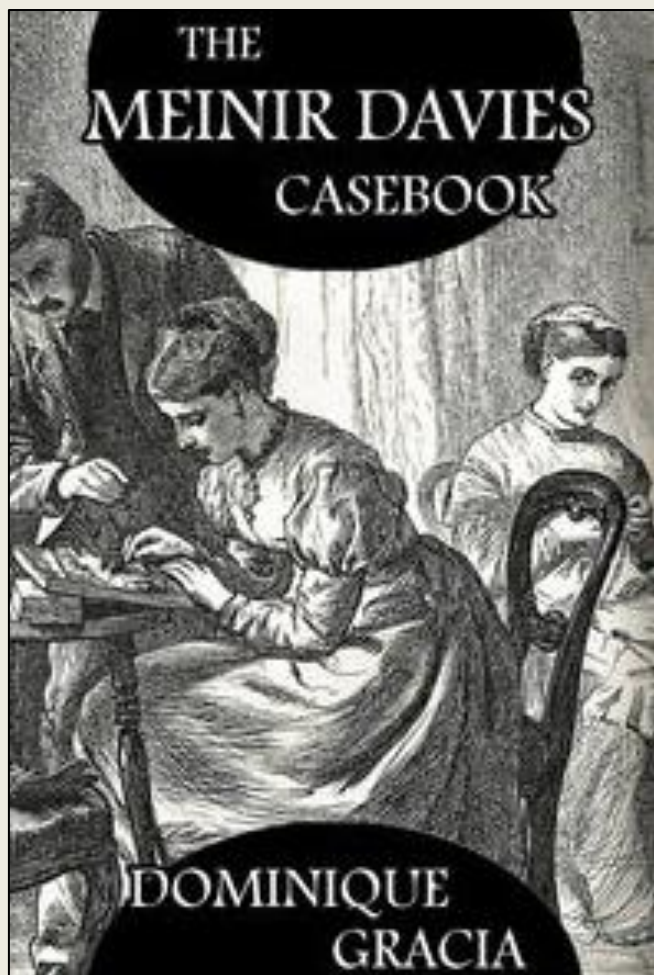
dress and fashion as gendered sites of agency and affect. Focusing on the relationship between texts and textiles, she demonstrates how dress is central to the narrativization, re-formulation, and re-fashioning of the material past in the present. In its examination of the narrative trajectories, lively vitalities, and material entanglements that accrue to, and originate from, dress in the neo-Victorian novel, this study brings a fresh approach to reading Victorian sartorial culture. For researchers and students of Victorian and neo-Victorian studies, dress history, material culture, and gender studies, this volume offers a rich resource with which to illuminate the power of fashion in fiction.



***The Meinir Davies Casebook*, by Dominique Gracia (London: MX Publishing, 2023), 270pp., £9.50 (paperback), ISBN 9781804242520**

In Victorian London, Sherlock Holmes is not alone in solving mysteries that baffle the official police. Housekeeper, schoolmistress, detective: Mrs Meinir Davies tracks down missing mothers, stolen treasures, and secrets and scandals touching some of England's most venerable institutions, from the Church to the Houses of Parliament.





In this collection of 12 stories, Meinir joins forces with Sherlock, Dorcas Dene, and the official police on the streets of London, from East to West, to help public servants, abandoned children, and one mysterious Mrs J. Holmes. What is the true story behind one of Holmes' bloodiest adventures, The Red Circle? Why has the man in the white hat followed Mrs Holmes across the Atlantic? And how many marriages will be threatened by a single diamond lizard?

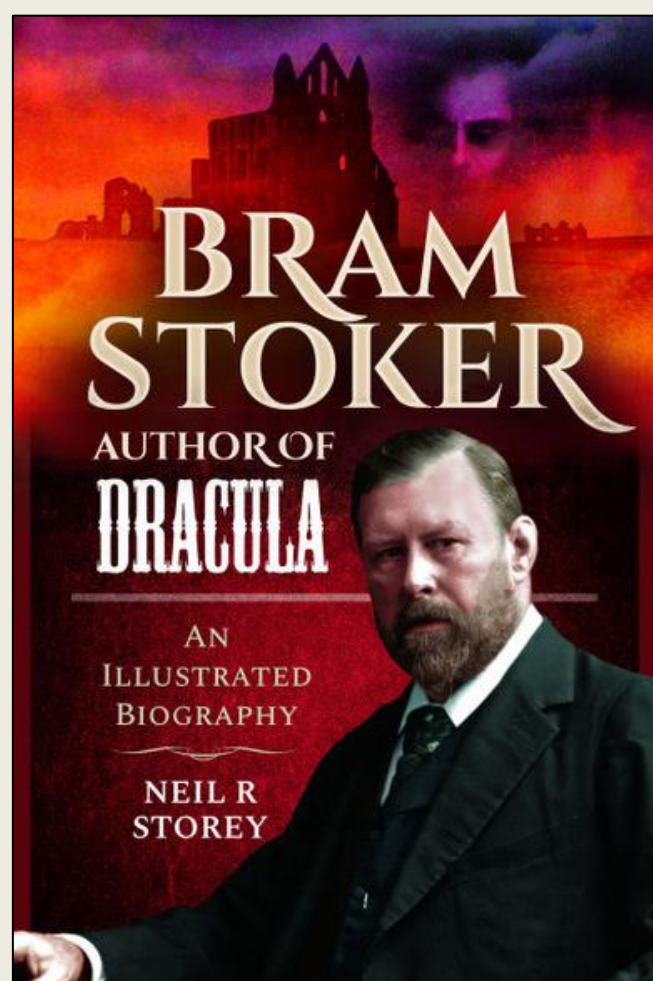
***Bram Stoker: Author of Dracula. An Illustrated Biography*, by Neil R. Storey (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2023), 336pp., £25.00 (paperback), ISBN: 9781399071079**

*Bram Stoker: Author of Dracula* is an affectionate and revealing biography of the man who created the vampire novel that would define the genre and lead to a new age in Gothic horror literature.

Based on decades of painstaking research in libraries, museums, and university archives and privileged access to private collections on both sides of the Atlantic, the private letters of Bram and the reminiscences of those who knew him not only shed new light on Stoker's ancestry, his life, loves and friendships they also reveal more about the places

and people who inspired him and how he researched and wrote his books. Bram wrote numerous articles, short stories and poetry for newspapers and magazines, he had a total of eleven novels and two collections of short stories published in his lifetime, but he would only become known for one of them – *Dracula*. Tragically, he did not live long enough to see it as a huge success.

In his heyday as Acting Manager for Sir Henry Irving at the Lyceum Theatre in the West End of London, Bram was a well-known figure in a golden age of British theatre. He was a big-framed, ebullient, genial, gentleman, with red hair and beard, who never lost his soft Irish brogue, was blessed with wit, and a host of entertaining stories fit for every occasion. Described as having the paw of Hercules and the smile of Machiavelli, above all he knew what it meant to be a loyal friend.

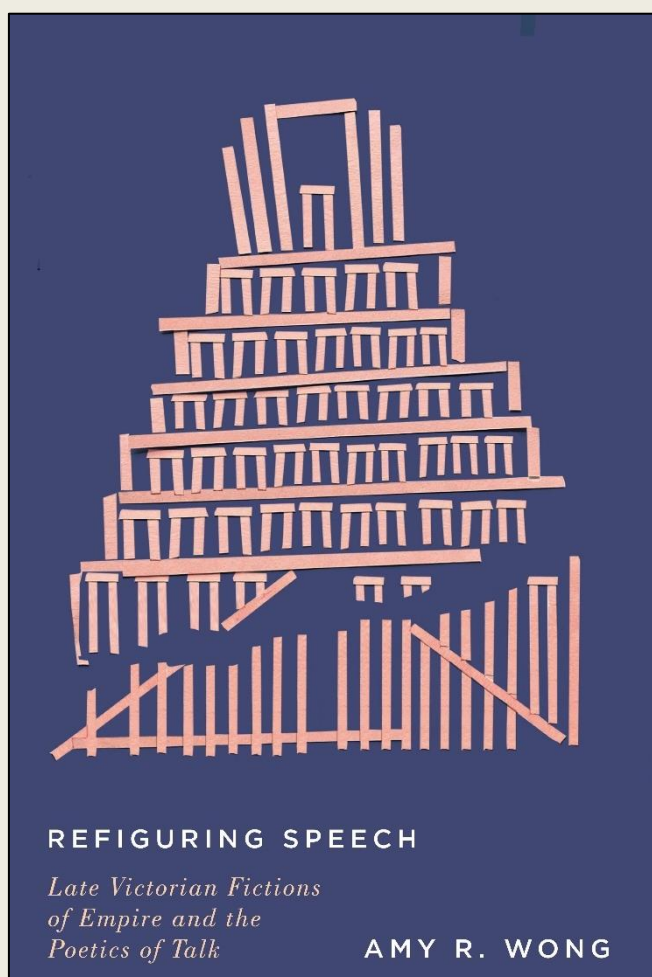


***Refiguring Speech: Late Victorian Fictions of Empire and the Poetics of Talk*, by Amy R. Wong (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2023), 240pp., £63.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781503635173**

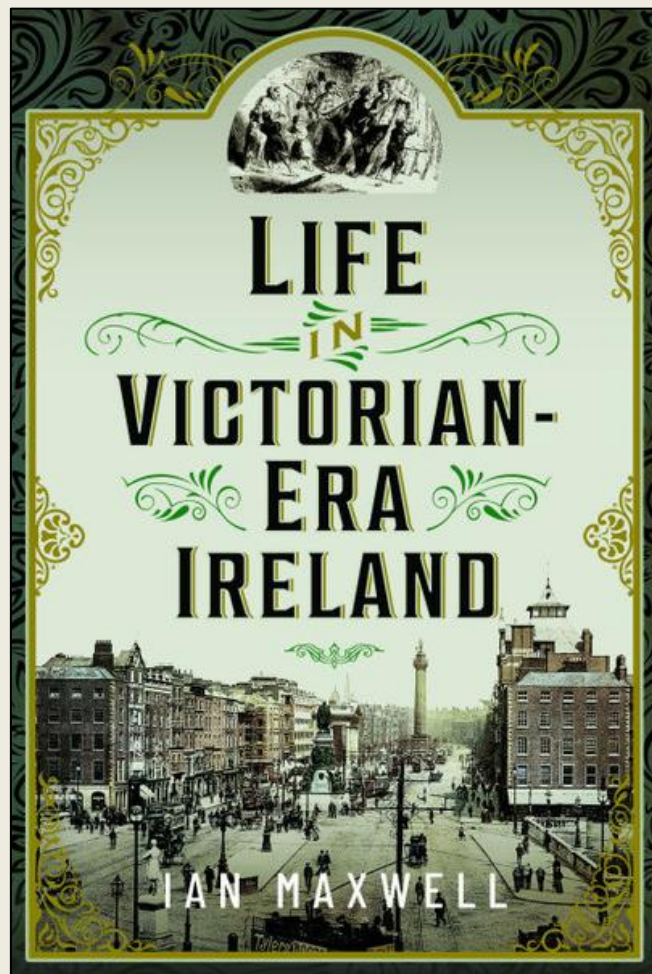
In this book, Amy R. Wong unravels the colonial and racial logic behind seemingly innocuous assumptions about "speech": that our words belong to us, and that

self-possession is a virtue. Through readings of late-Victorian fictions of empire, Wong revisits the scene of speech's ideological foreclosures as articulated in postcolonial theory. Engaging Afro-Caribbean thinkers like Édouard Glissant and Sylvia Wynter, *Refiguring Speech* reroutes attention away from speech and toward an anticolonial poetics of talk, which emphasizes communal ownership and embeddedness within the social world and material environment.

Analyzing novels by Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, George Meredith, Joseph Conrad, and Ford Madox Ford, Wong refashions the aesthetics of disordered speech – such as parroting, eavesdropping, profuse inarticulacy, and dysfluency – into alternate forms of communication that stand on their own as talk. Wong demonstrates how late nineteenth-century Britain's twin crises of territorialization – of empire and of new media – spurred narrative interests in capturing the sense that speech's tethering to particular persons was no longer tenable. In doing so, Wong connects this period to US empire by constructing a genealogy of Anglo-American speech's colonialist and racialized terms of proprietorship. *Refiguring Speech* offers students and scholars of Victorian literature and postcolonial studies a powerful conceptualization of talk as an insurgent form of communication.



*Life in Victorian-Era Ireland*, by Ian Maxwell (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2023), 224pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399042550



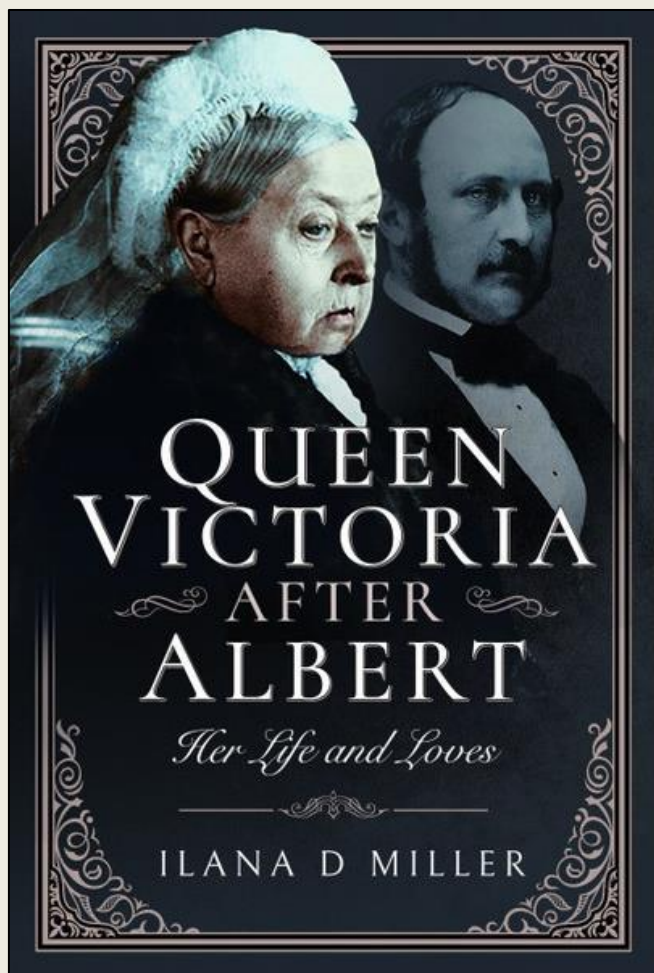
There are many books which tackle the political developments in Ireland during the nineteenth century. The aim of this book is to show what life was like during the reign of Queen Victoria for those who lived in the towns and countryside during a period of momentous change. It covers a period of sixty-four years (1837-1901) when the only thing that that connected its divergent decades and generations was the fact that the same head of state presided over them. It is a social history, in so far as politics can be divorced from everyday life in Ireland, examining, changes in law and order, government intervention in education and public health, the revolution in transport and the shattering impact of the Great Famine and subsequent eviction and emigration. The influence of religion was a constant factor during the period with the three major denominations, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian, between them accounting for all but a very small proportion of the Irish population. Schools, hospitals, and other charitable institutions, orphan societies, voluntary organisation, hotels, and even public transport and sporting organisations were organised along denominational lines. On a lighter note, popular



entertainment, superstitions, and marriage customs are explored through the eyes of the Victorians themselves during the last full century of British rule.

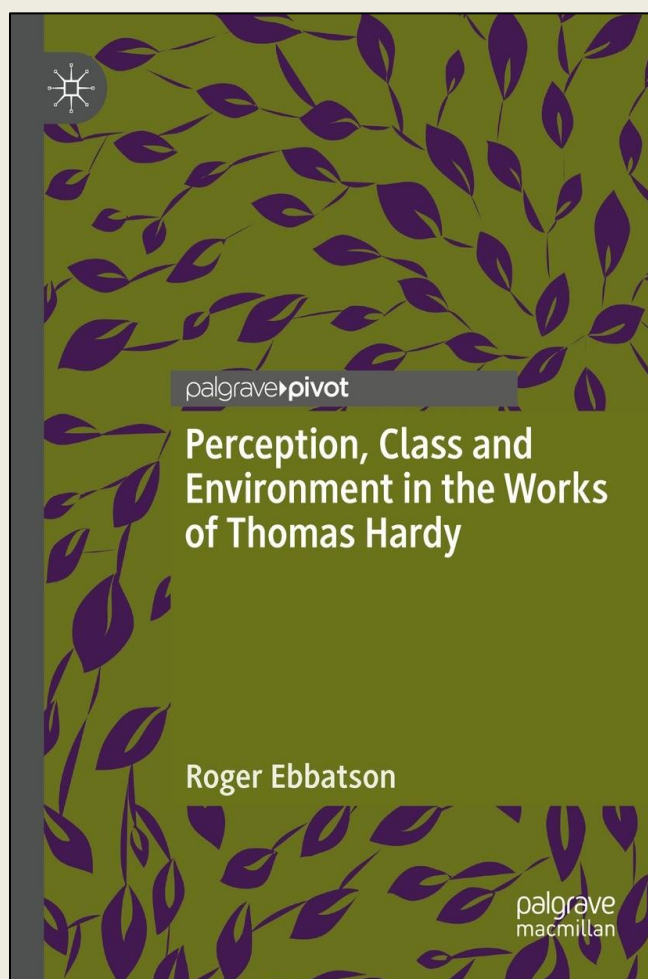
***Queen Victoria After Albert: Her Life and Loves*, by Ilana D. Miller (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2023), 224pp., £25.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399099714**

Few British monarchs have fit the time, the tone or the energy of an era quite the way Queen Victoria mastered her reign. From her ascension to the throne in 1837 to her death in 1901, her monarchy was one of spectacular advances in the British Empire. Political, scientific, and industrial wonders were changing the world. Britain's influence reached all corners of the earth. But there was one area that particularly intrigued the Queen. Men. Keenly aware of the opposite sex, her most trusted advisors were men. Lord Melbourne, her first prime minister, was an avuncular presence. Then her beloved husband Prince Albert took the reins until his death in 1861. In a widowhood of forty years, her ministers were a varied lot. She adored Disraeli, disliked Gladstone, and found genuine friendship with Lord Salisbury. Then there was Mr. Brown, the Scottish ghillie who



she found wonderfully attractive. Later there was Abdul Karim, the Munshi, or teacher with whom she had a motherly relationship. She adored her son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, the 'sunshine of their lives' and was devastated when he died. She also loved her grandson-in-law, Prince Louis Battenberg, who was one of the executors of her will. Those years without Albert were not barren loveless years, they were not without happiness and pleasure, even if the queen herself might protest.

***Perception, Class and Environment in the Works of Thomas Hardy*, by Roger Ebbatson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), xii+154pp., £34.99 (hardback) and £27.99 (e-book), ISBN 9783031401091 (hardback) and 9783031401107 (e-book)**



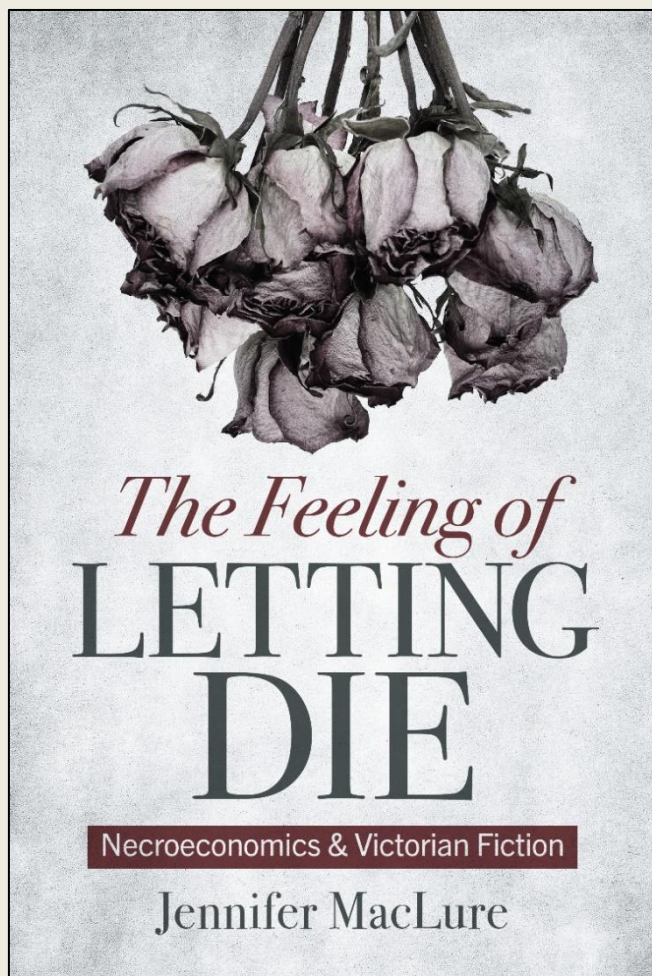
This book examines Thomas Hardy's writing in both prose and poetry, focusing on issues of perception, 'being', class and environment. It illustrates the ways in which Hardy represents a social world which serves as a 'horizon' for the individual and explores the dialectic between the perceptible world and human consciousness. Ebbatson demonstrates how, in Hardy's oeuvre, modern life becomes alienated



from its roots in rural life – individual freedom is achieved in works like *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure* or *The Woodlanders* at the cost of personal insecurity and a deepening sense of homelessness. However, this development occurs against the marginalisation of dialect forms of speech. This book also explores how Hardy's impressionist vision serves to undermine the prevailing conventions of plot structure.

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***The Feeling of Letting Die: Necroeconomics and Victorian Fiction*, by Jennifer MacLure (Athens: Ohio State Press, 2023), 200pp., \$69.95 (hardback) and \$49.95 (e-book), ISBN 9780814214855 (hardback) and 9780814283165 (e-book)**



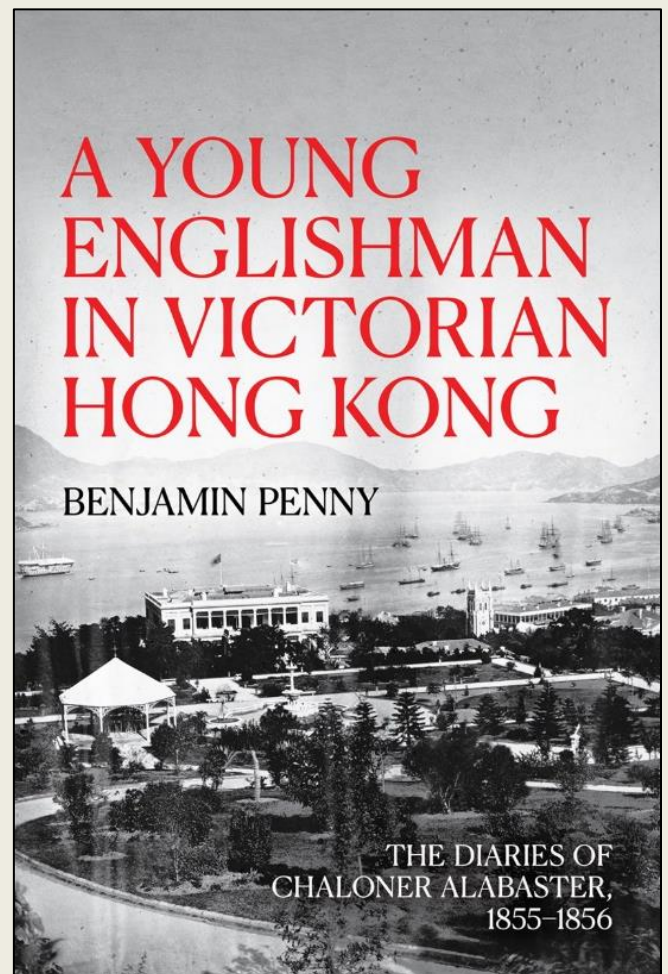
In *The Feeling of Letting Die*, Jennifer MacLure explores how Victorian novels depict the feelings that both fuel and are produced by an economic system that lets some people die in service of the free market. MacLure argues that Victorian authors present capitalism's death function as a sticking point, a series of contradictions, and a problem to solve as characters grapple with systems that allow, demand, and cause the deaths of their less fortunate fellows.

Utilizing Achille Mbembe's theorization of

necropolitics, MacLure uses the term "necroeconomics," positioning Victorian authors – even those who were deeply committed to liberal capitalism – as hyperaware of capitalism's death function. Examining both canonical and lesser-known works by Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, William Morris, and George Eliot, *The Feeling of Letting Die* shows capitalism as not straightforwardly imposed via economic policy but instead as a system functioning through the emotions and desires of the human beings who enact it. In doing so, MacLure reveals how emotion functions as both the legitimating epistemic mode of capitalism and its most salient threat.

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***A Young Englishman in Victorian Hong Kong: The Diaries of Chaloner Alabaster, 1855–1856*, edited by Benjamin Penny (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2023), £39.99 (paperback) and free (e-book), ISBN 9781760465919 (paperback) and 9781760465926 (e-book)**



In August 1855, 16-year-old Chaloner Alabaster left England for Hong Kong, to take up a position as a student interpreter in the China Consular Service. He would stay for almost 40 years, climbing the rungs of

the service and eventually becoming consul-general of Canton. When he retired he returned to England and received a knighthood. He died in 1898. Throughout his adult life, Alabaster kept diaries.

In the first four volumes of these diaries, collected here by Benjamin Penny, the teenage Alabaster recorded his thoughts and observations, told himself anecdotes, and exploded in outbursts of anger and frustration. He was young and enthusiastic, and the everyday sights, sounds and smells of Hong Kong were novel to him. He describes how the Chinese people around him ironed clothes, dried flour and threshed rice; how they gambled, prepared their

food and made bean curd; and what opera, new year festivities and the birthday of the Heavenly Empress were like. Like many a young Victorian, he was also a keen observer of natural history, fascinated by fireflies and ants, corals and sea slugs, and the volcanic origins of the landscape.

Alabaster's diaries are a unique, vibrant and riveting record of life in the young British colony on the cusp of the Second Opium War. With *A Young Englishman in Victorian Hong Kong*, Penny sheds new light on the history of the region.

# BAVS Funding Reports

*BAVS is committed to the support of its members' activities, such as conferences, events, and research activities. The application forms, including guidance notes and deadlines, are available from the [BAVS Funding webpage](#). There are two rounds of funding each year, with deadlines in May and November. For further information, please email the BAVS Funding Officer, Amelia Yeates ([yeatesa@hope.ac.uk](mailto:yeatesa@hope.ac.uk)).*

## BAVS Research Funding Reports

### **"Death Allowed to Enter": The Folklore of Death and Dying in Nineteenth-Century Rural England**

My project "'Death Allowed to Enter": The Folklore of Death and Dying in Nineteenth-Century Rural England' addresses a gap in the current understanding of nineteenth-century death culture by demonstrating how traditions recorded by folklorists can recuperate lost histories of a persistently marginalised sector of British society: the rural working class. It uses folklore alongside working-class autobiography, archaeology and material culture as a means of finding new ground in the field of nineteenth-century death studies, arguing for a distinct rural working-class death culture which has thus far been overlooked by scholars of Victorian Studies who have largely focused on the urban experience of death.

In September 2023, I travelled up to Sheffield in order to visit three different libraries and archives: the Richard Blakeborough Yorkshire Folklore Collection and the Archives of Cultural Tradition at Sheffield University Library Special Collections; the Addy Collection and numerous primary sources (for example funeral expenses and cards by Sheffield confectioners for funeral biscuits) at Sheffield Archives; and, finally, various folklore-related primary sources at Sheffield Local Studies Library. I was hoping to gain some insight into how nineteenth-century folklorists worked by examining their notebooks and also find some additional primary sources on the folklore of death, dying, and funerals.

On my first day I visited Sheffield City Archives and examined some wonderful late nineteenth-century wrappers for funeral biscuits which demonstrated how this rural tradition had by the end of the century been adopted and adapted in cities, commodifying a usually home-baked customary item. I then spent some time reading the notebooks of Derbyshire folklorist Sidney Oldall Addy and was fascinated to see that he entirely fit the mould of an antiquarian armchair researcher who collected folklore from previously printed sources rather than

venturing into the field to speak to any contemporary rural 'folk'.

I spent the second day at Sheffield University Library Special Collections and was delighted to be able to contrast Addy's notebooks with the notebooks of South Yorkshire folklorist Richard Blakeborough. His largely hand-written notes (thankfully in legible hand) demonstrated his close links to his local community and his numerous visits to local 'grandmothers' who shared their traditional folkloric beliefs with him. Within his notebooks I got to meet the delightful Mrs Trott who shared her views on how death culture was changing and bemoaned the loss of the rural funeral. Blakeborough transcribed her words in Yorkshire dialect, providing a hugely valuable unmediated source for rural working-class attitudes and beliefs around death and dying towards the end of the nineteenth century.

I finished up my trip at the Sheffield Local Studies Library, learning more about funeral biscuits. This trip has really improved my understanding of the different ways folklorists worked and the importance of engaging more deeply with those, such as Blakeborough, who published works based on interviews with contemporary rural working-class people. The first-hand accounts Blakeborough collected from Mrs Trott and Mrs Blewitt particularly have provided some wonderful insight into the pressures on the rural funeral in the nineteenth century and how the folk felt about the changes to their traditional practices. Furthermore Blakeborough recorded and annotated a traditional rhyme about preparing the body for burial which has further deepened my understanding of this crucial ritual moment and will provide ample examples for my thesis chapter on the practice. A huge thank you to BAVS for making this trip possible, the evidence I have collected will make a valuable addition to my thesis.

*Claire Cock-Starkey  
(Birkbeck, University of London)*

### **"Sheaves from Sagaland": Accounts of "Saga-Men" and Sailors at the Scott Polar Research Institute**

In August 2023, thanks to the support of a BAVS Funding Grant, I was able to make an archival trip to



the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) in Cambridge. This visit was in aid of my PhD thesis on nineteenth-century readers of Old Norse and their travels to the islands of the North Atlantic.

Previous scholarship has largely focused on Iceland and canonical 'Saga Men' such as William Morris. My project, therefore, aims to broaden our conception of the kind of people who were travelling to and writing about Iceland but also to contextualise the Victorian fascination with the country alongside other islands such as Greenland and the Faroes which were also closely associated with Norse exploration and settlement.

The plan for my time at the SPRI was to look at primary materials related to British naval voyages to, and past, Greenland in the 1800s. This included looking through the diaries of arctic sailors and explorers such as John Ross, James Clark Ross, and Leopold McClintock, as well as more ephemeral materials such as the playbills of entertainment put on for the crew's benefit. Visiting the SPRI also afforded me the opportunity to visit its attached museum, prompting questions about how these imperial British naval expeditions are presented to the public today, and how their artefacts are displayed alongside those of Indigenous arctic communities.

Many of the expeditions whose materials I was examining in the archives were spurred by the disappearance of the 1845 Franklin Expedition, which was lost looking for the North-West Passage with all hands aboard. The enduring appeal of the mystery of their demise, and the amount of time and resources devoted to solving it, has many parallels with the 'disappearance' of the Norse colony from Greenland in the fifteenth century. Both are examples of the limits of European exploration and therefore also both sources of Imperial anxiety for Britain and its navy. This archival visit afforded me the opportunity to explore the connections between these two historical mysteries, and the materials which I examined during my time at the SPRI have contributed greatly to my thinking in my thesis chapter on Greenland.

Thanks to BAVS Funding, I was not only able to examine these archival materials at the SPRI, but also to spend time (during the hours the archive was closed) within its specialist library. The SPRI contains many specialist and otherwise hard to access books on polar research, as well as a range of contemporary Indigenous magazine publications which are not widely available in the UK. This was a real boon to my wider reading and research, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to spend time working there.

*Hannah Armstrong (University of York)*

## **Interwoven: Painting, Textile Craft, and the Haptics of Gender in Victorian Britain**

At the end of September 2023, I used BAVS funding to pay for airline travel from the United States to London, in order to conduct preliminary research for my dissertation, tentatively titled *Interwoven: Painting, Textile Craft and the Haptics of Gender in Victorian Britain*. This project explores work of female Pre-Raphaelite painters in juxtaposition with textile works by women of the same period. This project's central claim is that by applying frameworks of multisensory material culture analysis to both painting and textiles, it is possible to deconstruct inherently gendered hierarchies of genre. It will consider needlework pieces such as samplers and needlework pictures, items of dress and examples of Arts and Crafts embroidery in conversation with paintings by Elizabeth Siddall, Rosa Brett, Joanna Mary Boyce, and Rebecca Solomon, among others.

During the first few days of my visit to London, I had the opportunity to study works by Elizabeth Siddall exhibited in the landmark show *The Rossettis* at the Tate. This show brought together works by Siddall from all over the UK, as well as works in the homes of private collectors that would prove difficult to access outside of this context. With the support of BAVS, I was able to undertake travel outside my departmental funding budget to see this exhibition, which cut months out of the research time for my dissertation since it allowed me to view and examine a very large group of works at once. While in London, I also conducted provenance and background research on several key works by Rosa Brett in the archives of private dealers and collectors. Additionally, I traveled to the Fitzwilliam Museum for a study day with their extensive sampler collection, examining a selection of works that helped me continue build my knowledge base on domestic needlework ahead of writing my first chapter, which explores the material and thematic relationships between objects produced in and for the home, and professional painting practice. In summary, this trip proved a fruitful means of kickstarting my dissertation research process and helped me to develop professional networks and resources in the UK that I will build upon when I return for more extensive research travel in the spring.

*Isabella J. Galdone (Yale University)*

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## **Olive Custance in Fairyland**

Thanks to the generous funding of BAVS, I was able to go to the Berg Collection at New York Public Library to look at the diaries and letters of the *fin-de-siècle*

poet Olive Custance. I was able to consult the entirety of the Custance collection held at the Berg, which I will put to use for three projects:

1. My intended monograph, which develops my PhD thesis on responses to the Italian Renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century, which in part explores Custance's poetic and romantic identity as a Renaissance pageboy.
2. An independent article on Custance resulting from findings at the Berg, which will investigate her medieval self-fashioning across multiple relationships.
3. My postdoctoral project on trans aestheticism, which I am beginning in December, which will explore Custance's imagining of fairyland as a space of gender nonconformity.

This builds on my existing research into Custance at the British Library, London and the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris. Thanks to my trip to New York, I now have a much fuller picture of Custance, building on the London and Paris holdings whose strengths lie in her well-documented relationships with Lord Alfred Douglas and Natalie Barney. The New York trip has alerted me to her creative and romantic involvement with many other contemporary figures, which my article will address.

I am very grateful to BAVS for funding this project and will credit BAVS in all future publications relating to this work. Thank you!

*Frankie Dytor (University of Cambridge)*

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### **Exploring the Paradox of State-Building in Afghanistan: An Archival Research Trip to London**

My PhD thesis scrutinises the correlation between warfare and the rise and decline of the state in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of India (NWF) in the 19th and early 20th century. After working intensively in the archives and libraries in India, I applied to BAVS for a Research Funding Grant to visit the archives in London. BAVS's grant has allowed me to travel to London to access crucial archival records for my thesis. I owe the BAVS committee gratitude for giving me a chance to visit London. It was a three-week-long academic tour in July 2023. During this time, I visited the British Library, The National Army Museum in Chelsea, The National Archives, Kew and finally, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (LHCMA).

The various archives in London afforded me a research experience I have never encountered. Facilities, such as online registration, permission to photograph documents, and an attentive and helpful

staff at the archives were a boon. Prior to visiting London, I explored their online catalogues to gather an idea regarding the documents I need to consult. At that time, I was thrilled at the thought of accessing such a large number of documents, but the actual experience proved even better. Their catalogues were not only extensive but also extremely thorough. Each record comes with a short description of its contents, which made it easier for me to prioritise and categorise them.

Most of the archival sources required for my research are housed in the British Library. Hence, I dedicated most of the time of the trip to access those records in the Asia Pacific and Africa Collection, Manuscripts and Rare Books reading room of the British Library. I concentrated on primarily four kinds of records: Firstly, the Records of the Military Department (IOR/L/MIL series); secondly, the private papers of the various military commanders in the European Manuscript (MSS EUR series); and finally, the Political and Secret Department Records (IOR/L/PS series). I have also accessed the records of the Parliamentary branch (IOR/L/PARL series). The Military Department records proved essential for the portions of the British-Indian Army's strategic and tactical thinking. Numerous memorandums afforded valuable insights into the pacification and Counter-insurgency tactics of the British Indian Army as used in the frontier of India. The Political and Secret Department correspondences unveiled many secret and confidential letters that are unavailable in the archives in India. These correspondences with the Amirs of Afghanistan and native agents of the Government of India portray the Afghan society's reaction at the individual and collection level in the face of foreign intervention in Afghanistan.

In the National Army Museum, I have mainly focused on consulting the private papers of the British-Indian Military generals who actively participated in the warfare in NWF and Afghanistan. These private papers are not available in the archives in India. The archival records I consulted were mainly manuscripts. I have reviewed the private papers of British-Indian Military generals such as Frederick Roberts. These records enabled me to look at the contested theatre of Afghanistan from the vantage points of military and political officers. These sources would help me understand how their perspectives were translated into policy and their repercussions on tribal society.

In the National Archives, I had mainly concentrated on the War Office and Foreign Office records. The 'Central Asia. Correspondence' and 'Proceedings in Central Asia' volumes from the Foreign Office series helped me understand the Anglo-Russian struggle for mastery of Afghanistan and Central Asia. I have also consulted a few sources

on the operations of the Royal Air Force in the NWF. With an analysis of the working of the RAF, my thesis highlights that the coming of new technology, in some instances, led to the escalation of violence on the part of the British-Indian Army. The reaction of the indigenous populace to the use of new military hardware can be culled from these sources.

Finally, I had the opportunity to visit LHCMA, attached to the archives of the King's College, London. There I consulted mainly private papers of personalities like Brig-Gen Philip Howell, General Sir Frederick Campbell, and General Sir Standish Monteith Hamilton. The Howell Collection had important documents like typescript letters from Lt. Col. George Younghusband, the commanding officer of the Corps of Guides at Mardan. The collection also had notes on the proposed scheme for the creation of Frontier Intelligence Corps in India.

These documents helped me to develop a critique of the discourse of state-building in Afghanistan. I aim to submit my PhD thesis within a year and thank BAVS once again for believing in the potential of my proposal.

*Arka Chowdhury (Jadavpur University)*

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## BAVS Event Funding Reports

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### **'I have a great number' of 'mes' – Elizabeth Gaskell Conference at ARU, June 2023**

We used a BAVS funding grant to arrange an Elizabeth Gaskell conference at Anglia Ruskin University. The event took place on 15 June 2023. Thanks to the grant, we were able to arrange a full day conference to examine Elizabeth Gaskell's works and life. The grant enabled us to make attendance free, provide full catering, and to provide travel bursaries. We also made the conference hybrid to open the conference to variety of speakers from all around the world, and to attendees unable to come in-person. Both of us are second-year PhD students so arranging the conference was a wonderful (and at times, difficult!) challenge but it was a thoroughly rewarding experience.

We wanted the conference to be diverse and were keen to welcome anyone interested in Gaskell: there was a variety of attendees – from PGRs to established academics to Gaskell enthusiasts! We opened registration in late April and received over seventy responses; there was an equal divide between those wishing to attend online and in-person. We used the BAVS grant to arrange catering,

travel bursaries for speakers and attendees and room booking for the day.

We organised four panels of four speakers each; first was 'Discourse and Dissent', second 'Gender and Sexuality', third 'The Body', and finally 'Trade and the Environment'. To make our conference relevant to wide range of PGRs, we also organised a roundtable called 'Teaching Victorian Literature' with Dr Elizabeth Ludlow (Anglia Ruskin University), Dr Simon Marsden (University of Liverpool), and Dr Jo Carruthers (University of Lancaster). The roundtable was aimed at giving PGRs and ECRs an insight into teaching and organising modules at a university level. There is not enough space to list all the excellent, well-researched papers here but a highlight for Kathleen was Rosa Ortiz's (University of Oviedo) paper "'Thou canst escape from it" Male Prophecies in "Lois the Witch" and *Mary Barton*', which examined prophetic rhetoric in Gaskell's works and how it is used to entrap young women. Alice very much enjoyed 'The Queerness of Libbie Marsh' from Jessica Campbell. Finally, it would be remiss not to mention the fascinating keynote speech given by Dr Jo Carruthers on 'Political Gaskell' examining the ways Gaskell engaged with speech, feeling, and politics in her novels.

The conference was a successful day. Speakers and attendees had plenty of time to connect with each other and form new working relationships. The feedback from both attendees and speakers has been excellent.

*Kathleen Gentle and Alice Jackman  
(Anglia Ruskin University)*

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### **The Year of Gothic Women, 29-31 August 2023**

The apex of a series of wonderful events offered by the Gothic Women Project, The Year of Gothic Women Conference in Dundee perfectly marked the bicentenary of Ann Radcliffe's death and two of Mary Shelley's publications: *Valperga* and the 1823 edition of *Frankenstein*, the first to bear the author's name. The conference opened with the choice of a walking tour of 'Mary Shelley's Dundee' or a trip to the V&A, setting a high bar for the exciting programme of excursions, socials, and panels to come. We were truly spoiled!

The papers presented explored a variety of gothic women from the eighteenth century to the present day and covered topics that ranged from floriography to *Sleeping Beauty*. Each day was framed by the momentous plenaries of Angela Wright, who firstly examined alternative households and familial structures in Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley's 'family romances', and Eileen Hunt, who then turned to the



'Last Wo(man)' and the 'Invisible (Wo)man', illustrating the substantial legacy of Mary Shelley's postapocalyptic imagination. Maisha Wester masterfully closed the conference with some 'Gothic Dating Tips', rereading the Byronic anti-hero in the Brontë novels in order to examine just why exactly figures like Rochester and Heathcliff make such 'crap boyfriends'. Some of my personal highlights were Helena Ifill's reparative reading of Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampyre* (1797) and the creative practice approaches presented by the 'Crimes Against Nature' panel; of course, I also greatly appreciated the opportunity to speak on a panel that focused on Mary Shelley's lesser-known works, on her birthday no less!

It is fitting that the ouroboros – the symbol of the snake eating its own tail – frequently cropped up throughout the conference. Much like the writing of many gothic women, the ouroboros is often aligned with notions of cyclical repetition or over-consumption. Yet, the trope also raises connotations of unity, rebirth, and renewal, offering the appropriate descriptors for an event that allowed us to come together to commemorate women who deserve so much more of our attention. In turn, the conference fostered the most welcoming, accessible, and inclusive of spaces thanks to the organisation of the Gothic Women Team and the support of BSECS, BARS, BAVS, and the IGA, who kindly provided the funding for a number of PGR/ECR bursaries. I hope that, like the ouroboros, this event will swiftly return!

*Beth Brigham (Northumbria University)*



Beth Brigham worked as an associate on the Gothic Women project, organising a postgraduate and early career online workshop on the Minerva Press (10 March 2022). She presented a paper on Mary Shelley's *Falkner* at the conference. Beth is a postgraduate researcher at Northumbria University funded by Northern Bridge Consortium/AHRC.

For more on our project visit our website: <https://gothicwomenproject.wordpress.com> and follow us on Twitter/X. According to Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau, our conference generated a direct economic benefit of £163,800 for Dundee and the surrounding area. We are very grateful to BAVS for funding our project. The generous offering of £600 provided 3 x postgraduate/early career researcher/unwaged bursaries at £150 each. BAVS was also named as the sponsor of our wine reception (with BARS).

# Calls for Submissions

Please email calls for publication submissions and funding opportunities to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com) for inclusion in future issues.

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## *The Gaskell Journal* Joan Leach Memorial Graduate Student Essay Prize 2024

**Deadline for submissions: 1 February 2024**

*The Gaskell Journal* runs a biennial Graduate Student Essay Prize in honour of Joan Leach MBE, founder of the Gaskell Society. The winning essay will be published in the *Gaskell Journal* (with revisions as appropriate), and its author will receive £200 from the Gaskell Society, and a complimentary copy of the Journal.

The essay competition is open to all graduate students currently registered for a PhD or MA. Entries must offer an original contribution to the field of Gaskell studies, whether to read her work in relation to Victorian social or intellectual contexts, or in the light of critical theory, or to offer a comparative study connecting Gaskell with another author. Essays will be shortlisted by the *Gaskell Journal* Editorial Board, with the final winner being chosen by our guest judge, Professor Kate Flint of the University of Southern California (author of works including *The Woman Reader 1837-1914*, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, *The Transatlantic Indian*, *Flash! Photography, Writing and Surprising Illumination*, as well as monographs on both Gaskell and Dickens).

Essays should be 6000-7000 words, and not under consideration for publication elsewhere. All shortlisted submissions will be considered for potential publication in the *Gaskell Journal*. Please see the *Gaskell Journal* website for submission details and style guide: [www.gaskelljournal.co.uk](http://www.gaskelljournal.co.uk). Please direct any queries to the Editors, Dr Ben Moore: [B.P.Moore@uva.nl](mailto:B.P.Moore@uva.nl) and Dr Rebecca Styler: [rstyler@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:rstyler@lincoln.ac.uk)

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## VPFA First Book Prize and Second Book Prize Awards

We are delighted to announce two new Book Prize Awards, under the auspices of the UK-based [Victorian Popular Fiction Association](http://victorianpopularfiction.org) (VPFA): the **VPFA First Book Prize and the VPFA Second Book Prize awards**. These book prizes will be awarded in alternate years, beginning in 2023 with the First Book Prize, followed in 2024 by the Second Book Prize. The VPFA First Book Prize is intended for the first book of an early-career scholar; the VPFA Second Book Prize is for a second book by scholars at any career stage.

Submissions for the **2023 VPFA First Book Prize** are now open, with a **deadline of 31 December 2023**. The winner will be announced in the spring of 2024.

*The Victorian Popular Fiction Association* will award one prize each year, worth £200, for scholarly contributions to our understanding of nineteenth-century popular literature and culture. Works eligible for these prizes will be scholarly monographs about nineteenth-century literary writers, groups or works which, specifically and explicitly, deal with the 'popular' paradigm. Works on neo-Victorian popular writing, which help us better understand Victorian popular literature or culture, will also be considered. We also accept volumes of critical essays and jointly authored monographs for submission. However, scholarly editions of popular Victorian texts and translations will not be eligible for submission. For scholarly monographs written in a language other than English – or other types of book/ other queries – please consult the VPFA about eligibility.

The works submitted for consideration for the inaugural 2023 First Book Prize should have been published in 2022 or 2023. Please see our website for eligibility rules, submission process, process of selection, and award details: <https://victorianpopularfiction.org/vpfa-book-prize/>

Please direct correspondence about the prize to [vpfainfo@gmail.com](mailto:vpfainfo@gmail.com)  
Julia Kuehn, Co-President, VPFA and Janine Hatter, Co-President, VPFA

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### CFP: 'Victorian Pedagogy', *Victorian Network*

*Victorian Network* is an open-access, MLA-indexed, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing and promoting the best work across the broad field of Victorian Studies by postgraduate students and early career academics. We are delighted to announce that our sixteenth issue (2024) will be on the theme of "Victorian Pedagogy" guest edited by Kevin A. Morrison.

Pedagogy is an exciting topic within Victorian scholarship that has attracted new critical focus in recent years. This issue seeks to include themes relating to the history and depiction of education in the nineteenth century, but also the ways in which Victorian Studies are being taught to students today.

As Elizabeth Gargano summarises in *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms: Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (2008), 'education became increasingly institutionalised throughout the century, [and] numerous Victorian school narratives portrayed harsh, excessively regimented classrooms, contrasting the looming spectre of educational standardisation within a supposedly nurturing tradition of domestic instruction [...]' (Gargano, 1). Schooling was therefore pertinent in the Victorian literary imagination and often depicted negatively in mid-century novels such as Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) and *Hard Times* (1854), or Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1848). In the nineteenth century, education underwent rigorous transformation through numerous parliamentary reforms, and led authors to document their concerns about the moral standards of educational institutions and the instructors within them. As a central preoccupation of the Victorian mind resulting in the first British education mandate, the topic of education in the long nineteenth century continues to garner scholarly interest.

Recently, however, the ways in which students learn about the Victorian period has also been reinvigorated with new research. For instance, *Teaching Victorian Literature in the Twenty-First Century: A Guide to Pedagogy* (2017) and Kevin A. Morrison's *Victorian Culture and Experiential Learning: Historical Encounters in the Classroom* (2022) have recognised latent pedagogic shifts whereby Victorian Studies are becoming inclusive of experiential learning and non-restrictive approaches to teaching. More university courses than ever before are now tailoring their teaching of Victorianism to the diverse research interests of students, to embrace student diversity and virtual learning in a post-pandemic educational climate. The prioritisation of globalised historical narratives, decolonised curriculums, and historical encounters beyond text-based study are also now recognisable in the study of the nineteenth century. By developing pedagogic awareness in academic subjects relating to the Victorian period, researchers can help future students to better harness a conceptualisation of the period that has moved beyond the tropes of 'imperial aggression and conservatism', to also generate progressive ways of engaging with the colonial past through new modes of teaching (Shields Jenkins, 'Global Victorians', 5).

"Victorian Pedagogy" aims to explore scholarly, multidisciplinary narratives about the history of Victorian education and the contemporary teaching of Victorian Studies. We invite submissions of approximately 7,000 words on any aspect of the theme. Possible topics include, but are by no means limited to:

- The education acts
- The Victorian schoolroom
- Parish schooling vs public schooling
- Female education
- School life as depicted in Victorian literature
- Barriers to learning
- The history of teaching Victorian literature
- Experiential learning/teaching
- Approaches to teaching and methodologies
- Digital methodologies
- Political pedagogies and self-development
- Decolonising the Victorian curriculum

All submissions should conform to MHRA house style and the in-house submission guidelines. **Submissions should be received by 3 March 2024** through our website. Contact: [victoriannetwork@gmail.com](mailto:victoriannetwork@gmail.com)

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## CFP: Silenced Voices and Erased Agencies in Victorian Life and Victorian Popular Fiction

Online VPFA Study Day, 8-9 June 2024

There has been an important scholarly turn to studies in silence and erasure since at least the 1970s by those eager to uncover hidden, marginalised, and underrepresented voices of the past. UK Research and Innovation currently list Hidden Histories as an area of investment and support. Tillie Olsen's *Silences* (1978) revolutionised the study of silence and agency in literature. Her book considers the circumstances that surround writers' periods of silence, focussing on factors that particularly impact marginalised groups such as women, people of colour, and the working class. Her book makes a distinction between "natural" and "unnatural" silences, deeming the former as 'that necessary time for renewal' and the latter as the 'unnatural thwarting of what struggles to come into being, but cannot'. These 'unnatural' silences are primarily caused by specific social circumstances that accompany being a marginalised individual e.g. for women, an obligation to family and home.

The Victorians were particularly concerned with matters of voice and agency. Throughout the nineteenth century, numerous reforms were introduced to grant more rights and autonomy to women, children, animals, and those considered insane. These concerns inevitably found their way into Victorian fiction. Drawing on numerous advancements in the understanding of the human mind and psychology as a discipline, as well as emerging social and cultural anxieties regarding empire, the Victorians created new methods of representing marginalised groups, their voices and their silences. From literal refusals to speak, to blank spaces, to monstrous figures, these works of fiction ask us to consider methods of communication that were adopted when restrictions were placed on the speakable.

This study day wishes to contribute to the robust conversations regarding voice, silence, and agency that are very much relevant today. It is the hope of the hosts that participants will leave with a better understanding of the institutions and mechanisms that worked in tandem to regulate and control marginalised voices and agencies in the Victorian era. We also hope to encourage participants to re-evaluate the idea of silence as strictly an absence, specifically an absence of agency.

We invite papers on topics including, but not limited to:

- Is there a difference between silence and the absence of words?
- Forgotten texts, particularly by women writers
- Marginalised groups in the Victorian era
- Insanity, the madhouse and human agency
- Non-human agencies: animals, nature, and the monstrous
- Presentation of silence in textual form and its interpretation
- Hidden or erased sexualities and genders
- Colonial relations and race
- Silence as a tool of communication
- Trauma, psychology, and silence
- Implicature
- Unspeakability/ Unnarratability
- Masculine adjudication over female voice
- Illness and disability
- Hierarchies and power imbalances
- Victorian soundscapes: technological advances and amplified voices/sounds
- The relationship between genre and types of silence

This will be an online Study Day (spread over two days to allow for speakers from different time zones). We invite proposals for papers of 15-20 minutes in length, panels (please send abstracts in one email), and also 10-minute Flash Papers that outline an ongoing or future research project. Please send abstract proposals of 200-300 words accompanied by a short bio to Rebecca Hamilton ([r.hamilton1.21@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:r.hamilton1.21@abdn.ac.uk)) by **Monday 11th December 2023**. Please direct any questions you might have to this email.

If you would like to get involved in organising this Study Day, please also contact Rebecca Hamilton.

***Advances in Nineteenth-Century Research:***  
***The Journal of the International Nineteenth-Century Studies Association***

The International Nineteenth-Century Studies Association ([INCSA](#)) is pleased to announce its new journal: *Advances in Nineteenth-Century Research*. Free to INCSA members, the journal will be published by Taylor and Francis (subject to final contract) three times each year, beginning in January 2026, and will cover the humanities as well as the social sciences, sciences and arts.

*Advances in Nineteenth-Century Research* will offer general and themed issues representing all fields of study in the arts, social sciences, and sciences. Content will regularly include research articles; discussion forums; pedagogy practicums; and reviews of books, recordings, films, exhibitions, and digital resources.

Nineteenth-century studies is at a crossroads. Traditional chronologies, established disciplinary boundaries, and the prestige of the Anglosphere have limited its reach and influence. *Advances in Nineteenth-Century Research* responds to these challenges in three ways:

- *International research* – connecting nations *in* and *through* history, and reaching beyond Anglophone academic markets.
- *Interdisciplinary research* – connecting academic disciplines, and connecting academic disciplines with practice-based work such as museology, librarianship, education, media and the arts.
- *Intertemporal research* – expanding our understanding of the nineteenth century to include its traces, impacts and legacies today.

Professor Bennett Zon (President, International Nineteenth-Century Studies Association)

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**CFP: The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Dickens Society Symposium**  
**“Dickens, Context and Co-occurrence”**

July 15 – 18, 2024  
University of Birmingham, UK

The theme of the 2024 symposium will be “Dickens, Context and Co-occurrence”. We invite you think of the various contexts that Dickens’s works are set in, connect to, and imagine. Contexts are where things co-occur – with various effects.

Topics of papers can cover Dickens and the context of theatre, the world of fashion, or the natural environment; Dickens and changing contexts through travel, translation, and time; contexts of family and friends; you may also want to think about the relationship between real world contexts and the textual contexts of the words on the page. As is the case every year, proposals on other aspects of Dickens’s life and works are welcome, too.

Abstract submission will open here through the conference website in September. Please submit your abstract of 300 words (maximum) and bio of 150 words (maximum). **Deadline: 15 JANUARY 2024.**

Please note that you need to be a member of the Dickens Society to present at the annual conference. Membership is conferred by subscription to *Dickens Quarterly*. Find out more [here](#). For any questions, please contact the conference organisers:

Michaela Mahlberg at [m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk) and Caroline Radcliffe at [C.Radcliffe@bham.ac.uk](mailto:C.Radcliffe@bham.ac.uk).

**Call for Bursary Applications:**

The Dickens Society annually provides bursaries to support the scholarly development of graduate students, independent scholars, and untenured faculty. For our Symposium in Birmingham, we will be offering bursaries for various social media responsibilities and assistance during the event.

We will be asking bursary recipients to take over the Dickens Society social media accounts during the Symposium, help with running the conference, possibly write a report of the papers to be disseminated

afterwards through the Society's channels, and contribute a blog post on a topic of their choosing for the Society blog within four months of the end of the event.

To apply, graduate students, independent scholars, and untenured faculty whose papers have been accepted should send a one-page CV with a one-page cover letter to Claire Wood, the Society Secretary, at [dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com](mailto:dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com) by **31 May 2024**.

The one-page cover letter should specify your academic status and funding (or lack thereof) and discuss the relevance of the Symposium for your research and professional development. It should also outline the following:

- Your own ideas for improving the social media presence of the event/any skills with Twitter and other relevant experience.
- If relevant, a very brief idea for a blog post you might write for the society blog after the event.
- Any relevant previous experience organizing and/or attending online and in-person academic conferences.

The bursary winners will be announced in early June. If you have any queries, please email [dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com](mailto:dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com).

### **Robert B. Partlow, Jr. Prize**

The Partlow Prize recognizes the best essay submitted for presentation at the Symposium by a graduate student, independent scholar, or contingent faculty member. Applicants for the Partlow Prize must submit a complete essay, suitable for 20-minute presentation time, to the Program Committee Chair, Michaela Mahlberg, at [m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk) by **1 May 2024**.

The Partlow Prize carries a cash award of \$500 (or, in the case of co-winners, two prizes of \$300 each) and a waiver of the registration fee for the Symposium. Should the essay be of publishable quality, *Dickens Quarterly* shall have the right of first refusal. We expect to decide on a winner by end of May.

### **David Paroissien Prize**

The David Paroissien Prize is awarded each year to the best peer-reviewed essay on Dickens published in a journal or edited collection. The Prize is named for David Paroissien, a founding member of the Dickens Society and also the founder of *Dickens Quarterly*, which he edited from its first issue in 1983 until his final issue in December 2020. As an editor he was rigorous, tactful, and generous, particularly with younger scholars. Under his direction, *Dickens Quarterly* attracted contributions from Dickens scholars around the world and became a leading venue for new work in the field.

To nominate (or self-nominate) an essay for the Paroissien Prize, please provide a copy of the essay and a cover email giving the name, email address, and institutional affiliation (if any) of its author. For the 2023 competition (essays published 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023), send these materials to Claire Wood, the Society Secretary, at [dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com](mailto:dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com) by **31 January 2024**. A three-person committee comprised of Officers and/or Trustees will judge submissions. Please note that, in determining an essay's eligibility for a given year, the actual date of appearance is what matters, not the nominal date of the journal issue, since it is common for journals to lag behind their publication date. Any author may be nominated for this Prize, whether or not they are a Society member. The Prize carries a cash award of \$500 and waives the registration fee for the Symposium at which the recipient will be recognized.

Decisions will be announced by early June 2024 to allow the recipient the option of making travel plans to attend the symposium and accept the prize in-person.

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## **CFP: Place and the periodical: An international conference on the regional magazine**

25-26 June 2024  
University of Chester, UK

Keynote speakers confirmed so far

- Professor Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, University of Geneva, leader of the Visual Contagions project, studying the global circulation of images in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Joanne Goodwin, editor of *Cheshire Life*, the UK's most successful county magazine



Magazines are usually associated with the metropolis, with capital cities, and with national and international movements and identities, for example *Paris Match* or the modernist titles *Blast* (London), *Noi* (Rome) or *The Dial* (New York). But what happens to the magazine when it appears in the provinces, the periphery, the regions, the counties – for example *¡Hola!* (Barcelona), the *Double Dealer* (New Orleans), *Cheshire Life* (Middlewich, Manchester, Chester) or *De Stijl* (Delft, Leiden)?

Equally, studies of print culture and geographical identities have focused mainly on the nation (Benedict Anderson), occasionally on the local (Simon Gunn on 19<sup>th</sup>-century satirical city magazines) – but almost never on those administrative units between national and local: county, province, region, oblast, canton, département, voivodeship, federal state, Bundesland, etc. (Royle is a rare exception.)

Literary scholars such as Moretti, McDonagh and Gibson have developed Raymond Williams's idea of the regional and provincial as value-laden metropolitan ideological constructions. Some of the most interesting work on the idea of the regional and provincial comes from scholars of the nineteenth-century novel. Livesey argues that provincial fiction e.g. Eliot, Gaskell, focuses on the 'interesting' as opposed to 'the beautiful, the sublime, or the picturesque', pushing us to 'judge a thoroughly inaesthetic object in the form of art.' There is growing interest in representations of place and landscape (Readman; Burchardt), rural modernity and its challenge to the cultural hierarchies of modernist scholarship (Shirley; Bluemel and McCluskey), and the reclaiming of the middlebrow (Hammill and Smith). Yet historians of the magazine such as Beetham have questioned the viability of magazines outside the metropolis. There is a small body of work on the regional magazine, including studies of the English twentieth-century county magazine and the aspirational appeal of the elite 'county set' (Hobbs), the Italian Northern League titles *Il Sole delle Alpi* and *Quaderni Padani* and their anti-urban mythology (Guidali) and the perceived difficulties of the New Orleans-based *Double Dealer* in being modernist but not metropolitan (Round).

This conference aims to expand this area of scholarship, and invites contributions on a neglected magazine genre, from any era or nation, exploring such questions as:

- How significant is place of publication? Is the magazine a placeless media form?
- Can a regional magazine be international?
- What are the subgenres of the regional magazine?
- Who produces regional magazines, and why?
- How has the regional magazine changed over time?
- What techniques do regional magazines use, in their text, images and advertising, to exploit place identities?
- What is distinctive about the language of the regional magazine?
- What can regional magazines do that metropolitan magazines cannot?
- How are these magazines affected by trends of centralisation, devolution or regionalism?
- Can a magazine be radical whilst regional, or is conservatism the norm? How does nostalgia function in regional magazines?
- Is the regional always middlebrow? Can a magazine be highbrow, or avant-garde, yet provincial?
- How should we judge the regional magazine? Always in comparison, or on its own terms? Was Matthew Arnold correct in seeing the provincial as inferior? Is there value in studying the unoriginal and the second-rate?
- How does the regional magazine connect to other media, e.g., broadcast, fiction, countryside publishing, tourist literature?
- How does place intersect with social class in the regional magazine?
- Does success always mean a move to the metropolis?
- How do regional magazines represent landscape, the countryside, the rural?
- How do they connect imaginary territories with administrative areas?
- Zines are a famously decentered media form, but do they only represent communities of interest, never geographical communities?

We also welcome case studies of individual titles, and of editors and contributors. Keywords: magazine; place; identity; region; province; county; rural modernity; place identities; placemaking; middlebrow.

We hope that a range of disciplinary and geographical perspectives will produce a rich, comparative conference, of interest to scholars of magazines, literature, publishing and place identities. This topic would particularly benefit from methods such as mapping, discourse analysis or network analysis, for example, and

methods accounting for the multimodal nature of magazines, combining word and image, in editorial and advertising.

**Deadline for proposals: 31 January 2024.** The conference language is English. Selected conference papers will be published in an open-access edited collection.

Please send 200-word proposals for:

- panels of 3 papers, 20 minutes each (panel proposal + paper proposals)
- round tables
- individual papers of 20 minutes

to [placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com](mailto:placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com). Please include a 100-word speaker biography.

For more information please email [placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com](mailto:placeandtheperiodical@gmail.com)

X (Twitter): @PlacePeriodical

Mastodon: @PlacePeriodical@mastodon.social

Threads: PlaceAndThePeriodical

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### CFP: The Shelley Conference 2024 *Posthumous Poems, Posthumous Collaborations*

28-29 June 2024

Keats House Museum, London

Two years after the death of Percy Bysshe Shelley in the summer of 1822, Mary Shelley, after a painstaking editorial process, published *Posthumous Poems* (1824). The volume contained much of Shelley's major poetry, including the hitherto unpublished 'Julian and Maddalo', together with translations of Goethe and Calderón, and unfinished compositions such as 'The Triumph of Life' and 'Charles the First'.

The Shelley Conference 2024 celebrates the first collected volume of Shelley's poetry. *Posthumous Poems* is the product of collaborations. The most significant of these is between Mary Shelley as editor and Shelley as poet, but they also occur between Shelley and the guarantors of the volume, including Bryan Waller Procter ('Barry Cornwall') and Thomas Lovell Beddoes. The conference also addresses ideas of posterity and reception more generally in Shelley scholarship, the range of literary forms collected in a single volume, and the complex collaborative literary relationships that shaped Shelley's life and endured after his death.

The conference will be held at Keats House Museum in Hampstead, London. Proposals should be in the form of 200-word abstracts for 15-minute papers. Please include a 100-word biography with your proposal.

Papers are invited on themes including, but not limited to:

- *Posthumous Poems*, its texts and history
- New readings of key poems and of *Posthumous Poems* as a collection
- Mary Shelley as editor
- Posterity and futurity as themes in Shelley's work
- Texts in dialogue with Shelley's work, particularly by those in his circle who survived him
- Shelley's engagement with Europe and European literature
- The nature and limits of the collaborative process
- Shelley's reception outside of Britain or in languages other than English
- Shelley and Byron
- Shelley and piracy

**Deadline:** Please email proposals in Word to [shelleyconference@gmail.com](mailto:shelleyconference@gmail.com) by **Monday 29 January 2024**.

**Bursaries:** Several bursaries will be available for postgraduate and early-career researchers presenting papers. Please visit the conference website for details. To apply, please add 'Bursary' to your email subject.

Keynote Speaker: Dr Ross Wilson (Cambridge)

Plenary Speakers: Dr Will Bowers (QMUL); Dr Madeleine Callaghan (Sheffield); Dr Bysshe Inigo Coffey (Oxford); Prof Nora Crook (Anglia Ruskin); Prof Paul Hamilton (QMUL)

Pre-Conference Lecture (27 June): Prof Mark Sandy (Durham)

**Conference Website:** [theshelleyconference.com](http://theshelleyconference.com) / [facebook.com/shelleyconference](https://facebook.com/shelleyconference) / Twitter: @shelleyconf

Conference Organisers: Dr Amanda Blake Davis (Derby); Dr Andrew Lacey (Lancaster); Dr Merrilees Roberts (QMUL); Dr Paul Stephens (Oxford). Postgraduate Helpers: Lydia Shaw (Durham); Keerthi Vasishta (Durham). Advisory Board: Dr Will Bowers (QMUL), Dr Bysshe Inigo Coffey (Oxford); Dr Anna Mercer (Cardiff); Dr Mathelinda Nabugodi (UCL); Prof Michael Rossington (Newcastle).

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### CFP: The Twenty-Sixth International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival

July 27<sup>th</sup> – August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024  
Dorchester, Dorset, UK

Paper proposals are welcome on any aspect of Hardy's life, work, and legacy for the Twenty-Sixth International Hardy Conference and Festival. Several significant Hardy anniversaries occur in 2024, including the 150th anniversary of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the 130th anniversary of *Life's Little Ironies*, and the 90th anniversary of *Satires of Circumstance* (which contains the 'Poems of 1912-13'). Proposals for papers on the poetry are especially welcome.

Papers should be planned for delivery times of a maximum of 20 minutes (approximately 2000 words).

Like its predecessors, the 2024 Conference is designed to appeal both to Hardy scholars and to general readers. We invite proposals from established scholars, Hardy enthusiasts, early-career researchers, independent scholars, and postgraduate students.

Confirmed lecturers include Anna Burton, Pamela Dalziel, Isabelle Gadoin, Oindrila Ghosh, Phillip Mallett and Jeremy Newton. Lectures and conference papers will be supplemented by excursions and entertainments relating to the local context which Hardy's work celebrates, and from which it emerged.

Proposals (absolute maximum 300 words) should be sent by email to Dr Mary Rimmer at [mrimmer@unb.ca](mailto:mrimmer@unb.ca). Each must be accompanied by a short biographical note (75 words or less) on a separate page. These notes will not be consulted during the vetting process but will be used by panel chairs to introduce speakers during the conference.

All submissions will be read and adjudicated by an academic panel. **The closing date is 12 January 2024.** The best of the papers given at the Conference will be considered for publication in the peer-reviewed *Thomas Hardy Journal* appearing in Autumn 2024.

Please note that all submissions will be acknowledged: if the submission is not acknowledged within four business days, the proposer should re-send.

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### *Journal of Victorian Culture Digital Forum* Call for Submissions

The *Journal of Victorian Culture Digital Forum* provides an indispensable guide to how our perceptions and understandings of the nineteenth century change as we encounter it in digital form. It brings together interested users, expert proponents, and the deeply sceptical to present a range of perspectives upon the difference that digital approaches (including digitisation, digital humanities, and data sciences) might make to the field. Previous issues have included maps and mapping, transnational archives, and literacy.

In recognition of the fact that digital humanities is broad in scope and that innovative approaches are being newly developed across Victorian Studies, our aim with this call is to improve the diversity of disciplines and approaches represented in the Forum. We therefore invite papers from a wide range of disciplines, including archaeology, art history, collections and archives studies, digital humanities, geography, history, history of



science and computing, literature, museology, music analysis, musicology, performance and cultural industries, theatre studies, transnational and indigenous studies.

Contributions should be research-led and exemplify good practice in the use and/or creation of digital tools and technologies in pursuit of original research in global nineteenth-century studies. Topics might include (but are not limited to):

- digital analysis of social, political, or cultural trends in the nineteenth-century
- digitally-led analysis of text, image, audio, or object
- reports from digital projects (construction, lessons learned, use in pedagogy/research)
- digitally-led pedagogy
- exploration of digital resources (history, creation, use)
- reflections on digital humanities and Victorian studies, past and future
- theoretical implications of digital humanities in nineteenth-century studies
- digitisation and digital publishing (creation of digital editions or datasets)
- global, transnational, historical networks
- transnational and indigenous histories
- the creation of software relevant to Victorian Studies

The usual format is papers of 3000 words in length; the *JVC* submission guidelines can be found [here \[academic.oup.com\]](http://academic.oup.com). The Forum is published online, and so digital media (e.g. audio or video) can be included. All submissions will be peer reviewed, and all essays featured in the *Forum* are freely available to read online.

We also welcome proposals for guest-edited fora: the usual format of these is a 1000-word introduction and 3x 3000-word articles. To suggest a guest-edited forum, please submit a proposal of no more than 1000 words, including abstracts for the articles.

This is an ongoing call with a rolling deadline.

For more information, or to discuss a paper or forum idea, please email the co-editors: Emily Bell ([e.j.l.bell@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.l.bell@leeds.ac.uk)) and Jo Taylor ([joanna.taylor@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:joanna.taylor@manchester.ac.uk)).

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### **Call for Reviewers: *Journal of Literature and Science* PUBLISH WITH US**

The *Journal of Literature and Science* <http://www.literatureandscience.org> is looking for reviewers to review various articles published in the last year to 18 months in the field of literature and science. Reviews should be 750 words long. For more details, please follow the link: <https://www.literatureandscience.org/> or contact Michelle Geric at [gericm@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:gericm@westminster.ac.uk) to register your interest.

Please find below a number of articles that we would like to offer for review. Its largely first come, first served, so do get in touch with an offer to review a specific article by emailing Michelle Geric at [m.geric@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:m.geric@westminster.ac.uk) . The list is certainly not definitive, and we would be very happy to receive suggestions for other relevant articles for review that aren't listed below – please do let us know.

- Stephanie Kinzinger, "Embodied Cognition in Edgar Allan Poe: *Eureka's* Cosmology, Dupin's Intuition." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 77. 2-3 (2022): 124–144.
- Christopher Harrington, "Cut it, woman": Masculinity, Nectar, and the Orgasm in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849)." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 50. 1 (2022): 1-25.
- Christiane Schwab, "Sailors, Book Hawkers, and Bricklayer's Laborers: Social Types and the Production of Social Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Periodical Literature." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 76. 4 (2022): 403–426.
- Jordan Kistler, "I Cannot Tell You All the Story: Narrative, Historical Knowledge, and the Museum in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*." *Configurations* 30. 3 (2022): 257-283.
- Rebecca Spence, "A Sigh of Sympathy": Thomas Hardy's Paralinguistic Aesthetics and Evolutionary Sympathy." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 50. 1 (2022): 117-139.
- Cara Murray, "Cultivating Chaos: Entropy, Information, and the Making of the Dictionary of National Biography." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 50. 1 (2022): 87-116.

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**Call for Clusters:**  
***Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen***

The *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, founded in 1846, is the world's oldest journal on modern philology still in print. It publishes essays, short notices, and reviews; engaging in current debates and reflecting the status quo of the disciplines covered. The *Archiv* welcomes contributions on literary history, literary theory, textual criticism as well as philological questions. The journal is peer-reviewed, MLA- and Electronic Journals Library-listed, indexed in ERIH PLUS, and offers a reliable and transparent publication process via Erich Schmidt Verlag, Berlin. The journal is comprised of three sections – Germanic, English and French Studies – and has chief editors responsible for each section. Together, they produce two sizeable issues per year that provide a comprehensive view of the latest trends and developments in the academic study of modern languages and literatures. For an overview of the journal and the content of back issues, please visit <https://archivdigital.info/>.

The journal's editors of the English Studies section now invite **proposals for thematic clusters/ 'special issues' to be published in 2025 across all areas of literary and cultural studies in any field and period(s) of English Literature**. A cluster will consist of an introduction (2,000-3,000 words) and four articles (7,500-8,000 words each).

The proposer(s) of the thematic cluster will take responsibility for the acquisition of essays, as well as the introduction. The English Section's chief editors will advise the cluster coordinator(s) throughout the peer review and production process. Early-career scholars are therefore particularly encouraged to consider applying.

We are looking for cluster proposals that are coherent, state-of-the-art, and in line with the *Archiv's* 180-year-old mission to publish sound scholarship and open up critical, philological debates.

Topics for clusters may include:

- current theoretical and methodological debates
- new developments in any field of literary theory
- approaches to a particular genre, author, or literary period
- questions of literary history
- the current state of literary studies

#### **Timeline**

For issue 2025/1	1 August, 2024: submission of completed articles for peer review
	1 December, 2024: submission of revised articles
	Mai 2025: publication
For issue 2025/2	15 January, 2025: submission of completed articles for peer review
	1 June, 2025: submission of revised articles
	November 2025: publication

Please submit your proposal (3-5 pages: outline and description of the proposed topic and its relevance; brief abstracts of the articles) to the editors by **December 31, 2023**: Prof. Dr. Eva von Contzen ([eva.voncontzen@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:eva.voncontzen@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de)) and Prof. Dr. Julia Kuehn ([j.c.kuhn@rug.nl](mailto:j.c.kuhn@rug.nl)).

# Of Victorianist Interest

Please email relevant notices to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com) for inclusion in future issues.

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## Davy Notebooks Project



© Portrait of Sir Humphry Davy by H.W. Pickersgill after Thomas Lawrence 1831 by courtesy of the Royal Institution of Great Britain

The Humphrey Davy Notebooks exhibition is at the Northumberland County Hall from Wednesday 8 November 2023 to Friday 12 January 2024. The final destination is the Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere, where it will be installed from Tuesday 16th January 2024 to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024. The exhibition showcases a number of original Davy manuscripts and focuses on his lectures, geology, chemistry, and links with the slave trade, his poetry and the miners' safety lamp known as the Davy lamp.

There are a number of activities associated with the exhibition, including teaching resources for schools, a Davy Poetry Reading Workshop in Morpeth Library on January 11<sup>th</sup>, and a webinar for the Wordsworth Trust on 25<sup>th</sup> January. For more details, follow us on social media (@davynotebooks) or email [davynotebooks@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:davynotebooks@lancaster.ac.uk).

Help us to transcribe the manuscript notebooks of Sir Humphry Davy – one of the most significant and famous figures in the scientific and literary culture of early nineteenth-century Britain, Europe, and America. Visit our website to get involved: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/humphrydavy/davy-notebooks-project>! We are supposed to get everything done and online by the beginning of next year, but there's still so much to do. Transcription rates seem to be slowing down and we still have about 1000 pages to transcribe. Please do as much as you can to get us over the finish line on time and encourage others to help too!

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## Marie Corelli and Notable Women Liverpool John Moores University Archives and Special Collections

Two recently acquired research collections are now available in the Archives and Special Collections of Liverpool John Moores University. The first is a collection of books, pamphlets and other material by and about Marie Corelli (?1854-1924). It includes novels, poems, essays and anthologies, as well as magazines containing her more ephemeral contributions. Topical and polemical pamphlets are also included, as well as printed material relating to her campaign to save historic houses in Stratford-upon-Avon. Corelli's own work is supplemented by material about her: multiple biographies, critical writing about her work, and postcards indicating her celebrity. A description of *Marie Corelli: The Maureen Bell Collection*, with a pdf listing all 93 items, can be found at: <https://archives.ljmu.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=Catalog&id=MC>

The second collection, *Notable Women 1846-1999*, began by focusing on a specific genre: books containing multiple biographies of women, mostly Victorian, and aimed at girls and women. Each volume of collective biography presents a series of essays, from vignettes to full-length chapters, bringing together exemplary (and sometimes notorious) women. Historical figures feature often: queens, aristocrats, courtiers, 'actresses' and 'beauties'. Women are sometimes grouped by attributes ('brave', 'earnest', 'eminent' women, 'clever girls') or by



their relation to men (wives, sisters, mothers, mistresses). Perceived moral qualities are a frequent focus: volumes of 'heroines' and of women who were 'great', 'good', 'illustrious', 'notable' and 'noble' abound. Less often, if perhaps more strikingly, volumes draw attention to 'sinners', too.

The books' bindings vary from the cheap and most basic to more decorative, illustrated and attractively presented gift books. The recurrence of individual names in these volumes indicates the growth and persistence of a popular historical canon of 'notable' women. In addition, the collection contains advice books as well as books on social issues relating to women and girls, exemplifying the changes in attitudes to womanhood from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries.

A description of *Notable Women: The Maureen Bell Collection*, with a pdf listing all 139 items in the collection, can be found at <https://archives.ljmu.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=Catalog&id=NWMB>

LJMU Special Collections and Archives are normally open 10am-4pm Monday-Friday. Visitors are strongly advised to book an appointment, and requests for archive material must be made in advance. Contact: [archives@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:archives@ljmu.ac.uk) or [www.ljmu.ac.uk/library/archives](http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/library/archives).

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### Tennyson Talks 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, 2023-24

All meetings are on Thursdays at 7.30pm London time. Admission to the Talks will be free. Joining details will be sent out a few days before each talk. If you are not a member of the Tennyson Society, please email Valerie Purton at [vpurton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vpurton@hotmail.co.uk) to be added to our mailing list.

7 December 2023:

Larry Mazzeno (Alvernia Univ., Pennsylvania)

'What the Early Feminists did to, and with, Tennyson:  
A Preliminary Survey'

4 January 2024:

Jim Cheshire (Lincoln)

'The Tennyson Research Centre in Lincoln:  
Archives and Access'

1 February 2024:

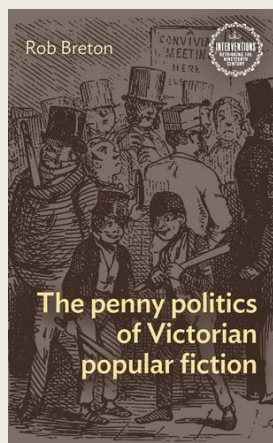
Elizabeth Helsinger (Chicago)

'Writing Towards and Against Death:  
Tennyson and the Rossettis'

7 March 2024L

Veronica Alfano (Macquarie Univ., Australia)

'Tennyson and the Reinvention of Language'



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