



Welcome to the latest issue of the *BAVS Newsletter*.

The much-anticipated BAVS conference is now just around the corner! Do check out the impressive programme, which is a real testament to the scope and scale of current Victorian scholarship. Registration is now open (with an early bird rate until 14 August). All details can be found over at <https://bavs2022.com/>. The BAVS committee are very much looking forward to welcoming you to Birmingham!

If you find yourself near Southport over the summer, why not check out '[Southport's Victorian Visitors](#)' at The Atkinson (until 17 September)? We're pleased to have been able to support this exhibition through BAVS Public Engagement funding awarded to Michelle Caldwell. The next funding round—for events, research, and public engagement—will open in the autumn (deadline 30 November).

As ever, the *Newsletter* includes reviews of recent books on a wide array of Victorian topics, as well as funding reports and CFPs. A reminder that we're always keen to hear from members (at any career stage) who would like to join our book reviewer pool and/or would like to review a specific publication. Authors of recent work on any aspect of Victorian studies are also invited to get in touch to suggest titles for review. Full details can be found on the [BAVS Newsletter webpage](#).

We're also still open to proposals for a slightly different kind of book review: one that re-visits a foundational contribution to Victorian studies published between 1950 and the present. How has it been built on, nuanced, and challenged by subsequent scholarship? Is it still a 'game-changer'? If you'd like to pitch an idea, do get in contact at bavsnews@gmail.com (or tell us about it over lunch at the conference in September)!

Best wishes,
Clare Stainthorp & Sarah Wride
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BAVS News

BAVS Conference, 1–3 September 2022, University of Birmingham

We are pleased to share further details of BAVS 2022, which is taking place in Birmingham in September. Even if you will not be presenting, do please consider joining us for this Victorianist reunion!

We are delighted to be welcoming Prof. Jane Hamlett, Prof. Julie-Marie Strange and Prof. Joseph Bristow as the keynote speakers.

The programme for the conference can be found on the [BAVS 2022 website](#). Please note that this is a draft and therefore subject to change.

Registration is currently open, and **early-bird rates are available until 14 August**. Registration includes lunch on Thursday and Friday and coffee breaks on all days, as well as free entry to the delightful Winterbourne House and Gardens. [Full registration details are on the conference website](#).

If you have any questions, please do get in touch with the conference team at bavs2022@contacts.bham.ac.uk

BAVS Annual Conference: Proposals welcomed for 2024 & 2025

We are inviting expressions of interest and applications for hosting future BAVS conferences. The BAVS conference (estimated to take place in July each year) brings together those engaged in research and related activities across multiple disciplines and at all career stages. It is a key annual event in the field.

If you are interested in co-/organising the BAVS conference in 2024, or 2025 at your institution, please complete a Proposal Form (available [here](#)) and return it to BAVS Secretary, Alice Crossley (acrossley@lincoln.ac.uk). All proposals will be considered by the BAVS Executive Committee at its first meeting following receipt of your form and the lead organiser/s informed of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter. We encourage you to apply at least 18 months before the proposed conference date. The organiser/s should be members of BAVS.

Successful applicants will have the support of a sub-team or members of the BAVS Executive Committee, who can provide guidance and advice on delivering the annual conference. The lead organiser/s will be asked to provide regular updates on the conference plans at subsequent Executive Committee meetings.

There is the potential for the 2024 conference to be linked to a NAVSA/AVSA initiative: a global pan-Victorianist series of online events in 2024, culminating in “flightless” conferences at regional hubs across multiple countries. Those interested in hosting the BAVS conference in 2024 may therefore wish to discuss with Alice, BAVS Secretary, what this might entail prior to submitting an application.

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.

***The Persian Presence in Victorian Poetry*, by Reza Taher-Kermani (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 240pp., £85 (hardback), ISBN 978-14-74448-16-1**

It is difficult to envision a greater contemporary intellectual barrier than between Britain and Iran, the latter often characterised as a fundamentalist eastern antithesis to the 'civilised West.' *The Persian Presence in Victorian Poetry*, however, demonstrates that there was a far greater degree of nuance in the relationship between the two countries during the nineteenth century. Reza Taher-Kermani analyses the incorporation of Persianate narratives, poetic conventions, and techniques across literary genres, with a primary focus on poetry. The core of the text is structured around three case studies: Matthew Arnold's 'Sohrab and Rostum' (1853), Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859), and Robert Browning's *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884).

The initial chapter lays the extensive groundwork for this case-study analysis by tracing the portrayal of Iran in literature from Greco-Roman and biblical sources through the centuries of textual output which accompanied British imperial expansion in Asia. Taher-Kermani particularly centres the literary output of British writers who wrote on Qajar Iran, describing the importance of historical monographs (John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (1815)), novels (James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824)), and travelogues for the formation of a Victorian 'idea' of Iran. This highlights the often-fraught attempts to extricate elements of mythology and outright fantasy from intellectual engagements with Iran, even as more reliable contemporary information became accessible in the nineteenth century.

This extensive introduction to literary interactions between Britain and Iran is followed by an overview of Persianate elements in Victorian poetry, demonstrating their sheer scale and variety. Poets drew inspiration not only from increasingly well-known Iranian poets such as Sa'di, Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi, Hafiz, and Rumi, but also Greco-Roman and biblical narratives which evoked past splendours or

lamented their decay and dissolution. This period additionally saw the burgeoning popularity of aesthetic orientalism, decontextualised and often fantastical creations which nonetheless frequently featured Iranian-influenced imagery.

Arnold's *Sohrab and Rostum*, the first of the case studies, is a narrative heavily adapted from its original source: Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, via a review by Charles Sainte-Beuve of Julius von Mohl's French translation. Unable to comprehend Farsi, Arnold additionally relied on Malcolm's *History of Persia* for the context of the narrative. Taher-Kermani supplements his direct analysis with discussion of the epic form in poetry, as Arnold not only drew parallels between *Shahnameh* and the Homeric epics, but actively sought to present his poem in the format of the latter to render it more palatable to British readers. 'Sohrab and Rostum' thus not only exhibits the transplantation of an Iranian narrative, but in its adaptation underlines the privileging of Greco-Roman literature in Victorian culture.

The second case study is FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, by far the most influential of the three poems examined. The question of authenticity is central to Taher-Kermani's analysis here, as though FitzGerald claimed that the *Rubáiyát* was a direct translation of the poetry of Omar Khayyám, the medieval astronomer and mathematician, it has no provenance. While Iranian culture significantly influenced the structure, themes, and idiom of the *Rubáiyát*, each of these elements was also modified or distorted, creating truly hybrid poetry which for many Victorian readers constituted their primary engagement with Iran, or at least FitzGerald's conception thereof. The 'translation' also accentuated hedonism as a key theme, according with orientalist tropes of the decadent and debauched Iranian residing in a land marred by ruined empires, thereby exemplifying the proximity of cultural appreciation and condescension.

Browning's *Ferishtah's Fancies*, a more obscure work than either preceding poem, comprises the final case study. Unlike the previous two examples, *Ferishtah's Fancies* is wholly original, neither translated nor adapted from an Iranian

source. Written in the form of a didactic parable, Browning's poetry was instead largely influenced by the Persianate output of other Europeans, most notably Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan* (1819). Taher-Kermani describes broadly how French and German publications relating to Iran, considered superior in terms of linguistic and philological methodology, had a significant impact on British writing throughout the nineteenth century, a subject which will likely inspire further comparative study.

Taher-Kermani's book contributes significantly to understanding the extent to which British poetry was influenced by contact with Iran during the nineteenth century, while simultaneously exploring the diversity of these influences and their manifestations. This places *Persian Presence* alongside scholarship investigating the dialogic nature of encounters between Iran and the West, epitomised by Hamid Dabashi's *Persophilia: Persian Culture on the Global Scene* (2015) which charts shifting European attitudes to Iran. Such scholarship furthers understanding of Iranian culture while also demonstrating that intellectual engagements between Britain and Iran have a long and varied provenance, and that the artificial binary of East and West can be overcome.

Seán W. Pieper (SOAS, University of London)

***Reimagining Dinosaurs in Late Victorian and Edwardian Literature: How the 'Terrible Lizard' Became a Transatlantic Cultural Icon*, by Richard Fallon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 283pp., £75 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-108-83400-1**

Charting the development of the cultural phenomenon that is the dinosaur across four case studies, Richard Fallon's *Reimagining Dinosaurs in Late Victorian and Edwardian Literature* argues that 'the popularisation of the new American dinosaur palaeontology was a transatlantic enterprise in which non-specialists played a central role' (p. 2). This deceptively straightforward thesis underpins a rich and entertaining study bringing together late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popular literature, the professionalisation of science writing, transatlantic print culture, the cultural conceptualisation of dinosaurs, and the key figures who fostered the transformation of these Mesozoic creatures into cultural icons and transatlantic indices of modernity.

Reimagining Dinosaurs builds on a rich body of scholarship that explores how the rise of the dinosaur coincided with the emergence of discourses regarding nationalism and imperialism and charts the role of museums in crystallising the figure of the

dinosaur. However, Fallon rightly notes that little has been written about 'the tangle of populist publications, specialist disputes, and transatlantic exchanges from which a modern understanding of dinosaurs was formed' (p. 32). Inspired by spectacular fossils discovered in western territories, particularly Wyoming and Colorado, American scholars such as O. C. Marsh argued that such finds proved that these creatures, previously lumped together as 'saurians' with other Mesozoic reptiles, should be understood as belonging to a single category, the contested 'Dinosauria' posited by British anatomist Richard Owen in 1842. Fallon's study demonstrates how such palaeontological theories were in turn popularised in the United Kingdom and became central to an expansive cultural discourse.

The first chapter introduces the book's governing character, Anglican clergyman, amateur naturalist, and science writer Henry Neville Hutchinson, whose *Extinct Monsters* (1892) was instrumental in popularising American dinosaurs in the United Kingdom. As Fallon shows, Hutchinson's career reflected the widening gap between popular and specialist science writing. Promoting the ideal that science writing should be democratic, Hutchinson believed that the proliferation of technical language and the increasing secularism of professional science writing 'alienated the public' (p. 31). To stimulate popular engagement with scientific discovery, he believed writers should turn to imaginative literature for (stylistic) inspiration, as well as uphold the relationship between science and faith. However, while his works and their illustrations deeply influenced the public's understanding of dinosaurs, many palaeontologists rejected his romantic approach to their discipline.

In his second chapter, Fallon explores how a new register for describing dinosaurs emerged in both fiction and nonfiction. Despite the rejection of Hutchinson's work by some experts, the approach to the field that he and other popularising authors promoted shaped the way dinosaurs were conceptualised, which converged with discourses of monstrosity and grotesquerie as well as evolutionary theory. Among other things, this work cemented in the public mind the notion that dinosaurs were big lumbering bird-brained monsters, poorly adapted and thus an evolutionary dead end, characterisations that Fallon explores through a discussion of now mostly obscure texts, such as Edward W. D. Cuming's *Wonders in Monsterland* (1901) and Emily Octavia Bray's *Old Time and the Boy* (1921),

Chapter 3 highlights the transatlantic dimensions of Fallon's corpus by tracing how dinosaurs figured in work that negotiated a transition from British imperial to capitalist American

supremacy, including sources such as illustrated periodicals and New Journalist publications. The chapter analyses a number of fascinating novels with transatlantic readerships, for example the religious space travel narrative *A Journey in Other Worlds* (1894) by American millionaire John Jacob Astor IV and the American Gustavus W. Pope's *Journey to Venus* (1895), as well as British works such as C. J. Cutcliffe's *The Lost Continent* (1899) and Frank Savile's *Beyond the Great South Wall* (1899). As Fallon shows, such texts tapped into, and indeed fed, transatlantic palaeontological discourse and replicated (or sometimes satirised) colonialist and expansionist rhetoric and themes.

In the final chapter, Fallon argues that Arthur Conan Doyle's famous *The Lost World* (1912) can be seen as a manifestation of its author's views on popular science writing, which echoed those of Hutchinson and other critics of the exclusionary mechanisms of specialist science writing. Conan Doyle rejected the materialism of specialist writing and the policing of boundaries between different systems of knowledge. As Fallon suggests, his interest in palaeontology was thus part of a continuum that also included cryptozoology and psychic phenomena. Again emphasising transatlantic dynamics, Fallon explores the differences between American and British versions of Conan Doyle's novel, and firmly re-establishes the importance for Conan Doyle's project of the original illustrations by the novelist's brother-in-law, Patrick Lewis Forbes.

Fallon carefully situates his work in the larger field of humanistic dinosaur scholarship, which to date has mostly focused on the role of museums and millionaires in the popularisation of the dinosaur. However, the book is also relevant for scholars outside this area. Meticulously delineating the transatlantic underpinnings of the modern figure of the dinosaur and charting the shifting boundaries between science writing and imaginative literature, *Reimagining Dinosaurs* is of considerable use not only for its literary palaeontological analysis. Readers interested more generally in genre, circulation, and transatlantic print culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will similarly find here plenty to interest them.

Christopher Cusack (Radboud University)

***Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals*, by Melisa Klimaszewski (Ohio University Press, 2019), xii+282pp., £64 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-8214236-5-3**

In *Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals*, Melisa Klimaszewski masterfully guides the reader through the Christmas

numbers Charles Dickens edited for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*—eighteen in total from 1850 to 1867, with forty writers represented—making a compelling case for a re-evaluation of collaborative writing and academic approaches to it, whether in the case of Dickens, the Victorians, or more broadly. As Klimaszewski demonstrates throughout, previous scholarship has focused on identifying authorship, unravelling texts in order to isolate Dickens's own contributions (as editions of Dickens's works often do, removing them from their frame narratives and thus removing some of the sense), and largely ignoring the intertextual resonances of style and theme between the different contributions. This monograph, divided into eight chapters which take the Christmas numbers in chronological order, offers not only a fresh perspective on the Christmas numbers, but also makes space for reflections on the Victorian periodical market, and should encourage further work on collaborative writing in the Victorian period and more widely. The inclusion of an appendix giving the contents and contributors for each number is valuable, particularly as Dickens did not include all contributing writers on the title page of a Christmas number until his penultimate one in 1866. An appendix showing authorship percentages is highly suggestive, showing, for example, that Dickens wrote less than a third of the Christmas numbers, and women 26.5%, though given the claims made in the book about misattribution and the difficulty of disentangling authorship (sometimes from within one chapter or one character's perspective), it is unclear on what data these charts are based.

Klimaszewski pushes back against the idea of Dickens as the overbearing editor, instead emphasising the way that the Christmas numbers facilitated differences of opinion and contrasting voices. Although she highlights that the individual style of a contributor comes out, much of the discussion is focused on Dickens himself, as the title suggests, with Wilkie Collins a second focal writer, as one with whom Dickens collaborated many times (Dickens and Collins also collaborated on several Christmas numbers together without other contributors). Dickens's other collaborators included W. H. Wills (identified by Klimaszewski as one of the most overlooked contributors, particularly in his editorial oversight of the early Christmas numbers), George Augustus Sala, Harriet Martineau, Eliza Griffiths, James White, Julia Cecilia Stretton, Edmund Saul Dixon, and Charles Collins.

The multivocal focus Klimaszewski adopts here is unusual; as she notes, much work on collaboration has focused on pairs. However, the book's focus on Dickens does keep him at the centre of the narrative in spite of the book's compelling arguments about the way truly collaborative writing

can dissolve, or at least complicate, hierarchical structures. Dickens's imposition of a frame narrative, introduced formally in 1854, helped with the cohesion of the various contributions but, as Klimaszewski notes, the various writers did not sit down to discuss their plans in this period (with the exception of Dickens and Collins's two-handers). Direction may have been given in a letter of invitation, sometimes sent by Wills; notably, when inviting writers to submit pieces for *Somebody's Luggage* (1862), Dickens did not even give full details of the frame narrative. Therefore Dickens's role as editor, captain, or conductor is central to this book, and Klimaszewski makes interesting use of the conceit of Dickens as conductor in her analysis.

The chapters all address two or three stories from a particular period; though they do not deal with each story equally, they do acknowledge all eighteen Christmas numbers. Some surprising threads come out in the analysis: there is a clear argument that Dickens moved away from seasonal concerns after the first four years (i.e. as he developed the idea for an overarching frame narrative) and towards other themes, concerning empire and race, unconventional families and queer relationships, and storytelling itself.

Chapter 2's discussion of orality and the way 'The Deaf Playmate's Story' (1852) highlights issues of polyphony and storytelling is particularly effective, as is Chapter 4's analysis of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* (1856), singled out as 'one of the most powerful examples of the polyvocal potential of the Christmas number form' (p. 78). Klimaszewski's discussion of the reception and neglect of 'The Beguilement in the Boats', as well as her confident resituating of this section within *Golden Mary*, is fascinating. Similarly, Chapter 8's argument that considering Andrew Halliday's contribution to *Mugby Junction* (1866) encourages a revisiting of our understanding of Dickens's own story, 'The Signalman' (1866), often read in light of his experiences at the Staplehurst rail crash of 1865, leads the reader to question the ways in which some of these stories are integrated into Dickens biography. Halliday's darkly comic take on death on the railway tracks shows, Klimaszewski argues, that Dickens was more comfortable dealing with this topic in different tones, and with different outcomes, than has previously been recognised due to a tendency to read Dickens's contributions to *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* in isolation.

Another highlight is the inclusion in Chapter 6 of a wonderful *Queen* illustration of Dickens, tied to a chair, surrounded by contributors, and forced to listen to Collins read his contribution to *Tom Tiddler's Ground* (1861). The captive author suggests titles including 'The Flight of the Ladybird, in Seven Wings', gesturing to the reception of these Christmas stories

and the extent to which the frame narrative had come to shape the idea of the Christmas number in the public imagination at this time. The frame narrative was clearly expected, as was a somewhat facetious title/unifying theme. *Collaborative Dickens* thus shows the evolution of the idea of the Christmas number, from an unnamed issue to a special issue with a fully developed frame narrative, from a story collection in which ideas are awkwardly repeated to a story collection in which ideas subtly resonate, arguing convincingly for a re-evaluation of these stories, of Dickens as a lone genius figure, and of collaborative writing itself.

Emily Bell (*University of Leeds*)

***Circulation and Control: Artistic Culture and Intellectual Property in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marie-Stéphanie Delamaire and Will Slauter (Cambridge: Open Book, 2021), 540 pp. 114 ill., £38.95 (hardback), £28.95 (paperback), open-access ebook, ISBN 978-18-00641-47-1**

Edited by Marie-Stéphanie Delamaire and Will Slauter, *Circulation and Control: Artistic Culture and Intellectual Property in the Nineteenth Century* is a wide-ranging collection of essays interrogating how images coalesced with the law in the Anglophone nineteenth century. The volume contributes to an exciting developing field which brings together law and the humanities and supplements approaches to nineteenth-century visual culture that are concerned with its worlds, networks, and agents—dealers, patrons, galleries, museums, markets—rather than its makers.

With fourteen chapters spanning over 500 pages, the volume is as ambitious in scale as it is in scope. There is ample opportunity for it to be re-read, each time bringing together chapters in different combinations to throw up new conversations. *Circulation and Control's* breadth is testament to the abundance of work to be done in the field and the significance of its interdisciplinary remit in revealing the networked reality of the nineteenth century beyond disciplinary confines. Contributions come from legal scholars, historians of intellectual property, art historians, digital humanists, and curators.

Delamaire and Slauter focus the volume on the United States and the United Kingdom, with one notable chapter by Jilly Haley that explores indigenous experiences of celebrity in New Zealand during British colonial rule. Rather than limiting the volume, the selectivity of the geographic scope is an expedient solution to the problem of managing such a wealth of material and means that it participates in a contemporary scholarly interest in transatlantic art

histories. However, the collection does leave room to explore further the methodological nature of comparative histories—indeed, several of the chapters exist in isolation without fully realising the comparative nature of the work. In contrast, Thomas Smits' chapter on the transnational illustration trade is a welcome intervention that explores the fluidity and transience of the period; a theme taken up in much recent scholarship including by Anna Arabindan-Kesson's *Black Bodies, White Gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World* (2021), Melody Barnett Deusner's *Aesthetic Painting in Britain and America: Collectors, Art Worlds, Networks* (2020), and Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser and Tim Barringer's *Thomas Cole's Journey: Atlantic Crossings* (2018).

Circulation and Control is organised into three thematic sections. The first, 'Who Owns What? Images and Copyright Law' contains chapters by Isabella Alexander and Cristina S. Martinez, Marie-Stéphanie Delamaire, Simon Stern, Will Slauter, and Oren Bracha. Its concern, in broad terms, is how the visual altered and impacted frameworks of international law from Hogarth's Act of 1735 to the 1880s. The second, 'Agents of Circulation: Entrepreneurs and Rivals' explores the individuals and groups involved in the production, distribution, and reuse of images with contributions from Erika Piola, Thomas Smits, and Rose Roberto. The final section, 'Navigating Intellectual Property: Architects, Sculptors and Photographers' offers essays by Elena Cooper and Marta Iljadica, Karen Lemmey, Shannon Perich, Jill Haley, and Katherine Mintie that consider the interplay of law, artistic practice, and business strategy.

These sections highlight the shared preoccupations of contributors while emphasising the overarching editorial approach. Rather than commissioning essays on set topics, contributions emerged out of new research presented at two conferences in 2018 and 2019. This manifests in a creative, and often indirect, dialogue across essays, throwing up intriguing points of intersection and thematic undercurrents. A number of essays are connected by discussions of repetition and iteration, or by a prioritisation of intermediary actors, for example. The compilation does justice to the wealth of exciting research currently available and provides a useful point of entry for scholars across disciplines. The introduction is exceptionally lucid and will make a strong addition to undergraduate reading lists, as it offers both a detailed overview of the scholarly landscape and an illuminating précis of the impact of society and technology (especially photography and chromolithography) on the visual culture of the nineteenth century. Finally, the accessibility of the volume must be emphasised. Its physical hardback

and paperback editions are affordable, especially considering the size of the volume and its 114 illustrations, while a PDF version of the text is freely available to download. This is an indispensable resource for students and researchers alike.

Frances Varley (*Courtauld Institute of Art*)

***A Cultural History of Hair in the Age of Empire*, edited by Sarah Heaton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), ix+219pp., £75.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-14-74232-09-8**

In the introduction to this edited collection, Sarah Heaton suggests that hair is more compelling and resonates more powerfully than other historical artefacts because it was a part of a body and has therefore shared so many of its moments, whether ordinary or momentous, public or private. 'Here is not simply the cold dark patina on an object once held, nor the sweat stains on a dress once worn', writes Heaton of a plait of hair, 'but part of the woman herself' (p. 1). Such a singular category of object would seem to warrant critical attention within Victorian Studies—especially given the impact of thing theory and the material turn more broadly on the field and its ongoing interest in bodies and objects. Yet *A Cultural History of Hair in the Age of Empire* is the only collection of essays focused on hair in the nineteenth century (to my knowledge) and the first major study of the subject since Galia Ofek's monograph, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (2009). Its chapters register a broad range of desires and anxieties surrounding hair in the period and the Victorians' apparent inclination to represent and interpret it in diverse ways, whether through its colour, length, texture, volume, or styling.

Richard Leahy's chapter on 'Religion and Ritualized Belief' considers issues of enchantment, othering, and artistic obsession in Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti's painting and poetry before turning to neo-Victorian representations of hair in the novels *Possession* by A. S. Byatt (1990) and *Affinity* by Sarah Waters (1999). A chapter on 'Self and Society' by Jonathon Shears acknowledges but resists replicating Ofek's Medusa-Rapunzel paradigm by focusing on hair (self-)consciousness as it intersects with 'the follicular determinism of nineteenth-century phrenology' (p. 49) and how both 'the absence of attention to the hair *and* an overattentiveness to it could likewise mark out physical and mental difference' (p. 51). 'Fashion and Adornment' is explored in Patricia Hunt-Hurst's chapter through African American women's hair practices, with particular attention paid to headwraps as a means of creativity, self-expression, and participation in fashion culture—and not only as

a protective or prescribed item of clothing in the context of slavery. Sallie McNamara explores 'Production and Practice' by detailing several distinctively Victorian phenomena: the hair harvest, hairpieces, and hairwork. Janice M. Allan's exploration of 'the contaminated and contaminating sources' (p. 96) of hair in 'Health and Hygiene' is a standout chapter which argues that middle-class Victorians' aspirations to refinement and civilisation, while seemingly figured in elaborate coiffures of false hair, were undermined by its shady origins and secret histories. In 'Gender and Sexuality', Heaton addresses the significations of red and white hair—the latter of which, especially, does not often receive critical attention—and identifies tensions in terms of public display and private idealisation, fashionable artifice and social control. 'Race and Ethnicity' is discussed by Elizabeth Way. This chapter considers the experiences of African Americans, the context of the slave trade, and hair as a means of resistance, fostering community and self-assertion. Way notes the impact of pseudo-scientific studies of hair on justifications for racism and slavery, but turns also to the history of black hairdressing, barbers, and haircare businesses in the US. Carolyn Miller deals with 'Class and Social Status' through hairlessness—another less studied aspect of hair—and more specifically hair cut in circumstances of destitution, such in workhouses or by women desperate for the little money selling it would yield. Finally, Sally West traces the uncanny, disorderly, and deviant potential of hair in 'Cultural Representations'. Her conclusion is one which summarises many of the book's arguments—hair in the Victorian period is found to be 'a material which is deeply unstable and potentially subversive in its meanings' (p. 165).

A minor criticism is that several chapters cover the same popular examples and anecdotes—there are a few discussions of the Great Exhibition, the Pre-Raphaelites, *Little Women* (1868), and *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), for instance—though together these chapters touch on many less cited subcultures and representations of hair, such as points on pubic hair and Victorian pornography, and facial hair and political affiliation. For a study of hair 'in the age of Empire', there is a lot of British and American content and little on hair fashions and practices in the colonies yet, the collection does explore the global context of the nineteenth-century hair trade and how Western fashions and discourses reflected and perpetuated racist, classist, and gendered ideologies. The chapters themselves cover relatively wide-ranging material, with useful regular subtitles, though the conclusions to each chapter are brief and telling of the scope demanded in so short a volume, perhaps at the expense of greater depth. Indeed, the book is part of a series of six volumes exploring hair

from Antiquity to the Modern Age with each covering the same themes in its chapters. While this approach may be useful, as the series blurb suggests, for those wishing to trace historical developments in one theme through each relevant chapter, I believe it may have inhibited the potential of such a project—would not each volume otherwise have identified distinct themes or framings pertinent to hair in its period? Despite this constraint, the editor and contributors to this volume have provided a wonderfully rich resource for those interested in delving into the complex, and often covert or unexpected, culture of hair practices, fashions, and representations in the nineteenth century.

Heather Hind (University of Roehampton)

***Theology, Horror and Fiction: A Reading of the Gothic Nineteenth Century*, by Jonathan Greenaway (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 202pp., £80 (hardback), ISBN 978-15-01351-78-5**

Jonathan Greenaway's *Theology, Horror and Fiction: A Reading of the Gothic Nineteenth Century* offers a critically important and intellectually nuanced perspective into the often neglected relationship between Gothic literature and theology, within a Christian framework. In a fundamental re-examination of the complex theological reflections offered by key Gothic texts in the nineteenth century, Greenaway proposes that in order to understand the sophisticated theology of the Gothic, it is imperative to move critical discourse beyond the genre's grotesque and often voyeuristic fascination with religious imagery, from 'ruined churches' and 'crucifixes', to 'mysterious priests and closed orders of nuns' (p. 1). This is not to say that the Gothic offers its readers a prescriptive religious framework, or that we can interpret it as an exercise in Christian hermeneutics—and Greenaway carefully avoids the trappings of such generalising statements through a thorough consideration of the genre's history, including its not seldom hostility to religion. But to reduce the Gothic to its tropes of religious aesthetics is to ignore the genre's constant grappling with theological questions over the span of the nineteenth century, questions which are often inextricable from the broader socio-political contexts of Gothic prose, as Greenaway persuasively argues.

Early on, the book draws on Graham Ward in *True Religion* (2003) to set out a useful theoretical distinction between religion (understood broadly in terms of ecclesiastical structures and practices), and theology (referring to God and how humans conceive of Him). And while its religious tropes are somewhat standardised, the theology of nineteenth-century

Gothic is 'more radical', challenging orthodoxy by revealing to readers 'shocking new ways' of thinking about the divine (p. 17). After thoroughly explicating the theoretical framework, methodology, and critical imperative of the book, Greenaway goes on to provide historically-informed theological readings of crucial texts which punctuated both the development of the Gothic novel and its dynamic relationship to theological thought; thus the argument takes us from a discussion of mediated theology in *Frankenstein* (1818) in Chapter One, through to a consideration of the influence of reformed theology on nineteenth-century Gothic literature through a close reading of Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three situates theologically the important works of Emily and Charlotte Brontë: it offers a reading of *Wuthering Heights* (1847) as embodying a heterodox theology which teases out institutional hermeneutics as 'prone to perverting sacred texts' and fostering violence (p. 79), and re-frames *Jane Eyre* (1847) in terms of a theological engagement with the morality and ethics of social bearings, once again divorced from institutional religion. Chapter Four argues for a theological understanding of the Victorian ghost story.

The book is perhaps at its most original and radical in Chapter Five, which looks at *fin-de-siècle* materialism and proposes a novel understanding of how discourses surrounding rationalism, positivism, and biological science continue to bear the imprint of an underlying 'theological logic' (p. 126) and how, consequently, late Victorian Gothic literature resists the pull of materialism. Greenaway argues that despite being steeped in the language of medical experimentation, Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' (1886) displays a hitherto unexplored theological undercurrent framing evil in Augustinian terms as 'a perversion of the Imago Dei' (p. 139). His discussion of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) demonstrates how, to understand a physical yet ancient evil, the materialistic rhetoric of Victorian rationalism is necessarily tied in with theology—a prerequisite to defeating the vampire. Greenaway's analysis uncovers the sophistication of the novel's engagement with theology, demonstrating that it is not reducible to the good-versus-evil binaries which criticism has often attributed to it: instead, it reveals the problematic weaponisation of religious ritual itself, while also considering how *fin-de-siècle* religion threatens 'the status of the middle classes' as a 'superstitious force', while at the same time being instrumental in maintaining 'the virtues of capitalist exchange and empire' (p. 162).

Greenaway's study addresses a gap in criticism existing in the field of Gothic literature, which has traditionally been read as a sceptical mode,

re-evaluating the quizzical nature of the genre with reference to theological curiosity. Several recent critical interventions in this direction have been crucial in redefining the Gothic as theological discourse and exploration, with leading works including Alison Milbank's *God and the Gothic* (2018), Zoe Lehman-Imfeld's *The Victorian Ghost Story and Theology: From Le Fanu to James* (2016), and Jen Cadwallader's *Spirits and Spirituality in Victorian Fiction* (2016). *Theology, Horror and Fiction* contributes to this developing strand of interdisciplinary criticism which interrogates and furthers our scholarly understanding of the often uneasy intersections between Gothic literature and theology.

Madeline Potter (Edge Hill University)

***The Poems of Elizabeth Siddal in Context*, by Anne Woolley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 296pp., £85 (hardback), ISBN 978-15-26143-84-6**

Anne Woolley's book on Elizabeth Siddal is extremely timely given the greater consideration being paid towards broadening our understanding of history and the artistic canon by bringing forgotten voices to the forefront. In Pre-Raphaelitism, Serena Trowbridge's *My Lady's Soul: The Poetry of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall* (2018) and Jan Marsh's *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisters* (in tandem with the 2019 exhibition of the same name at the National Portrait Gallery, London) have highlighted the role of women in the movement.

Siddal has often been seen as a sidenote in the life and art of her husband Dante Gabriel Rossetti, her life tragically cut short at a time when 'suicide was not just scandalous, and likely to lead to social disgrace for her extended family, but [also] illegal.' (p. 1). Siddal's life therefore becomes viewed in light of this tragedy and an extension of her more widely known husband and his family. It appears to be a life only semi-remembered with many creating 'an embellished story around her' (p. 2) and as such what we know of Siddal and her creative works is questionable. This book offers a reassessment of her life by highlighting the artistic skills and capabilities of Siddal as both a poet and a painter in her own right. Siddal is not a mere sidekick alongside the well-known names, instead we see someone sharing philosophies and practices with other writers and poets to whom she is arguably an equal.

Woolley ensures that Siddal's artwork receives attention, with the cover image taken from her ink drawing of *Pippa Passes* (c. 1855) inspired by Robert Browning's poem. Context is provided about the life and career of Siddal and how early published

editions of her writing were 'heavily revised and corrected' (p. 3) by other people, thus blurring the true voice of Siddal. Although Siddal's sister-in-law Christina Rossetti is mentioned briefly it is noted that the reception and status of Rossetti and her poetry was considerably different.

The first chapter demonstrates the concept of the duality of love shown through Siddal and her husband's works. There are reflections on human love as embodied by the relationship with Rossetti as well as consideration of divine love as presented in poems such as 'A Silent Wood' (1857) and 'Lord May I come?' (1862). Woolley argues that both poems demonstrate 'the search for an experience of erotic and religious love [which] can be seen as a journey, and one fraught with uncertainty and loneliness.' (p. 65) This chapter makes the best use of Siddal and Rossetti's artworks which are interspersed throughout and further emphasises the link between literature, art, and love.

The ballad tradition is explored in the second chapter through the works of Siddal and Algernon Swinburne. The bringing together of the two poets is important because as Woolley notes earlier in the book 'Swinburne was Siddal's only close friend' (p. 12) and the two engaged with the ballad form independently in their respective writings. Woolley demonstrates with great skill how Siddal interacts with this oral tradition and how this forms part of a reimagining of the form as well as imitating and adapting its core values.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson and John Ruskin are then considered alongside Siddal under the idea of the feminist question in the third chapter, which allows for a greater exploration of Siddal's poetry within the socio-political context of the period. Tennyson's poem 'Lady Clare' (1842) is considered not just because Siddal completed a watercolour based on it, but also due to its 'commentary on nineteenth-century feminist issues, and the 'Woman Question'.' (p. 143) The close literary relationship between Siddal, Tennyson, and Ruskin becomes obvious but a contrast appears in how Lady Clare is portrayed in Tennyson's poem and Siddal's watercolour of 1854-57.

The final chapter returns to the Pre-Raphaelites and their understanding of power by considering Siddal alongside the Romantic poet John Keats. It is well known that the Pre-Raphaelites held poets like Keats in high regard particularly those works 'with a mystical or spiritual or medieval context, and a female protagonist' (p. 203). The legacy of Keats was helped by this adoration, and Woolley presents the influence of Keats on Siddal through explorations of the physical and spectral body. Siddal's drawings which offer a ghostly or otherworldly depiction of women are shown to go

beyond the stereotypical roles of the period, differing from Pre-Raphaelite representations seen in Rossetti's art.

This critical study of Siddal's life and poetry is hugely significant in our reassessment and re-understanding of Victorian women writers. A voice that has been forgotten and seen as a morbid footnote in the shadow of her husband has emerged as a poetess and artist of the same distinction as her contemporaries and worthy of closer critical attention.

Jordan Welsh (University of Essex)

***Trees in Nineteenth-Century English Fiction: The Silvicultural Novel*, by Anna Burton (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2021), 218pp., £96 (hardback), ISBN 978-03-67369-04-0**

Anna Burton's book *Trees in Nineteenth-Century English Fiction: The Silvicultural Novel* aims to 'isolate the nineteenth century as a period of distinctive and notable arboreal awareness' (p. 2), mapping the silvicultural tradition by examining the writings of several thinkers who, Burton states, would not precisely fit into or wholly identify themselves with it. At the forefront of these she places William Gilpin, his book *Forest Scenery* (1791), and his pioneering principles of the Picturesque.

Chapter One situates Gilpin within the silvicultural network, which Burton interestingly defines as 'writings that share and borrow arboreal anecdotes and knowledge between one another' (p. 5), showing how he was relentlessly cited as an authority in later nineteenth-century arboreal, natural and landscape writing. She claims that this tradition foregrounds the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as periods of lasting arboreal and environmental consciousness, in the midst of parliamentary enclosures and rapid industrialisation, that merit deeper examination. Richly interpolated with plates and maps, this chapter is the theoretical trunk from which the book branches out into chapters and grows organically.

Chapter Two discovers textual strategies that accommodate arboreal spaces in Jane Austen's novels. Burton emphatically and convincingly argues that Austen possesses a keen awareness of a silvicultural tradition. She deftly points out that in Austen's works trees are not mere scenic backdrops, but important at the conversational level, both to denote Austen's 'arboreally informed viewpoints' (p. 70) and as a means to define or deduce characters' (often landowners') standing amongst the community. Especially interesting is the affinity that Burton identifies between trees and female characters, which functions to establish women's

independence within their otherwise-restrictive lives.

The third chapter focuses on the notable presences and absences of trees in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction. Burton establishes Gaskell as 'an arboreal authority, albeit an unaccredited one' (p. 103), identifying the widest possibilities for arboreal discourses in her works through folkloric ideas contained in the 'Langue des Arbres'. The profusion, or scarcity, of trees in Gaskell's fiction is linked to the availability of refuge and privacy for her female characters, or lack thereof. Insights into Gaskell's commentary on nineteenth-century theories of miasma and the over-proliferation of trees/vegetation as harbingers of disease and pollution evoke cultural dialogues involving urban and rural polarizations. Burton suggests that Gaskell's presentation of 'opposing environmental opinions' provides a panoramic 'silvicultural outlook' (p. 132).

Chapters Four and Five are devoted to the silvicultural tradition in the works of Thomas Hardy, whose ecological consciousness and connectedness to rural topography of Dorset is well-established. Chapter Four reads *The Woodlanders* (1887) in the light of Hardy's connections with Gilpin, who conceived of trees as more than merely borders/margins on horizontal planes but as capable of being 'deep map(ped)' under (roots) and above (sky) (p. 164). Burton effectively reiterates that in Hardy trees are more than narrative material, signifying a wider mesh of arboreal (sub)texts, his layered notion and depiction of woodscapes, and the arboreal nature of the Hintock community. Hardy, she argues, reveals his affinities to Gilpin and other geological and natural history writers through his 'use [of] the idea of layers and parts as a framework to negotiate landscape as a physical, temporal, and notional entity' (p. 154). Burton extends possible readings of this complex novel as a 'silvicultural and stratigraphical deep map' (p. 164) through an awareness of layers of traditions and the unfixed nature of the landscape as text. In Chapter Five, Burton delineate how trees are 'arboreal boundaries' in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and establishes the 'importance of historicity of trees' in Hardy's narrative. She probes Hardy's reconciliation of 'actual and imagined environments' (p. 170) in the novel, extending his concept of a partly real and partly dream landscape, which is the backdrop to his intellectual and fictional universe. The complex intertwining of Gilpin's idea of the landscape as a map, Hardy's annotated maps, and J. Hillis Millers' premise about topography as 'shifting' (p. 171) is treated with scholarly astuteness as Burton reinterprets a familiar novel along unexplored lines. Hardy's status as one of the most significant

impressers of the silvicultural tradition on the novel genre is underscored by the fresh perspectives offered by Burton. These chapters will be interesting and important for Hardy scholars and it is certainly the section of the book I am deeply partial to!

This book is marked by dense and original research into the variegated role of trees and woodscapes in English culture and fiction of the long-nineteenth century. In the process of this mapping, Burton draws our attention to the connection between the Victorian responses to ecological concerns, as an aftermath of industrialization, and contemporary climate crises which have, again, made us rethink how we perceive of and express our arboreal and environmental concerns. Thus, it is a valuable work for the lay reader as well as the specialist with interdisciplinary interests in Victorian fiction and environmental studies.

Oindrila Ghosh (*Diamond Harbour Women's University*)

***The Sexual Politics of Jane Eyre: Representations of Fear and the Construction of Text in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre*, by Ann Erskine (Sussex: Edward Everett Root, 2021), 188pp., £84 (hardback), ISBN 978-19-13087-25-8**

***The Poems of Anne Brontë*, edited by Edward Chitham (Sussex: Edward Everett Root, 2021), 250 pp., £29.99 (paperback) ISBN 978-19-13087-54-8**

Erskine's recent book, *The Sexual Politics of Jane Eyre*, is a powerful reconsideration of the feminist and postcolonial pathways into Charlotte Brontë's novel and reframes earlier critical readings from the perspective of fear. Rather than anger or rebellion, fear is deemed the novel's primary emotion and motivational force, which manifests as terror, dread, panic, anxiety, and jealousy, and is deployed as reactive, propositional, and experiential states that direct Jane's critical moments and, ultimately, the entire narrative.

Jane's specific fear is posited as sexual subjugation. The red room scene is cast as an awakening space with Turkish allusions introduced by Erskine as the key to exploring the sexual politics of fear, desire, and subjugation in the novel—specifically the tropes of the Sultan/slave dynamic. Two images guide this reading: the painting *Sultane* (1747) by Charles-Andre Van Loo, depicting Madame de Pompadour being served coffee by a black maid in her Turkish *boudoir*; and Martinus Schouman's painting, *Bombardment of Algiers, in Support of the Ultimatum to Release White Slaves, 26-27 August 1816* (1816).

To understand Victorian notions of fear, Erskine draws upon nineteenth-century Scottish philosopher Alexander Bain's work on the emotions, as well as her own background in clinical psychology. The social and biological anxieties of middle-class women around insanity, fragility, and marriage are also considered, as well as fear and sexuality within the Victorian literary gothic more broadly. The novel is also situated within the wider socio-cultural climate of unease engendered by revolution, poverty, crime, and instability that was especially concerning during the first half of the century. Jane's preoccupation with the fear of sexual subjugation is placed within this framework, with the Turkish allusions articulating the forbidden subjects of sexual desire and potential enslavement.

The book's eleven chapters (which vary significantly in length, some being just a few pages long) are mapped chronologically onto the novel, and divided into two sections, the first concerned with Jane and the second with Bertha. Chapter one, titled 'Flight or Fight', focuses on a discussion of childhood fear. Chapter two introduces the Eastern motifs and the idea of the '*Boudoir Turc*', Turkish bedroom, and the harem allusion. The image of *Sultane* exemplifies the prevailing country house trend for creating Turkish rooms, and the red room is discussed in this context with female sexuality at its heart. Chapter three considers the aftermath of the red room experience. The cultural discourse of *Turquerie*, including a discussion of Turkish white slavery, is the focus of chapter four. Chapter five then applies these motifs to Jane and her dynamic with Rochester. The additional discussion of Turkish tropes in relation to Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), read by Helen Burns at Lowood, unites the two sections, leading the reader from Jane's sexuality into the subject of Bertha.

Chapters six to nine consider Bertha's 'three stories', conceived as the Colonial Subject, the Madwoman, and the Hyena. Erskine structures her argument throughout with excellent close reading, that is especially strong when arguing the semantics of Bertha's ancestry in chapter seven. Rather than the widely accepted postcolonial heritage, she claims Bertha's ancestry is that of a Spanish-French Creole, whose diasporic family settled in Jamaica; she is not West Indian but of white European descent. In England Rochester's 'foreign' wife is subject to xenophobic fears, claims Erskine, thus Bertha is viewed as a 'foreign other' rather than a 'racial other' (p. 63). The final chapters, ten and eleven, on 'Overcoming' and 'Returning', turn again to Jane's progress and fears and explain their resolution.

Erskine concludes that when read with the lens of fear, Brontë's novel serves as a discourse of sexual oppression, conveyed by Turkish tropes,

which Jane successfully negotiates. Characters are defined by their responses to this central concern; for example, Erskine casts the male characters from John Reed, to Brocklehurst, Rivers, and Rochester, as 'objects of fear' (p. xi) who seek to subjugate Jane. From this perspective each has a crucial role in shaping her passionate character. The book's central argument is fascinating and convincing. Within the field, it contrasts with the various scholars who have focused predominantly on Jane's search for autonomy, and Bertha's sexuality, which is associated with her accepted West Indian heritage.

Numerous scholars have considered sexuality in this novel, but the only book-length study since Jim Maynard's foundational *Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality* (1984) has been Jin-Ok Kim's 2003 *Charlotte Brontë and Female Desire*, while Brontë's Turkish influences have not been discussed at this length. Erskine's claim that she unsettles Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's argument in the groundbreaking text *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is justified and convincing. Whereas *Madwoman* explains the novel's central emotions as being rage and rebellion against patriarchy, with scant reference to sexuality, Erskine principally sees fear of sexual subjugation at its heart, thereby recasting the notion of rebellion. The redefinition of Bertha's heritage as a diasporic Spanish-French Creole, and the relocation of slavery metaphors away from the Caribbean to the Turkish Ottoman, undoubtedly alters the established postcolonial outlook. Erskine's exciting revision of the feminist and postcolonial pathways makes a significant impact on the field that will undoubtedly inspire further scholarship.

Edward Chitham is a leading literary critic and Brontë scholar, his publications include a general Brontë biography, a study of their Irish heritage, the creation of Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, and a new biography of Anne Brontë published in April 2022. *The Poems of Anne Brontë* updates and simplifies Chitham's out-of-print 1979 Macmillan edition. It reproduces the poetry collection in the first edition, with less commentary, but has been revised with a new introduction and several noteworthy additions.

The poems are chronologically ordered and span the period December 1836 to January 1849, a few months before Anne's death in May of that year. One of the most significant is the 335-line poem, no.57, titled 'Self-Communion', written across a six-month period and completed a year before she died. The poem represents Anne's poignant reflection on her own life; movingly described as 'a haunting, elegiac lament over an unfulfilled life' (Clare Flaherty quoted in Chitham, p. x). Chitham briefly discusses the poem in his introduction, along with an overview of the three periods of poetic output in her life. His

introduction is comprehensive and includes more recent biographical information relating to Anne's encounters with poets as shown through her music copy book and Marianne Thormählen's discovery and discussion of Anne's annotated volume of the 1845 Christian poems *Sacred Harmony* (*Brontë Studies* 30.2, 2005).

This book has five useful appendices. They include an inventory of previous publications of Anne's poetry, a complete table of all her poems, the poems' manuscript details, as well as a list of further poems and fragments attributed to Anne. The final appendix lists her non-novelistic output and a select bibliography of critical scholarship of her work. It includes a graph illustrating her poetic output usefully differentiated as Gondal and non-Gondal pieces.

As Chitham remarks, like her novels, Anne's poetry has been long overshadowed by her sisters' but is becoming increasingly recognised: she is 'no longer the forgotten sister, but is beginning to take her place alongside the other two' (p. xvii). Sadly, Anne's 2020 bicentenary was also eclipsed by those of her sisters in 2016 and 2018, as the pandemic denied her the celebration she so deserves. Chitham's informative and timely edition of Anne's poetry will foster further appreciation of her work and help place her legacy alongside that of her sisters.

Louise Willis (King's College London)

The Haunted House in Women's Ghost Stories: Gender, Space and Modernity, 1850-1945, by Emma Liggins (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 307pp., £74.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-30-30407-51-3

Emma Liggins writes that 'the gendering of space has not been fully exploited in debates about haunting and the haunted house' (p. 4). In *The Haunted House in Women's Ghost Stories*, she sets out to rectify this omission. Six discrete chapters focus on ghost stories ranging chronologically from 1850 to 1945. The main bibliography runs to fourteen pages, providing clear proof of robust research by the author.

In Chapter 2, 'The Old Ancestral Mansion and Forbidden Spaces in Elizabeth Gaskell's Ghost Stories', Liggins examines the importance of the growth of tourism in the Victorian period for the trend of visiting 'haunted houses'. Following an in-depth analysis of short stories, 'The Old Nurse's Story' (1852), 'The Crooked Branch' (1859), and 'The Grey Woman' (1861), and a review of modern critical opinion, focusing upon how a house's 'apparent domesticity' allowed it to become uninhabited except by supernatural presences' (p.

45), Liggins turns to the ways in which 'superstitions of the past continued to resonate in the Female Gothic narrative' (p. 51).

Liggins investigates Margaret Oliphant's ghost tales of the 1880s and 1890s, in which she 'explored the legal and financial exclusion of women in relation to their yearning for space', in Chapter 3, 'Left Out in the Cold: Exclusion and Communication with the Female Ancestor in the Ghost Stories of Margaret Oliphant' (p. 81). After an examination of the role of domestic interiors and gardens in stories such as 'The Lady's Walk' (1882-83) and 'The Library Window' (1896), Liggins observes that in Oliphant's stories women have limited freedom of movement, her 'stories of the seen and unseen linger on in the figure of the excluded woman, left out in the cold, distanced from the comforts of home' (p. 109). The spotlight moves from England to the Continent in the following chapter, 'The Rapture of Old Houses: Dust, Decay and Sacred Space in Vernon Lee's Italian ghost stories'. Liggins opens Chapter 4 with the observation that 'Unusually for the woman writer of supernatural fiction, Lee wrote extensively about French and Italian churches and cathedrals, describing their darkened, candlelit interiors and impressive vastness in terms of the aesthetics of decay' (p. 117). Arguing that 'Lee relished the ruin as an emblem of antiquity and escape from a modernity increasingly seen as vulgar and unsightly', Liggins offers a significant examination of Lee's ghost fiction (p. 145). She goes on to demonstrate how 'Winthrop's Adventure' (1881) 'offers a subtle and quite different version of the architectural uncanny' and the significance of the tale in Lee's fiction (p. 130).

In Chapter 5, "'Ghosts Went Out When Electricity Came In": Technology and Mistress-Servant Intimacy in the Ghost Stories of Edith Wharton', Liggins leaves Europe for the work of an American author. She investigates the ways in which Wharton's ghost stories appear to be inspired by the writing of Lee. Liggins examines how 'ghosts intrude into the domestic interior in the form of unexpected guests, unwanted letters and servants who do not know their place, disrupting routine and habit and mocking the codes of etiquette and politeness which helped to define bourgeois society' in Wharton's stories (p. 155). At the conclusion of the chapter, Liggins investigates the ways in which Wharton's stories destabilise the social structure, noting how 'the substitution of mistresses for servants in the domestic interior, and the servants' tendency to "cover up" for the ghosts who are able to penetrate supposedly protected spaces, anticipate the imminent collapse of the upstairs/below stairs hierarchy' (p. 185).

Liggins returns to English writers in Chapter 6, 'Finding Her Place: Claustrophobia, Mourning and Female Revenants in the Ghost Stories of May Sinclair'. This chapter is an exploration of *Uncanny Stories* (1923) and *The Intercessor and Other Stories* (1931) which focuses on 'revenants', those who have returned from the dead. The chapter opens with the statement 'The female revenants in the ghost stories of May Sinclair are determined to stake their claims to domestic space' (p. 195). Liggins examines how 'by the spectral occupation of bedrooms' Sinclair's female protagonists subvert Victorian ideas about the role of women' (p. 195). The interest that the Brontës' parsonage held for Sinclair is scrutinised by Liggins. She argues that Sinclair's response to it was 'largely mediated' by her reading of Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Bronte* (1857) which constructed the parsonage as remote, restrictive and haunted by the Bronte sisters (p. 200). Liggins goes on to examine Sinclair's recurring thematization of 'the bedroom as a room of death/mourning and of an often disturbing sexual intimacy' (p. 218).

Liggins considers her final author in Chapter 7, 'Ideal Homes? Emptiness, Dereliction and the Ruins of Domesticity in the Short Stories of Elizabeth Bowen'. She investigates the way Bowen's 'acute observations of places and interiors were often structured around emptiness, dereliction and the loss of inhabitability' (pp. 236, 237). In her examination of how Bowen links the old and the new in her stories, Liggins shows how her 'Preoccupation with emptiness, either due to modern living or after demolition or ruin, sets Bowen apart from other women writers of the ghost story' (p. 265). Liggins's examination of *The Shadowy Third and Other Stories* (1923) by Ellen Glasgow offers welcome insight into intertextuality in Bowen's writing.

In her conclusion, Liggins draws together the different strands in her account of the female ghost story, providing an exceptional introduction to this often over-looked and under researched genre. This book will be of interest to scholars of women's writing, ghost stories, and nineteenth-century fiction, as well as the general reader. It is an excellent companion to two recently reprinted short-story collections introduced by Liggins: *Twilight Stories* (1879) by Rhoda Broughton and Charlotte Riddell's *Weird Stories* (1882).

Kathleen Beal (University of Hull)

***Reading Ideas in Victorian Literature: Literary Content as Artistic Experience*, by Patrick Fessenbecker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 244pp., £85 (hardback) ISBN 978-1-4744-6060-6**

Do ideas have a right to be the focus of literary criticism? Can literary texts be read primarily for ideas, their ideological content, and, if these texts are historical, can they resonate with present-day readers? And what has happened to literary criticism? These are the recurring questions Patrick Fessenbecker addresses in his *Reading Ideas in Victorian Literature*. The first thing one notices is that it is indeed the overarching impulse to deformalize (contemporary) theory that lies at the core of the book rather than the Victorian age per se. Ideas and reading them (not so much 'the reader') are the main layers of Fessenbecker's investigation and one wonders whether the label 'Victorian' in the title is entirely justified, as it is precisely the author's aim to suggest a new form of criticism (applicable to all kinds of literature). The justification for the Victorian focus of this project, however, lies in the fact that it is precisely the high realist novel of the period from 1850 to 1890 that 'married intellectual content with all the rest of its elements and effects' (p. 4). Ideas were so central in novels from this time that it was indeed unnecessary to open up a separate category such as 'novel of ideas'—this was what all Victorian novels were. As a consequence, Fessenbecker's book is both of value for scholars and students of Victorian studies (who may find more pleasure in the case studies in Chapters 2, 4, and 6, perhaps) and for those interested more generally in (hi)stories and diachronies of literary scholarship and criticism (in Chapters 1, 3, and 5).

The Introduction provides a thorough overview of the different iterations of formalist thought made throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and a defence of the importance of ideas to literature. Form and ideas are played out against each other (at least at first) as siblings, with the former being the 'big sister'. The overarching concern of *Reading Ideas in Victorian Literature* is to provide alternatives to 'the tendency in criticism to redefine "form" at the beginning of an essay and let the argument flow from there' and ask 'what ways of reading this model of literary analysis leaves out' (p. 2). Why, the study wonders, is 'reading for the message' frowned upon? Perhaps one reason is that 'ideas' and 'content' are messy, complicated terms and require 'reading-as-thinking' or 'thoughtful reading' to be unlocked (p. 3). Crucially, Fessenbecker argues, it is also content rather than (merely) form that is pleasurable. The Introduction takes us from the New Critics to Jacques Derrida and other proponents of deconstruction to different accounts of symptomatic reading and moral philosophy, arguing that despite their differences these schools of thought are united in their conviction that 'ideas are not worthy of analysis in themselves, and that the literary critic must in some sense look past them' (p. 13). It is

perhaps somewhat surprising that Fessenbecker leaves out any mention of reader-response criticism until the middle of Chapter 1. What emerges only after this rich discussion at the beginning of the study is the insight that reading for content resonates much more with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinking—the focus on form is primarily a Modernist one. In other words: reading for content is anti-Modernist, for ‘when the British modernists claimed that they were not interested in what the work of art could say, it was exactly the Victorian tendency to offer moral claims that they were worried about’ (p. 25).

Chapters 1, 3, and 5 explore and develop how engagement with form is tied to the historical contexts in which texts were read, and the history of form and whether or not it is justified to engage in anachronistic readings of texts. Chapter 3 is a particularly engaging analysis, if somewhat too defensive as the author takes great pains to demonstrate what positions he wants to counter, see pp. 130f. Establishing a certainly intended duality of theory paired with content, each of these chapters is followed by an essay that addresses content. Is open to the reader to interpret whether such a symmetrical arrangement is a tongue-in-cheek comment on how the study seeks to intertwine form and content, but this arrangement does make for a predominantly harmonious and thoughtful read. Chapters 2, 4, and 6 exemplify and counter the previously outlined formalist criticism with case studies of Anthony Trollope’s *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864–65), *Phineas Finn* (1867–68), *The Eustace Diamonds* (1871), and *The Duke’s Children* (1879), in the context of the concept of akrasia (weakness of the will) and ethical confusion; George Eliot’s *Felix Holt* (1866) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), in the context of how these works explore ‘the nature of egoism and the origins of moral agency’ (p. 142); and Robert Browning and Augusta Webster’s poetry, in the context of the tensions between daily life and moral claims that are positioned as either ironic (for Browning) or sincere (for Webster).

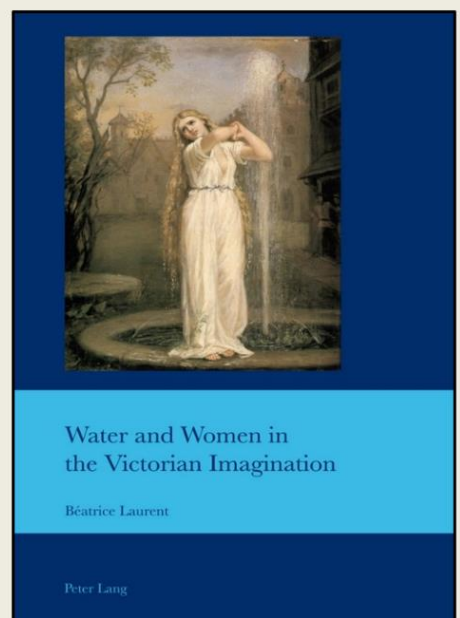
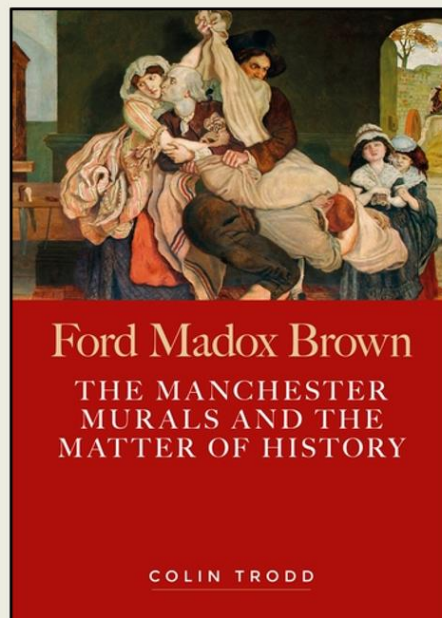
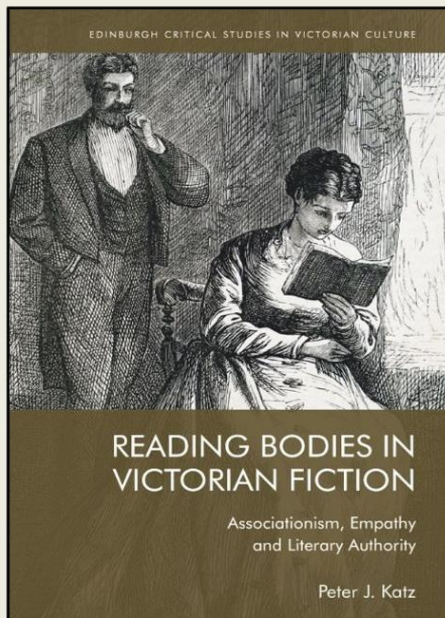
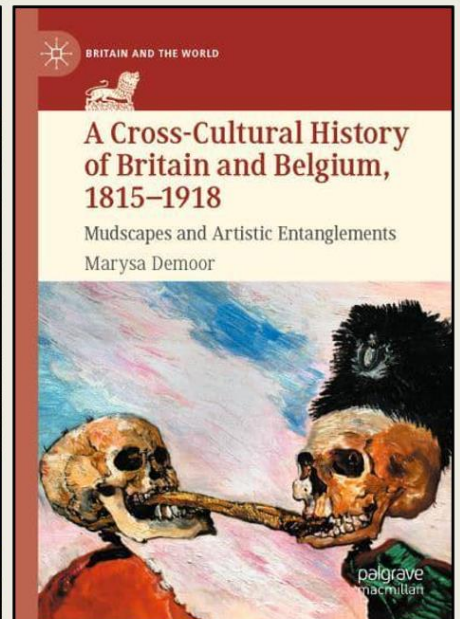
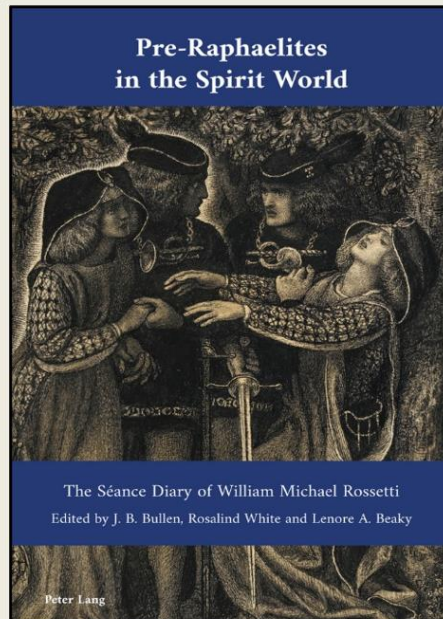
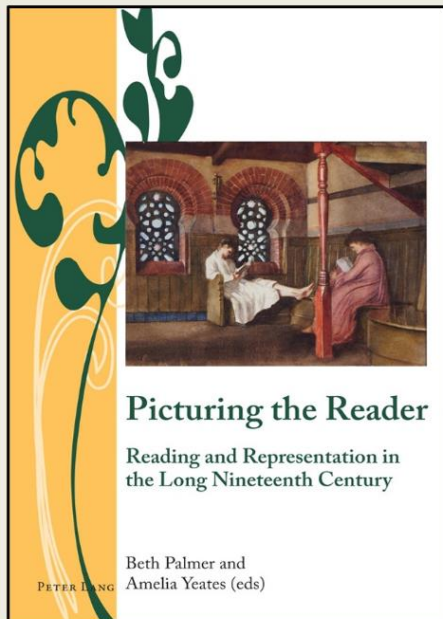
Fessenbecker makes a strong case for a kind of reading that gives thought to thought(s), continuing the tradition started by Stephen Best, Sharon Marcus, and Rita Felski. For Best and Marcus, advocates of ‘surface reading’, theory is already present in a text which is why the latter should be taken ‘at face value’; Felski, on the other hand, argues that readers should look at rather than see through texts. At a time when ideas are skimmed and often outright neglected in favour of headlines and/or limited characters, Fessenbecker’s is an approach that is anachronistic—in the best sense of the word—and powerful. It urges us to look to ways of creating literature through reading used in times not so

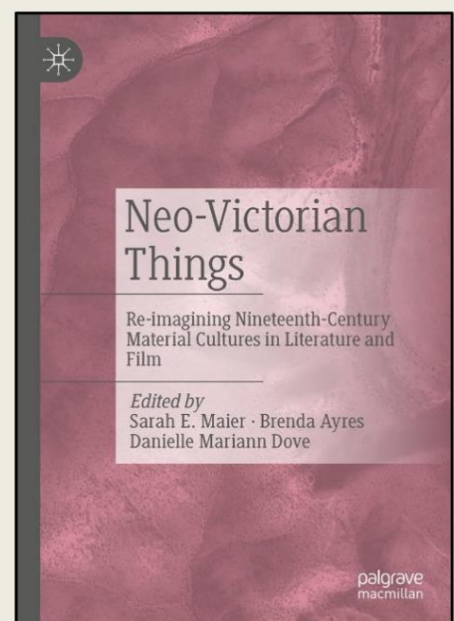
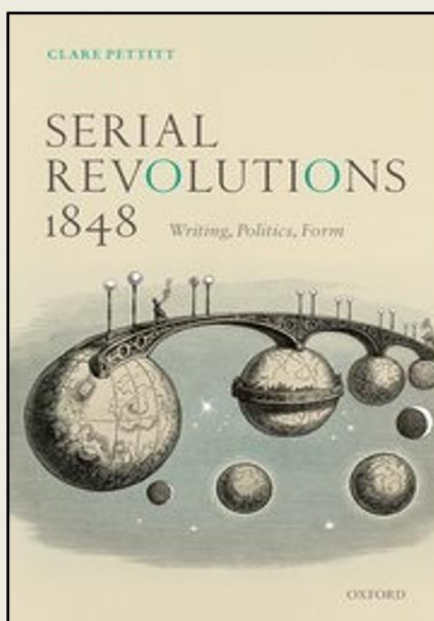
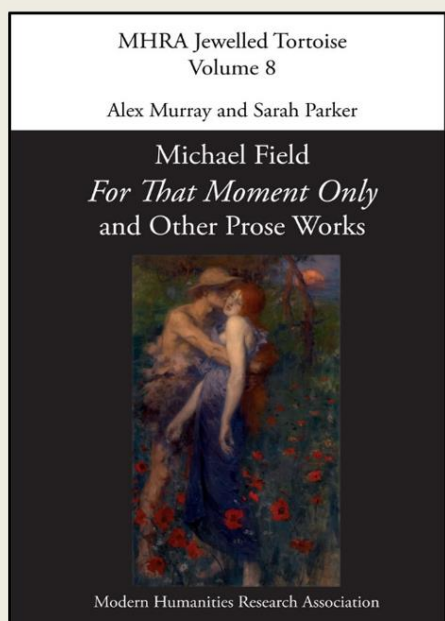
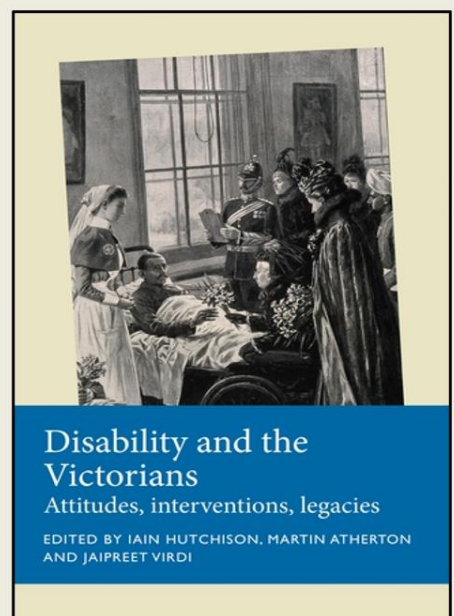
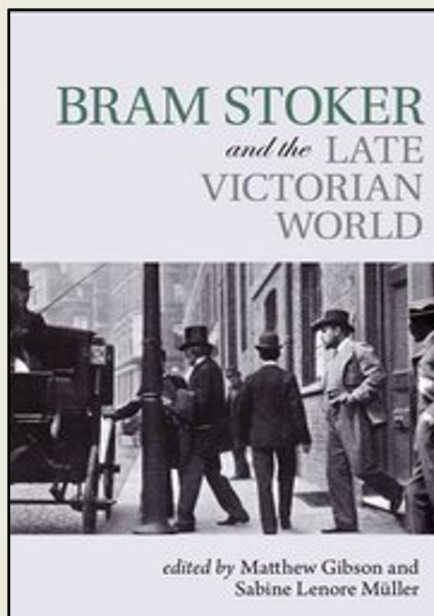
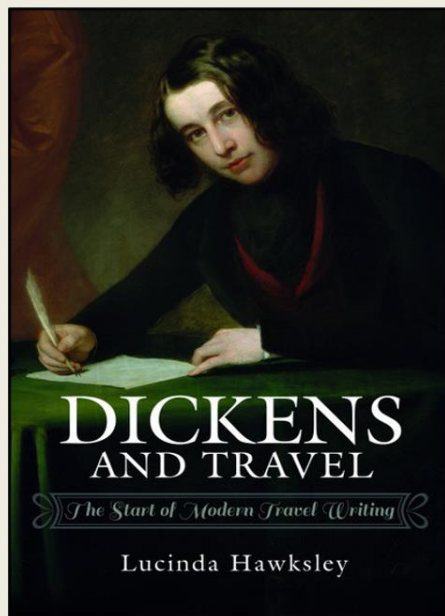
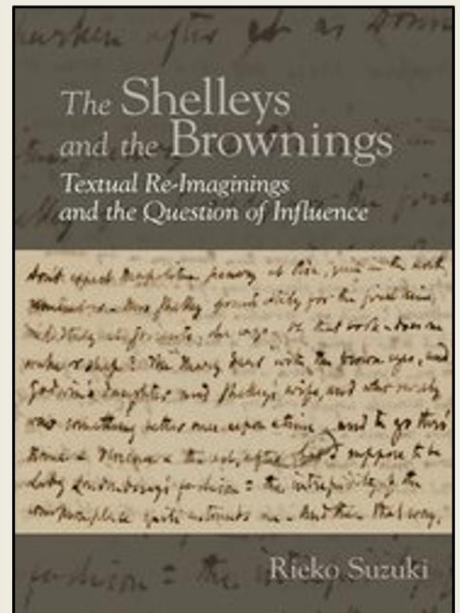
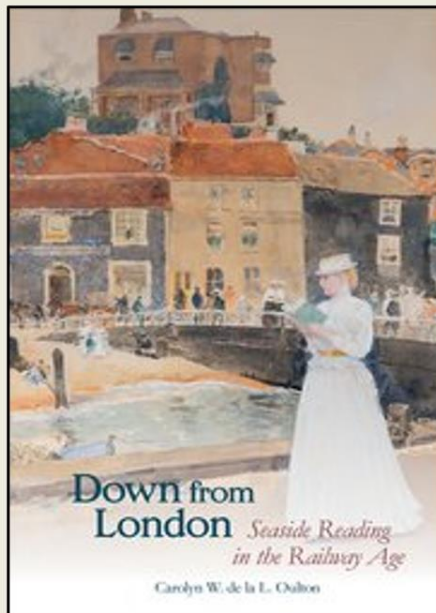
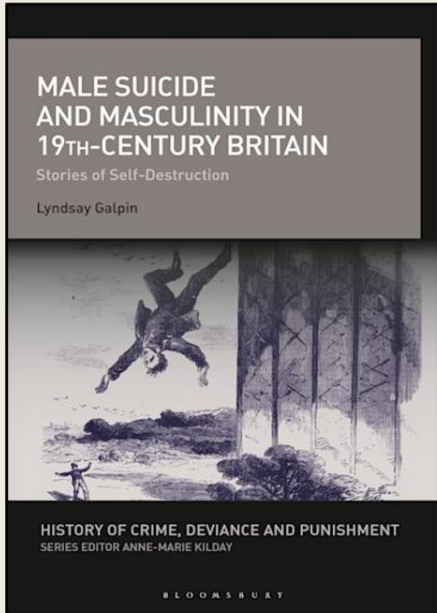
distant from our own. This is not to say that reading is synonymous with writing, but Fessenbecker defines reading both as a practice and a position from which to engage with a text and unpicking what it tells us. For this reason, it shall be especially interesting to use the suggested method to provide subversive, sensitive, and challenging readings of twentieth-century and present-day texts, thus signalling the continuing relevance of pre-Modernist Victorian aesthetics and how such reading can indeed function as the ‘ultimate paraphrase’ (p. 61).

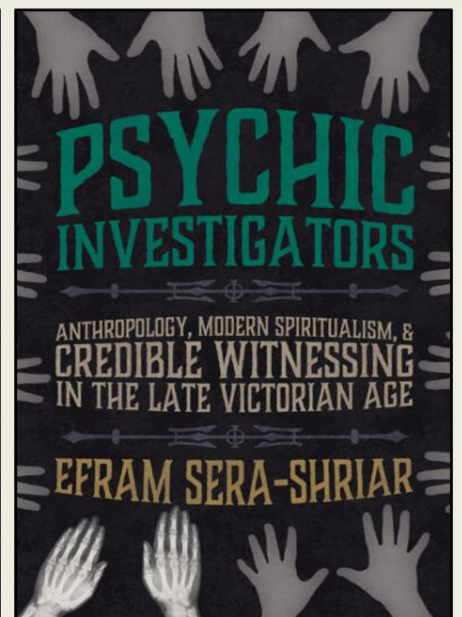
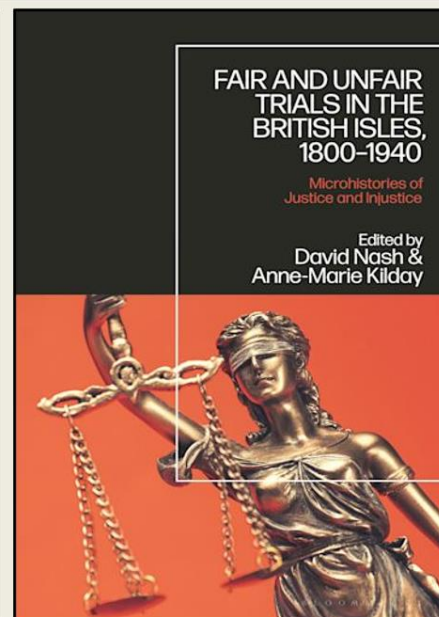
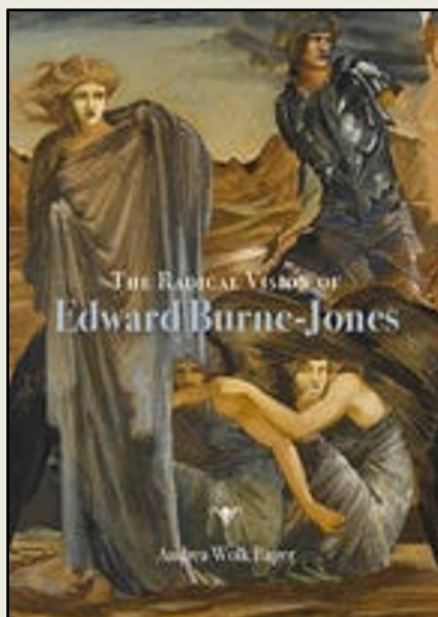
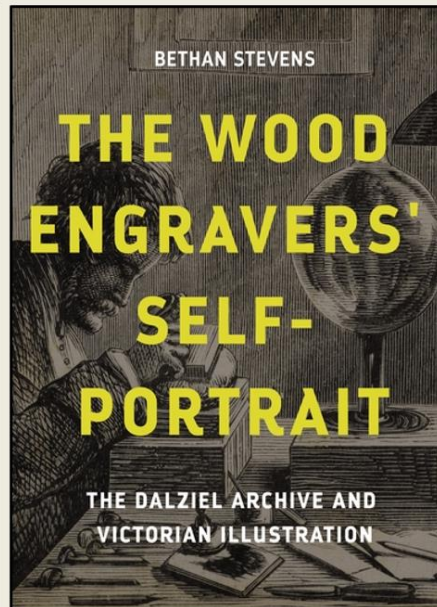
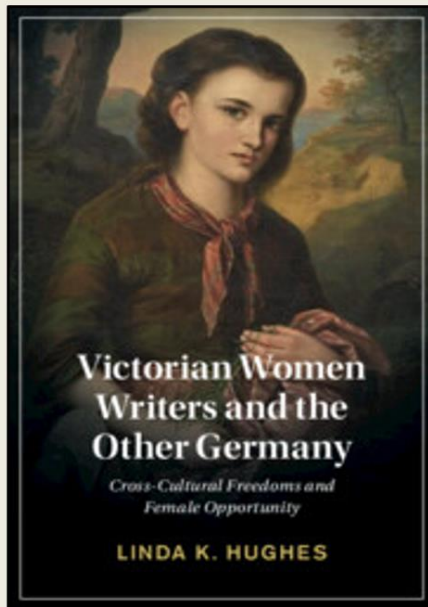
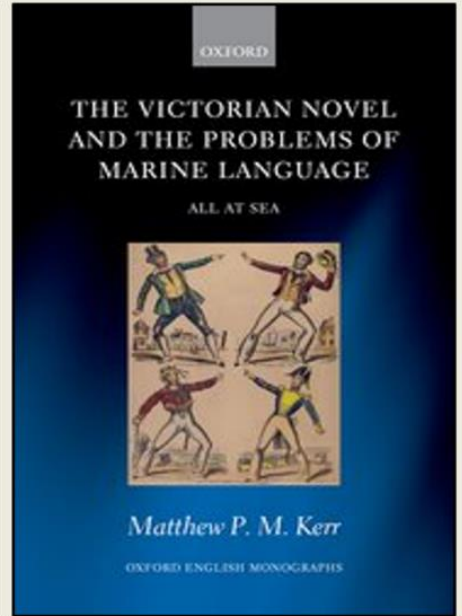
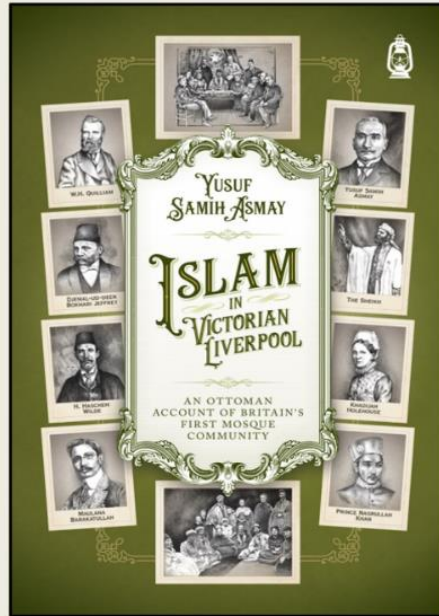
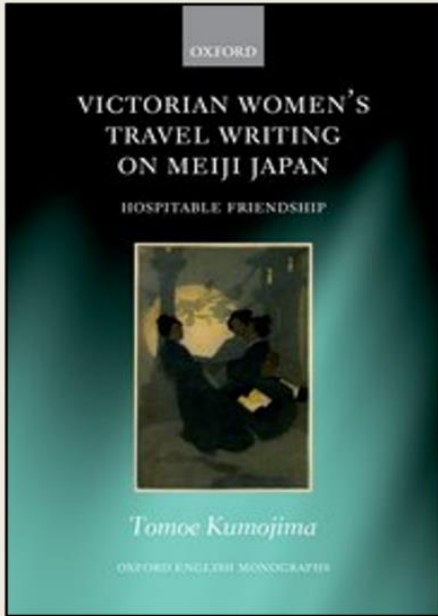
Heidi Lucja Liedke (University of Koblenz-Landau)

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.







BAVS Funding Reports

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Gone West: Victorian Novelists' Manuscripts and the American Archive, 1890–1963

In May 2022, I used my BAVS Funding Grant to conduct a week's archival research at the British Library for my postdoctoral project. This project investigates the transatlantic trade in British literary manuscripts that began with the collecting of the American financier John Pierpont Morgan in the late nineteenth century. It builds on my PhD (Cardiff, 2021), which examined Charles Dickens's transatlantically dispersed archive as an important dimension of his writings and afterlives. My goal during my week at the British Library was to expand my research outwards to explore the case studies of the manuscripts of other Victorian novelists, helping me to map the interventions that American collecting made in the business of being a Victorian author, and the mediating influence of the American archive on Victorian literary afterlives.

The Lady Eccles Oscar Wilde Collection at the British Library offers valuable insight into the formation of the transatlantically dispersed Oscar Wilde archive in the twentieth century. A bequest of important Wilde material, including autograph drafts of his plays, was made by his friend and executor Robert Ross to the British Library in 1909. However, J. P. Morgan's son Jack and librarian Belle da Costa Greene, as well as the Los Angeles-based collector William Andrews Clark Jr, were also acquiring significant Wilde material in the early twentieth century, for what are now the Morgan Library in New York and the Clark Library at UCLA. In 2003, the British Library received a further major bequest of the private Wilde collection which the American Mary Eccles was accumulating from the early 1960s onwards. Letters, newspaper cuttings, and auction catalogues contained in this collection helped me to trace the history of the transatlantic market for Wilde material in the twentieth century, and the individuals, dealers, and institutions eager for ownership of and authority over his literary remains.

As well as taking a deep dive into the Wilde archive, I was able to broaden the basis of my research by examining the archives of the still-existing rare book and manuscript sellers Maggs Bros, which are held at the British Library. These are too enormous for a single trip to encompass. However, examination of the first couple of folders of their American correspondence files, which date from 1914, helped me to quantify the scale and qualify the nature of American interest in buying British literary heritage. In under two months at the beginning of 1914, Maggs Bros received over 500 pages of letters from Americans interested in buying British literary material. Enquiries from Texas, San Francisco, and Seattle, as well as the more geographically and culturally adjacent New York and Boston, testify eloquently to the bustling nature of the transatlantic trade in British literature at this time.

Thanks to the BAVS funding I was also able to meet with the British Library's Curator of Modern Literary Manuscripts to discuss my project. This was brilliantly useful both for learning more about the impact of American collecting on British heritage institutions, and for getting a more in-depth sense of the library's relevant collections, enabling me to plan future research. I'm looking forward to presenting my findings from this trip in a paper at the BAVS 2022 Conference. My research into the formation of the Wilde archive will be hugely useful for the Clark Library visiting fellowship which I will undertake in 2022–23, and for developing further publications from this project.

Lucy Whitehead (Edge Hill University and Cardiff University)

Calls for Submissions

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

Victoriographies: A Journal of the Long Nineteenth Century is seeking article submissions and reviews from scholars. *Victoriographies* is fully peer-reviewed and published tri-annually by Edinburgh University Press. As we enter our second decade of publication, we are excited to include innovative work and to welcome emerging voices.

Continuing its project to explore the long nineteenth century and contemporary responses to the long nineteenth century, *Victoriographies* has transitioned to new editorship under Dr. Amy Huseby (Florida International University, U.S.) and Dr. Beth Palmer (University of Surrey, U.K.). Dr. Doreen Thierauf (North Carolina Wesleyan University, U.S.) will take over as Book Review Editor.

Building on the journal's history of publishing cutting-edge scholarship for over a decade, we invite articles from authors working in burgeoning areas of Victorian studies and encourage transhistorical, transcontinental, and transmedial approaches. The journal seeks contributions that interrogate afresh ideas, images, texts, objects, spaces, performances, themes, and authors that seem familiar, as well as those which address understudied aspects of the long nineteenth century. Our aim is to emphasize connections and ligatures beyond the temporalities, national locations, and objects of inquiry that have traditionally constrained nineteenth-century scholarship. Articles from researchers of all career stages are welcome, and we especially encourage submissions from scholars around the globe.

Article submissions should be between 7,000-8,000 words (inclusive of endnotes). Authors should include a title page, detailing their name, title, and current affiliation, plus a current email address to which proofs and pre-publication correspondence will be sent. Please provide an abstract of about 200 words, a brief biographical sketch (50-100 words), and 5-7 keywords (preferably not all words used in the title) for online searches. Please do not submit a manuscript that is under consideration elsewhere. Please see this link for a style guide: <https://www.euppublishing.com/page/vic/style>.

Submissions can be sent to the editors: Victoriographies@gmail.com

General Call for Book Reviews

We also welcome book reviews, particularly by early-career researchers, postdoctoral students, advanced graduate students, and postgraduates. Reviews should be 800-1,000 words in length for single books and 1,300-1,500 for two or more books, and they should be accompanied by a biographical note of 50-100 words. Books should be published no more than two years in the past (2020) but can, of course, be forthcoming in which case we'll request the work in advance from the publisher. For more information about the journal, including our style guide, please visit our website (<https://www.euppublishing.com/loi/vic>).

If you are interested in reviewing a recent monograph or essay collection relating to the literature and culture of the long nineteenth century for an upcoming issue, please contact Book Review Editor, Dr. Doreen Thierauf (dthierauf@ncwc.edu).

Call for Guest-Edited Special Issues

Victoriographies is currently accepting proposals for guest-edited special issues.

Continuing its project to explore the long nineteenth century and contemporary responses to the long nineteenth century, *Victoriographies* has transitioned to new editorship under Dr. Amy Huseby (Florida International University, U.S.) and Dr. Beth Palmer (University of Surrey, U.K.). Building on the journal's history of publishing cutting-edge scholarship for over a decade, we invite articles from authors working in burgeoning areas of Victorian studies and encourage interdisciplinary approaches. The journal seeks contributions that interrogate afresh ideas, images, texts, objects, spaces, performances, themes, and authors that seem familiar,

as well as those which address understudied aspects of the long nineteenth century. Articles from researchers of all career stages are welcome, and we encourage submissions from scholars across the globe.

Recent special issues have covered topics including: "Death, Nineteenth-Century Celebrity and Material Culture," "Conan Doyle and London," and "Alternative Dickens." For further examples and a full list of previous issues, see [Victoriographies List of Issues](#).

Proposals may be inspired by the anniversaries of significant publications or events, or they may cover topics including but not limited to:

- Decolonizing Victorian Studies/Global Nineteenth-Century Studies
- Victorian Studies and Contemporary Pedagogy
- Sex and Sexuality in the Long Nineteenth Century
- Digital Methodologies in Nineteenth-Century Studies
- Victorian Infrastructures
- Conflict, War, and Imperialism
- Archival Studies, Museums, and Cultural Heritage
- Ecocritical, Energy, and Ecological Victorian Studies
- Affect, Embodiment and the Senses in the Nineteenth Century
- Medical Humanities and Victorian Disability Studies

In the first instance, please send a word or PDF document including

- Title of proposed special issue
- Guest Editor(s) (name, affiliation & brief bio)
- Abstract (max. 500 words)
- Contributors (name, article title, 200-word abstract, and brief bio; max. 5 articles between 7,000-8,000 words)
- Proposed submission date

to general editors Amy Huseby and Beth Palmer: victoriographies@gmail.com.
