

Welcome to the Spring issue of the *BAVS Newsletter*, packed with news, book reviews, recent publications, reports, and CFPs. Do get in touch with any items for inclusion in future issues!

Hopefully you've already had an opportunity to engage with one of the brilliant **EVENT 2024** sessions that have taken place online, whether by joining a Zoom session or by sharing responses asynchronously via [COVE Conferences](#). There are many brilliant panels coming up with themes ranging from theatre, decadence, and global religions to activism and teaching: [details of virtual events here](#).

We also hope you'll be able to attend one of the **EVENT 2024 face-to-face hubs**. See p. 4 for more details about the UK hubs that are taking place in Belfast, Cardiff, Hawarden, Lancaster, and Stirling in September. If you're not based in the UK there are twelve other in-person events taking place across the globe, [find one near you here](#).

We are excited to have launched a new **BAVS Postdoctoral Network!** Members that identify as early-career should take a look at the [survey](#) currently being run by our postdoctoral representatives to work out how this network can best serve your needs. In the first instance, the network will be running BAVS Tea Time sessions, a space to chat with peers in an informal online setting. You can register your interest via [this form](#).

The deadline to apply for the next round of **BAVS funding** to support events (up to £1000), research (up to £625), and public engagement and outreach (up to £300) is 31 May 2024. These awards are open to all members, regardless of employment status, position, sector, or field. We are looking forward to reading your ideas for exhibitions, podcasts, web resources, and creative ventures, as well as individual research projects.

Finally, the deadline for submissions for the **BAVS Rosemary Mitchell Prize for a Second Monograph** is coming up soon. If you published your second book between 16 February 2023 and 16 February 2024, see overleaf to find out how to submit your work for consideration.

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The BAVS Rosemary Mitchell Prize for a Second Monograph

Annually, BAVS awards the Rosemary Mitchell Book Prize to the best second monograph published that year in Victorian studies. The prize is judged by a panel of BAVS scholars. Unlike other book prizes, this is specifically intended to honour the work of mid-career Victorianists in all disciplines who publish a monograph over the past year. The Prize will draw the attention of the Victorian Studies community to important new work in the field. The Prize also represents a celebration of the monograph as a form. Full rules are below and can also be found here: <https://bavs.ac.uk/book-prize/>

Judges: Dr. Melissa Gustin, Dr Dany van Dam, Dr. Vicky Mills (Chair)

Rules

This is a prize awarded by the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS) which is intended for mid-career scholars. The winning book will be the second book by a scholar.

Eligible contenders must have published a scholarly work in Victorian Studies **between 16 February 2023 and 16 February 2024**. In order to submit, an author has to be a paid-up member of BAVS on 30 April 2024. This will be checked. Members of BAVS outside the UK can enter books for the prize. Applicants for the prize do not need to have a university post.

The work needs to be a scholarly monograph in Victorian Studies (multi-authored books of articles will not be acceptable but joint-authored monographs will be and the prize can be shared). We will not accept scholarly editions of Victorian texts, neo-Victorian novels, or websites.

We will accept monograph studies devoted to the long nineteenth century (broadly defined) but will also accept texts that deal with neo-Victorian Studies as well. The work in question does need to have some post-1830 content (up to 1914). The prize is open to scholars in any discipline that deals with nineteenth-century Britain (including Britain's relationship with the wider world).

Publishers or authors may nominate a book. A covering letter (either by the author or the publisher) *must indicate the name and publication details of the author's first book*. We accept that the author's first book may not have been in Victorian Studies: they simply have to have published an earlier book. If publishers or authors wish to check if a work is eligible or not, they should email v.mills@bbk.ac.uk **before 15 April 2024**. The covering letter can be sent separately by email (to the Chair Victoria Mills at the above address) if desired.

The judges will need to be provided with THREE hard copies of the nominated work (paperback copies are acceptable). **IMPORTANT:** The author/publisher needs to email v.mills@bbk.ac.uk with details of the book. Victoria Mills will then provide the addresses to which the author/publisher needs to send the books.

The final deadline for receipt of books is 1st May 2024. Volumes received after that date will not be eligible and will not be returned. It is the responsibility of authors to make sure that publishers send over copies of the book. We do not expect authors to pay for copies and take no responsibility for this. Books sent for consideration will not be returned. Dispatch of the books by authors or publishers grants BAVS ownership of them.

The prize winner will be announced at the end of September 2024. An online panel will be devoted to the prize-winning book in which scholars will offer responses to the volume in conversation with the author.

The cash prize is £500. If a monograph is joint-authored, the prize money will be divided between the authors.

All judges are required to declare any conflict of interest.

The Judges' decision is final.

BAVS Postdoctoral Network

The BAVS Postdoctoral Reps are delighted to launch the **Postdoctoral Network**. This Network is open to anyone who identifies as early-career or postdoctoral, regardless of affiliation. We especially encourage those on precarious contracts, in alt-academic or GLAM roles, or who identify as independent researchers. At this early stage, we would like to invite responses to this **survey** so that the shape, scope, and function of the network can be decided by those interested in joining.

As part of the network, we are also excited to launch **BAVS Tea Time**, an informal, online space for the BAVS community to get together and discuss everything and anything. From the job market, publications, collaborations, to fun rabbit holes we've found ourselves down and exciting new ways to avoid finishing that manuscript, we want this to be an open space for nurturing an honest BAVS postdoc community. If you are interested in attending BAVS Tea Time, please fill out **this form** to register your preferred days, times, and frequencies. We hope to have the first BAVS Tea Time scheduled for the end of April/early May.

If you have any questions or would like to reach out directly, please feel free to write to [Alicia Barnes](#), [Emily Vincent](#), and [Harriet Thompson](#) (BAVS Postdoctoral Representatives).

BAVS Funding

The deadline to apply for BAVS funding to support events, research, and public engagement activities is 17:00 GMT on **31 May 2024** (the following round's deadline is 30 November 2024).

BAVS is committed to supporting activities, aimed at furthering Victorian Studies, of all of its members, regardless of employment status, position, sector or field. This includes, amongst other academics, early career and independent researchers, students, heritage professionals and teachers.

Funding is available for activities such as organising conferences, talks, networking events, training courses and workshops, exhibitions, displays, podcasts, individual research and creative projects, and creating online resources, and we are always happy to hear new ideas.

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.

Full details and application forms can be found on the BAVS website at <http://bavs.ac.uk/funding>

Please direct all enquiries and application forms to the Funding Officer, Dr Amelia Yeates, yeatesa@hope.ac.uk.

EVENT 2024 Flightless Conference and UK In-Person Hubs

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 also includes monthly zoom events throughout the 2024 calendar year open to all delegates. For full details of digital EVENT 2024 sessions, see <https://www.event2024.org/digital-events/>. The next session is an exciting [Theatre Panel](#) on Friday 19 April:

Watch like an Edwardian! In 1909, when Cicely Hamilton's The Pageant of Great Women was first performed at London's Scala Theatre, the suffrage campaign was developing strong ties to the theatrical community. Bringing together experts on Suffrage Drama from all career stages, this NAVSA Theatre Caucus sponsored panel will think about the impact of Hamilton's drama, and consider how the collective campaigning of the suffrage movement can be accessed in the twenty-first century through digital performance. If you're not familiar with the Pageant (or if you are and would like to experience it fully!), the Caucus's crowd-sourced digital performance will be available through COVE in advance of the panel.

If you did not submit a paper to a hub, you can still participate actively in EVENT 2024, including entering into conversation with the authors of the papers that will be delivered across the globe in September via COVE Conferences. To participate in these activities, you need to register: <https://www.event2024.org/registration/>

If you are wondering why you should consider paying for registration to attend these Zoom sessions, scroll down on our home page to Sponsors and Fees for an explanation of the fee structure of this conference: <https://www.event2024.org/>

For financial assistance to attend EVENT 2024, whether virtually or in person, see the relevant question on our FAQ page: <https://www.event2024.org/frequently-asked-questions/>

The UK will have five hubs: 1) Stirling, 2) Cardiff, 3) Hawarden, 4) Belfast and 5) Lancaster. Each hub will host independent face-to-face events in September 2024. Papers can be shared through COVE Conferences, a password-protected annotation platform that allows delegates from across the world to read and comment on papers delivered at other hubs. See below for information about each of the UK hubs. Full registration details can be found on the individual hub webpages linked below and the EVENT2024 website: <https://www.event2024.org/registration/>

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

The Stirling hub will be hosting panels and papers on topics ranging from exhibits, exhibitions, and openings to occult meetings and séances, including a strand focused on global Scotland in the 1830-1910 period. Overlooked by the Victorian Gothic grandeur of the National Wallace Monument (1869), both Stirling and nearby Bridge of Allan have rich Victorian heritage for delegates to explore. Programme and further details forthcoming: <https://scvs.ac.uk/index.php/victorian-events/>

In order to ensure delegates fully benefit from the international online Event 2024 sessions taking place throughout the year, early registration is strongly recommended: <https://www.event2024.org/registration/>

If you have any questions, please contact Professor Christine Ferguson christine.ferguson@stir.ac.uk and Dr Michael Shaw michael.shaw@stir.ac.uk

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

The Cardiff BAVS hub combines the long 19th century with the Victorian, placing both in relation to the contemporary. In her opening keynote on 'Poaching, Protest and "the Common Good"', Kirsti Bohata (Swansea) explores debates about land use in the past and present. The second keynote, by Steph Roberts (Freelance Visual Arts Producer and Commissioning Editor Wales for Art UK) considers 'The Picton Problem' as an example of how

colonial narratives are addressed in the museum sector; the programme includes time to visit the 'Reframing Picton' exhibition in the National Museum of Wales. Panel topics range from 'Crises, Personal and Political, Then and Now', 'Apocalypse, Dystopia and Speculative Fiction' and 'Temporalities' through 'Arctic Voyages', 'Water Environments', 'Found Children' and 'Colonial Encounters and Identity' to 'Consumer Culture, Theatre and Entertainment', 'Sensation and Mystery', 'The New Woman' and 'Celebrity Life-Writing'. Three special author sessions, on Tennyson, Hardy, and Conan Doyle/Sherlock Holmes, are complemented by a creative-critical panel on 'Writing Neo-Victorian Fiction'. There will be an opportunity to attend a PGR training session, workshops on 'Editing' and 'Salvaging' the Victorians, and a Special Collections session on 'Victorian Illustrated Books'. The conference dinner takes place in the Grade II listed Gothic Revivalist Aberdare Hall, and the pre-conference programme offers guided tours of Cardiff's Victorian Arcades and of the Castle apartments designed by William Burges. The conference concludes with a neo-Victorian roundtable discussion featuring Martin Danahay (Brock, Canada), Marie-Luise Kohlke (Swansea), Kate Mitchell (ANU), Sylvia Mieszkowki (Vienna) and Saverio Tomaiuolo (Cassino University, Italy).

Website including provisional programme: <https://event2024cardiff.wordpress.com/>

Registration link: <https://www.eventsforce.net/cbs/627/home>

For further details, contact Ann Heilmann, heilmanna@cardiff.ac.uk

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. The programme has a material culture slant and our speakers are a mix of academics, students, archivists, curators, librarians, and conservators; many speakers are talking about projects involving collections. Keynote speakers include Deborah Wynne (Professor, University of Chester), Holly Kirby (Assistant Curator, Attingham Park, and Visiting Lecturer, University of Chester), Mike Sanders (Professor, University of Manchester), and Michael Wheeler (Visiting Professor, University of Southampton).

In addition, the Gladstone hub will be hosting a Heritage Fair with workshops on finding and using Victorian collections and opportunities for public engagement and research connections with 14+ collections-organisations including libraries, archives, museums, and art galleries based in the North West.

You can find out all about what will be happening at Gladstone's Library on our website:

<https://www.gladstoneslibrary.org/events/events-courses-list/event-2024-at-gladstones-library>

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

Beginning with the French Revolution and ending with the First World War, the long nineteenth century was framed by events of global proportion. The QUB hub will address 'events' – at any scale – in the period spanning 1789-1914. Acknowledging the porous boundaries between the Romantic, Victorian and Modern, our hub is open to researchers working in and across these fields. We aim for geographical as well as temporal breadth, spanning the literary, artistic, political, and scientific cultures of nineteenth-century Ireland, Britain and other (inter)national contexts.

Registration Link: <https://www.event2024.org/registration/>

There is no registration cost, other than the central \$100 EVENT fee. Attendees, will, however need to arrange their own accommodation and pay independently for the conference dinner.

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. The hub will be hosting panels and papers on the theme 'Event' with particular focus upon 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).

In order to ensure delegates fully benefit from the international online Event 2024 sessions taking place throughout the year, early registration is strongly recommended: <https://www.event2024.org/registration/>

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Jo Carruthers (j.carruthers@lancaster.ac.uk).

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. 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.

***A Cross-Cultural History of Britain and Belgium, 1815-1918: Mudscapes and Artistic Entanglements*, by Marysa Demoor (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), xvi + 288pp., £109.99 (hardback) and £87.50 (e-book), ISBN 9783030879259**

Marysa Demoor's excellent, eclectic book addresses the 'cultural entanglements' (p. 3) generated by British historical and artistic tourism and its secondary effects, from the aftermath of Waterloo to the end of the First World War. It demonstrates that in this period, which embraces the artistic efflorescence of Belgium's *Belle Époque*, connections between the two countries were uniquely overdetermined by related ruling dynasties and collective memory, as well as cultural preoccupations and military history. Accordingly, the image of Belgium that emerges is infinitely richer than that offered by the well-worn historiographical trope characterizing it as, in Robert Southey's words, 'the theatre of strife through every age' (quoted p. 63).

Demoor's approach is an example of *histoire croisée* (cross-cultural or entangled history), which might be broadly defined as the self-reflexive and methodologically eclectic analysis of intersections between historical phenomena, which considers those phenomena as being empirically grounded and constantly in process. Chapter 2 builds on Demoor's introduction by outlining her most important preoccupations and approaches, alongside summarizing pre-Waterloo British attitudes to the region that would subsequently become the Belgian nation-state. Felicitously and provocatively, Demoor claims to conceive of nineteenth-century Belgium as 'another British colony with all the stereotypes and constructions of nationhood such an encounter entail' (p. 22).

Subsequent chapters each chart an interlacing set of paths, in keeping with the way in which *histoire croisée* typically entails constructing narratives that reveal dynamic interactions between objects and processes. Chapters 3 and 4 address the ways in which British authors and artists who visited Waterloo, from William Beckford to the Trollopes,

shaped wider cultural memory – and hence aspects of Britishness – through their responses to the site. Chapter 5 takes a more visual turn, outlining the artistic, literary, and political responses of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris to the paintings of Jan Van Eyck and Hans Memling. In Chapter 6 the focus switches to the two nations' interwoven royal houses, initially characterized by warm relations between Victoria and her uncle Leopold I, the first king of an independent Belgium. Such affection on the part of Britain – illuminatingly enriched by episodes from the career of Victoria's near-contemporary Charlotte Brontë – was endangered towards the end of the century by the widespread and horrific abuses carried out in the Congo Free State, at that time a personal possession of Leopold II. The change in attitudes is exemplified in the journalism of W. T. Stead: as the scale of suffering in the Congo became increasingly clear, it compounded Stead's moral disapproval of Leopold's character and his resentment at the king's refusal to have Gordon rescued from Khartoum.

Chapter 7 returns to the Northern Renaissance and its legacies. Its influence on the Pre-Raphaelites, and on collectors and connoisseurs such as the under-acknowledged James Weale, was simultaneously recorded and stoked by the periodical press. The two movements' shared predilection for the grotesque and excessive limited their mainstream appeal, but the Pre-Raphaelites in turn shaped the work of younger Belgian artists such as Fernand Khnopff and the Anglo-Belgian James Ensor. Effectively supported by small but well reproduced images, this important chapter identifies more and deeper artistic affinities than have been previously supposed. It delineates 'an unknown imagined community' spanning the North Sea (p. 173) and promises to enrich the understanding of cross-media cultural interactions in the period: for instance, Khnopff's frontispiece illustration for Georges Rodenbach's memorable Symbolist novella *Bruges-la-Morte* (1892). Chapter 8 effects another return, to Flanders as a battleground and resting place, this time for the dead of the First World War. The salience of earth in British war poetry, often in the form of

anthropomorphized (typically maternal) mud, gains new meanings in light of the Waterloo-related chapters. Chapter 9 considers the mediating role of networks and individuals, notably Laurence Binyon, who contributed to the standing of Belgian culture in Britain between 1890 and 1919. Chapter 10 offers a brief but stimulating reflection on the trope of greyness in relation to Belgian landscapes.

Demoor manages a complex evidence base admirably, moving easily between philological specifics and broad-brush cultural history as befits the principles of *histoire croisée*. Copy-editing could have been more rigorous: a few names and dates are inaccurate, and the French term *crosses* (rifle butts) is mistranslated as 'crosses' (p. 243). Such minor irritations aside, this is a uniquely rich and stimulating study, which is sure to expand the horizons of researchers working in any of the numerous fields with which it engages.

Adrian Armstrong (Queen Mary, University of London)

***Subsurface*, by Karen Pinkus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023), 219pp., £21.99 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9781517914790**

In an innovative addition to environmental humanities and nineteenth-century studies, *Subsurface* asks its readers: 'How do we know the subsurface?' (p. 22). Across this volume's 200 pages, Karen Pinkus approaches the subsurface through numerous definitions. The subsurface is exploited for resources yet remains unexplored and difficult to map; it is a paradoxical space that is both 'hollow and solid, navigable and impenetrable' (p. 22). Though difficult to 'know' and demarcate, *Subsurface* invites readers to explore how climate, geology, and extraction intersect with narrative theory and literary criticism. To undertake this journey below the Earth's surface, Pinkus excavates a selection of predominately European and Northern American nineteenth-century literature. Focusing upon authors like Jules Verne, E. T. A. Hoffman, and Arthur Conan Doyle, the book pinpoints this period as fundamental in opening the subsurface for exploration, extraction, and exploitation. *Subsurface* traverses numerous texts, critical perspectives, and contemporary contexts to conduct an original analysis of what lies beneath the surface of narrative structure and reading itself.

Pinkus utilises a five-part structure to uncover layers of the subsurface. The analysis repeatedly returns to Verne's *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864) as a springboard for discussing the five elements of *Subsurface*. Chapter 1 looks for

'Cracks' in the surface as entry points for the book's descent below. Using Verne's *The Black Indies* (1877), Pinkus begins by considering the geological models that emerged in the nineteenth century that influenced his writing. Moving through the cracks to enter the subsurface, Chapter 2 examines 'Extracting' as a violent, colonial process that results in a fantasy of 'geoimperialism' (p. 63). Pinkus uses examples from writers like Verne, Doyle, and Émile Zola to question how the subsurface is both desirable and dismissed. It is a space filled with resources and 'a place of (indefinite) storage' for the unwanted by-products of fossil fuels (p. 87), leading to Chapter 3's contemplation of 'Burial'. Chapter 4 examines 'Surface Depth', focusing on soil in Verne's fiction as the liminal space between surface and subsurface that invites a reflection on modes of surface/depth reading. The book concludes with 'Subterranean Futures', ending not on a 'note of hope' but with an invitation to reflect on the importance of 'narrative itself' when imagining the subsurface (p. 184).

Subsurface surveys an impressive range of critical voices and perspectives to interrogate the key terms of each chapter. The second chapter on 'Extraction' swiftly moves between Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, and Johann Peter Hebel, to name a few. Through this process, Pinkus correlates the 'slow violence' of moving 'materials from the subsurface to the surface' with a metaphorical 'hollowing out of humanity' that sits in the background of reading literature 'as a nagging feeling that refuses to go away' (pp. 63, 86). The range of literary critics cited allows Pinkus to reorientate a twenty-first-century reader's experience of writers like Verne within current practices of fossil fuel extraction in tangible, concrete ways. The book goes beyond reading old texts through contemporary contexts to foreground a more profound connectivity between surface meanings and subterranean connotations, positing an intriguing new method for reading the ecological in Victorian literature.

The book's expansive range of, and drawing of parallels between, critical perspectives, literary texts, and contemporary climate change is perhaps best suited for readers versed in narrative and critical theories. As *Subsurface* moves asynchronously through its analysis of primary texts, current events, scientific developments from the last three centuries, and theoretical perspectives, a passing familiarity with the narratives it dissects aids the reader in navigating the book's underground journeys. Yet, Pinkus's unique temporal blend is vital for making *Subsurface* feel pertinent to eco-criticism and nineteenth-century studies today. For example, the fourth chapter on 'Surface Depths' moves across numerous temporal and geographic moments in fiction and fact. Signposted with handy subtitles, the

chapter journeys from the beginning of Verne's expedition to the Earth's core in 'Iceland, 1864' to attempts at carbon capture in 'Nepal, 2019', and concludes with a lecture on land art by Robert Morris in 'New York, 1979' (pp. 125, 158, 161). Such interconnectivity gives this book's literary analysis a deeper resonance with twenty-first-century audiences living through the climate crisis without imposing that context in a superficial manner.

While the subsurface remains challenging to conceptualise and navigate throughout the book – a discordant 'realm of both mystery and possibility' (p. 1) – this uncertainty is the feeling with which Pinkus intends to leave her readers. When heroes descend to the underworld in the katabatic stories Pinkus references, they 'search for knowledge' in the hope that they will ascend back to the surface (p. 11). Yet, discovering the desired knowledge or a safe return home is never guaranteed. This book poses more questions than it answers, but the disquieting doubt it uncovers ultimately embodies the subsurface as Pinkus imagines it. This book invites us to question the undercurrents of textual surface, making a vital contribution to understanding not just how we imagine ecological subjects but how we read their layers of meaning.

Ruth-Anne Walbank (University of Warwick)

***Human Tissue in the Realist Novel, 1850–1895*, by Ben Moore (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 100pp., £39.99 (hardback) and £31.99 (e-book), ISBN 9783031266393**

Adding to an expanding body of critical works in the Medical Humanities, Ben Moore's *Human Tissue in the Realist Novel, 1850-1895*, one of four Palgrave Studies in Literature, Science and Medicine books published in 2023, cleverly draws upon the Victorian notion of connectivity within biological and literary material. The word *tissue* was historically used to denote first fabric, then paper, before coming to represent human cellular material (p. 1). Moore examines how *tissue* and its layers of meaning may be used to discuss the growth too of literary realism, its shifting stages of emergence, popularity, and decline across the nineteenth century. Realism, Moore argues, has much to do with subjectivity and the construction of the human subject in relation to, and frequently in opposition from, animal life. As a result, Moore locates developing concerns about the Anthropocene through a study of nineteenth-century realist fiction.

Although *Human Tissue* is a study of the nineteenth century, the author employs post-structural theorists, including Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Fredric Jameson, to dissect the

language of realist authors. Moore provides detailed close readings of fiction by Charles Kingsley, George Eliot, Émile Zola, George Moore, and Vernon Lee — authors who were all 'interested in [...] theories of human and animal life' (p. 8) — to draw out tensions between the constructed human subject and their relationship with nature. Across five chapters, Moore reads mankind as a 'layered and fluctuating sociobiological construct', humans as independent and interdependent (p. 89) This begins in Chapter One, with a study of Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1834) as a text ostensibly concerned with clothes and fabric, but actually representing layers of changing philosophical and religious beliefs.

In Chapter Two, Moore identifies in Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863) a hierarchical series of forms, where all species are connected by at least one attribute, through the Christian belief of the "Great Chain of Being" (p. 18). In *Alton Locke* (1850), however, Moore claims that Kingsley showed less confidence in cellular distinction, reading the book as a pre-evolutionary narrative that links humanity even with microscopic dirt and dust.

My favourite chapter was the third, mainly because its discussion of 'anthropogenic climate change' clearly addresses mankind's tenuous relationship with the environment (p. 43). Here Moore explores the warring of humanity and nature in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). Although critics have read the raging flood that kills Maggie and Tom Gulliver as an unnecessary allegory from an otherwise realist author, Moore reads in the ending a credible 'overlaying of natural history onto human history' (p. 58). This interpretation of Eliot's novel positions humanity as destroyed by its own destructiveness and reminded me of lines from William Wordsworth's poem 'A Slumber did my Spirit Seal' (1800), in which the speaker suggests the shared composition of human and natural material after death: she "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course | With rocks, and stones, and trees".

Finally, in Chapter Four, Moore turns to arguments around vivisection, food, and animal life, registering disgust in the bourgeoisie's hierarchising of humans over animals. Moore reads in Zola's writings the argument that science, the experimental realist novel, and the dissection of living creatures (in real life and as a literary narrative) should provide a route for man to examine his own related cellular construction. Moore's book concludes by claiming that even as the production of realist novels was an attempt to illuminate the human condition to man, that same attempt is held up by the very divisive and layered nature of language and identity.

From the title of Moore's book, I was expecting greater emphasis on the nineteenth-century discovery of human tissue and on the ways

that biological classification of cellular material affected the Victorian scientific community. For that reason, it would have been helpful for Moore to have included a study of Rudolf Virchow's essays. Virchow was a mid-Victorian scientist who was not only considered the father of cellular pathology; he was also obsessed with the instability of language intended to accurately express scientific properties. Nonetheless, what Moore's work provides is, above and beyond, an examination of language that does much to remind us that the realist novel and scientific labels that we may assume to be definite forms have their own frailty and tendency to fragment.

Sara Zadrozny (Oxford University Department of Continuing Education)

***Reading Bodies in Victorian Fiction: Associationism, Empathy and Literary Authority*, by Peter J. Katz (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 256pp., £90.00 (hardback), £19.99 (paperback), and £85.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781474476201**

Peter J. Katz's study is a timely intervention in Victorian studies, but also literary studies as a whole, to remind scholars of the importance of affect and feelings when encountering a text. Continuing the post-critique debate started by scholars such as Bruno Latour, Stephen Best, Sharon Marcus, and Rita Felski, Katz argues that we must attend to texts' surfaces rather than engage in a hermeneutics of suspicion. Specifically, he presents associationism, a science that used physiology to understand mental phenomena, as a form of attending to a text that can cultivate forms of empathy. Such theories have a new urgency in the light of an increasingly hostile attitude toward the Humanities as disciplines that are without a marketable purpose. To look to the nineteenth century to understand how reading literature can have the very specific aim of teaching readers to become empathetic citizens can be an extremely important counter-argument for all those doubting the uses of reading for pleasure and reading fiction in general.

The introduction provides an engagingly written discussion of associationism and the role of affect as forms of reparative readings. What this school of thought aimed at was dismantling the dichotomy between the 'hard' sciences as being material and the 'soft' sciences as being ephemeral. In contrast, associationism held that language was a physiological process, too, that could draw bodies together. Katz argues that language needs to be approached as a bodily phenomenon because this is how 'many Victorians understood it' (p. 5). Similarly,

he suggests that 'Victorians most certainly understood that common readers possessed their own literary interests and tastes' (p. 7). Such a *posteriori* assumptions always risk being somewhat speculative; yet Katz's approach of stepping into the shoes of imagined Victorian readers and anchoring his argument in both the historical context and five thoroughly researched case studies does chime in with his suggested ethics of care. Looking at the diversity of texts devoured by the Victorians, they indeed emerge as readers unfettered by hierarchies of cultural or literary value. Notably, this clashes with the inclusion of the discipline of literary studies at the university and how from the beginning – Katz cites from Alexander John Scott's inaugural lecture as Professor of English at University College, London, in 1848 – its study had to be defended against accusations of not being intellectual enough.

Chapter One zooms in on the history and philosophy behind associationism to show that the theory's 'empirical epistemology understands language and embodiment as part of the same surface' (p. 28). That the chapter begins with quarks and Isaac Newton and ends with Alexander Bain's conviction that language directly inspires physical sensation and considerations as to how in the preface to *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) Charles Dickens asserts that a text's value lies in what the reader herself affectively gets from it, shows how swiftly Katz navigates between abstract theory and specific literary exemplification. The following chapters present focused case studies, beginning with an analysis of Dickens's short story 'The Hospital Patient' (1836) in Chapter Two. The chapter combines an approach that I read as associationist with a surface reading: the subchapter headings merely read 'Fictions' (p. 55), 'Optics' (p. 58), or 'Memory' (p. 72). This story about a young woman who was beaten by her husband is a shocking depiction of domestic abuse; since the focus is on the material of the medical setting, an empathetic stance in the readers can materialize. As Katz sums it up, '[t]o think about empathy with suffering bodies, "The Hospital Patient" investigates the development of empathy with textual bodies' (p. 81) – we, just like the story's original readers, can feel the woman's anguish.

Chapters Three and Four turn to Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-61) and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), respectively, enacting the complex entanglement of sensationalism, the body as riddle and the body as reading material. The chapter on Dickens, which also constructs an analogy between the serial publication form of the novel and the rapidity of associations, in particular works out how the reader needs to navigate between bodies, characters, and 'young-Pip's' mistakes and misreadings and 'narrator-Pip's' corrections of these

readings and renewed mistakes (see p. 87). In the reading of *The Moonstone*, the remarks concerning marginalized characters are especially innovative: successfully 'solving' the riddle at the core of the novel comes at the expense of being granted access to the best readers of the novel, namely the Indian Brahmins, but also Penelope Betteredge and Rosanna Spearman. In all of those cases, it is the British characters who do not (want to) see the power of their readings, that is, closing themselves off from the vitalism inherent in them. In Chapter Five, a reading of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), it seems to be the writer herself who is torn between the limits of science and hermeneutics: in its representation of Robert Audley's continuous failures to understand both the texts and female bodies around him, the novel 'rebels against conclusions and the scholarly methods that derive them', providing a note of caution, in fact, also for scholars today not to make assumptions about bodies' interiors (p. 161). Chapter Six turns to Walter Besant's *Children of Gibeon* (1886) and how bodies can be erased depending on whether 'a gift of clothing exposes the social relations bound up in things' (p. 197). It poses the question, how can surfaces matter in a different way than materializing social conditions?

Katz's study ends with a sentimental, yet moving, vignette of walking the London streets with his students, in the steps of Dickens and others, to understand the ubiquity of poverty then and now. To read others' pain as your own pain and to be moved by it to evoke social change are important agendas. They may be optimistic, but such collective acts of actually *seeing* bodies – not clouded by theory and abstraction – are crucial. Dickens is indeed very present, but the whole study would have been equally convincing if even more space was given to his writings; however, as a whole, *Reading Bodies in Victorian Fiction* is an important addition to Victorian scholarship and expresses an urgent call for an attitude towards (historical) texts that is caring and empathetic.

Heidi Lucja Liedke (Goethe University Frankfurt)

***Sister Novelists: The Trailblazing Porter Sisters, Who Paved the Way for Austen and the Brontës*, by Devoney Looser (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 576pp., \$30.00 (hardback) and \$21.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781635575293**

Devoney Looser's double biography of the Porter sisters, *Sister Novelists: The Trailblazing Porter Sisters, Who Paved the Way for Austen and the Brontës*, answers Jane and Anna Maria Porter's previously unfulfilled wishes. Although Looser's subtitle implies

that the Porters preceded Jane Austen, they were in fact exact contemporaries who outlived Austen into the Victorian era. The biography is important for Victorianists, given its aim at recovering writers whose impact on the Victorian era has been immensely understudied. The sisters, two of the most famous writers of their day, preserved their correspondence with the intention of it being eventually published. Jane, in executing her will in 1850, left clear instructions for her good friend Nathaniel Parker Willis to write her biography. This wasn't a vain request; the sisters, who had published twenty-six novels between them, were widely admired throughout their lives, and, in an age that had come to appreciate authorship, it was not uncommon for writers to preserve their letters for publication. However, Jane and Maria never got their biography, and their letters were not published either. Instead, their deaths were mourned, their novels continued to be printed, and they remained household names throughout the nineteenth century, that is, until the arbiters of modern-literary history (twentieth-century critics and creators of school curricula) gave Jane Austen the pride of place as the main female writer to be remembered of the early 1800s. Walter Scott, furthermore, was given all the credit for popularizing historical fiction, a genre which the Porter sisters mastered first.

These are the wrongs which Looser sets out to right. The biography, in hardback a doorstop that comes wrapped in a lilac dust jacket, reanimates the lives of Jane and Maria, along with their numerous famed-writer friends, royal acquaintances, and talented family members. Looser aptly compares the sisters to Elinor and Marianne Dashwood from Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). Jane, the elder sister, navigated the family's tricky affairs from a young age. She managed accounts, settled her brothers' debts, and negotiated strategically with her and Maria's publishers. Publicly reserved, she was witty in private and didn't refrain from passing judgement on friends or voicing her qualms about women's limited power. Maria was the more emotionally driven of the two and the faster writer. She once fell in love with an officer she saw through her window, and they secretly corresponded for over a year, until meeting in person led to disillusionment.

Neither sister married, and both provided the means for their mother and brothers' survival for much of their lives. Their brother, Robert, made a name for himself as a historical painter and later a diplomat. He was their closest brother in affection, but his thriftless ways kept Jane and Maria responsible for his debts throughout and even after his life. Despite both sisters' fame and connections, they were always in a financially precarious position. The sisters alternated writing novels so that they

would share the labour of providing for the family and taking care of their mother and home (when they had one). They would make a few hundred pounds on a successful three-volume novel, and then would have to spend nearly all on their brothers' debts and the lease to their cottage. This discouraging pattern continued through most of their adult lives. Nevertheless, Jane and Maria successfully pioneered the nineteenth-century historical novel.

It is no easy task to write a biography of two people, but Looser manages to capture the lives of Jane and Maria equally by turning their prolific correspondence into animated scenes. She didn't have to go far for a source: in their letters, Jane and Maria scrupulously recorded their own conversations or those with others. Though somewhat unusual for biography, Looser explains in her introduction that in this first biography of the Porter sisters, it was important to put their voices front and centre. The effect of this choice is rewarding: the reader bears witness to the interiors of drawing rooms, theatres, sickbeds, and dinner parties firsthand. As witty and observant writers, Jane and Maria captured the colourful personalities of their social circles in biting quips. Describing a dinner party, for example, Maria writes to Jane, 'I was literally crammed with as many different things as there were animals in the ark' (p. ix). Looser lets the sisters' voices rule the book, avoiding retroactively imposing a narrative onto their lives.

At times, the Porters' lives feel hopelessly thwarted by failed novels, failed romance, and absent, financially disastrous brothers. Other times, it's hard to believe, despite these personal realities, how famous both sisters really were. To accept that they were celebrities, who sold millions of copies of their novels and were more well-known than Austen in their time, is to unsettle what we think we know about literary history. Despite the work by scholars, like Looser, which has proven that our twenty-first-century understanding of nineteenth-century literary fame is woefully misguided, popular narratives and the endless churn of Austen adaptations bury these truths. Looser offers clear proof that Scott took his historical novel form from the Porters without attribution. Knowing this changes how we understand literary history and why some writers (often women) were eclipsed by others (mostly men). Jane didn't let Scott get away unscathed: she used her pen to take back the credit she and Maria deserved, but this wasn't enough to change the narrative that has endured to this day. Whether Looser's biography will change that narrative now is yet to be seen, but I have faith that there is room for Jane and Maria in our ever-changing canon.

Emma Swidler (Indiana University)

***The Maternal Image of God in Victorian Literature*, by Rebecca Styler (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 226pp., £130.00 (hardback) and £35.09 (e-book), ISBN 9780367473631**

Monica Sjöo's painting 'God giving birth' shocked the public when it was first exhibited in 1968. However, as Rebecca Styler demonstrates in *The Maternal Image of God in Victorian Literature*, the idea of God as mother was already prevalent in the works of many nineteenth-century writers. For example, the social campaigner Josephine Butler, one of the authors discussed in this study, 'compared the work of redemption with the "travail" of childbirth' (p. 1).

This monograph analyses the works of five British and North American authors, ranging chronologically from 1850 to 1915, for whom 'the maternal divine image signified themes felt to be under-represented in the prevailing image of God' (p. 2). In Chapter 1, 'The idea of God as a mother in Victorian culture: sympathy, prophecy, nature', Styler explains why this maternal model was created and its relevance for different Christian traditions. This introduction also makes an interesting connection between divine motherhood and ecofeminism, the social and political movement that emerged in the late-twentieth century.

In Chapter 2, 'Faces of the Madonna in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction: feminist justice and the matriarchal divine', Styler begins by examining the short story 'Lizzie Leigh' (1850) as a parable of universal salvation. The rest of the chapter is devoted to the potential Gaskell saw in the Roman Catholic Madonna as a 'symbol of the divine feminine that could elevate the status of women and of compassionate values' (p. 41) and how this is portrayed in *Cranford* (1852-53), 'The Poor Clare' (1856), and *Ruth* (1853). The most compelling argument of this chapter is found in the discussion of *Ruth* because it considers the literary and artistic works that inspired Gaskell whilst also proving that the representation of a fallen woman who is also a mother has 'the potential to disrupt conventional Christian moralities' (p. 60).

Chapter 3, 'George Macdonald's fairy god mothers: Romantic religion, female vocation and maternalistic communities', investigates divine motherhood in Macdonald's poetry, realist novels such as *Robert Falconer* (1868-69) and *The Vicar's Daughter* (1870), and the fairy tales he wrote during the 1870s. Styler writes about his 'endorsement of women's prophecy' and argues that it is through tales such as *The Princess and the Goblin* (1870-71) that Macdonald 'developed his maternal divine image more fully' (pp. 72, 75). The most noteworthy part of this chapter is Styler's engagement with lesser-known works such as 'The History of Photogen and

Nycteris' (1879-80) that she interprets 'in light of Macdonald's ideas about animal spirituality' (p. 69).

Styler turns her attention to a non-fiction writer in chapter 4 'Josephine Butler, esoteric Christianity and the biblical motherhood of God'. Throughout this chapter, Styler expands on her arguments about Butler's theological thought that she proposed in a chapter of her previous monograph, *Literary Theology by Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (Ashgate, 2010). Styler argues that Butler's ideas of God as mother are fully developed in the works that she wrote during the 1890s and 1900s such as *The Lady of Shunem* (1894), a collection of commentaries on Bible stories.

In Chapter 5, 'The Big Good Thing: Frances Hodgson Burnett's maternal gospel of optimism, immanence and Demetrian utopia', Styler starts by investigating earlier works such as the memoir *The One I Knew Best of All* (1893) and the novels *That Lass O'Lowrie's* (1877) and *The Dawn of A Tomorrow* (1906). She argues that 'the maternal was a significant spiritual category for Burnett' both 'in terms of what it positively stood for and the caricatured "masculine" paradigm it opposed' (p. 139). The second half of this chapter offers a nuanced analysis of *The Secret Garden* (1911) through which Styler explores how the utopian world of the garden can reform the faults of the real world.

In the last chapter, 'Charlotte Perkins Gilman and "maternal pantheism": Religion in utopian motherlands 1899-1915', Styler first shows how a maternal divine image became associated with utopianism and then provides an overview of the utopian fiction written by women from the 1880s up to the publication of Gilman's *Herland* in 1907. The second part focuses on *Herland* and through a fascinating close reading of the ecological and religious elements of this work Styler concludes by arguing that for Gilman 'living in the spirit of divine motherhood meant seizing the reins to recreate humanity, exerting an authority over people and environment that smacks of maternalism, racism and anthropocentrism' (p. 183).

This book offers persuasive readings of a great variety of texts and as such represents an enriching addition to the field of nineteenth-century literature and religion. This study will also be a valuable read for scholars interested in ecocritical and ecofeminist approaches to literature.

Rosa Ortiz Notario (Independent Researcher)

***Chains of Love and Beauty: The Diary of Michael Field*, by Carolyn Dever (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 280pp., £30.00**

(hardback and e-book) and £22.00 (paperback), ISBN 9780691203447

***Michael Field's Revisionary Poetics*, by Jill R. Ehnenn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 288pp., £90.00 (hardback) and £90.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781474448390**

The notion of recovery has dominated Victorian studies for the past couple of decades, with important interventions in historical and literary critical writing drawing attention to the neglected voices of nineteenth-century women. In 2020 the 'Reclaim Her Name' campaign sought to restore the birth names of women authors to their prominent publications, as opposed to using the male pseudonyms that they had originally, deliberately, chosen to publish under, examples included George Eliot's (Mary Ann Evans's) *Middlemarch* (1871-72) and Vernon Lee's (Violet Paget's) *The Phantom Lover* (1886). Perhaps such choices were made to conceal their womanhood in an oppressive and patriarchal publishing industry, but the existence of this campaign seemed to presuppose this to have been the only reason. The campaign drew criticism – if these women chose new names for themselves then, surely, we as readers in the twenty-first century should respect that? If gender is understood as performance, and if the *noms de plume* of in particular queer authors are bound up in self-fashioning, then maybe it is best to leave those names intact? One of the most fascinating, and complex, examples of nineteenth-century queer self-fashioning is Michael Field – the pseudonym that constituted the creative and romantic life of two women.

The relationship between Katherine Harris Bradley (Michael) and Edith Emma Cooper (Field) is still scandalous today because it was incestuous. As Carolyn Dever points out in *Chains of Love and Beauty: The Diary of Michael Field*, many critics are happy to explore the couple's queerness while turning a blind eye to the incestuous element of their partnership. A critical approach attentive to queerness that does not consider the familial element runs the risk of whitewashing the complexity of their lives. Dever does not shy away from delving in. She argues that Michael Field's relationship, which she describes as a marriage, was an 'original state' as opposed to a destination – the two consciously decided not to leave the family home (p. 25). Such a reading aligns with what we know of other aspects of the couple's thought. Both were hostile to progressive political ideas, with Bradley writing in their shared diary *Works and Days* on 22 January 1901 that 'the great illusion of the Victorian age is the illusion of progress' (London, British Library, Add MS 46790, fol. 17^v). As Alex Murray has recently argued, Bradley was a 'decadent Conservative', with deep hostility to free

trade, democracy and trade unionism (*Decadent Conservatism: Aesthetics, Politics and the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p. 2).

Dever's new book is the first in a series (the second set to be published this year) and approaches *Works and Days* as if it were a 'unified literary work' (p. 28). Dever never quite defines what she means by this. She suggests Michael Field drew upon nineteenth-century novelistic conventions, though ultimately it is Dever's analytical techniques, for example engaging in illuminating close readings while drawing out how the lives of women in the nineteenth century were governed by external structures, that redefine the text in this way. Dever's approach emphasises the ways in which Michael Field were deliberately constructing a narrative of their lives, a narrative which emerged as this unanimous project (twenty-nine volumes, one volume per year) went along, one volume per year. Such an approach offers a wonderful presentist temporality: we as retrospective readers have the answers to questions that captivated the two women. As Dever writes, 'What happened to Oscar Wilde? What was the outcome of the Boer war, which transfixed the poets for some time? When did Queen Victoria die?' (p. 18). Dever's insistence on reading their work as prose also ties such historical events together thematically. The book's key strength, though, is its account of many elusive biographical and historical contexts, not least the couple's friendship with Robert Browning and their tendency to triangulate their relationship with thirds: Bernard Berenson (with whom Cooper was for some time infatuated), Browning himself, and eventually their dog, Whym Chow.

Jill R. Ehnenn's *Michael Field's Revisionary Poetics* also contains many as yet unexplored historical contexts, and is steeped in innovative theoretical practice. Ehnenn makes use of Caroline Levine's affordance theory, thinking through the ways Michael Field's varied experimentations with form allow for new ways of understanding movement between formal artistic modes, the moving of ideas between two people on a page, or the translation of embodied sensation through language. Where Dever is solely interested in *Works and Days* as a work of prose, Ehnenn thinks about Michael Field through their plethora of formal interventions in the context of late-nineteenth-century aestheticism. She also emphasises the feminist potential of their historical revisionism. In *Long Ago* (1889), for example, Michael Field rewrites fragments from Sappho's poetry. They make use of anachronistic form through experimenting with Elizabethan closet drama, which Ehnenn argues allows the women the same agency as it did for women writers three hundred years earlier: the affordance of domestic space to explore

'forbidden territory' such as queer sexuality and desire (p. 50).

Ehnenn notes Michael Field's pioneering experiments with ekphrastic poetry in *Sight and Song* (1892). Ekphrasis, which seeks to transform one form into another, is understood by Ehnenn as a dialectic between subjective and objective engagement with the art object. She takes an ecocritical approach in the third chapter when considering the lyricism in another of Michael Field's collections of poetry *Underneath the Bough* (1893), the elegiac tradition in *Wild Honey and Various Thyme* (1908), and the significance of their conversion to Catholicism in their late devotional verse. She argues that they appropriated the metric conventions of devotional poetics in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, which developed richly throughout the nineteenth century in the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Keble, and Christina Rossetti, for example. Devotional verse included 'tropes of confession, petition, praise, and meditation' (p. 212). The adoption of devotional verse conventions was further spurred by Cooper's diagnosis of bowel cancer in February 1911, which Ehnenn argues enabled the poets to create work attentive to suffering.

The great triumph of both books is their accessibility. Dever's analysis provides a gateway into the volumes of *Works and Days* that have been sitting in British Library storage for the better part of one hundred years. Michael Field always intended to publish their diary. Thomas Sturge Moore, the executor of their estate, did publish one volume in 1933 but was rather dismissive of Michael Field's critical agency, suggesting theirs were the banal, lifeless descriptions of two women on the outskirts of fashionable artistic movements. Dever concedes that a lot of the diary's contents is quite commonplace – 'books and bills, carpets, dresses and hats' – but these sit alongside 'desire, art, sex and death' (p. 1).

Ultimately, Ehnenn and Dever take very comparable approaches to the life and work of Michael Field, threading important biographical and historical contexts throughout their accounts. This is partly inevitable: the process of 'recovery' is not quite complete, and the extent of critical engagement with their writings is still, compared with those of canonical authors, scant. This provokes an interesting dilemma about the tension between historical reconstruction and theoretical engagement – is it possible to provide innovative, ambitious theory about authors who are still relatively unknown? This may be one of the main challenges for scholars of recovered writers in the coming years. For their part, Ehnenn and Dever have provided the groundwork for a way forward.

Megan Williams (University of Surrey)

***Panoramas and Compilations in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Seeing the Big Picture*, by Helen Kingstone (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 275pp., £109.99 (hardcover) and £87.50 (e-book), ISBN 9783031156847**

Kingstone begins this interdisciplinary study with the compelling question ‘What does it mean to gain an overview of an era while living through it, and why is it difficult to achieve?’ (p. 1). Applying this question to nineteenth-century Britain, Kingstone uses the panorama and compilation to explore how one gains an overview in a period of ‘every-increasing material’ (p. 1). The case studies that underpin Kingstone’s examination of ‘overview *through* immersion’ (p. 5) begin with the panorama invented in 1787 and continue through to the compilations of the second half of the nineteenth century such as the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885-1901). However, Kingstone acknowledges that the panoramic and the compilation models were not tied to one decade or mutually exclusive, demonstrating their fluidity throughout this study which ultimately investigates how ‘people respond to excess of information’ (p. 8). Moving between the panoramic and compilation models meticulously, Kingstone provides comprehensive conclusions at the end of each chapter, helping to ground the reader even when the plethora of case studies can feel overwhelming. Kingstone readily builds upon current scholarship, acknowledging its contribution while also clearly stating how this study responds to the work of these scholars.

Part I begins with a history of the panorama, in which Kingstone argues that panoramas depicting recent historical events were an important method of chronicling contemporary history. Moving beyond existing scholarship by John Barrell, Dietrich Neumann, Oliver Grau, and Alison Griffiths, which has described panoramas as simply relating to other visual media, panoramas become a model through which contemporary events could be mediated into history. Thomas Carlyle and Archibald Alison employed the panoramic model in textual form to gain the same sort of overview when writing about history. Kingstone focuses mostly on Carlyle’s *French Revolution: A History* (1837) as he readily uses a panoramic perspective in his writing; she argues that Carlyle and Alison employed the idea of panoramic perspective to ‘[generate] imaginary spatial distance’ and to ‘broaden the social view and represent inconspicuous masses of people’ (p. 64).

Decades later, Thomas Hardy also used a panoramic perspective in his two fictions set during the Napoleonic Wars, *The Trumpet-Major* (1880) and *The Dynasts* (1904-08), with the latter example superseding Carlyle with Hardy’s innovative mix of

‘proximity and distance’ (p. 87). Hardy employed constructs in his writing such as the portrayal of hypothetical stage performance to immerse the reader in dialogue and the depiction of a spirit realm, the commentary arising from which, based on hindsight, offered the perfect overview (p. 87). Part II begins and ends with Kingstone’s analysis of the transition from the panorama to the compilation through a case study on the photography of the Crimean War (1853-56) – the first war photography ever produced. Kingstone demonstrates that even though the Victorian quest for an overview shifted from the painted panorama to the compilation of multiple photographs, the two mediums still worked together. On the other hand, photographic compilations provided both an overview and immersion, offering precedence for the late nineteenth-century compilations discussed in the last part of Kingstone’s study.

In Part III, Kingstone examines big data projects which could centre on compilations of things, populations, language, images, or even literature. The projects featured in Part III focus on current events and esteemed living or recently deceased people. In the first of three case studies, Kingstone considers W. T. Stead’s *Review of Reviews* (1890 onward) and its aim to create a monthly overview of topical issues. Secondly, *Men of the Time* (1852-99) provides one answer to how collective biographies offered an overview for the Victorians, even when they chronicled contemporary people. Kingstone completes this investigation of the compilation by looking at the original *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885-1901), in which its collective biographies drew from recently deceased people to provide an overview through immersion. Ultimately, Kingstone proposes ‘a new politics of distance’ by considering the overview ‘as a tool for temporal understanding’ (p. 235).

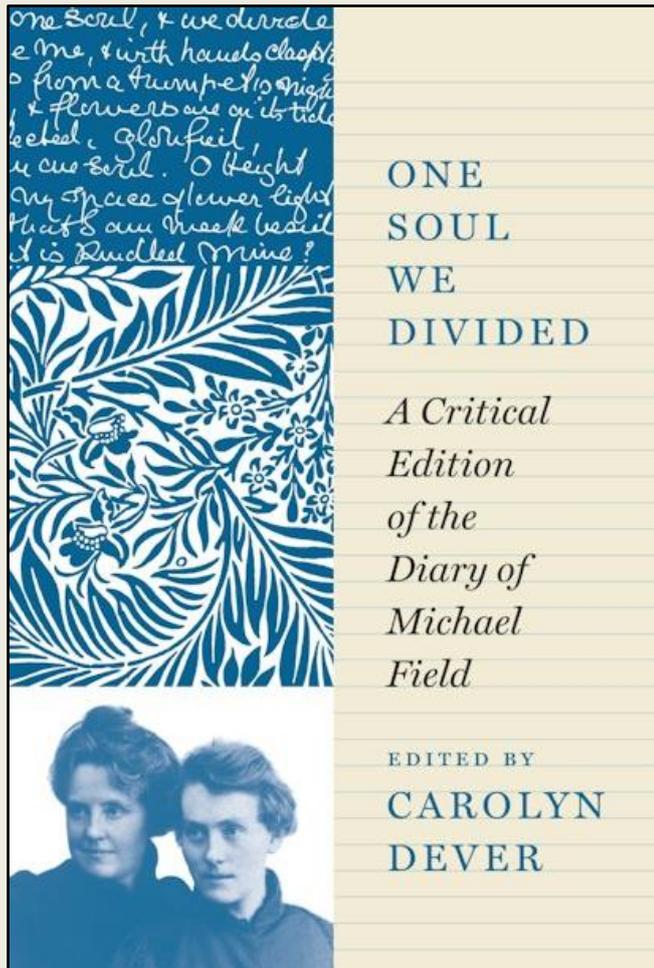
Kingstone’s study effectively builds on the work of previous scholars – particularly regarding the nineteenth-century panorama – by tying the panoramic perspective not only to the compilation but also to the notion of writing one’s history. Scholars of the visual and material will find Kingstone’s study a timely intervention in the field, offering a new perspective on how the Victorians saw themselves and their history. By looking at how the nineteenth century responded to an ever-expanding world, Kingstone suggests that we can gain beneficial observations and different approaches to our twentieth-first-century use of big data to answer life’s big questions.

Michelle Reynolds (University of Exeter)

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 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.

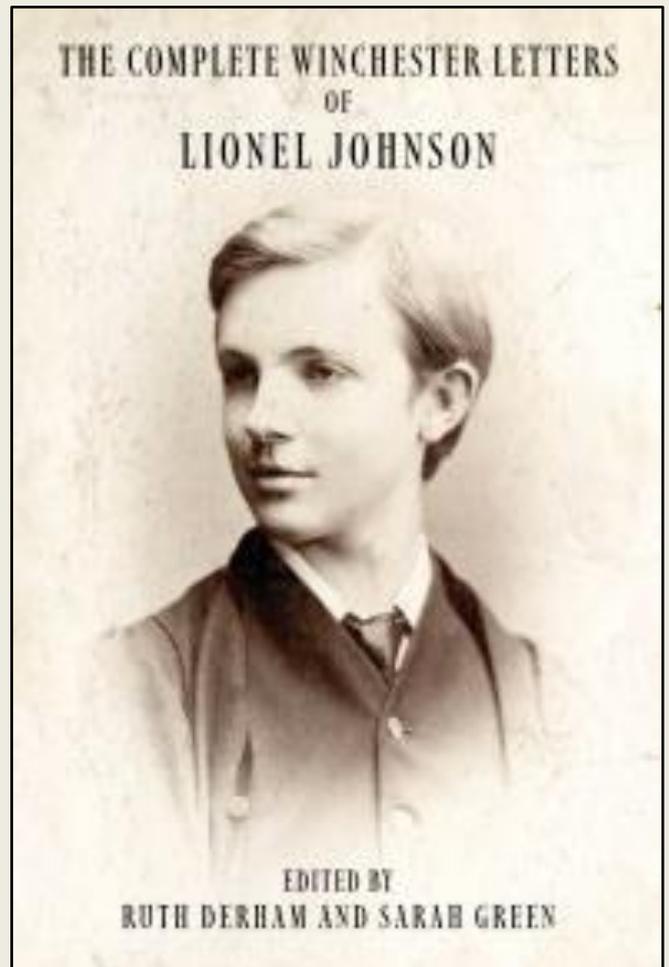
One Soul We Divided: A Critical Edition of the Diary of Michael Field, edited by Carolyn Dever (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024), 360pp., £84.00 (hardback) and £25.00 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9780691208114



One Soul We Divided: A Critical Edition of the Diary of Michael Field, edited Carolyn Dever, is the first critical edition of selections from the joint diary of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper – who wrote under the pseudonym Michael Field – titled *Works and Days*. A fascinating personal and literary experiment, the diary tells the extraordinary story of the love, art, ambitions, and domestic life of a queer couple in *fin-de siècle* London. It also tells vivid firsthand stories of the literary and artistic worlds Bradley and Cooper inhabited and of their encounters with such celebrities as Browning, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, Aubrey Beardsley, and Bernard Berenson.

Carolyn Dever provides essential context, including explanatory notes, a cast of characters, a family tree, and a timeline. An unforgettable portrait of two writers and their unexpected romantic, literary, and artistic marriage, *One Soul We Divided* rewrites what we think we know about Victorian women, intimacy, and sexuality.

The Complete Winchester Letters of Lionel Johnson, edited by Ruth Derham and Sarah Green (Roanoke: Snuggly Books, 2024), 296pp., \$23.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781645251408



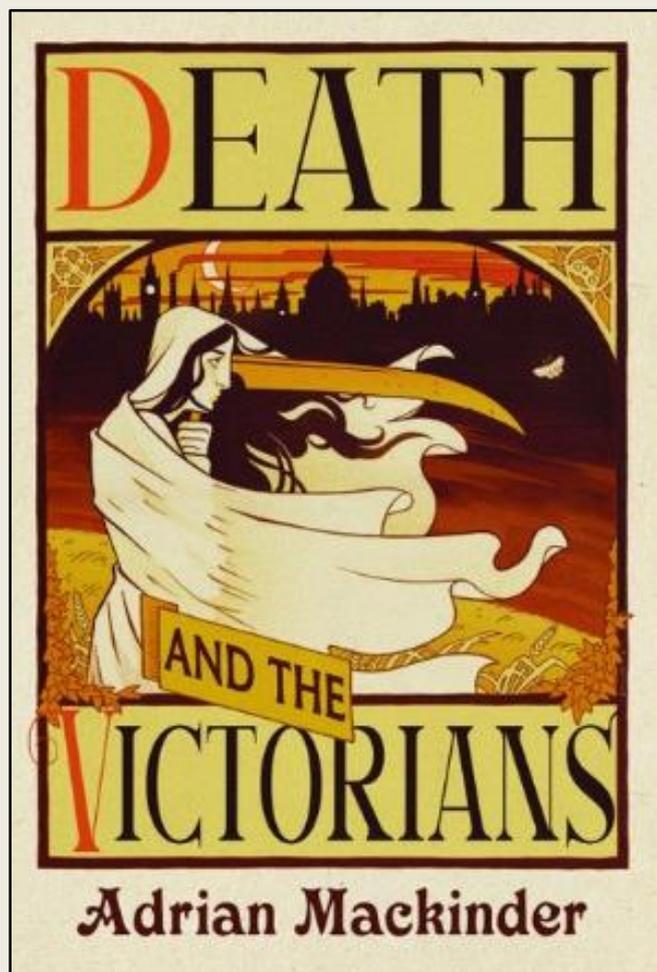
Lionel Johnson, Decadent poet and critic, was one of the leading voices of the British 1890s. When he died suddenly at the age of 35, his old school friend Frank Russell—brother to Bertrand Russell and by then a radical member of the House of Lords—published a

series of Johnson's early letters as "Some Winchester Letters of Lionel Johnson (1919)".

Carefully edited and anonymized, Russell claimed that these letters showed 'the true Lionel', rather than the 'later genius', to be a 'loving, suffering man, burning with zeal to help and comfort his fellow-sufferers in the world'. But why were the correspondents anonymized? What was missing from those edited sections? Were there aspects of the friendship Russell wished to conceal?

This new edition, edited by historian Ruth Derham and scholar Sarah Green, restores for the first time the full text of Johnson's *Winchester Letters* from the recently discovered originals. Instead of pronouncements from a young prophet, these letters reveal something altogether more human, as four young men navigate some of the biggest questions of their day. Was religion still possible or desirable? Did sin still exist? And when did love of one's friends become something more?

***Death and the Victorians: A Dark Fascination*, by Adrian Mackinder (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2024), 192pp., £25.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399082556**



From spooky stories and real-life ghost hunting, to shows about murder and serial killers, we are fascinated by death - and we owe these modern obsessions to the Victorian age.

Death and the Victorians explores a period in history when the search for the truth about what lies beyond our mortal realm was matched only by the imagination and invention used to find it. Walk among London's festering graveyards, where the dead were literally rising from the grave. Visit the Paris Morgue, where thousands flocked to view the spectacle of death every single day. Lift the veil on how spirits were invited into the home, secret societies taught ways to survive death, and the latest science and technology was applied to provide proof of the afterlife. Find out why the Victorian era is considered the golden age of the ghost story, exemplified by tales from the likes of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Oscar Wilde and Henry James. Discover how the birth of the popular press nurtured our taste for murder and that Jack the Ripper was actually a work of pure Gothic horror fiction crafted by cynical Victorian newspapermen.

Death and the Victorians exposes the darker side of the nineteenth century, a time when the living were inventing incredible ways to connect with the dead that endure to this day.

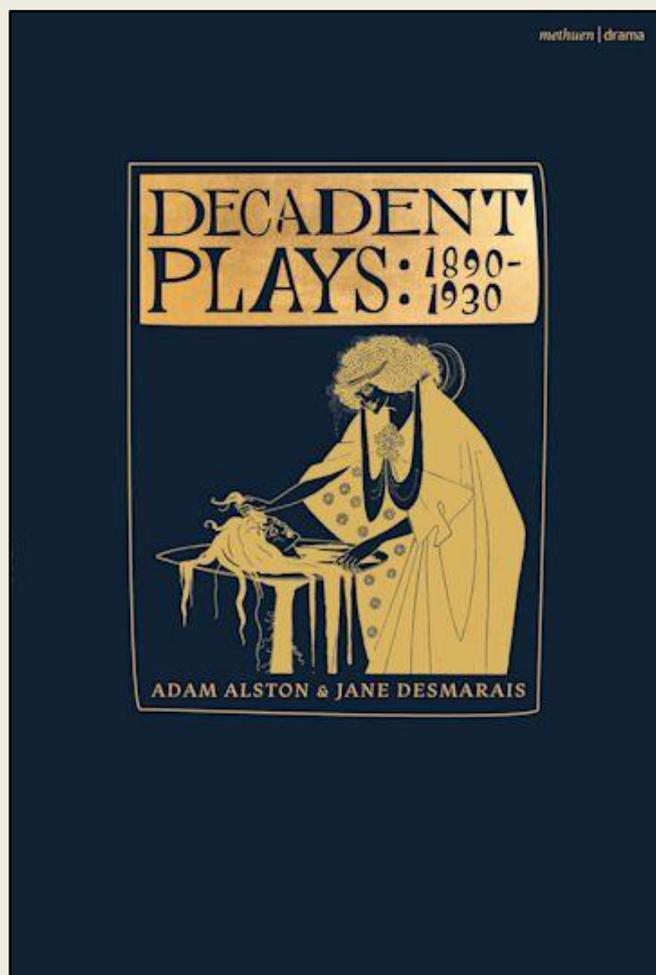
***Decadent Plays: 1890-1930*, edited by Adam Alston and Jane Desmarais (London: Bloomsbury, 2024), 432pp., £95.00 (hardback), £29.99 (paperback), and £26.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781350171824**

Poisoned cigars, seductive apparitions, minds and empires in the last of their decline and the most notorious kiss in dramatic history - decadent plays challenged the moral as much as the dramatic imagination of their own day, and continue to probe horizons of taste and the possibilities of stagecraft.

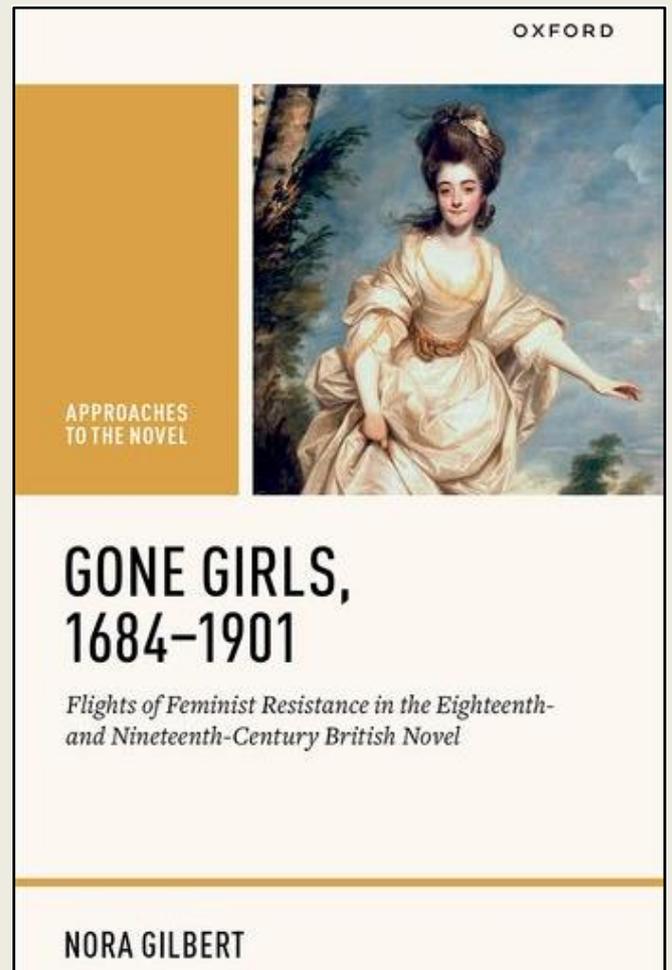
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many writers reacted to urban modernity by embracing decadent themes and styles, and dramatists were no exception. Decadence offered these writers a framework for exploring nonconformist identities and beliefs that challenged behavioural norms as much as the desirability of modern progress. Decadent plays were at once behind the times in their celebration of antiquity, and forward-thinking in their staging of themes that have become all the more timely in the 21st century, including queerness, unconventional eroticism, and critiques of empire and industrial progress. Equally, the diversity of decadent drama cannot be pigeonholed; many of these plays still have the capacity to

offend worldviews, and invite us to interrogate present-day conventions and propriety.

International in scope and eclectic in content, this edited anthology is an authoritative and accessible introduction to a fast-expanding field of decadent literature. The first publication of its kind to deal with decadent drama, and featuring plays translated into English for the first time, *Decadent Plays: 1890 to 1930* breaks new ground by foregrounding decadence as a dramatic sensibility in this most pivotal of periods in the history of modern drama. Featuring canonical and little-known works by Oscar Wilde, Michael Field, Lesya Ukrainka, Rachilde, Remy de Gourmont, Jean Lorrain, Leonid Andreyev, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Maurice Maeterlinck, Izumi Kyoka, and Djuna Barnes, this anthology is an essential introduction to decadent drama that will pique the interest of specialists and non-specialists alike.



Gone Girls, 1684-1901: Flights of Feminist Resistance in the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Novel, by Nora Gilbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 240pp., £65.00 (hardback) and £54.17 (e-book), ISBN 9780198876540

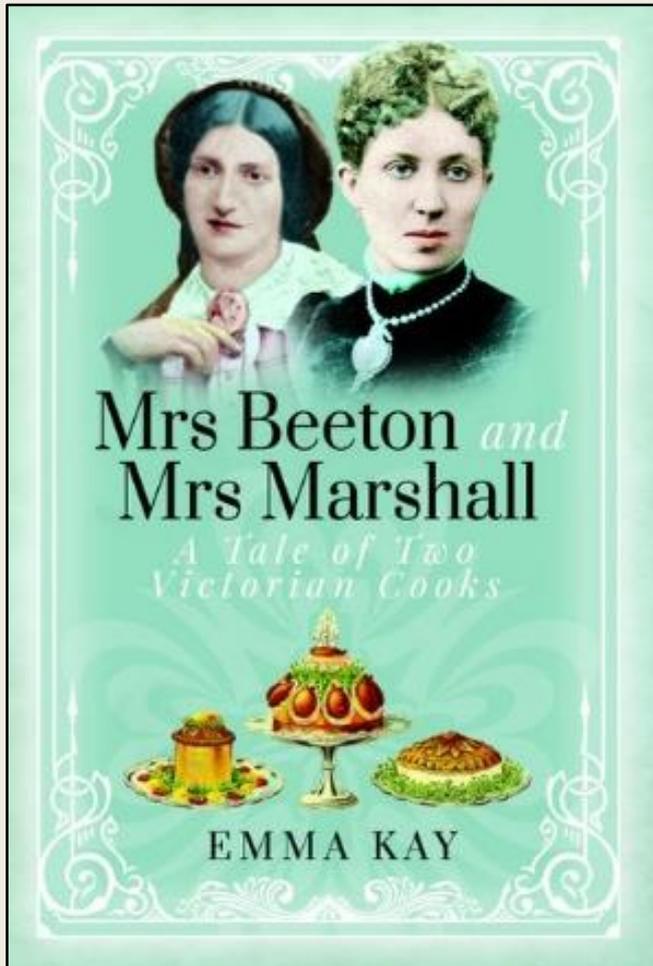


In *Gone Girls, 1684-1901*, Nora Gilbert argues that the persistent trope of female characters running away from some iteration of 'home' played a far more influential role in the histories of both the rise of the novel and the rise of modern feminism than previous accounts have acknowledged. For as much as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British novel may have worked to establish the private, middle-class, domestic sphere as the rightful (and sole) locus of female authority in the ways that prior critics have outlined, it was also continually showing its readers female characters who refused to buy into such an agenda--refusals which resulted, strikingly often, in those characters' physical flights from home.

The steady current of female flight coursing through this body of literature serves as a powerful counterpoint to the ideals of feminine modesty and happy homemaking it was expected officially to endorse, and challenges some of novel studies' most accepted assumptions. Just as the #MeToo movement has used the tool of repeated, aggregated storytelling to take a stand against contemporary rape culture, *Gone Girls, 1684-1901* identifies and amplifies a recurrent strand of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British storytelling that served both to emphasize the prevalence of gendered injustices throughout the period and to narrativize potential

ways and means for readers facing such injustices to rebel, resist, and get out.

***Mrs Beeton and Mrs Marshall: A Tale of Two Victorian Cooks*, by Emma Kay (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2023), 216pp., £25.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781399009003**



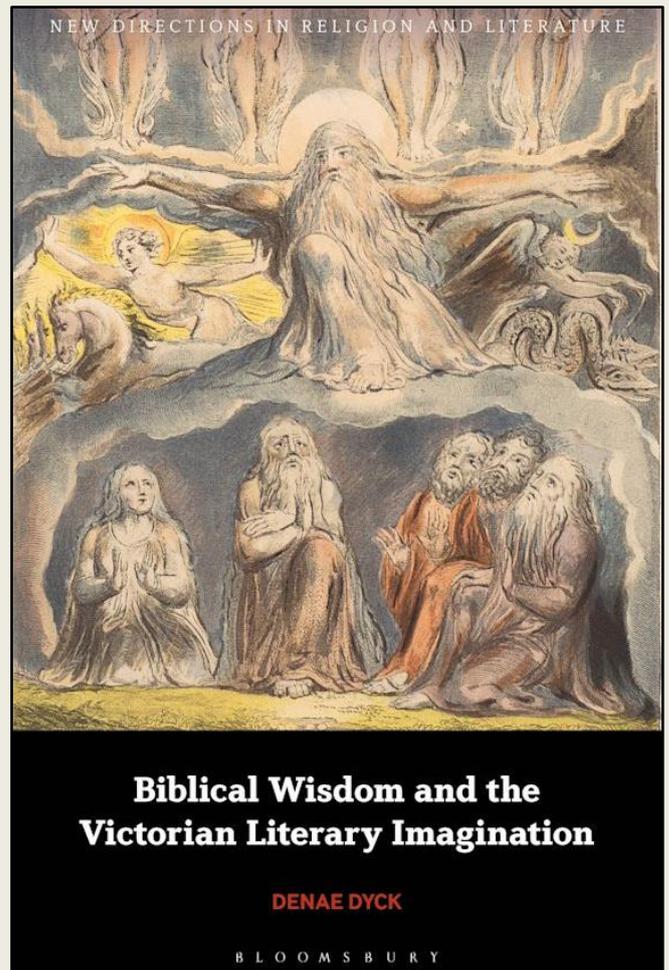
The name Mrs Beeton has endured for well over a century, synonymous with all things reassuringly culinary, while her contemporary Agnes Bertha Marshall remains somewhat of an enigma.

Both Isabella Beeton and Agnes Bertha Marshall lived within a short distance of each other in Pinner, worked in London, wrote about, and shared a passion for food, all just a couple of decades apart. While Isabella Beeton compiled one successful book of collected recipes, Agnes built a cookery empire, including a training school, the development of innovative kitchen equipment, a range of cooking ingredients, an employment agency and a successful weekly journal, as well as writing three incredibly popular recipe books.

Mrs Beeton and Mrs Marshall: A Tale of Two Victorian Cooks intrudes on the private lives of both these women, whose careers eclipsed two very different halves of the Victorian era. While there are

similarities between the two, their narratives explore class and background, highlight the social and economic contrasts of the nineteenth century, the ascension of the cookery industry in general and the burgeoning power of suffragism.

***Biblical Wisdom and the Victorian Literary Imagination*, by Denae Dyck (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024), 217pp., £85.00 (hardback) and £76.50 (e-book), ISBN 9781350335370**

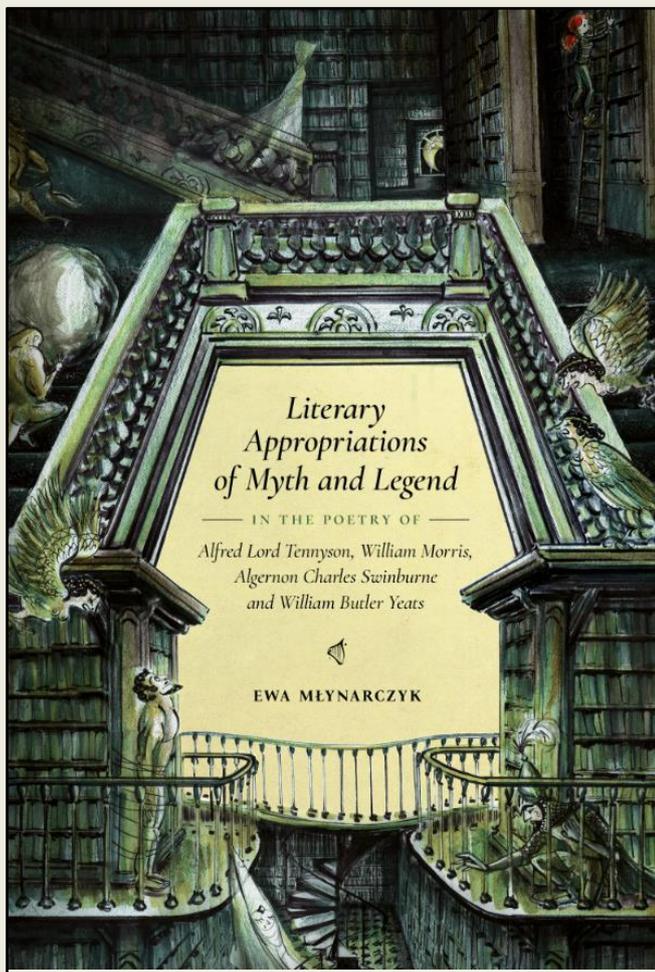


Examining the creative thought that arose in response to 19th-century religious controversies, this book demonstrates that the pressures exerted by historical methods of biblical scholarship prompted an imaginative recovery of wisdom literature. During the Victorian period, new approaches to the interpretation of sacred texts called into question traditional ideas about biblical inspiration, motivating literary transformations of inherited symbols, metaphors, and forms.

Drawing on the theoretical work of Paul Ricoeur, Denae Dyck considers how Victorian writers from a variety of belief positions used wisdom literature to reframe their experiences of questioning, doubt, and uncertainty: Elizabeth Barrett Browning,

George MacDonald, George Eliot, John Ruskin, and Olive Schreiner. This study contributes to the reassessment of historical and contemporary narratives of secularization by calling attention to wisdom literature as a vital, distinctive genre that animated the search for meaning within an increasingly ideologically diverse world.

***Literary Appropriations of Myth and Legend in the Poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne and William Butler Yeats*, by Ewa Młynarczyk (Warsaw: Institute of English Studies of the University of Warsaw, 2024), 235pp., open-access hardback and e-book, ISBN 9788360269336**



For centuries, myth has proved to be a powerful vehicle for generating new, epoch-dependent meanings. After its temporary eclipse in the eighteenth century, myth's universal usability once again reasserted itself in the poetry of Romantic, Victorian and later nineteenth-century poets.

The aim of the book is to show that the works of Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne and William Butler Yeats prove that myths and legends could still be employed in

original and creative ways. Not only do these poets show keen awareness of the classical heritage but they also venture into other cultural areas, exploring Celtic and Norse themes and adapting them for their particular needs. Another important feature that they all share is the influence of the Romantic tradition on their works, so that these poets themselves may be perceived as the last Romantics.

The book focuses on the comparative analysis of three motifs, common to myths and legends coming from different cultural backgrounds: the quest, the otherworlds, and the outcast (the sense of alienation and internal conflict experienced by a mortal in touch with the higher reality). Questers for inspiration, seekers of higher knowledge, dreamers versed in ancient lore, born out of their time, escaping from their world into the fairyland, yet struggling to communicate their vision to their contemporaries, the mythological characters have provided the Victorian poets with the masks allowing them to make their message at the same time personal and universal.

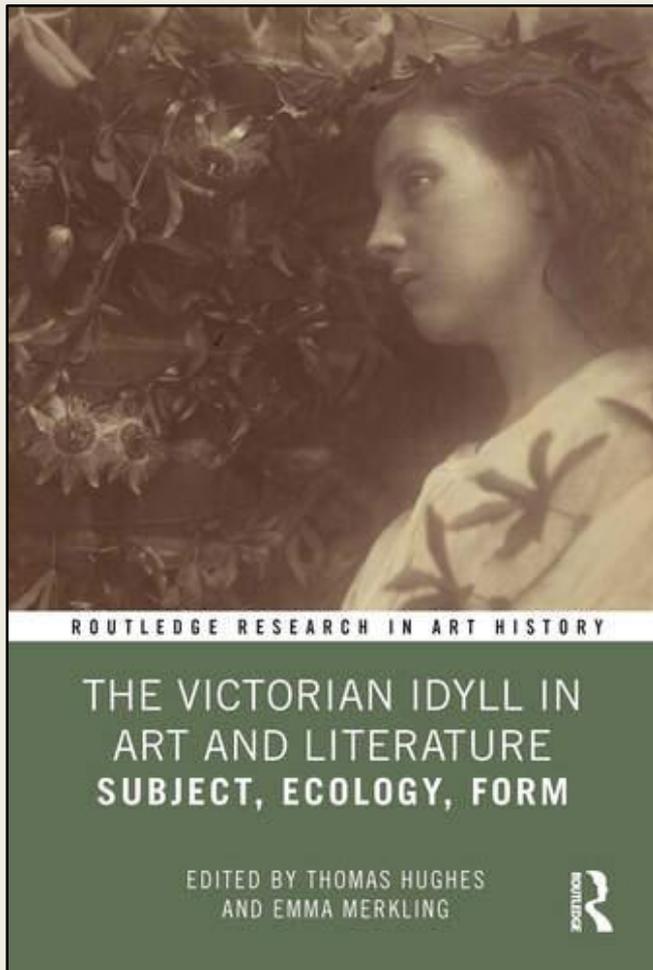
***The Victorian Idyll in Art and Literature: Subject, Ecology, Form*, edited by Thomas Hughes and Emma Merklings (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 204pp., £130.00 (hardback) and £38.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781032356785**

Resonating with contemporary ecological and queer theory, this book pioneers the theorization of the Victorian idyll, establishing its nature, lineaments, and significance as a formal mode widely practised in nineteenth-century British culture across media and genre.

Chapters trace the Victorian idyll's emergence in the 1830s, its flourishing in the 1860s, and its evolution up to the century's close, drawing attention to the radicalism of idyllic experiments with pictorial, photographic, dramatic, literary, and poetic form in the work of canonical and lesser-known figures. Approaching the idyll through three intersecting categories—subject, ecology, and form—this book remaps Victorian culture, reshaping thinking about artistic form in the nineteenth century, and recalibrating accepted chronologies. In the representations by a host of Victorian artists and writers engaging with other-than-human forms, and in the natures of the subjectivities animated by these encounters, we find versions of Victorian ecology providing provocative imaginative material for ecocritics, scholars, writers, and artists today.

This book will be of interest to scholars working in art history, English literature, Victorian studies, British history, queer and trans* theory,

musicology, and ecocriticism, and will enliven debates pertaining to the environmental across periods.

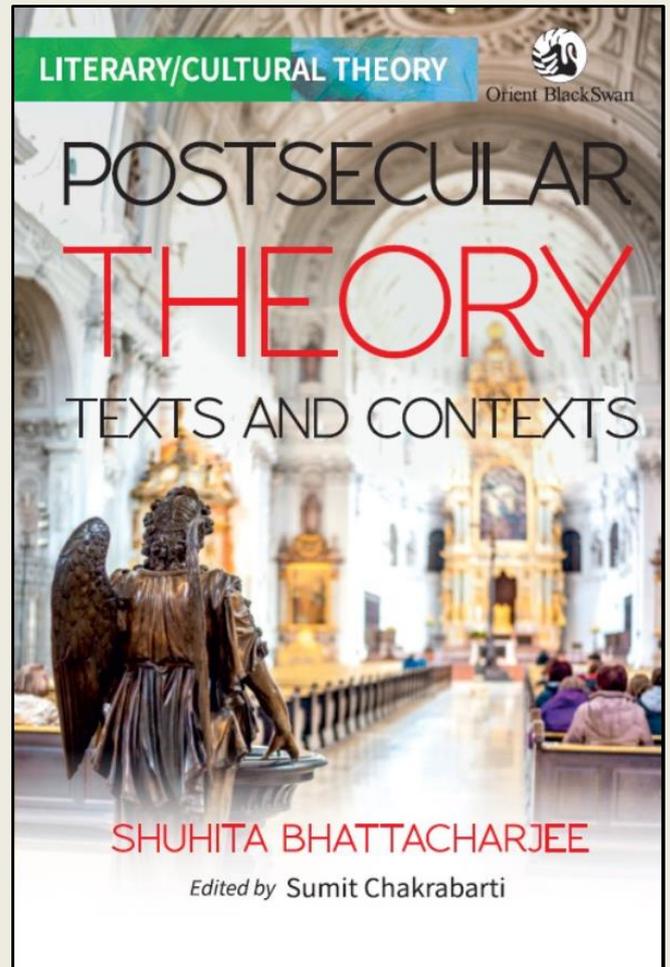


***Postsecular Theory: Texts and Contexts*, by Shuhita Bhattacharjee, edited by Sumit Chakrabarti (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2023), 264pp., ₹490.00 (paperback), ISBN 9789354421402**

Of particular relevance in the current global political climate, this volume reviews and investigates 'Postsecular Theory' as a well-established field of critical inquiry. It discusses the complexity of arguing for faith's centrality to human experience at a time when institutionalized faith systems are barraging human rights frameworks around the world. The book examines how the historical lineage of these injustices can be traced all the way back not to religion but to Western colonialist commercial hegemonies. It models at length what postsecular literary analyses may look like with respect to works from the long nineteenth and twenty first centuries.

At the heart of the book is the section on nineteenth-century literature that has three chapters on Victorian New Woman fiction, fin-de-siècle scientific romances, and Anglo-Indian colonial novels. Examining works from an age that was then

and is still considered to be the harbinger of 'secular' modernity, these chapters show how the nineteenth-century texts illustrate a definitive transition—the construction of the 'secular' from within the religious—while offering a gendered, colonial and racialised understanding of these concepts during a phase of high imperialism. Towards the end, the volume discusses the dilemmas of transnational feminism, religion, and human rights in the context of modern graphic novels such as Marjane Satrapi's Iranian graphic novel *Persepolis*.

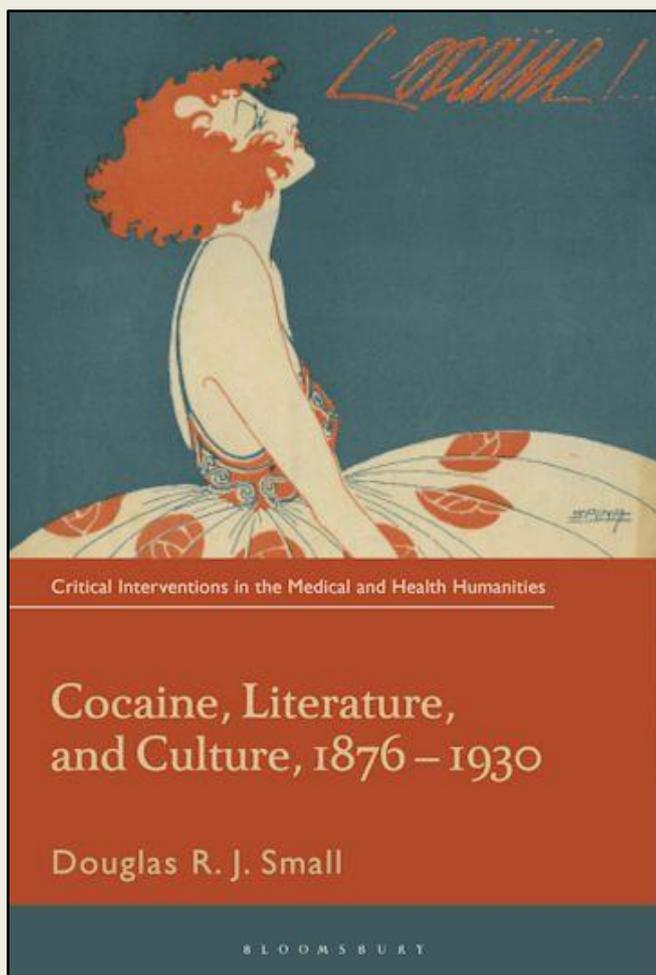


***Cocaine, Literature, and Culture, 1876-1930*, by Douglas R. J. Small (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 264pp., £85.00 (hardback) and open-access e-book, ISBN 9781350400092**

The first significant study of cocaine in the literary and cultural imagination of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this open access book offers an important exploration of the drug's symbolic and metaphorical associations in the decades prior to its criminalization.

Examining the paradoxical position of cocaine in this period by looking at its role as an icon of technology, modernity and idealised medical identity, alongside developing notions of habituation and

dependence, this book reads texts such as the Sherlock Holmes stories, by Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as work by Arthur Machen, W.C Morrow and Aleister Crowley.



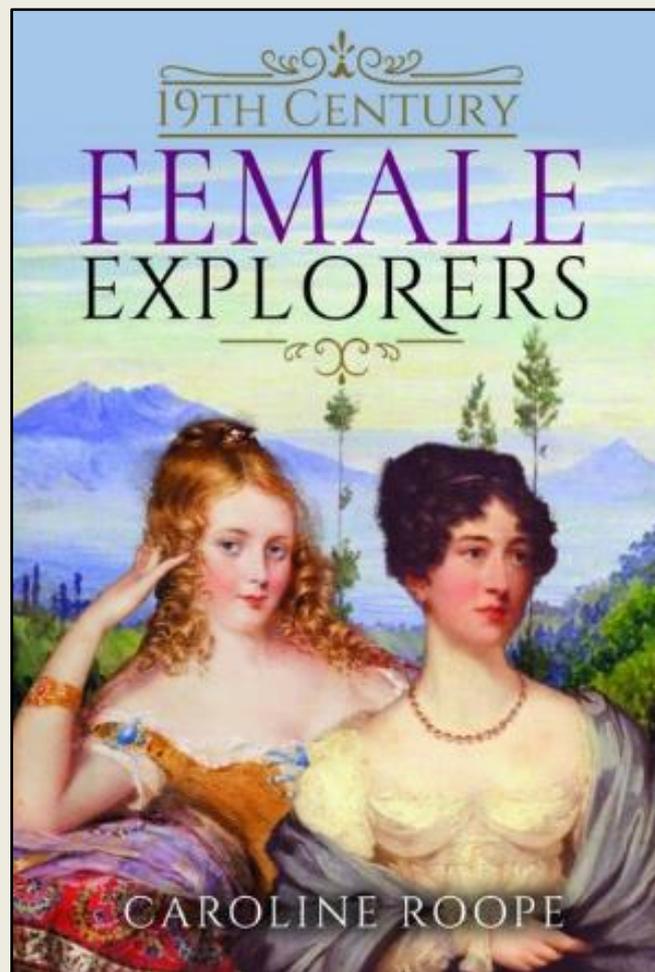
***Nineteenth-Century Female Explorers*, by Caroline Roope (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2023), 224pp., £25.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781399006866**

As any historian will testify, a nineteenth-century woman's place was very much at home. Or was it? For a lucky (and plucky) few, who had a little determination, and the ability to withstand lice infestations, climbing mountains in corsets, rascally guides and occasional certain death - as well as the raised eyebrows of the society they left behind - then the world really was their oyster.

In this lively re-telling of twenty-two extraordinary ladies who did just that, Caroline Roope invites you to journey to the further corners of the earth along with them. From humble missionary Annie Royle Taylor, who knew God would keep her safe, to the haughty aristocrat, Lady Hester Stanhope who defied convention and dressed as a Turkish man including pistol, knife and turban, their collective voices still resonate hundreds of years later. Drawing

on their original accounts and archival sources, this expertly researched book brings to light a wealth of stories that are full of grit (sometimes literally), courage, and just enough humour to wish we'd been there with them on their adventures on the other side of the horizon.

So, pack a suitcase, along with a 'good thick skirt' à la Mary Kingsley, and prepare to go beyond the garden gate...

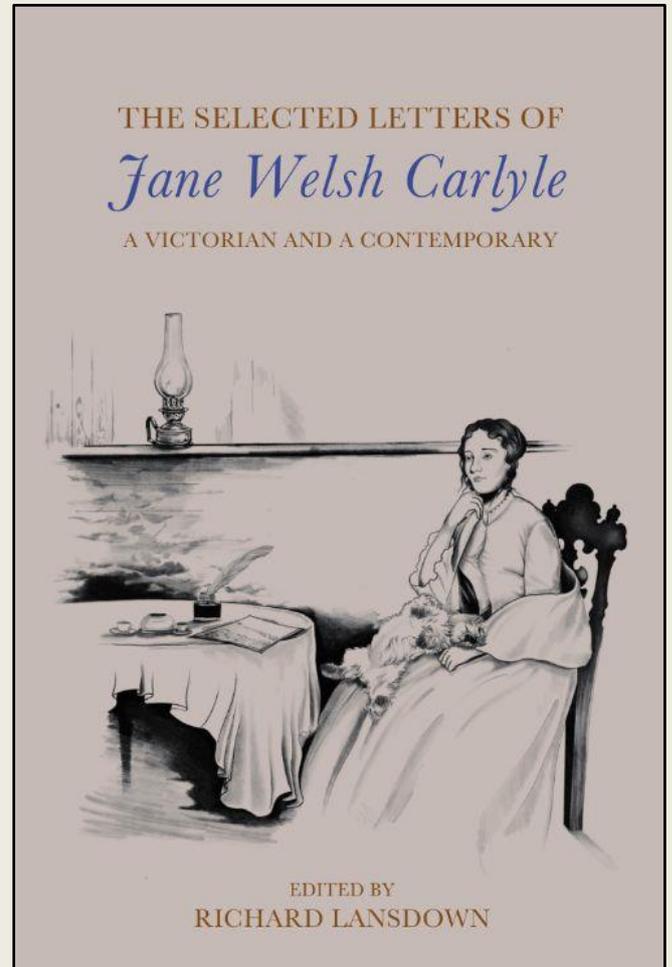


***Peculiar Power: The Life of Georgiana Kingscote, Novelist and Swindler*, by Teresa Crompton (For the Author, 2024), 373pp. (paperback) and 428pp. (e-book), £10.75 (paperback) and £7.95 (e-book), ISBN 9798873615544 (paperback)**

A new biography by the author of *Adventuress: The Life and Loves of Lucy, Lady Houston*. *Peculiar Power: The Life of Georgiana Kingscote, Novelist and Swindler* tells the story of a Victorian Englishwoman's tumultuous progress from convention to crime, and finally to independence and fulfilment. Georgiana Kingscote (1862-1908) was born with much in her favour - a privileged family background, aristocratic connections and a clever brain. As daughter of an ambassador and as a society hostess she mixed with royalty and diplomats. A

Joseph Wolff, an eccentric and adventurous Jewish convert to Christianity.

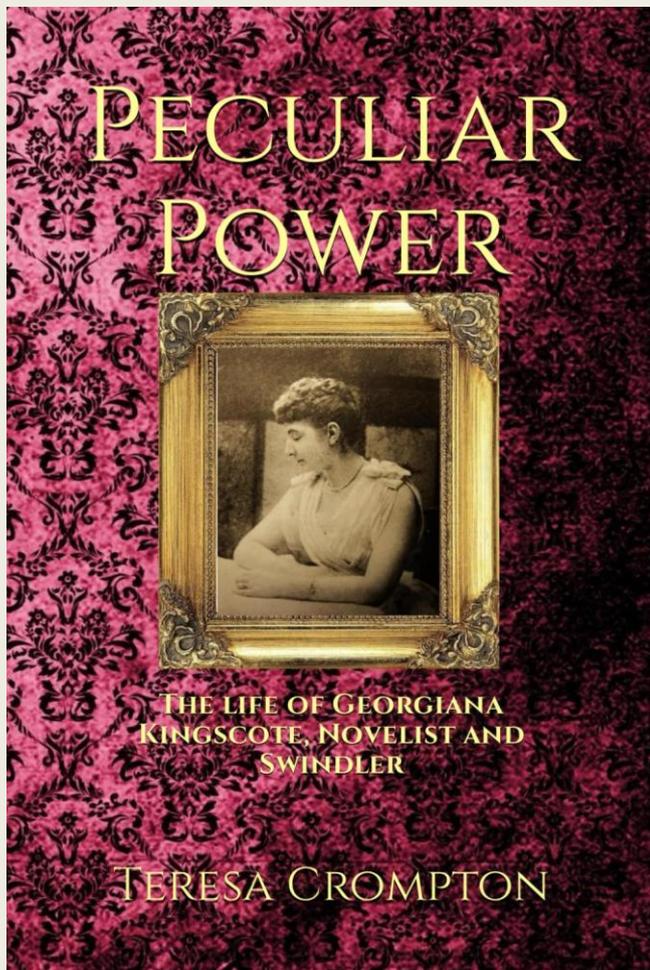
The Selected Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle: A Victorian and a Contemporary, edited by Richard Lansdown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024), 472pp., £125.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781399523462



Presents an image of Victorian life—especially womens’ lives—that uniquely and surprisingly anticipates our own in the present.

- A modern, complete and accessible selection of letters from an edition of nearly fifty volumes
- Respects the integrity of the materials; letters mostly printed complete, without ‘cherry-picking’
- Edited and annotated for a contemporary readership at both the scholarly and the general level
- Supported by an overall biographical and critical introduction, separate chapter introductions to form the life story, annotation as required, and an appendix listing correspondents and personalities

This book is a modern edition of an Anglo-Scottish



woman of great charm, imagination and ability, she spoke several languages, authored books and articles (also using the name Lucas Cleeve), bred prize-winning dogs and chickens, and launched her own millinery business. But nothing was ever enough: Georgiana craved money – other peoples’ money. Becoming a swindler and confidence trickster, through cynical manipulation and exploitation she fleeced high-society figures, bankrupted vicars, conned friends and relatives, and ruined the lives of her own husband and children.

When her crimes were exposed, scandalised Victorian society forced Georgiana into exile. Cut adrift from her old life she wandered on the Continent and in America leaving a fresh trail of victims in her wake. As she scabbled to survive her life experience provided material for dozens of novels, penned under the name of ‘Lucas Cleeve,’ bringing her new notoriety.

The book seeks explanations for Georgiana’s wayward life in her family background. One grandmother, Isabella, had been a close friend of Mary Shelley. Unmarried but pregnant, Isabella was saved from social disaster when Shelley arranged for her to marry ‘Mary Dods,’ a person of ambiguous sexuality. Georgiana’s other grandmother, Lady Walpole, was a pillar of respectability. From the important political and literary family, she married

epistolary classic, drawn from the authoritative scholarly edition. The letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle are works of art in themselves but also shed light on the Victorian age and the experience of women within it. They are arranged chronologically alongside biographical summary, and include her correspondence concerning a large range of Victorian intellectuals and other identities, from Mazzini to Dickens, Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Ruskin, and Tennyson to George Eliot. The letters are commonly regarded as among the liveliest in the language, alongside those of Byron, Keats, Henry James and Virginia Woolf, and are a key document in feminist history, and the history of female authorship.

Note from the editor:

This publication might be of interest to late-period Romanticists and early to mid-period Victorian scholars. Jane Carlyle's letters are among the crown jewels of English epistolary literature, and give us wonderful insights into literary England from the 1830s to the 1860s, as well as providing a unique record of social change and the condition of women at the time. This is the first selection entirely drawn from the standard Duke/Edinburgh edition and largely presents the letters complete, as she wrote them.

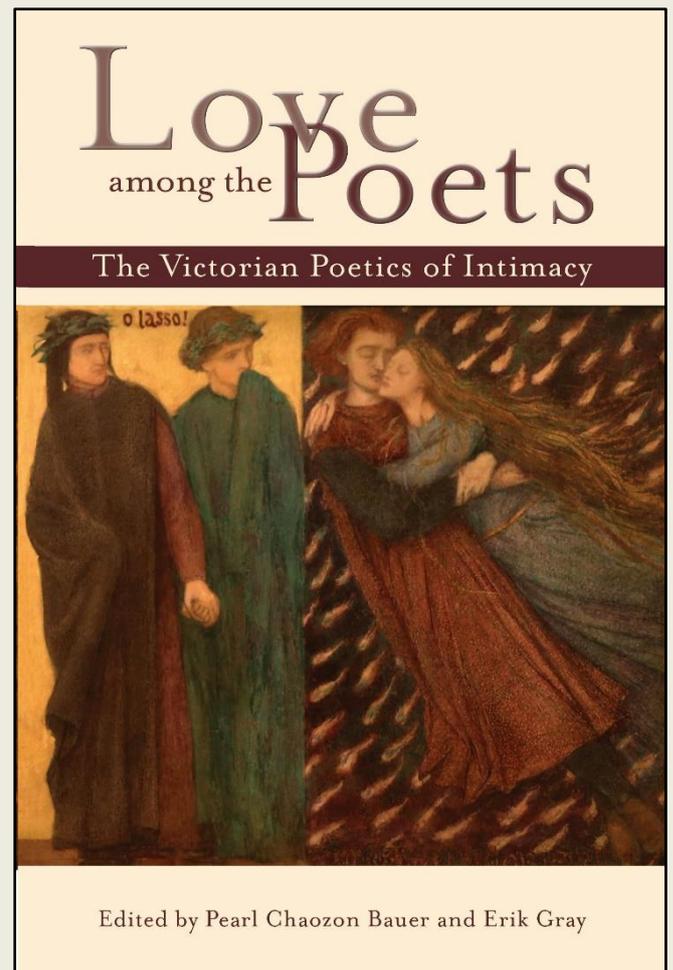
***Love among the Poets: The Victorian Poetics of Intimacy*, edited by Pearl Chaozon Bauer and Erik Gray (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2024), 240pp., \$89.00 (hardback) and \$79.99 (e-book), ISBN 9780821425442**

British literature of the Victorian period has always been celebrated for the quality, innovativeness, and sheer profusion of its love poetry. Every major Victorian poet produced notable poems about love. This includes not only canonical figures, such as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Christina Rossetti, but also lesser-known poets whose works have only recently become widely recognized and studied, such as Augusta Webster and the many often anonymous working-class poets whose verses filled the pages of popular periodicals. Modern critics have claimed, convincingly, that love poetry is not just one strain of Victorian poetry among many; it is arguably its representative, even definitive, mode.

This collection of essays reconsiders the Victorian poetry of love and, just as importantly, of intimacy—a more inclusive term that comprehends not only romance but love for family, for God, for animals, and for language itself. Together the essays seek to define a poetics of intimacy that arose during the Victorian period and that continues today, a set of

poetic structures and strategies by which poets can represent and encode feelings of love.

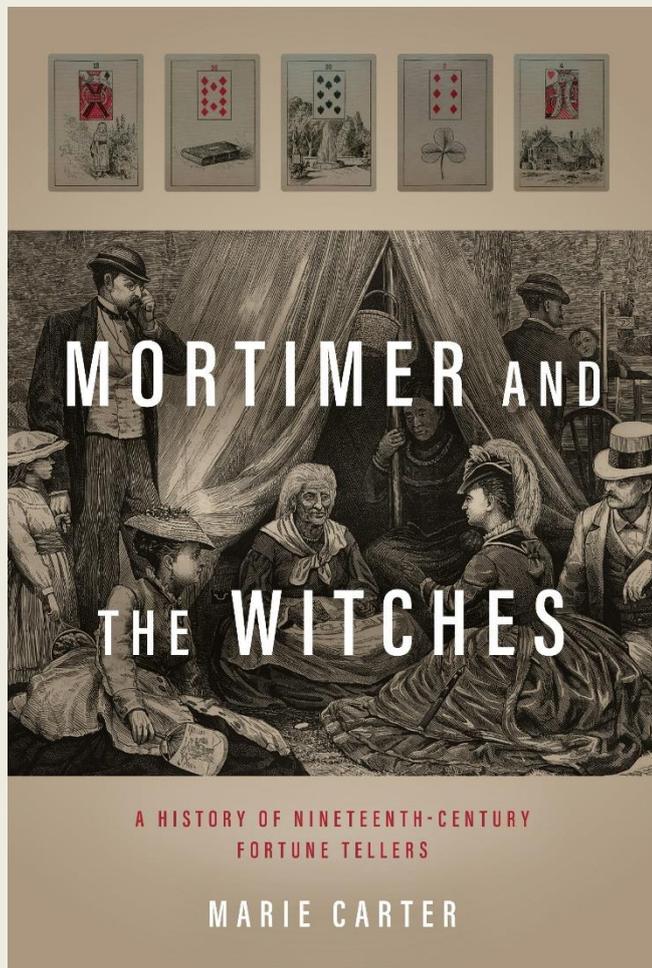
There exist many studies of intimate relations (especially marriage) in Victorian novels. But although poetry rivals the novel in the depth and diversity of its treatment of love, marriage, and intimacy, that aspect of Victorian verse has remained underexamined. *Love among the Poets* offers an expansive critical overview. With its slate of distinguished contributors, including scholars from the US, Canada, Britain, and Australia, the volume is a wide-ranging account of this vital era of poetry and of its importance for the way we continue to write, love, and live today.



***Mortimer and the Witches A History of Nineteenth-Century Fortune Tellers*, by Marie Carter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2024), 208pp., \$29.95 (hardback) and \$28.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781531506247**

The neglected histories of 19th-century NYC's maligned working-class fortune tellers and the man who set out to discredit them.

Under the pseudonym Q. K. Philander Doesticks, P. B., humor writer Mortimer Thomson went undercover to investigate and report on the



fortune tellers of New York City’s tenements and slums. When his articles were published in book form in 1858, they catalyzed a series of arrests that both scandalized and delighted the public. But Mortimer was guarding some secrets of his own, and in many ways, his own life paralleled the lives of the women he both visited and vilified. In *Mortimer and the Witches*, author Marie Carter examines the lives of these marginalized fortune tellers while also detailing Mortimer Thomson’s peculiar and complicated biography.

Living primarily in the poor section of the Lower East Side, nineteenth-century fortune tellers offered their clients answers to all questions in astrology, love, and law matters. They promised to cure ailments. They spoke of loved ones from beyond the grave. Yet Doesticks saw them as the worst of the worst evil-doers. His investigative reporting aimed to stop unsuspecting young women from seeking the corrupt soothsaying advice of these so-called clairvoyants and to expose the absurd and woefully inaccurate predictions of these “witches.”

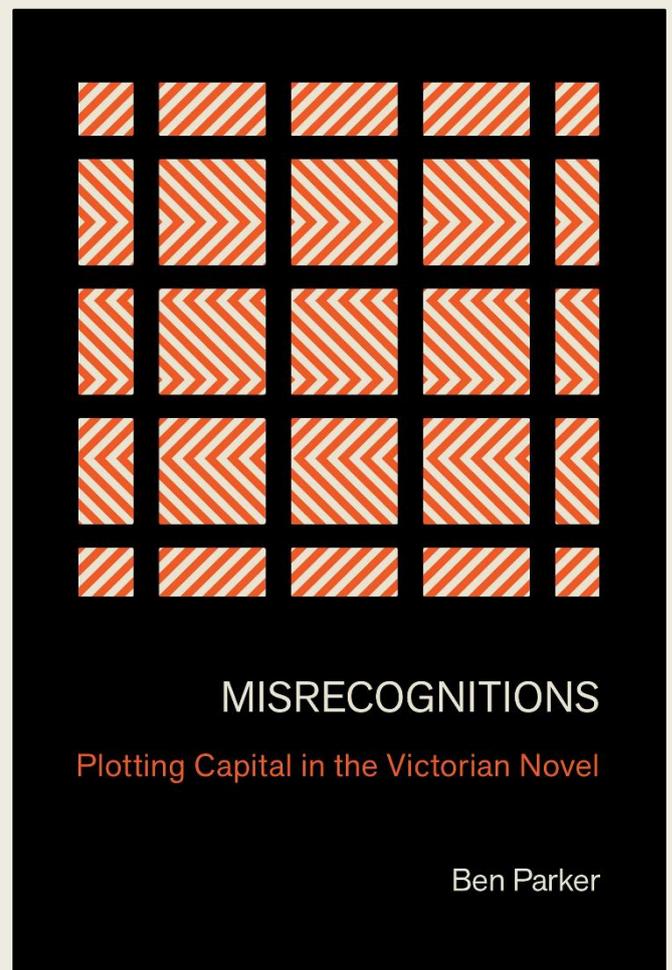
Marie Carter views these stories of working-class, immigrant women with more depth than Doesticks’s mocking articles would allow. In her analysis and discussion, she presents them as three-dimensional figures rather than the caricatures Doesticks made them out to be. What other

professions at that time allowed women the kind of autonomy afforded by fortune-telling? Their eager customers, many of whom were newly arrived immigrants trying to navigate life in a new country, weren’t as naive and gullible as Doesticks made them out to be. They were often in need of guidance, seeking out the advice of someone who had life experience to offer or simply enjoying the entertainment and attention.

Mortimer and the Witches offers new insight into the neglected histories of working-class fortune tellers and the creative ways that they tried to make a living when options were limited for them.

***Misrecognitions: Plotting Capital in the Victorian Novel*, by Ben Parker (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2024), 198pp., \$48.95 (hardback) and \$31.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781501774072**

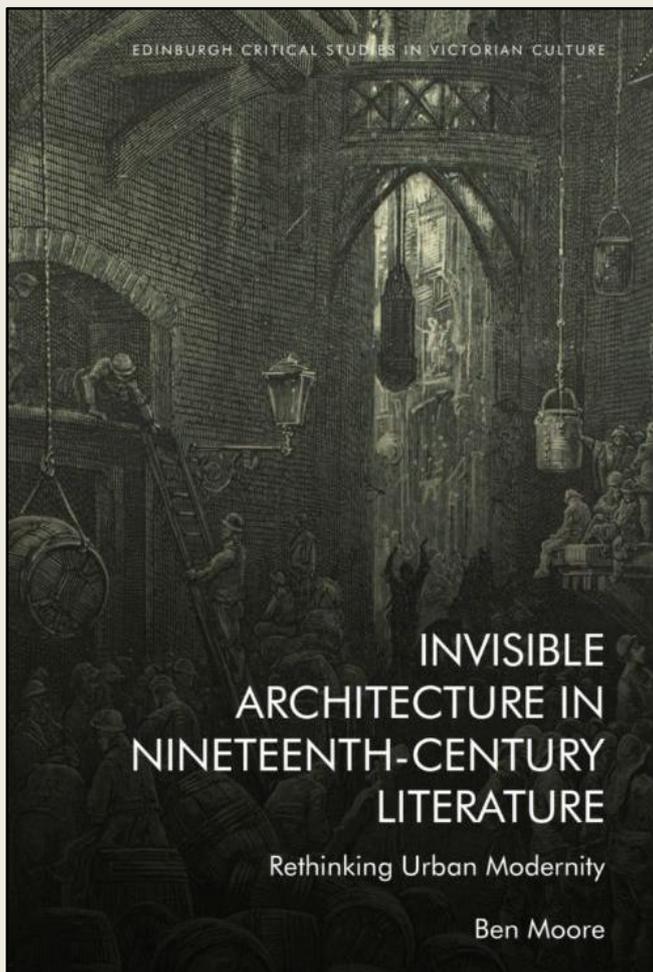
Misrecognitions mounts a vigorous defense of the labyrinthine plotting of Victorian novels, notorious for their implausible concluding revelations and coincidences. Critics have long decried Victorian recognition scenes—the reunions and retroactive discoveries of identity that too conveniently bring the story to a close—as regrettable contrivances. Ben



Parker counters this view by showing how these recognition scenes offer a critique of the social and economic misrecognitions at work in nineteenth-century capitalism.

Through a meticulous analysis of novels by Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Henry James, as well as Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, *Misrecognitions* tracks how the Victorian novel translates the financialized abstractions of capital into dramas of buried secrets and disguised relations. Drawing on Karl Marx's account of commodity fetishism and reification, Parker contends that, by configuring capital as an enigma to be unveiled, Victorian recognition scenes dramatize the inversions of agency and temporality that are repressed in capitalist production. In plotting capital as an agent of opacity and misdirection, Victorian novels and their characteristic dialectic of illusion and illumination reveal the plot hole in capitalism itself.

***Invisible Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: Rethinking Urban Modernity*, by Ben Moore (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024), 272pp., £90.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781399508483**



Rethinks the relationship between architecture,

literature and (in)visibility in the nineteenth-century city.

- Presents a new approach to reading urban modernity, through the categories of the hidden, the mobile and the transparent
- Develops the theoretical concept of 'invisible architecture' as a tool for analysing nineteenth-century literature
- Intervenes in the growing field of literature and architecture studies
- Offers new readings of important novels by Gaskell (*Mary Barton*), Dickens (*Dombey and Son*, *Our Mutual Friend*) and Zola (*The Kill*, *The Ladies' Paradise*)
- Makes new arguments for reading the Gothic cathedral, the arabesque and pre-modernist whiteness in the context of urban modernity

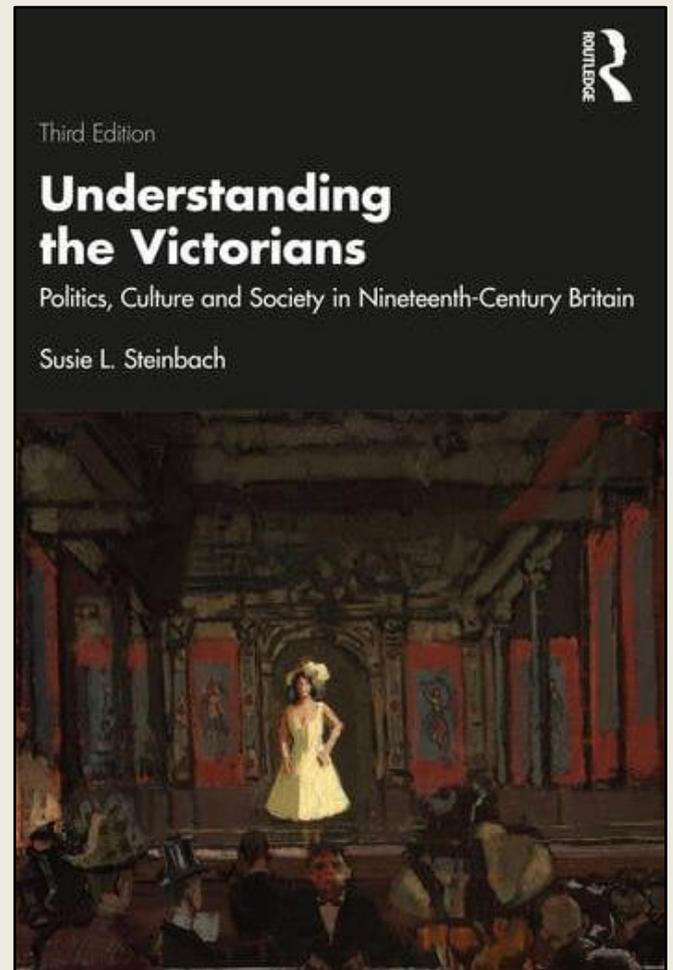
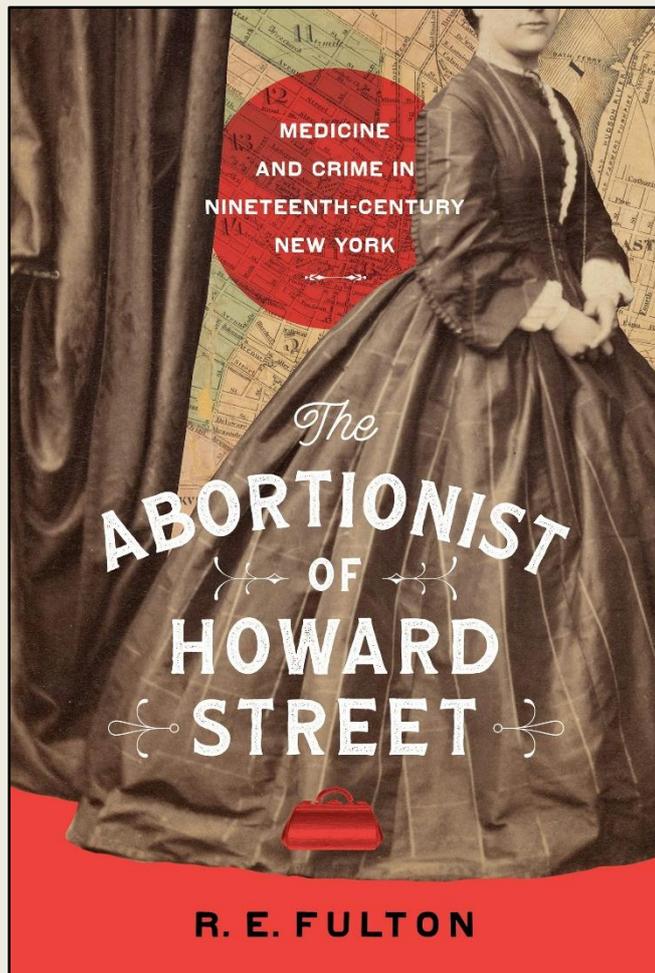
Ben Moore presents a new approach to reading urban modernity in nineteenth-century literature, by bringing together hidden, mobile and transparent features of city space as part of a single system he calls 'invisible architecture'. Resisting narratives of the nineteenth-century as progressing from concealment to transparency, he instead argues for a dynamic interaction between these tendencies. Across two parts, this book addresses a range of apparently disparate buildings and spaces. Part I offers new readings of three writers and their cities: Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester, Charles Dickens and London, and Émile Zola and Paris, focusing on the cellar-dwelling, the railway and river, and the department store respectively. Part II takes a broader view by analysing three spatial forms that have not usually been considered features of nineteenth-century modernity: the Gothic cathedral, the arabesque and white walls. Through these readings, the book extends our understanding of the uneven modernity of this period.

***The Abortionist of Howard Street: Medicine and Crime in Nineteenth-Century New York*, by R. E. Fulton (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2024), 272pp., \$28.95 (hardback) and \$13.99 (e-book), ISBN 9781501774829**

Josephine McCarty had many identities. But in Albany, New York, she was known as "Dr. Emma Burleigh," the abortionist of Howard Street.

On January 17, 1872, McCarty boarded a streetcar in Utica, New York, shot her ex-lover in the face, and disembarked, unaware that her bullet had passed through her target's head and into the heart of the innocent man sitting beside him. The unlucky passenger died within minutes. Josephine McCarty

Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain, by Susie L. Steinbach, 3rd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 416pp., £135.00 (hardback), £35.99 (paperback), and £32.39 (e-book), ISBN 9780367421038



was arrested for attempted murder and quickly became the most notorious woman in central New York. *The Abortionist of Howard Street* was, however, far more than a murderer. In Maryland she was "Johnny McCarty," a blockade runner and spy for Confederate forces. New Yorkers whispered of her as a mistress to corrupt Albany politicians. So who was she?

The prosecution in her murder trial claimed she was a calculating and heartless operative both in the bedroom and in her public life. Or was she the victim of ill fortune and the systemic weight of misogyny and male violence? The answer, of course, was not as simple as either narrative. In this absorbing and rich history, R. E. Fulton considers the nuances of Josephine McCarty's life from marriage to divorce, from financial abuse to quarrels with intimate partners and more, trying to decipher the truth behind the stories and myths surrounding McCarty and what ultimately led her to that Utica streetcar with a pistol in her dress pocket.

In *The Abortionist of Howard Street*, Fulton revisits a rich history of women's experience in mid-nineteenth century America, revealing McCarty as a multifaceted, fascinating personification of issues as broad as reproductive health, education, domestic abuse, mental illness, and criminal justice.

Understanding the Victorians paints a vivid portrait of an era of dramatic change, combining broad survey with close analysis and introducing students to the critical debates on the nineteenth century taking place among historians today.

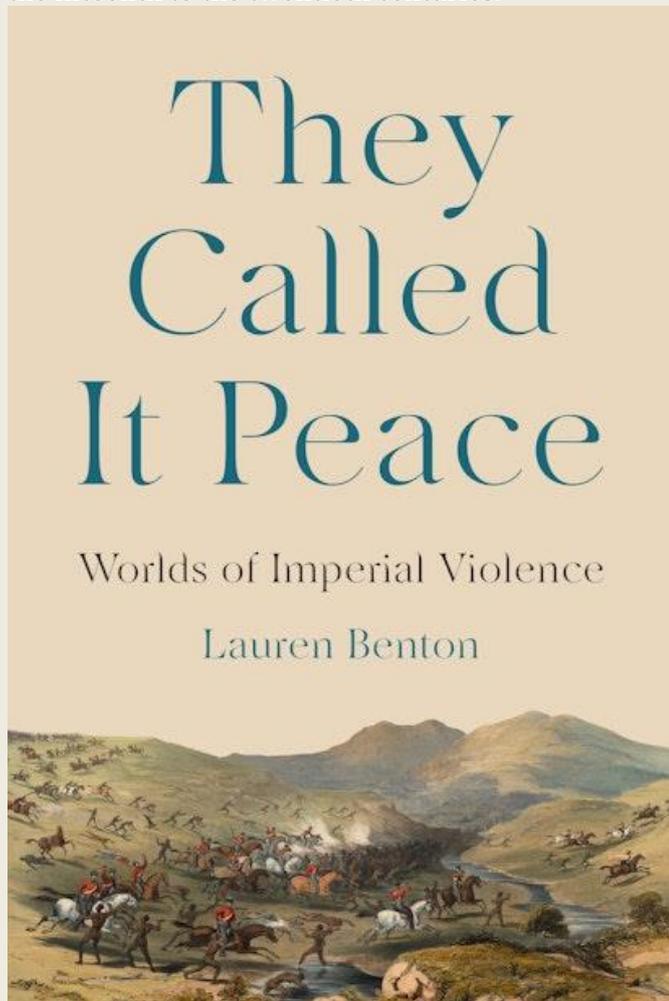
The volume encompasses all of Great Britain and Ireland over the whole of the Victorian period and gives prominence to social and cultural topics alongside politics and economics and emphasizes constitutive of human relations. This third edition is fully updated with new chapters on emotion and on Britain's relationship with Europe as well as added class, gender, and racial and imperial positioning as discussions of architecture, technology, and the visual arts. Attention to the current concerns and priorities of professional historians also enables readers to engage with today's historical debates. Starting with the Queen Caroline Affair in 1820 and coming up to the start of World War I in 1914, thematic chapters explore the topics of space, politics, Europe, the empire, the economy, consumption, class, leisure,

gender, the monarchy, the law, arts and entertainment, sexuality, religion, and science.

With a clear introduction outlining the key themes of the period, a detailed timeline, and suggestions for further reading and relevant internet resources, this is the ideal companion for all students of the nineteenth century.

***They Called It Peace: Worlds of Imperial Violence* by Lauren Benton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024), 304pp., £35.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9780691248479**

A sweeping account of how small wars shaped global order in the age of empires. Imperial conquest and colonization depended on pervasive raiding, slaving, and plunder. European empires amassed global power by asserting a right to use unilateral force at their discretion. *They Called It Peace* is a panoramic history of how these routines of violence remapped the contours of empire and reordered the world from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries.



In an account spanning from Asia to the Americas, Lauren Benton shows how imperial violence redefined the very nature of war and peace. Instead of preparing lasting peace, fragile truces ensured an easy return to war. Serial conflicts and

armed interventions projected a de facto state of perpetual war across the globe. Benton describes how seemingly limited war sparked atrocities, from sudden massacres to long campaigns of dispossession and extermination. She brings vividly to life a world in which warmongers portrayed themselves as peacemakers and Europeans imagined “small” violence as essential to imperial rule and global order.

Holding vital lessons for us today, *They Called It Peace* reveals how the imperial violence of the past has made perpetual war and the threat of atrocity endemic features of the international order.

Alongside these scholarly contributions, we heard from practitioners of direct action today, including Phoebe Plummer from Just Stop Oil, who delivered a call to action and explored their own personal relationship to protest, and Reading Red Kitchen, who create a mutual-aid space for sharing provisions with asylum seekers. The conference closed with a creative performance by Paula Serafini, who presented her collective art project on time in relation to climate activism. Throughout the day, artist Michael Duckett interpreted contributions through sketches which he shared with the group.

The event sought to draw upon recent work in Victorian Studies towards presentism and the urgent need to connect our historical work to contemporary problems; speakers looked to Bourdin's tragic death and the radical context that incubated his anarchist politics in order to think about how global histories and cultures of revolutionary praxis might inform our response to urgent political crises today.

The organisers are very grateful to BAVS for funds to support travel and accommodation expenses for PGR and non-affiliated speakers. The event involved a number of participants who are not employed by HE institutions and who are self-employed political/creative practitioners; in many cases, these speakers are also from marginalised communities. We are thankful to BAVS for facilitating fair payment in exchange for their labour.

*Charlotte Jones (Queen Mary, University of London)
and Megan McInerney (University of Surrey)*

BAVS Research Funding

'Imperial Voices in Verse: British Poetry and the Empire, c. 1815–1914'

Archival work is a crucial component of my current PhD research, which seeks to explore the interplay between British poetry and the Empire in the long nineteenth century chiefly by recovering and paying sustained attention to largely forgotten imperial poetic texts that have not yet been digitised. However, since I am based in Rome, I have had to travel to the UK over the past three years in order to access the libraries and archives wherein such texts are available. When applying for a BAVS Funding Grant last year, I envisaged that I could use it to undertake

a one- or two-week research trip to London towards the end of November 2023 and conduct vital research at the British Library for my dissertation. That was still my idea in July, when I was informed that I had received the grant. Little could I know that a cyber-attack on the British Library in October would cause a technology outage affecting the services available, which forced me to change my plans shortly before my intended departure. BAVS generous funding eventually contributed to several shorter research trips, not only to London, but also to Edinburgh, during a prearranged two-month visit to Newcastle University, where I was an Occasional Postgraduate Research Student from mid-January to mid-March 2024.

My visits to the Lit & Phil Library in Newcastle upon Tyne and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, as well as to the British Library, were extremely valuable for my research, as they enabled me to widen and diversify, both geographically and linguistically, the array of primary sources at the centre of my dissertation. Thanks to BAVS funding, I was able to peruse a great number of otherwise inaccessible empire-related poetic texts, ranging from war and royal jubilee poetry authored by noncanonical writers to patriotic anthologies of verse. At both the Lit & Phil and the National Library of Scotland, I was able to unearth and scrutinise some interesting texts first published in the UK but outside London. Despite the limitations still in force at the British Library, I was also able to place manual orders to request some remarkable items, including a poem written in Italian by Francesco Sastres on the occasion of George III's Golden Jubilee (1809). The discussion of these different kinds of underused textual evidence will permit a more nuanced description of the development of imperial ideology across the long nineteenth century in my dissertation.

I am positive that the research activities which I was able to undertake thanks to BAVS funding have significantly improved the quality of my work. I think that this will already be visible in the research paper on royal jubilee poetry which I will present in September at EVENT 2024, as well as in my dissertation, which I will submit soon. I am deeply grateful to BAVS for its support, which I will never fail to acknowledge in the future research output resulting from my project.

Paolo D'Indinosante (Sapienza University of Rome)

Calls for Submissions

Please email calls for publication submissions and funding opportunities to bavsnews@gmail.com for inclusion in future issues.

CFP: HistoryLab+ Conference 2024

Where? Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull and online

When? 25-26 July 2024

Free to attend? Yes!

CFP deadline? 23:59 on 15 May 2024

HistoryLab+, the UK's national network for early-career historians, welcomes paper proposals that engage with one or more of these images on the theme of historical human, animal, and environmental exploitation and its legacies.



We are, as ever, particularly interested in receiving proposals from early-career historians relating to research that

- applies atypical methods and/or technologies;
- results from collaboration between job sectors or countries;
- is interdisciplinary;
- has attracted new audiences.

Please send either an individual proposal or a proposal for a panel or roundtable to conference.historylabplus@gmail.com by 23:59 on **15 May 2024**.

Individual proposals should contain: an abstract (250 words), a short biography (100 words), and, in order of preference, how you are able to present your research (in a 20-minute paper, 10-minute paper, 5-minute lightning talk, or a poster).

Panel or roundtable proposals should contain: a description of the panel or roundtable theme and format (250-words) and, for each speaker, an individual abstract (250 words) and a short biography (100 words).

For either proposal type, please also indicate whether and why you would like to be considered for a conference bursary to defray your travel and accommodation expenses, should funding become available.

If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at the same email address: conference.historylabplus@gmail.com. Keep a weather eye on our conference webpages and Twitter/X posts for further updates!

Georgic Gothic: EcoGothic, Antipastoral and Global Horror

Essay collection proposed for International Gothic Series, Manchester University Press.

In their most recent overview of ecoGothic research, William Hughes and Andrew Smith note the prevalence of 'intersecting and fruitful links between animals, plants, and food' and that 'Gothic engagements with food have become a significant area of investigation' in recent studies ('EcoGothic: ten years on', *Gothic Nature* 4.1. (2023), 12-24 (pp. 18, 19)). Agriculture is also filled with risk, personal and existential. Tales of horror arise from fear of nonhuman nature overpowering the human. These fears collide at the agricultural interface – the field, the wood, the cow.

EcoGothic can provide ways of questioning assumptions about human actions and lifestyles, even when they appear positive, and this interrogation can help to change the relationships between human, nonhuman, or more than human Others. Climate breakdown increases pressure on farmers, especially those striving for some alleviation through agriculture itself.

Environmental studies have recently come to revisit the georgic mode, by which agriculture and its labour can be depicted. In Virgil's long poem, the *Georgics*, there is an insistent recognition that farm labour is 'relentless', often with meagre reward, and that both practice and politics of land ownership can be dangerous. However, Virgil also detailed the intimate, reciprocal relationship with nonhuman, and how hope was an ever present impulse to further endeavour. Novels, paintings and now films and digital media add to earlier poetic genres, offering new perspectives on ancient combinations of hope and misery. Unease permeates agricultural writing: farming hurts – there are well known examples such as Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) – hard labour alongside brutal machinery.

EcoGothic offers a way of way of examining the balance between hope and experience, Virgil's 'Fate', ally and enemy in one. 'Staying with the trouble', as Donna Haraway has explored, can be a way of working through disaster. At the beginning of her text, Haraway includes the georgic impulse to recreate through the earth: 'we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles' (*Staying With The Trouble: Making Kin In The Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 4). Compost – decay – renews the earth.

This essay collection seeks contributions that investigate the connections between gothic and georgic which are not limited to the downsides of darkness, but explore how the mysterious, uncanny and disruptive provoke responses in their ability to influence minds and behaviours in order to improve multispecies engagement. Contributors can source material from any nation or period: fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, film and digital. Of particular interest is farming beyond the UK, for example in Ireland and Australia, Africa and Asia, places that nourish their own ecoGothic elements.

Please direct enquiries and send abstracts as Word docs (400 words plus short bio) to Sue Edney by **31 May 2024**. If accepted, you will be invited to submit a draft chapter of up to 7000 words by 6th December 2024. sue.edney@bristol.ac.uk

Themes can include and are not limited to

- Extreme weather – drought and flood
- Encroaching vegetation – 'invasive species'
- Animal diseases and mutations affecting human interaction
- Spirit presences on farms, witchcraft, good and bad
- 'Unnatural' behaviours of animals and crops
- Psychological disturbance of farmers
- Disturbance through innovation – GM crops
- Machinery and danger
- Animals and danger
- Killer bees and other invertebrates
- Fungi and the uncanny
- Chemical poison and aerial pollution
- Industrial farming
- Folk horror – 'The Wicker Man' and rurality
- Film, gothic-georgic examples: *Lamb* (2021, dir. Valdimar Jóhannsson), *The Levelling* (2016, dir. Hope Dickson Leach), *First Cow* (2019, dir. Kelly Reichardt)

CFP: Victorian Sustainability Study Day
10th June 2024, Senate House, University of London

Keynote speakers: Professor Paul Young, University of Exeter & Professor Lesa Scholl, University of Melbourne

'All England may, if it so chooses, become one manufacturing town; and Englishmen, sacrificing themselves to the good of general humanity, may live diminished lives in the midst of noise, of darkness, and of deadly exhalation'
(John Ruskin, 1860)

"Here is a mine of truth, which, however vigorously it may be worked, is likely to outlast our coal."
(George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 1871)

The crises of climate change demand new perspectives on contemporary and historical cultures. Though the term 'sustainability' was not used in its current sense of seeking to manage and mitigate humanity's environmental impacts until the late twentieth century (Kriesel 2018), scholars identify many of the conceptual roots of sustainable or 'green' thinking in the economic, scientific, aesthetic, and technological developments of the Victorian era. From Malthusian population theory and Marx's articulations of the metabolic rift to the 1860s 'Coal Question'; to popular debates around pollution and waste management; to the rise of second-hand fashion and domestic cultures of repair; to the privatisation of land and efforts to conserve 'wild space' at home and in the Empire, the nineteenth century generated new ways to imagine, engage with, and safeguard natural environments, as well as to conceptualise the future of life on Earth.

Held in collaboration with Royal Holloway, University of London, the University of Surrey, and the British Association for Victorian Studies, this one-day study day seeks to interrogate the development and place of 'sustainability' in nineteenth-century cultures. Our primary aim is to explore and examine the ways in which Victorian writers, activists, artists, and commentators grappled with the pressing ecological concerns of their day and how this thinking continues to structure the present, as well as to assess the social and material relations that emerge from living with and within (un)sustainable environments.

The organisers welcome proposals for individual 10-minute 'lightning papers', panels, or round tables, which consider Victorian 'sustainability' in its many forms and from various disciplinary perspectives. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Population, urbanisation, and industrialisation in the Victorian period
- Energy production and consumption; alternative energy futures
- Recycling, waste, and pollution
- Making, mending, repairing and systems of exchange/re-use
- Ecosystems theory; natural and built environments in Victorian literature and culture
- Globalisation, colonialism, settler colonialism, and the ethics of imperial modernity
- Sustenance, famine, and the sustainability of food production and distribution
- Sustainable research / practice in Victorian studies

Please send 200-word proposals, with a 50-word bio-note to the organisers Dr Danielle Dove (d.m.dove@surrey.ac.uk) and Dr Briony Wickes (Briony.Wickes@rhul.ac.uk) by **30th April 2024**. This free event is generously funded by the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS). PGR/ECR participants are also encouraged to apply for two travel bursaries supplied by BAVS to support their attendance.

To apply for a bursary, please fill in this [google form](#) when submitting your proposal.

CFP: Edward Carpenter and the Future: A Symposium
Friday 28 June 2024, Queen Mary University of London

'The world travels on--and shall travel on.' So declared Edward Carpenter in the first part of his long and visionary poem *Towards Democracy*. Written and revised over many years, from 1881 to 1905, and running to some 400 pages, *Towards Democracy* sang of a democratic spirit that Carpenter felt and hoped was coming into being. Democracy, as he described it, was slowly unfolding, like a ball of wool rolling steadily into the future. 'A

few centuries shall not exhaust the meanings of it', he said: 'In you and me too, inevitably, its meanings wait their unfolding.'

The future was in the heart of Edward Carpenter and at the heart of his work as a poet, a practitioner of everyday utopia, and a pioneering queer activist. As feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham stated in her 2008 biography of Carpenter, this man – famous for his sandals, simple lifestyle, and relationships with Walt Whitman, Bloomsbury Group stalwarts, and working-class lovers – 'possessed a knack which helped to prod the modern world into being.' At this symposium, held 95 years since the day of his death in 1929, we invite contributors to gather together with the aim of looking afresh at the futures Carpenter made possible in his own time and what he means to us today, as we face our own uncertain future. Across a day of papers and discussions, we will reconsider Carpenter's life and legacy as well as his highly varied body of work – an oeuvre that spanned poetry, protest songs, social and artistic criticism, biography, political treatises, and much else – re-reading him as a writer in his own right and exploring some of his more overlooked work on, for example, empire, eco advocacy, and anti-carceral politics.

We invite proposals for papers and presentations from academics of any career stage and any discipline as well as non-academic speakers and practitioners interested in any aspect of Carpenter's life, work, and legacy.

Taking our cue from this experimental figure, we also welcome contributions in creative and non-traditional formats, such as: performance, creative writing, video essays, and creative practice. Individual papers, readings, and screenings, etc., should be no more than 20 minutes.

Topics for discussion could include but are not limited to:

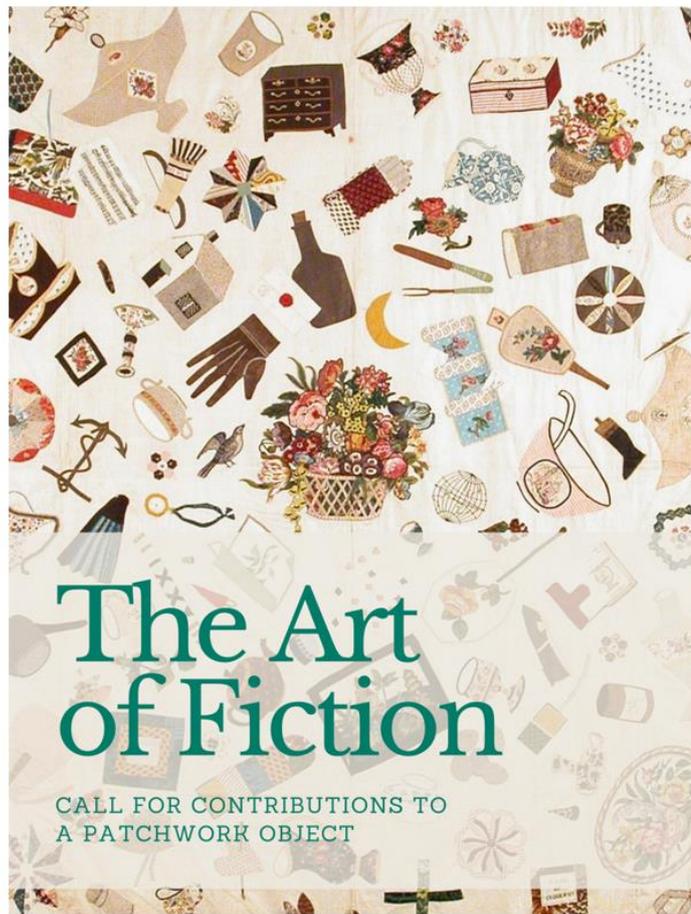
- Edward Carpenter's legacies and afterlives in literature, culture, and politics
- Utopian futures – political, ecological, sexual – in Carpenter, his contemporaries, and his followers
- Towardsness: prefiguration, anticipation, and the future tense in literature and politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
- Long poems and long lives: accretion and revision in poetics and politics
- Edward Carpenter's place in literary and cultural histories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in Victorian, modernist, and gender and sexuality studies today
- The uses of Edward Carpenter, his writing, practice, and thought, to meet the crises of our own present and future

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words, with a short contributor biography of 100 words, to Dr Matt Ingleby (m.ingleby@qmul.ac.uk) and Dr Charlie Pullen (c.pullen@qmul.ac.uk) by **April 15th 2024**.

The full call for papers and details of the events taking place in the run-up to the symposium ('Liberty' Sunday 21 April; 'Ecology' Sunday 19 May; 'Afterlife' Sunday 9 June) can be found on the website: <https://edwardcarpenterfuture.org/>

Of Victorianist Interest

Please email relevant notices to bavsnews@gmail.com for inclusion in future issues.



We welcome contributions to a collaboratively made patchwork object. As part of the University of Exeter's "The Art of Fiction" project, we are creating an artwork that responds to the theme of 'women's creative identities'.

How to take part

Send us a 12 x 12 cm piece of fabric and an accompanying story (max 300 words).

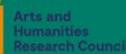
Timeline

Submissions must be received by 30 September 2024. The object will go on display in early 2025.

For more information, visit [The Art of Fiction website](#).

Follow the @artfictionproject on [Instagram](#) and [Threads](#) to learn more about the #patchworkobjectproject!

Background image: Bedcover, patchwork and appliqué top, wool embroidered border, c. 1810, in the collection of Killerton House, Devon.



Expanding 'Science Fiction' in the Nineteenth Century

26 April 2024, 12:50pm – 7:00pm (CET).

Join the Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies International (CN-CSI) on April 26 2024 for a day-long free online workshop of eclectic and interdisciplinary papers from guest speakers themed around Science Fiction in the Nineteenth Century

This workshop brings together exciting voices from a range of interdisciplinary fields to explore and expand our understandings of 'science fiction' in the nineteenth century across the globe. What we today call 'Sci-Fi' is a genre very much of the nineteenth century, canonically understood to have emerged in its earliest forms with texts like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and reaching broad popular appeal by the *fin-de-siècle* through publications from H. G. Wells onwards. This workshop adopts a provocatively broad definition of the term 'Sci-Fi' to explore the existence beyond literary fiction of creative, speculative, and fantastical engagement with new technologies and scientific practices. Our Sci-Fi 'texts' will be considered broadly, ranging from imaginative explorations of non-human others in fiction, to engagement with nineteenth-century scientific thought and technologies in Victorian 'high-art' painting. We shall see how, across the globe, fantasies and fears about these technologies, and the limits and possibilities of scientific enquiry and expansion, can be traced across areas as diverse as theatre and the visual arts, mainstream science writing, and imaginative speculative fiction.

[See website for registration \(free\) and programme details.](#)