Newsletter

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR VICTORIAN STUDIES
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Welcome to the (in the bleak mid-)Winter issue of the *BAVS Newsletter*, filled with news, book reviews, recent publications, reports, and CFPs.

Thanks to everyone who attended the BAVS Conference in Birmingham in September. It was by all accounts an unmitigated success, and a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones. If you weren't able to attend (or would like to re-live it!) a flavour of this fantastically wide-ranging conference can be gathered from the two reports in this issue, which include a charming illustration by Billie Gavurin inspired by Professors Strange and Hamlett's keynote on Victorian pet culture.

The *BAVS Newsletter* Archive has now launched. It contains the contents lists and PDFs for all of our issues going back to 2009. This webpage makes past (and future) *Newsletter* content more accessible and searchable – do take a look!

This issue of the *Newsletter* includes the first of our new 'Foundational Text' review series that re-visits a significant contribution to Victorian studies published between 1950 and the present, with Irmtraud Huber reflecting on Robert Langbaum's 1957 monograph on the dramatic monologue. If you'd like to contribute to this series, please do send your pitch to the *Newsletter* team.

Wishing you all a joyful and restful holiday period,
Clare Stainthorp & Sarah Wride
bavsnews@gmail.com

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BAVS News

BAVS Executive Committee

We are delighted to have Prof. Patricia Pulham as the new President of BAVS (as announced at the conference in September). In addition, we welcome several new members of the BAVS Executive Committee, some of whom are taking on newly created roles. Our new members' roles are as follows:

PGR Reps:
Hollie Geary-Jones
Carys Hudson

Postdoc Reps:
Alicia Barnes
Harriet Thompson

Curator & Archives Liaisons:
Alexandra Foulds
Rebecca Mellor

COVE Liaison:
Bev Rilett

Committee members:
Heidi Leidke
Vicky Mills
Reiko Suzuki

Digital & Social Media Officer:
Heather Hinds

BAVS Online Writing Retreats 2023

We would like to gauge interest among BAVS members in online writing retreats. If you would be keen in attending something like this, please let us know your thoughts and preferences using the form linked here.

BAVS Executive Committee seeks Schools & Education Liaison

The BAVS Executive Committee is seeking a School & Education Liaison. If you would like to be considered for this role (outlined below) below, please send the Secretary, Alice Crossley acrossley@lincoln.ac.uk, an email with a Statement of Interest (300 words maximum) indicating your suitability for and interest in the position and how you propose to contribute.

Schools & Education Liaison: To promote greater engagement in Humanities subjects at School level. This post is especially suitable for School teachers with knowledge of secondary Humanities provision in the UK, who is interested in developing links between BAVS and the study of our disciplines at school level. BAVS Executive positions are usually held for a 3-year term. For further information about the responsibilities of members of the executive committee please see: https://bavs.ac.uk/news/bavs-executive-committee-roles/

Flightless Conference 2024 (NAVSA, BAVS & AVSA): Call for Hub Hosts

NAVSA, BAVS and AVSA are participating in a global collective event for Victorianists in 2024. The “Flightless conference” will be a series of events and shared materials with a fixed cost (c. $100), comprising multiple Zoom events scheduled across the calendar year, papers shared and available for asynchronous annotation through the COVE platform, and the opportunity to attend an in-person conference at a designated Hub (there will be multiple hubs across various countries: attendance at a hub conference will have an additional but reduced conference fee, less than the annual association conference fee). A conference website will provide a shared "portal" to schedules at hubs and Zoom events.

BAVS is inviting Expressions of Interest in hosting a BAVS hub (an in-person conference or event) in the last 2 weeks of September 2024, related to the overall flightless Victorianist conference theme “Event”.

BAVS call for Hub Hosts:
The University of Lancaster and Queen's University Belfast will be two BAVS hubs, but we hope to have 1, 2 or 3 more across the country:
Expressions of interest are welcome from prospective hubs, especially in the following locations:

- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Ireland
- the south of England or midlands
- other European hubs (Rome is currently the only one in Europe)

The conference theme proposed is "event," interpreted broadly. Non-exhaustive examples as conference topics suitable for hubs include:

- the event that is NAVSA, BAVS, AVSA;
- catastrophic events (like climate change);
- history and temporality;
- chronologies and periodization; a focus on key dates (a year, a decade, a milestone publication/movement/artwork/figure);
- theatre and spectacle;
- performativity and identity;
- personal events (marriage, birth, death, the life course);
- autobiography and biography; memory and recollection;
- unnarratable events (the sublime, the visionary, the transcendent, dream/fantasy/gothic).

If you are interested, please contact p.pulham@surrey.ac.uk and awisnicki@yahoo.com for further information and/or an informal chat by **20 February 2023**.

Flightless Conference Structure
Delegates will pay one conference fee (cost c. $100) which allows them to participate in as many or as few of the following virtual options as they wish:

1. Attend Zoom events scheduled across the entire calendar year: material culture workshops, pedagogy sessions, work-in-progress seminars; position-paper seminars; Zoom cocktail hours; caucus events; and so on.
2. Read papers and participate in asynchronous annotation of custom selections of papers online at COVE (Collaborative Organisation for Virtual Education – to which all BAVS members have access): https://editions.covecollective.org/. This would occur over the space of one month following the hub conferences.
3. Attend a one-day Zoom conference at the end of September, with panels bringing together speakers from across the world, culminating in a celebratory final EVENT.

In addition:

4. Delegates can attend a nearby face-to-face hub event during the last two weeks of September (hub events will have a reasonable additional fee for registration, cost TBD by the host institution). ***This call is for expressions of interest in hosting a BAVS hub.***

Nineteenth-Century Matters 2023-2024
University of Glasgow

Outline

Nineteenth-Century Matters is an initiative jointly run by the British Association for Romantic Studies and the British Association for Victorian Studies. Now in its seventh year, it is aimed at postdoctoral researchers who have completed their PhD, but who are not currently employed in a full-time academic post. Nineteenth-Century Matters offers unaffiliated early career researchers a platform from which to organise professionalisation workshops and research seminars on a theme related to nineteenth-century studies, and relevant to the host institution's specialisms. The focus should be on the nineteenth century, rather than on Romanticism or Victorianism.

For the coming year, the Nineteenth-Century Matters Fellowship will provide the successful applicant with affiliation at the University of Glasgow. The fellowship will run for one year from 1 June 2023 to 1 June 2024. Glasgow's School of Critical Studies is a major centre for nineteenth-century scholarship, with specialists working in fields including textual editing, travel writing, medical and scientific humanities, periodical culture, authorship, book history, reception studies, and place-based approaches. Glasgow's Archives and Special Collections are rich in Romantic-period and Victorian material, including a wide range of print brought in under the 1710 Copyright Act, extensive holdings of illustrated works (including William Blake illuminated books), rich collections of nineteenth-century novels, and extensive archives relating to industry, shipping, retail, education, and publishing.

In addition to intellectual exchange and collaboration, the successful fellow will benefit from:

- Access to University of Glasgow library resources, both physical and digital, and including Archives and Special Collections, for the duration of the fellowship.
- A mentor from the School of Critical Studies who can advise on research, careers, and public engagement.
- Access to University of Glasgow events and research community.
- Free access to the BARS Early Career and Postgraduate Conference held at the University of Edinburgh from 15-16 June 2023 (with the potential to assist with organisation, if desired).
- Access to the University of Glasgow webinar function to host online events, if desired.
- Access to room bookings to host in-person events, if desired.

There is no requirement for the Fellow to live in the Glasgow area and accommodation will not be provided as part of the fellowship. The primary purpose of the fellowship is to enable the successful applicant to continue with an affiliation and remain part of the academic community. It is a non-stipendiary post, and the fellow will need to support themselves financially. The fellow will, however, be financially supported by BARS and BAVS to organise a research or professionalization event on a theme relevant to their own and/or the University of Glasgow's interests, with a contribution of £1,500 towards the fellow's expenses and event costs incurred. It is also expected that the fellow will acknowledge BARS, BAVS, and the University of Glasgow in any publications that arise from their position.

Application Process

Applicants should submit a CV with a two-page proposal describing their research topic and proposed event, and explaining why they would benefit from the fellowship. Applicants can propose research on any aspect of the nineteenth century; we are keen to encourage interdisciplinary proposals which might include, but are not limited to: literature, history, art history, theatre, periodical culture, medical humanities and 19th-century legacies. Applications should be sent to Briony Wickes (Briony.Wickes@rhul.ac.uk) and Amanda Blake Davis (a.davis2@derby.ac.uk). The deadline for applications is **Monday 30 January (23:59 GMT)**.

Reviews

The BAVS Newsletter *is always looking for writers, particularly among postgraduate, early-career, and independent researchers, to review recently published work 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 and further information 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.*

***Jesus in the Victorian Novel: Reimagining Christ*, by Jessica Ann Hughes (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 188pp., £76.50 (hardback), ISBN 9781350278158**

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? The nineteenth century is when questions about the historical Jesus Christ entered public consciousness. Not surprisingly, then, in this period the Son of God 'play[ed] in ten thousand places', as Gerald Manley Hopkins wrote in 1877. One place in which Jesus played prominently was Victorian literature; he underwent many 'fictional transfigurations', in the words of Theodore Ziolkowski's foundational book from 1972 on fictional characters as Jesus. With *Jesus in the Victorian Novel*, Jessica Ann Hughes offers a critically important contribution to the rich body of scholarship on Jesus in Victorian literature that began with Ziolkowski. Recently, the wide-ranging contributions to Elizabeth Ludlow's edited volume *The Figure of Christ in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2020) have highlighted how the ubiquitous and multiform literary Jesus complicated the division between sacred and secular. Hughes builds on and deepens the findings of that volume by taking as her focus one 'fictional transfiguration': 'instances in realist novels where Jesus appears as himself to characters in the Victorian period, even if simultaneously embodied in other characters' (p. 6). Hughes goes looking for the historical Jesus in the novels of the usual suspects, such as Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, and of Eliza Lynn Linton and Mary Augusta Ward.

This means the book excludes evangelical and Catholic fiction, like Nicholas Wiseman's *Fabiola* (1854), in which Jesus overwhelmingly appeared as a divine figure. Implicit in Hughes's argument is indeed that we must differentiate between the historical Jesus and the divine figure of Christ (a mythologised historical person according to nineteenth-century biblical scholarship) as two different characters in Victorian literature. Her tight focus on the historical Jesus in realist novels allows for a sustained analysis. Hughes is able to show how well-known novels, such as Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) and *Robert Elsmere* (1888) by Ward, also cannot be understood as 'inherently secular' (p. 169). Indeed, the book shows that the divide between sacred and secular faded around the literary figure of Christ-as-human, and that Victorian writers tried to capture the 'religious experience' (p. 170) of encountering this mysterious but down-to-earth Jesus. The nineteenth-century resurrection of Jesus as a character lent itself particularly well to novelistic realism, Hughes contends. In the first two chapters, she sketches out the theological and cultural contexts in which Jesus was shaped as a narrative figure for the Victorian period. Chapter 1 historicises the emergence of Jesus in the novel. Hughes traces the influences of Christian—*de facto* Protestant—narratology in evangelical sermons and conversion narratives, which focused on Jesus's transcendence, atonement and unknowability, aspects that 'removed [Jesus] from the realm of the novel' and centred the believer or the convert rather than Jesus as the protagonist (p. 36).

Chapter 2 delves deeper into the cultural context in which the Jesus of the realist novel took shape by exploring popular piety and Protestant anxieties in the first half of the nineteenth century. Hughes argues that the proliferation of Romantic and evangelical stories and novels paved the way for new aesthetic directions that incorporated folk language, allegory and 'other veiled modes of utterance' (p. 48), most notably in John Keble's bestseller *The Christian Year* (1827). The rise of Jesus as a literary archetype with historical roots meant that 'narrative tensions and nuances of personality embedded in the narratives of Jesus' life bec[a]me areas for artistic exploration' (p. 49). And for experimentation, even if, as the book's structure rightly points out, Victorian representations of Jesus predominantly fell within the traditional, religious typologies of Christ.

The next three chapters form the heart of the book; each one examines one literary version of the Victorian Jesus in high realist novels: as the revolutionary king, as the high priest, and as the moral prophet. Chapter 3 examines Kingsley's use of refracted narration in *Yeast* (1848) and *Alton Locke* (1850) to show how realist novels shifted their

characterisation of Jesus from a focus on atonement to triumphant resurrection, exemplified in Kingsley's kingly Christ. Via Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Chapter 4 shows how the idea of a human, masculine Jesus pushed Victorian authors (and readers) to focus less on his sacrifice and more on his reconciliatory role as intermediator between God and humanity. In the final chapter, Hughes compares Ward and Linton's novels, in which Jesus appears as a prophetic teacher who is ultimately discredited as incompatible with modern, Victorian society.

Jesus in the Victorian Novel is a slim book that covers a wide range of material, and offers a convincing argument: the discovery of the historical Jesus made him a powerfully evocative realist novel character, even representative of the genre itself. 'Who was Jesus?' became as much a question about the identity of the reader, who was invited to read in the character a 'solution to individual and social longings for coherence' (p. 173). As such, the book will be a valuable read for scholars of the novel as well as of nineteenth-century theology and religion.

Kristof Smeyers (University of Antwerp)

***Material Ambitions: Self-Help and Victorian Literature*, by Rebecca Richardson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), 255pp., £34.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781421441979**

'Practical industry', Samuel Smiles wrote in his Victorian bestseller *Self-Help*, 'wisely and vigorously applied, always produces its due effects. […] All may not rise equally, yet each, on the whole, very much according to his deserts. "Though all cannot live on the piazza," as the Tuscan proverb has it, "every one may feel the sun."' (Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (2nd edition), (London: John Murray, 1876), p. 267). A reader of Victorian fiction today might not recognise such ideas of 'just deserts' as being a particular hallmark of the nineteenth-century novel, which rarely gave space to depictions of success by degrees. Rather we are more used to the image of victory via competition, of winners and losers, heroes and villains, the individual's triumph over adversity, not the gradual but uneven improvement of a cohort's lot due to a shared sense of 'how to get on'. Pointing to this quotation as a rare moment in Smiles's 1859 guidebook to success where he awkwardly 'addresses the question of how success is allotted among his self-helpers' (p. 25), Rebecca Richardson identifies the difficulty Smiles and other nineteenth-century writers had in trying to belie the violence implicit in the relationship between the individual and his 'competitors', or between the individual and the conditions of his environment. This becomes a central theme throughout *Material Ambitions* as Richardson helps us, the reader, to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which Victorian literature grappled with the inherent antagonisms contained within ambition and its associated drives.

Material Ambitions begins from the premise that the self-help genre has been understudied and historically peripheral to our understanding of the Victorian period, despites its huge importance to contemporary Victorian discourse. Richardson's aim is to 'recentre' Smiles and others, such as the literary critic George Lillie Craik, to demonstrate their significance to 'cultural debate about the value and limits of ambition' (p. 2). She does this by focusing her study of self-help narratives across genres, including the novel, the self-help book, and biography. Throughout this sophisticated analysis of aspiration and ambition as a preoccupation of much nineteenth-century fiction and non-fiction Richardson elucidates the profound valorisation of individualism in a range of texts including: Smiles's *Self-Help* 1859); Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832), *Autobiography* (1877) and *Life in the Sick-Room* (1844); Dinah Craik's *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856); a wide range of William Makepeace Thackeray's publications from *Barry Lyndon* (1844) to *Vanity Fair* (1847-8); Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography* (1883) and *The Three Clerks* (1857); and Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and *My Career Goes Bung* (1946).

Existing scholarship on nineteenth-century representations of the individual tends to focus on the novel, argues Richardson. And so, this study sets out to expand upon recent work by Nicholas Dames, Beth Blum, and others by bringing the novel into a larger dialogue with biography, autobiography, and self-help texts. A chapter on Trollope, for example, explores the 'competitive logic' (p. 147) that structures his fiction and the regimented work ethic he employed in order to pursue two careers, as detailed in his *Autobiography*.

Material Conditions also develops current research by the likes of Daniel Stout and Emily Steinlight on the relationship between the individual and 'the aggregate, whether the aggregate is understood to be the nation, the corporation, or the population' (p. 8). In the final chapter of the book, Richardson examines Miles Franklin's fiction and the part it played in establishing Australian white nationalism via a narrative centred upon an ambitious New Woman settler.

Another theme explored by Richardson is the ways in which ability—a presumption of many nineteenth-century texts devoted to ambition—is defined against depictions of disability. In this strand of argument Richardson builds on the work of David T. Mitchell, Sharon L. Snyder, Martha Stoddard

Holmes, and Karen Bourrier to examine the sometimes-debilitating effects of monomania, work ethic, and ideals of perfectionism. In her discussion of Dinah Craik's *John Halifax, Gentleman*—'the classic novel of self-help' (Robin Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 86) although it precedes Smiles's publication by three years—Richardson demonstrates how Craik 'questions the paths for and value of ambition' (p. 93) in her representations of ability and disability.

In a short coda *Material Ambitions* makes an ambitious leap to the present: to Donald Trump's presidency of the United States, to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the global climate crises. In doing so Richardson leaves the reader with the provocative suggestion that Victorian literature provides a 'space' (p. 207) to reconsider the ramifications of a worldview fixated on attainment of ever-increasing goals, on a planet with finite and diminishing resources.

Helena Goodwyn (Northumbria University)

***Charles Dickens: But for You, Dear Stranger*, by Annette Federico (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), xv+165 pp., £18.99 (hardback), ISBN 9780192847348**

***Dickens and Travel: The Start of Modern Travel Writing*, by Lucinda Hawksley (Barnsley, South Yorkshire and Haverton, PA: Pen and Sword History, 2022), x+270 pp., £22.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781526735638**

The inspiration for OUP's 'My Reading' series, to which Annette Federico's *Charles Dickens: But for You, Dear Stranger* contributes, was the desire to explore what the Series Editors describe as the 'taut and resonant space' between reader and text (p. viii). The approach is ambitious and refreshingly different. There is fertile ground here for seeding ideas about the relationship between reader and book, about the complex interweaving of the reader's experience of life with the lives that unfold on the printed page, about the process of communication from writer to reader, and about the transformative potential of the act of reading.

The brief for contributors is challenging—their task is to write 'not conventionally but personally' about their responses to their chosen books (p. vii). This challenge puts them on a high wire above the pitfalls of tedious self-indulgence and reductive discussion of superficial 'relevance'. Federico walks this high wire with aplomb, producing perceptive and interwoven narratives—one focusing on her personal background and development and the other on her readings of the novels she selects. As she writes in her Preface, 'A chronology of my life as a reader of Dickens is embedded in this book, running parallel to my life as a daughter, a spouse, a teacher, a scholar' (p. xi).

Federico chooses four novels, devoting a chapter to each and encapsulating in the chapter title a key theme that emerges from her reading: for *Oliver Twist* (1838), 'Where is Love?' (a song from Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* (1968), which she saw before she read the novel); for *David Copperfield* (1850), 'Blessed Little Room' (David's description of the room where he escaped from childhood oppression into the worlds of his favourite books); for *Little Dorrit* (1857), 'The Shadow Fell Like Light' (quoting from Book 2, Ch. 29, in which Clennam is reunited with Amy in the shadow of the Marshalsea wall); and for *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), 'But for You, Dear Stranger' (from the seamstress's words of gratitude to Carton as they await the guillotine—also used, expressively, as the subtitle of the book).

With these and other themes, Federico weaves an intricate web from her personal history (her relationship with her parents, childhood memories, marriage, etc.), contemporary events (e.g., Trump, COVID-19), her experiences of teaching, her responses to the novels, and some fine textual interpretation. The result is an illuminating perspective on the selected texts—a perspective that incidentally sheds light on how Dickens achieves his intimate and powerful impact.

Federico is a keenly perceptive reader, often highlighting fleeting occurrences in Dickens's narratives. In *Oliver Twist*, for one instant Bumble softens towards the tearful Oliver as he takes him to Mr Sowerberry. For that moment, suggests Federico, '[t]he two of them almost seem like a strict father and a sensitive son' (p. 23). This acute observation, one of many, exemplifies a process that emerges frequently in the book: the incident is precisely described in the novel, but its significance is interpreted through the life experience of the reader. The novelist prompts, the reader elaborates. As Federico later notes, 'Reading is a process of continual modification as we read, a movement back and forth between the inner reading world and the outside real one' (p. 52).

Apart from a minor misunderstanding of the Artful Dodger's use of the word 'covey' (p. 11), I found little to quibble about. Federico is a skilful stylist and, writing with fluency and clarity, has produced a scholarly work that is also intensely personal. This is a convincing demonstration of how we use the novel to illuminate our own experiences and the world around us, and of how our own experiences in turn illuminate the novel.

The subtitle of Lucinda Hawksley's *Dickens and Travel: The Start of Modern Travel Writing*, is both enticing and provocative. There is certainly an interesting conversation to be had, or rather continued, about Dickens's contribution to the genre of travel writing and his influence on its evolution. Unfortunately, the controversial assertion of the subtitle remains undefended and largely unaddressed. There is no substantive engagement with existing scholarship on the genre and no indication that I could find of what is meant by 'modern travel writing'. There is indeed very little reference to travel writing other than that by or related to Dickens. Apart from an occasional passing mention of other writers, there is only a brief, unelaborated comment in a chapter focusing on *Pictures from Italy* (1846) that '[t]his type of travel writing, although not yet common, was a fashionable new form of literature' (p. 164), followed by an illustrative quotation from Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842 and 1843* (1844).

While the subtitle may hold a promise that is not fulfilled, one cannot argue with the appropriateness of the main title: extensive coverage of Dickens's travels is duly delivered. Hawksley is constructively broad in her scope, a strategy that allows her to open with Dickens as a deadline-driven young journalist rushing around the country by coach and to close with a contemplated but never undertaken trip to Australia. In between, she provides a comprehensive overview of Dickens's experiences of travel as they emerge through his published writing, his correspondence, and the narratives of friends and colleagues. She tracks his journeys in Britain and North America and on the Continent through the travelogues, *Uncommercial Traveller* papers and other journalism, travel-related letters, Forster's biography, and eye-witness accounts such as George Dolby's memoir of the late-1860s American reading tour, *Charles Dickens as I Knew Him* (1885).

The approach is biographical. For the most part, Hawksley provides summaries of Dickens's writing interlaced with extracts from the correspondence and observations from others. There is copious quotation but little analysis. Often, as in the case of *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) and *Pictures from Italy*, Hawksley uses what are in effect extended synopses of Dickens's texts as a means of recounting his journeys.

She provides many examples of how Dickens's travel experiences found their way into his fiction. These are typically offered as observations without further comment, but there are some less obvious instances alongside the better-known ones, such as the 'cameo' (p. 12) of Dickens and Phiz as two passengers on the coach carrying Nicholas Nickleby towards Dotheboys Hall. There are also curious omissions, however—for example, an account of snobbery in Boston (pp. 48–49) is not accompanied by a mention of the corresponding episode in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844). And Hawksley scores an own goal with her speculation that *Little Dorrit*'s Rigaud may have been partially inspired by Dickens's impressions of Lyon. She wrongly states that his birthplace is not specified—Rigaud says that he was born in Belgium in the novel's opening chapter—and proceeds to attribute to him a long passage of dialogue (p. 107) that is in fact spoken by his cellmate Cavalletto.

In fairness, such inaccuracies are not characteristic of the book and Hawksley does cover a great deal of ground. For the academic or specialist reader, nevertheless, there are serious shortcomings. There is no referencing system, there is an absence of source citations (some quotations, frustratingly, lack any mention of a source), the index is unhelpful, with long strings for some entries, and the 'Dickens and Travel Bibliography' is woefully inadequate, running only to a page and a half and even omitting some works used substantially in the text.

The book seems to be aimed at a non-specialist readership. There is little that is new here, but Hawksley does present an extensive overview of Dickens's travels and may bring new readers to the travelogues and journalism—perhaps this was, after all, her primary aim.

John Edmondson (Independent Researcher)

***The Crimean War and Its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain*, by Lara Kriegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 244pp., £90.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781108906951**

Lara Kriegel's *The Crimean War and Its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain* avowedly and unashamedly offers the reader a 'new perspective on the making of modern Britain, its invented traditions and its cherished heroes, its cultural values and its social life' (p. 5). This book is a scholastic study of how we 'understand the ongoing impacts of diverse historical phenomena', which uses the Crimean War as its case study (p. 4).

Comprising a total of 244 pages, and a very healthy and detailed body of footnotes and an up-to-date bibliography, the book is divided into six chapters. Each of these is dedicated to one of the most enduring aspects of the Crimean War, not only that war's two best-known legends, Florence Nightingale (Chapter 2) and the Charge of the Light Brigade (Chapter 5), but the topics of travel narratives (Chapter 1), the Victoria Cross (Chapter 3), death and

graves (Chapter 4), and Mary Seacole (Chapter 6). The six chapters are neatly arranged into three parts, creatively and appropriately entitled 'Persistence' (Chapters 1 and 2), 'Avatars' (3 and 4), and 'Angels' (5 and 6).

This book clearly illustrates the dichotomous nature of the Crimean War for British society since the 1850s. On the one hand it is a conflict that 'is evident in the texture of everyday life' in modern and contemporary Britain and has influenced and continues to influence Britain's 'invented traditions and its cherished heroes, its cultural values and its social life' (p. 5). On the other it 'is a commonplace to dismiss [it] as an embarrassment, an event better forgotten, and a conflict that has lingered in "semi-obscurity"' (p. 3). Either way, the Crimean War is a conflict that everyone in Britain knows today; principally for the six key topics detailed in this book.

Although Seacole was only really added (or recovered) in the past two decades—thanks to the efforts of Dame Elizabeth Anionwu and others thereafter (including Helen Rappaport)—her incorporation within the British Crimean narrative most clearly illustrates its important place within modern British popular culture and both national narrative and identity. Britain today is a multicultural nation and Seacole's inclusion has created a new, relatable, and appealing tool for continued, renewed and original engagement with this conflict by the current (and post-Windrush) generations of Britons.

The sole criticism that one might have for this book is its failure to properly identify and set its own parameters: what is Britain? 'Britain' and 'British' have different meanings for different people, both inside and outside of the British archipelago or the broader politico-geographical entity that was historically or is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and (now Northern) Ireland. Kriegel refers within the text to Britain's 'Island Story' (p. 3) and to 'the English especially' within the descriptor of 'Britons' (p. 236). She also uses 'English' or 'England' and 'British' or 'Britain' interchangeably. More might be said of how the war's afterlife has been perceived in Scotland or Wales compared to England. How has it evolved (if at all) in Northern Ireland, especially when compared to the Republic of Ireland, where a general amnesia of British imperial wars or exploits existed for much of the twentieth century? This latter query is especially poignant, because all 'four nations' of the United Kingdom fought in, experienced, responded to, and felt and displayed (albeit to varying degrees) the legacies of the Crimean War, as evidenced by Brian Griffin, David Murphy, and myself.

Regardless, this book is a must-read for scholars of the Crimean War and Britain's nineteenth-century imperial wars, as it questions the apparent uniqueness of the Russian conflict. It will be of great interest to all scholars of the Victorian period, who wish to better understand its legacies within Britain, Ireland, and the former imperial colonies and dominions. Kriegel's study is equally set within the immediate Victorian context, the world wars of the twentieth century, the decades of the British Welfare State and decolonisation, the Cold War, and its aftermath, as well as the national and international upheavals of the past decade. The Black Lives Matter movement and the COVID-19 pandemic dominate the concluding chapter, while 'Brexit' is referenced over a dozen times throughout the book. The way in which 'Brexit' has been engaged with, both by successive Conservative governments and the British public, is compared with the 'English capacity to embrace disaster' with 'character' and 'pluck' (as demonstrated in 1854 during the Charge of the Light Brigade) (p. 3).

In conclusion, Kriegel states that by 'telling a new story about the Crimean War, this book offers a new perspective on the making of modern Britain, its invented traditions and its cherished heroes, its cultural values and its social life', and she is correct (p. 5). It behoves scholars of the Crimean War to apply Kriegel's methodology to the other belligerents of the conflict, if not only to try and ascertain why so many of those modern states and nations did not and have not assimilated the conflict in the same manner.

Paul Huddie (University College Dublin)

***Plotting the News in the Victorian Novel*, by Jessica R. Valdez (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020) 224pp., £75.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781474474344**

In *Plotting the News in the Victorian Novel* Jessica R Valdez traces the 'varying ways that nineteenth-century novels envision newspapers and incorporate, problematise and transmute news stories into fictional narrative' (p. 1). In particular, Valdez tracks the effects of '"narratives of the real"' on 'communit[ies] of readers', positing that within nineteenth-century novels the fictionalized newspaper manifests in contrast to the real and not as emblematic of it (p. 1).

The book is divided into four chapters that span the Victorian period, beginning with Dickens and ending with *Dracula* (1898). Each chapter focuses on just one or two authors and centres the changing landscape of news discourse across the nineteenth century, and how the chosen novels distinguish their narrative realities from the supposed factuality of the newspaper. Each chapter also tracks the influence of contemporary news stories on the novel, showing how novels remade and

resolved the real, and the differing ways in which these novels conceived of the formation of readerly communities and their capacity to be accurately represented by print media.

Valdez primes the reader for her argument by first interrogating some of the best-known critical assumptions about the function of both novels and newspapers in nation-building and in authorizing personal experiences by linking form to fact. Specifically, Valdez is interested in the news and the novel as more than parallel analogies for the national community, reading against Benedict Anderson's famous argument for (imagined) simultaneity in reading practices as the germ of the modern nation. Rather, Valdez gestures to the multiplicity of ways in which Victorian novels conceived of newspapers, so that neither newspapers nor novels are stable metaphors for the nation. Valdez productively re-casts Anderson's reading of *Semarang Hitam* (1924) so that it points not to the collapsing of the novel-reader into the fictional newspaper-reader, but the markedly different reading practices engendered by novels and newspapers. In effect, novels enable readers to reflect on their reading practices with greater self-consciousness than Anderson's account suggests.

The first chapter explores the metaphors used by Charles Dickens to contrast news and narrative, beginning with *Household Words* and ending with the post-script to *Our Mutual Friend* (1864). In *Household Words*, Dickens imagines the ceaseless production of news as a storm engulfing London, a metaphor which foregrounds the disorganized and destructive potential of unmediated news output on readerly communities. In contrast, the postscript to *Our Mutual Friend* compares the novel writer to a weaver who creates complex patterns out of seemingly random threads, seeing the whole of the pattern before the reader is able to. For Valdez, these metaphors demonstrate how nineteenth-century novels invest realism with meaning not by reference to external, verifiable fact, but by imposing the guise of random occurrence onto a patterned structure. These realisms produce readers capable of thinking about their own place within extra-textual communities.

The self-reflexive nature of novel-reading is essential to Valdez's later observations about how nineteenth-century novels do imagine communal formation (and exclusion) as a consequence of newspaper reading. This comes across most clearly in chapters three and four on the sensation novel and representations of Anglo-Jewish communities. Here, Valdez reads *Armadale* (1866) and *Aurora Floyd* (1863) to resist the critical view that suggests sensation novels and early crime journalism function primarily to index the strange and alienating effects of modernity. Instead, these novels make plain the ways in which sensation and melodrama are integral to the newspaper, community building, and heterogenic constructions of the real, such that both novels and newspapers transform uncommon occurrences into narratives of the 'everyday'.

Turning to Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* (1892), Valdez grapples with how this novel negotiates the impulse of newspapers like *The Jewish Chronicle* to represent minority communities as homogenous, coherent communities in need of anglicisation, at the same time that they reified cultural differences. This is the only chapter which does not read the novel as a reworking of a specific contemporary news story; instead, Valdez positions Zangwill's novel as a reworking of Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), in which Deronda's final longing toward Palestine is reshaped into a longing for the Jewish ghetto and proximal communities over nationalistic imaginings. Valdez's book offers an impressive reconsideration of the role of the nineteenth-century novel in national social formation, which usefully foregrounds changing reading practices and critical attitudes toward realism and form. It is a fascinating exploration of different narrative realisms and fictionalized representations of the press.

Lisa Bilella (University of Leeds)

***Spectral Dickens: The Uncanny Forms of Novelistic Characterization*, by Alexander Bove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), x+242pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781526147936**

Charles Dickens's relation to realism has been in question for a long time, at least since G.H. Lewes's letter on the death of Mr Krook in *Bleak House* (1852-3), which claimed that 'Spontaneous Combustion could not possibly be' (Charles Dickens, 'Preface' to *Bleak House* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 6), or George Eliot's 1856 suggestion that Dickens scarcely ever passes from the external to the internal without 'becoming as transcendent in his unreality as he was a moment before in his artistic truthfulness' (p. 97). In *Spectral Dickens*, Alexander Bove takes up a position in this long-running debate, arguing that 'it is difficult to situate Dickens within the tradition of Victorian realism at all' (p. 31), especially in terms of character.

Spectral Dickens thus follows G.K. Chesterton, who praised Dickens as a writer of caricature, in seeing his work as constituting a critique of realist character itself and, ultimately for Bove, of subjectivity in general. The title might suggest that

Derrida will be prominent, and Bove does draw on his concept of 'hauntology' (p. 23), but only to lead into what Bove sees as fundamentally a psychoanalytic question, especially in its Lacanian form, as explored and extended by Dolar, Zupančič and Žižek. What hauntology (as opposed to ontology) points towards most importantly is that character is not so much an encounter with a simulacrum of a real person, but 'an *encounter with the Real*, which is as such a distinct kind of *encounter with otherness/impossibility*' (p. 23). This kind of encounter is 'precisely what is conjured away in the idea of mimetic realism' (p. 23), but it comes to the fore in Dickens, and gives character its 'ethical force' (p. 23).

To demonstrate this uncanny, non-realist nature of character in Dickens, Bove offers three related approaches to his writing. Part I begins with a discussion of caricature, especially the French illustrators Honoré Daumier and Grandville, read in relation to anamorphosis (proceeding from Lacan's famous reading of Holbein's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors*). These topics are then placed in dialogue with Phiz's illustrations and Dickens's writing, focusing on *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-7). Part II argues that Dickens's characters often function as effigies, on the border of living and non-living, making them what Chesterton calls 'moor effocish things' (p. 83), alluding to Dickens's childhood experience of seeing the sign COFFEE ROOM from the opposite side of a glass panel (which Žižek reads as a sign of the repression of the Real, pp. 114-6). One such figure is the Wooden Midshipman in *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), who is 'the central effigy of the novel, generating an almost irrepressible proliferation of animatic metaphors' (p. 109), linking him with human characters such as Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1). Another is Esther's doll in *Bleak House*. This part leads to a provocatively speculative analysis of Phiz's famous image of Tom-All-Alone's (used as the cover image of the book). For Bove, this image should be read not only as the perspective of Woodcourt as he enters these streets, but also the first-person view of Jo as he flees from him, making it a 'dreamlike' (p. 154) and condensed symbolic image. Part III picks up this interest in dream structures, building on Steven Marcus to argue that 'Dickens's novels *use representational material in the same way as the dream does*' in Freud, giving a material (but spectral) form to the signifier, and hence drawing attention to the 'drive or cut inherent to the split structure of the signifier' (p. 166).

As this summary indicates, this is often a densely argued book, which relies heavily on Lacanian categories such as the threefold division of symbolic, imaginary, and Real. (It is a pity, then, that quite a number of typographical errors have crept in—'teaming' instead of 'teeming' (p. 105), 'I know am' instead of 'I know I am' (p. 132)—which sometimes disrupt the flow of reading). It is also a polemical work, which takes issue with critics who have not pushed their insights in this direction far enough. So, for instance, while Audrey Jaffe approaches Esther Summerson as a character structured by the symbolic order in *Vanishing Points: Dickens, Narrative, and the Subject of Omniscience* (1991), she grounds her approach on 'a traditional notion of self that must either fail or succeed based on autonomy and wholeness', whereas for Bove 'we should do away with the teleological notion of a self altogether' (p. 133). Occasionally this approach risks over-reading in a particular direction, as when Bove argues that the metaphoric image which structures *Dombey and Son* is 'that of *mirror reflections*' (p. 104), rather than for instance the sea or the railway. Nonetheless, the central contention is, to me, highly convincing. It leads to several fantastically insightful ideas, such as the final chapter's interpretation of *Little Dorrit* (1855-7) as itself having 'the structure of the *as if*' (p. 204), Dickens's favourite form of comparison. In *Spectral Dickens*, then, Bove has produced both a work that expands the ways we think about character, and a sustained demonstration of the continuing value of Lacanian thought for literary analysis.

Ben Moore (University of Amsterdam)

***The Crimean War in Victorian Poetry*, by Tai-Chun Ho (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021), 304pp., £56.65 (hardback), ISBN 9781788741798**

Tai-Chun Ho's original *The Crimean War in Victorian Poetry* offers the first book-length examination of the work of a group of British poets during one of the most important conflicts of the nineteenth century. Exploring the cultural impact of the war on the home front through the medium of poetry, this volume complements the books of Cynthia Dereli, Stefanie Markovits, Holly Furneaux, Trudi Tate, Paul Huddie, Lara Kriegel, and others, which have amply demonstrated that the Crimean War had more to it than a notoriously complex diplomatic background, a disastrously mismanaged campaign on the part of the British, and a series of well-known battles fought on the Black Sea peninsula and elsewhere.

The Crimean War, according to Ho, saw a 'literary war' on the home front fought by a diverse group of poets: men and women, 'canonical' and less well-known, working-class and middle-class. In examining 'a multiplicity of civilian voices in various literary forms and styles', the book challenges 'the current canon of British war poetry forged by the modernist appreciation of soldier poets' (p. 14), and

thus paints a richer picture of Victorian wartime literary culture. At the same time, the book convincingly challenges 'the deeply entrenched view' 'that the genre of war poetry is a product of the First World War only' (p. 4).

In six well-structured chapters, Ho uncovers debates—provoked by the Crimean War's immediacy and visibility engendered by the media—amongst poets and other commentators about the idea of the 'war poet' and poetry's role during war. Chapter 1 demonstrates that civilian poets' 'armchair spectatorship of the suffering of soldiers' led to a paradigm shift. Painfully conscious of 'the ineffectuality of trumpeting battle cries from home', these poets, including the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'set out to refashion the model of the warrior poet' based on the Greek martial poet of the seventh century BC, Tyrtaeus, 'and to transform the traditionally accepted function of the war song' (p. 75). The Crimean crisis, and the new challenges in the representation of war that it brought to the surface, thus compelled civilian poets to experiment with a variety of literary forms, including the 'dream vision', as Chapter 2 shows. Focusing on the Chartist poet Gerald Massey, Tom Taylor, and Robert Brough, Chapter 3 uncovers the emergence of 'a more diverse, interrogatory, and subversive mode of war poetry' (p. 152), and the participation of these poets in a literary 'people's war' against the aristocratic governing classes. Chapter 4 examines the 'Spasmodic' poetry of Sydney Dobell to reveal how it challenged readers to 'rethink their perceptions of the physical experiences undergone by the participants of the military struggle, including the army surgeon and the common soldier, while calling into question an armchair spectatorship of the slaughter' (p. 161).

Chapter 5 offers an analysis of one of the most famous poems of the Crimean War, Tennyson's *Maud* (1855). Here the author could have said more about the 'evils' of peace which *Maud*'s neurotic speaker so vehemently denounces, and how this fitted into debates about whether a righteous war could actually serve as a social regenerator by purging society from Mammonism, selfish materialism, and other 'vices' which a long period of peace supposedly fostered. The reception of Tennyson's poem also has a more interesting story to tell—one that intersected with wider conversations about war and its place in modern society. The reason why Goldwin Smith (Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, 1858–66) reviewed the Poet Laureate's poem in a highly critical manner becomes clear only upon taking into account Smith's peace-mindedness and association with such individuals as Richard Cobden, radical MP for the West Riding of Yorkshire and a leader of the Manchester School. Therefore, a more meaningful engagement with how the controversies between the peace movement and its critics were translated into verse might have better illuminated some other themes of the poetry of the Crimean War which equally deserve attention. The book's final chapter focuses on a widely neglected volume of poetry, Louisa Stuart Costello's *The Lay of the Stork* (1856), to examine the ways in which female poets wrote about the war and how they engaged with its gendered dimensions.

Overall, Ho's book makes an important addition to the Crimean War's scholarly literature. Its examination of visual culture (e.g., *Punch*'s cartoons) and material culture (e.g., Staffordshire pottery) complements its excellent analysis of wartime poetry, and adds to its scholarly value. This book should be necessary reading for students, scholars, and others interested in the Crimean War. It should also be recommended to historians studying Britain's wars in the nineteenth century. Literary scholars and those working on Victorian culture more generally will also find much in this book that is interesting and compelling.

Petros Spanou (University of Oxford)

***Jews in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Charity, Community and Religion, 1830-1880*, by Alysa Levene (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 248pp., £28.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781350201767**

British Jewish historians have traditionally focused upon the period of 1880-1920, which saw some 120,000 immigrant Jews arrive in Britain and transform Jewish life here. But it is the period that immediately precedes this moment of rupture, the years 1830-1880, that has most recently enjoyed historians' attention, notably in monographs by Michael Clark (2009) and Sara Abosch-Jacobson (2019). This period not only saw the full emancipation of British Jews, but also the development of institutional frameworks that would later gusset (or harass) the wave of immigration that came immediately afterwards. Alysa Levene's monograph is a rich addition to such work. *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, a study of Jewish life in Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, responds to two lacunae within this period, but also within the field as a whole: an overconcentration on Jewish life in London rather than in the 'provinces' and a shortage of demographic history.

The first half of *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Britain* investigates the demography of British Jews. Levene's work is a systematic engagement with the Anglo-Jewish Database, based on the 1851 census. She first turns her attention to the composition and

structures of families. If Jewish families were, as Levene puts it, 'fluid in form', they nonetheless remained distinct from non-Jewish households (p. 42). Jews were less likely to live alone, to live with elderly parents (in part because there was a higher chance they did not live locally), and to work as servants for non-Jewish households. Levene's analysis benefits from expert readings of other non-Jewish historical demography. In particular, Levene contributes to the debate as to how likely households were to be composed on the basis of self-interest or of affection. Levene concludes that the Jewish case shows the weakness of this binary. Jews were likely to live together out of 'a combination of mutual assistance, cultural expectations and compassion for family members in need' (p. 34).

Jews in Nineteenth-Century Britain shows that Jewish settlement in Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester, perhaps with the exception of the latter, displayed far greater dispersion than in the later period of mass immigration. Interestingly, although Jewish households often had kin in the same city they lived in, they tended to live at some distance apart, and this increased according to the relative affluence of the family. Patterns of dispersal in these cities were overall similar: length of stay and affluence decided how much dispersion took place. If Jews were very likely to live alongside non-Jewish neighbours, their households nonetheless had distinct characteristics: they had larger families, were more likely to pay for servants, and more frequently hosted lodgers. The way Jews lived, as per Levene's adept demographic analysis, 'reinforced their culture identity in its broadest sense, while also permitting some level of integration into the wider society' (p. 79).

Levene demonstrates that Jews were much less likely than non-Jews to work in the primary occupational sector in Birmingham and in Liverpool. But even in Manchester, where manufacturing was the largest sector of Jewish employment, the rate was not as high as for the local non-Jewish population. In this period Jews did not live in the areas of 'bad reputation' and Jews were comparatively better off than their neighbours. These conclusions will be of interest to British Jewish historians of later periods. Levene, following Bill Williams's earlier work (1976), demonstrates that substantial Eastern European Jewish immigration took place between 1830 and 1870. However, the processes which were associated with post-1880s immigration—ghettoisation, immiseration—did not take place in the period Levene studies. Levene shows how in this period occupational and residential patterns suggest impressive upward mobility for members of the Jewish community. To this extent Levene's work reinforces the sense of rupture that the 1880s heralded.

The second half of Levene's investigation turns to communal charity work. This has always occupied a crucial role in British Jewish history and has been the subject of an important recent study on Jewish women and children by Susan Tananbaum (2016). Levene's work helps to spread the focus outwards from London. The period of 1830-1870 was a crucial moment of expansion and consolidation, but Levene underlines the differences that local contexts made in these processes. Liverpool as a port city had to face a much more severe challenge of transmigration, while internal disputes between new and old congregations affected Manchester's provisions. Levene avoids emphasising the opportunities for social control that charity distribution offered, focussing instead on the flexibility and ambition of these provincial charitable provisions. Provincial charities wanted to help the Jewish poor who had long been resident there, but resented new arrivals and wanted to stop new foreign poor from arriving and staying. Levene gives evidence for the problematic hostility to foreign 'alien' Jews that existed even before the waves of mass immigration.

The presence of London looms behind the scenes in this work, particularly in the chapters dealing with communal charity work. It is perhaps the case that this work in its focus on the provincial areas neglects the fluidity and exchange between province and centre that continued from this period to the present day; more exploration of transactions and exchange would have enriched understandings of both province and London and helped to move towards unsettling this binary. Equally, although Levene often makes reference to the global imagined community that Jews belonged to, there could have been more elaboration of specific exchange and connections within that world. Nonetheless, the rigorous detail, extensive tables and maps, and succinct arguments guarantee this work's place as necessary reading for nineteenth-century historians of demography and British Jewry.

William Pimlott (Birkbeck, University of London)

Foundational Text Review

For our new 'Foundational Text' review series, we are asking writers to revisit 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 would like to contribute to this review series, the BAVS Newsletter *team would love to hear from you at bavsnews@gmail.com! You will find a list of suggested books on the* Newsletter *webpage, but any and all ideas are very welcome. Reviewers must be a BAVS member.*

***The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition*, by Robert Langbaum (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 246pp.**

It is impossible to write seriously about the dramatic monologue without reference to Robert Langbaum's approach to the form as hinging on the tension between sympathy and judgement. With this formulation, introduced in *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition*, Langbaum broke new ground. '[N]o one has quite known what to do with the dramatic monologue except to classify it', he himself noted, and such classifications 'close doors where they ought to open them' (p. 75). Langbaum's own work has done the opposite: his formulation has been productive not only of a sustained critical engagement with and interest in the dramatic monologue, but also of an ongoing critical debate about the relation between and the applicability and validity of the ideas he introduced. As happens so often with successful critical ideas, Langbaum's definition of the dramatic monologue is nowadays rarely considered in the context of the wider argument he attempted to make in his book. To do so is both alienating and enlightening: it can help to better understand the conditions as well as the limitations of Langbaum's approach to the dramatic monologue, while bringing us upfront with some of the many ways in which what we do, how we write, and what we think we know as literary critics have changed over the last seventy-five years.

In 1957, when Langbaum's *The Poetry of Experience* was first published, Victorian poetry was not a popular field of academic study. Thus, this book, which was centrally concerned with what has come to be recognised as one of the most characteristic innovations of Victorian poetry and whose main protagonist was Robert Browning, carefully avoided mentioning the word 'Victorian'. Rather, the wider aim of *The Poetry of Experience* was to demonstrate continuities between Romanticism and Modernism, and though the main arguments rest on the case of the dramatic monologue, Langbaum took this form to be paradigmatic not for a particular Victorian moment but for all serious post-Enlightenment, i.e. in his terms Romantic, literature. Langbaum painted with a very broad historical brush: there is, he claimed, a poetry of meaning and a poetry of experience, the former is characteristic of all poetry before the late eighteenth century, the other arises as a Romantic reaction against the Enlightenment. In the poetry of meaning, 'the poet talks, as in ordinary discourse, either about himself or other things, treating his topic in either case as an abstraction from experience, as an object complete with its own meaning'. In the poetry of experience, in contrast, 'the poet talks about himself and other things, finding his meaning in neither but evolving it through an interchange and final fusion between the two' (p. 232).

Langbaum argued that the Romantic poets reacted against the scientific abstraction that had characterised the Enlightenment by stressing the primacy of perception. His further development of this thought serves to clarify the central role the dramatic monologue takes in his system:

> But why should immediate experience yield a living reality? Because the act of knowing spontaneously and completely is an act of imaginative projection into the external object, an act of identification with the object; so that the living consciousness perceived in the object is our own. If, in other words, the act of knowing analytically requires that we 'murder' the object, treating it as something unlike ourselves, something unalive; the act of knowing organically requires that we imbue the object with life, finding in it the counterpart of our own consciousness. (pp. 24–25)

This act of projection, of role-playing, in which our sympathetic involvement with the object becomes a source of knowledge which does not depend on external criteria, but which arises from experience itself, provides the framework for Langbaum's approach to the dramatic monologue and led him to claim that this Victorian poetic form is 'the articulation of a form potential in romantic poetry from the start' (p. 79). In reading a dramatic monologue, Langbaum argued, our moral judgement, that is external criteria, has to be suspended while we

sympathetically project ourselves into the position of the speaker, in order to 'derive meaning [...] from the poetic material itself rather than from an external standard of judgment' (pp. 78–79).

This is the central argument which Langbaum revisited from different perspectives and with reference to different material in all his chapters. His first chapter offered a discussion of the poetry of the Romantic poets, Wordsworth in particular. He then turned, in Chapter 2, to the dramatic monologue, for which Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' (1842) served as the prototype. Chapter 3 offered an extended discussion of Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69) as a Relativist poem, while Chapter 4 returned to a broader consideration of the dramatic monologue in contradistinction to the soliloquy. Chapter 5 sought to apply the insight about the Romantic turn to experience to nineteenth-century receptions of Shakespeare, arguing that a psychologising reading of Shakespeare is anachronic but inevitable in the post-Enlightenment condition. With Chapter 6, focusing on what Langbaum called 'the lyric element', he once more returned to the dramatic monologue, this time to stress what he considered the superfluity and excess of utterance characterising these poems. He concluded with a final chapter contrasting this new poetics of experience and character with the older, Aristotelian poetics of action**,** proposing that 'it is largely the victory of character over action that distinguishes the high literature of modern times' (p. 210).

The obvious problems with Langbaum's broad historical simplification culminate in his rather self-defeating claim that ultimately dramatic monologues 'all mean the same thing – the greatest possible surge of life' (p. 208). If that were true, what work would be left for the critic to do? What Langbaum has had to say about the dramatic monologue, however, has sparked a vibrant debate. Many of his assertions about features of the genre have since been challenged or qualified. Critics disagree with Langbaum about the importance of the auditor (Dorothy Mermin; Helen Luu) and about the role of rhetoric (Cornelia Pearsall), and the distortion resulting from his almost exclusive focus on Browning has been widely acknowledged (Glennis Byron; Patricia Riggs; Cynthia Scheinberg). But by far the most serious and most productive criticism is that which probes the ideological core of Langbaum's argument: that sympathy and judgement are functions in which all readers share equally. In a 1997 journal article on Victorian women poets, Cynthia Scheinberg was the first to highlight the masculinist bias in Langbaum's claim that 'we' sympathise with the murdering duke of 'My Last Duchess'. As Glennis Byron summarises: 'The difficulty lies in [Langbaum's] assumption of some universalised reader, in his failure to acknowledge that sympathy and judgement will always be predicated as much, if not more, upon the reader's specific cultural, historical and social identity as on the language and strategies of the poem itself'.[1] As such, Langbaum's study is a prime example by which to understand a sea-change in academic attitudes: a blithe certainty in the identity of the critical reader (male, white) is replaced by an awareness of the individual situatedness of the critical reader and their perspective. Still, Scheinberg does not reject Langbaum's basic terms, sympathy and judgement, but adapts them: 'rather than splitting the reader's capacities for sympathy and judgment, dramatic monologues by both men and women work to reveal the contingency between powers of poetic sympathy and moral judgement'.[2] These terms have simply become too widely used, and too useful to dispense with, in discussions of the dramatic monologue.

And yet, I think that returning to Langbaum's original proposition may also reveal an even more fundamental shift in attitudes towards what literature is and does, beyond the expectable gender bias. Langbaum saw the dramatic monologue as the ultimate realisation of a Romantic project of experience. 'Each encounter with the external world', he proposed, 'gives us a chance to project ourselves sympathetically into the Other and, by identifying there another aspect of the spiritual Self, to evolve a soul or identity' (p. 50). For Langbaum, it seems, the encounter with different perspectives the dramatic monologue excels in staging is only a route to the self, just as the speaker of the dramatic monologue, in Langbaum's ultimate analysis, 'reaches his apotheosis of perception and self-perception, becoming more himself than ever only to dissolve his own particularity and the particularity of what he sees in the general stream of being' (p. 209). Langbaum's belief in the universalising effect of literature, where today we tend to emphasise difference, and his apparent conviction that it is literature's task to evolve the self in the encounter with alterity, rather than to posit the incommensurability of self and other or to question the viability of any concept of self, renders the intellectual distance which separates *The Poetry of Experience* from today most palpable and most provoking.

Irmtraud Huber (University of Konstanz)

1 Glennis Byron, *Dramatic Monologue* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 22.

2 Cynthia Scheinberg, 'Recasting "sympathy and judgment"': Amy Levy, Women Poets, and the Victorian Dramatic Monologue', *Victorian Poetry*, 35.2 (1997), 173-91 (p. 179).

Recent Publications

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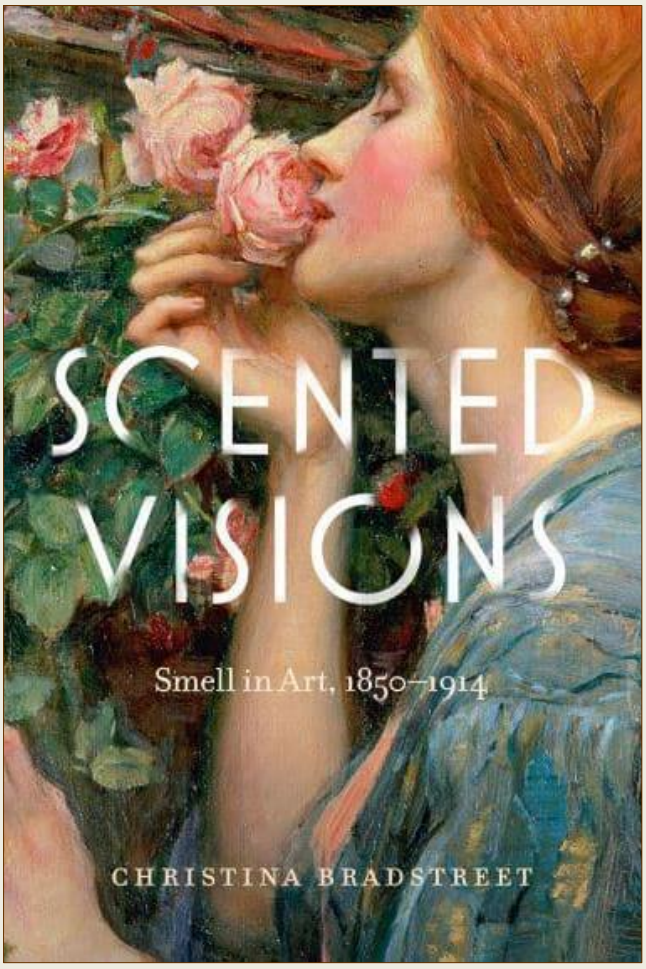
***Scented Visions: Smell in Art 1850-1914*, by Christina Bradstreet (University Park PA: Penn State University Press, 2022), 290pp., £125.48 (hardback), ISBN 9780271092515**



Smell loomed large in cultural discourse in the late nineteenth century, thanks to the midcentury fear of miasma, the drive for sanitation reform, and the rise in artificial perfumery. Meanwhile, the science of olfaction remained largely mysterious, prompting an impulse to "see smell" and inspiring some artists to picture scent in order to better know and control it. This book recovers the substantive role of the olfactory in Pre-Raphaelite art and Aestheticism.

Christina Bradstreet examines the iconography and symbolism of scent in nineteenth-century art and visual culture. Fragrant imagery in the work of John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Simeon Solomon, George Frederic Watts, Edward Burne-Jones, and others set the trend for the preoccupation with scent that informed swaths of British, European, and American art and design. Bradstreet's rich analyses of paintings, perfume posters, and other works of visual culture demonstrate how artworks mirrored the "period nose" and intersected with the most clamorous debates of the day, including evolution, civilization, race, urban morality, mental health, faith, and the "woman question."

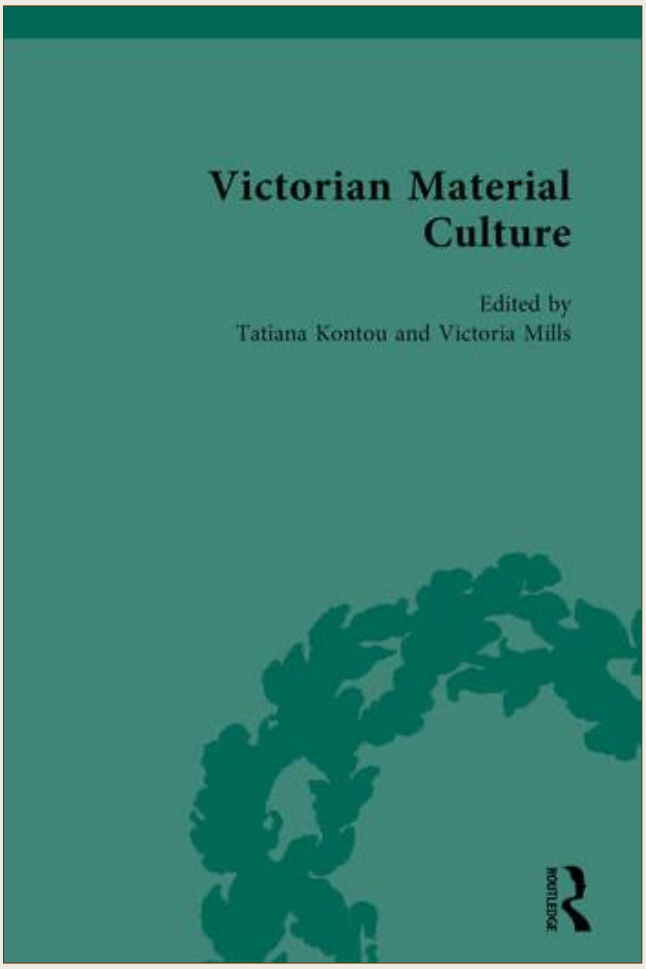
Beautifully illustrated and grounded in current practices in sensory history, *Scented Visions* presents both fresh readings of major works of art and a deeper understanding of the cultural history of nineteenth-century scent.

***Victorian Material Culture*, edited by Tatiana Kontou and Victoria Mills, 6 vols (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 2994pp., £378.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781138225268**

From chatelaines to whale blubber, ice making machines to stained glass, this six-volume collection will be of interest to the scholar, student or general reader alike—anyone who has an urge to learn more about. Victorian. things. The set brings together a range of primary sources on Victorian material culture and discusses the most significant developments in material history from across the nineteenth century. The collection will demonstrate the significance of objects in the everyday lives of the Victorians and addresses important questions about how we classify and categorise nineteenth-century things.

The volumes are organized thematically and focus on key elements of materials, processes and production. Sources for each volume have been selected and critically introduced by a group of leading experts working across a variety of scholarly disciplines. Series titles include: *Raw Materials*, edited by Adelene Buckland; *Science and Medicine,* edited by Boris Jardine and Josh Nall; *Invention and Technology*, edited by Richard Menke; *Manufactured Things*, edited by Deborah Wynne and Louisa Yates; *Fashionable Things*, edited by Tatiana Kontou and

Kara Tennant; and, *Victorian Arts,* edited by Victoria Mills and Kate Nichols.



***Bleak Health: The Medical History of Charles Dickens and his Family*, by Nicholas Cambridge (Brighton: Edward Everett Root Publishers, 2022), 220pp., £49.95 (hardback), ISBN 9781913087982**

Dickens had a life-long obsession with health and medicine. This landmark new book documents this more fully than ever. It is valuable, too, for studies of public health changes in the 19th-century.

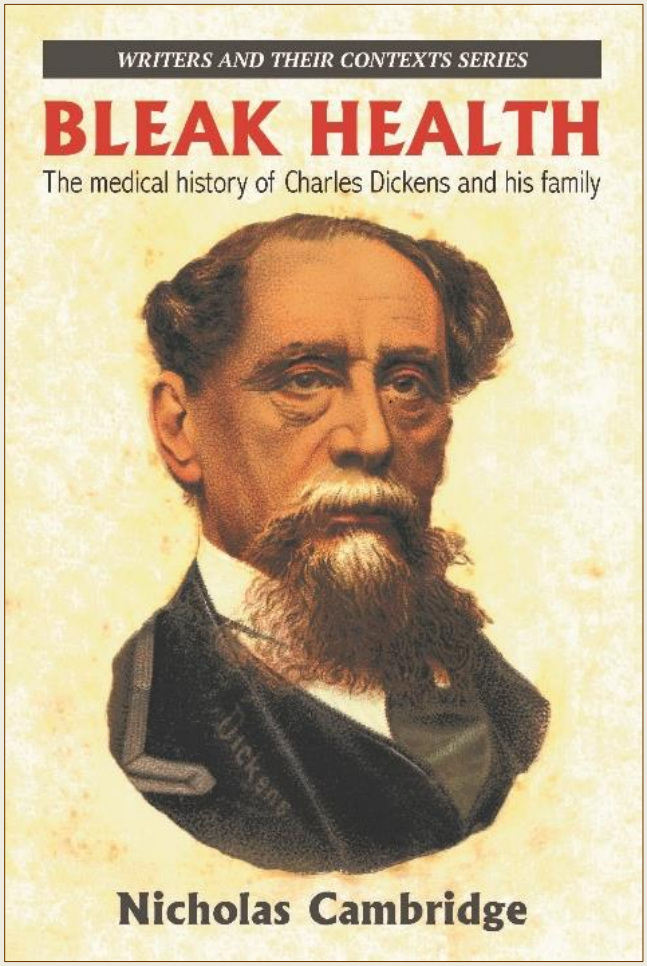
Bleak Health— by a medically-trained literary historian— offers an in-depth study of Dickens's life and letters from a medical viewpoint, throwing new light on his world; his medical history; that of his family, and his obsessions.

This is the first time that a comprehensive account of the health of Charles Dickens and his family has been published in one volume. It will provide a key reference for his readers.

The Victorians were preoccupied with their health and the connection between mind and body— and Dickens was no different. He tried to keep healthy by going for long walks, taking daily shower baths and keeping abreast of medical issues of the era. Despite these efforts he developed 20 illnesses during his lifetime. These included chronic carbon monoxide poisoning, gonorrhoea, *tic douloureux*, asthma, gout, a painful anal fistula and transient ischaemic attacks; he finally died from apoplexy. To treat his ailments Dickens tried all the standard therapies of the era such as bloodletting, blistering and purging. He was also reliant on medicines including laudanum, Cockles antibilious pills and calomel.

Apart from the family practitioner he became friends with several leading doctors including the mesmerist John Elliotson and the public health reformer Thomas Southwood Smith. Through these relationships Dickens himself became an expert mesmerist and an enthusiastic campaigner for public health improvements.

Bleak Health provides new insights into the health of Dickens's family. A detailed account is given for the first time of Dickens's father's tragic final illness from a ruptured urethral stricture including the treatments and surgeons involved. The book describes the difficult confinements endured by Dickens's wife Catherine who had 10 children. After her seventh confinement, Catherine received chloroform anaesthesia because Dickens decided that she should be free of pain. Later, Dickens often referred to Catherine's 'nervous condition' believing she was suffering from a mental illness. This may be



the reason why he wanted her admitted to a lunatic asylum.

Dickens often bore the responsibility for the health of his siblings and after their deaths he helped support their families. Six out of seven of his siblings died at an earlier age than he did, including two in childhood. His sister Frances died from consumption. His letters describe her harrowing symptoms in graphic detail in the days before her death. Consumption also claimed the lives of two brothers. Dickens's younger brother Frederick died of asphyxia caused by a burst abscess of his right lung.

Dickens had seven sons and three daughters who overall pleased him more as youngsters than they did as adults. They suffered with a variety of infectious diseases including scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, cholera and smallpox. Two of his sons were troubled with deafness and one developed stammering and suffered with sleepwalking. Two sons died from heart attacks, one from a burst aortic aneurysm and the eldest son died of apoplexy, like his father. His most successful son, Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, died from his injuries after being hit by a motorcycle.

***The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist*, edited by Andrew Hobbs, vol. 1 (1865-87) (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), l+676pp., £25.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781800642362, also available as open access e-book**

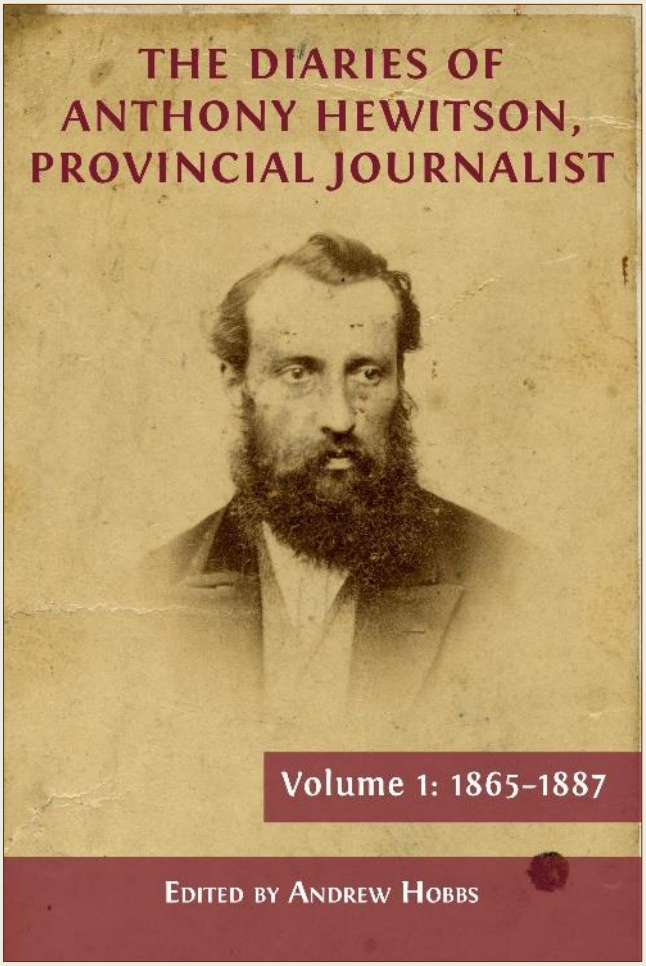
Anthony Hewitson (1836-1912) was a typical Victorian journalist, working in one of the largest sectors of the periodical press, provincial newspapers. His diaries, written between 1862 and 1912, lift the veil of anonymity hiding the people, processes and networks involved in the creation of Victorian newspapers. They also tell us about Victorian fatherhood, family life, and the culture of a Victorian town.

Diaries of nineteenth-century provincial journalists are extremely rare. Anthony Hewitson went from printer's apprentice to newspaper reporter and eventually editor of his own paper. Every night he jotted down the day's doings, his thoughts and feelings. The diaries are a lively account of the reporter's daily round, covering meetings and court cases, hunting for gossip or attending public executions and variety shows, in and around Preston, Lancashire.

Andrew Hobbs's introduction and footnotes provide background and analysis of these valuable documents. This full scholarly edition offers a wealth of new information about reporting, freelancing, sub-editing, newspaper ownership and publishing, and illuminates aspects of Victorian periodicals and culture extending far beyond provincial newspapers.

The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist are an indispensable research tool for local and regional historians, as well as social and political historians with an interest in Victorian studies and the media. They are also illuminating for anyone interested in nineteenth-century social and cultural history.

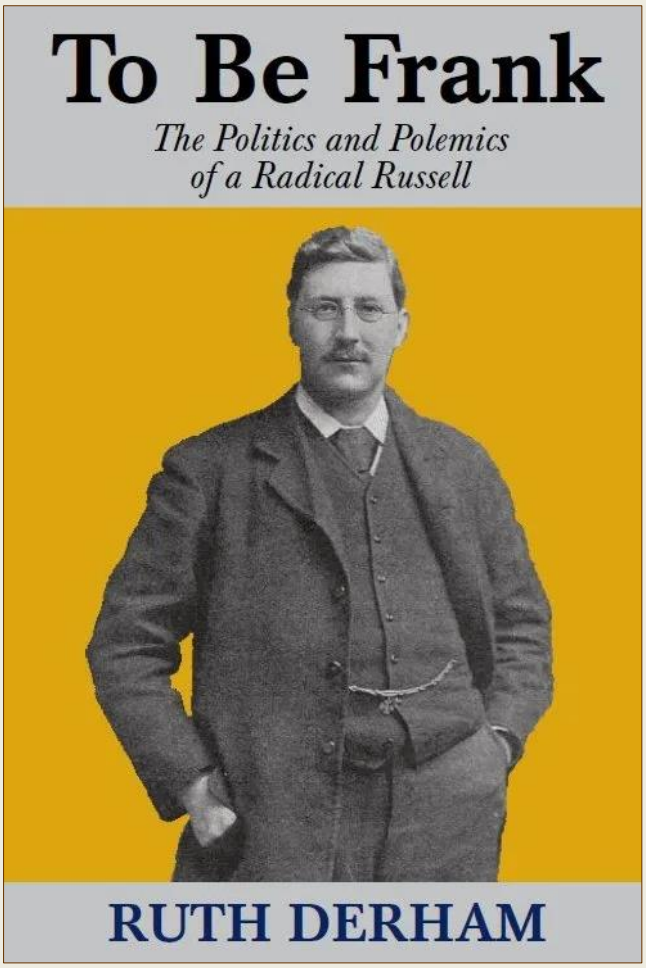
Open Book Publishers gratefully acknowledge funding for this book from the Marc Fitch Fund, the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the University of Central Lancashire.



***To Be Frank: The Politics and Polemics of a Radical Russell*, by Ruth Derham (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 2022), 210pp., £16.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780851249117**

The 2nd Earl Russell, John Francis Stanley, described himself as a socialist and strong individualist, but primarily innately rebellious. To this we might add rationalist, atheist, orator and persistent social campaigner. Born into privilege, raised and educated to be 'useful' and autonomous, Frank Russell pursued a path that brought him into conflict with the established order, spurring him to prove that he was

no vacuous aristocrat but a worthy successor to his illustrious grandfather, Lord John Russell, who had twice been Prime Minister. Giving voice to his deep-seated abhorrence of injustice, Frank Russell became an early advocate of controversial causes such as divorce reform and votes for women. He was the first peer to join the Fabians and speak as a 'candid friend' of the burgeoning Labour Party. This collection from his desk, compiled by his biographer, illustrates Frank Russell's diversity, humanity, humour and candour as, with similar principles but different methods to his brother, polymath Bertrand Russell, he pioneered campaigns for many rights we take for granted today.



***Consuming Female Beauty: British Literature and Periodicals, 1840-1914*, by Michelle J. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 224pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781474470094**

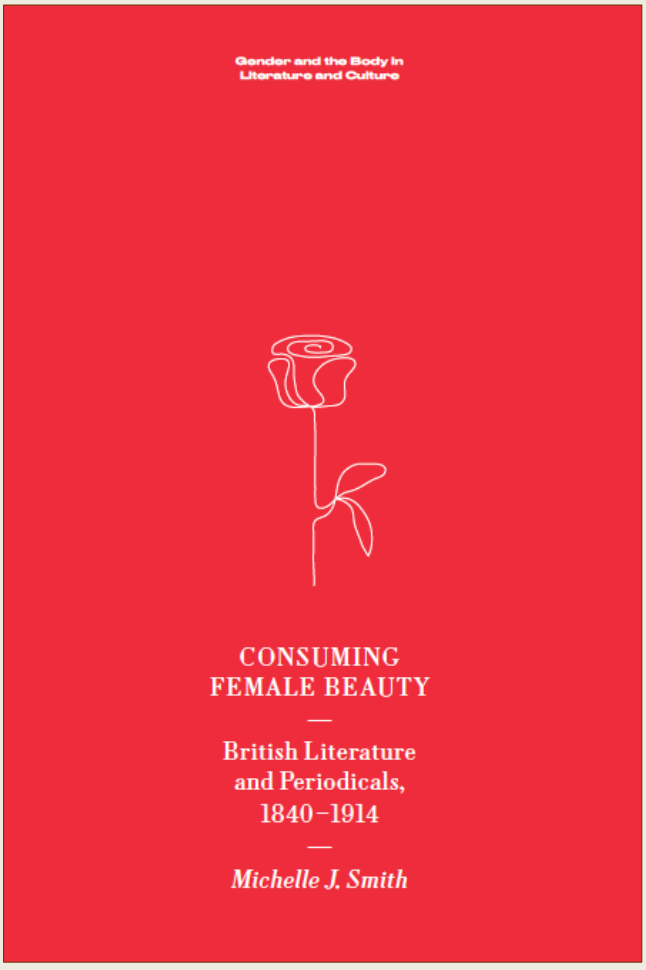
The first comprehensive account of female beauty in nineteenth-century British print culture

- Draws on an extensive and diverse range of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century print materials, such as women's magazines, beauty manuals, advertising and fiction, a significant proportion of which are rare archival sources that have not been discussed in existing scholarship

- Analyses how consumer culture and the emergence of the celebrity transformed and reshaped ideals about female beauty and femininity, providing a greater focus on beauty in popular culture

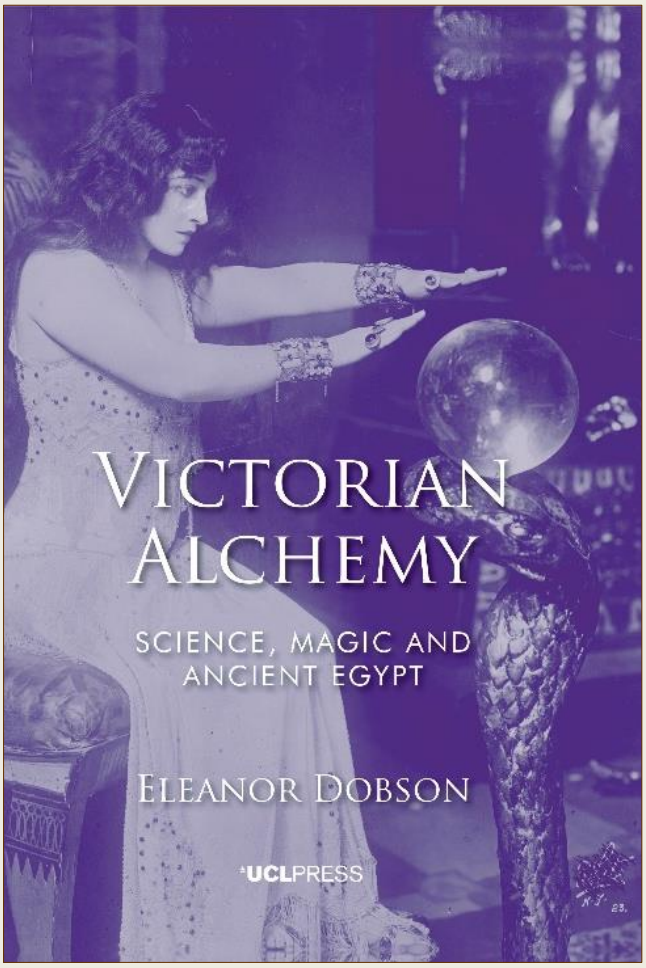
- Provides a historical context for understanding the origin of modern ideas about female appearance relating to cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, skin lightening, and body shape

Pinpointing how consumer culture transformed female beauty ideals during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study documents the movement from traditional views about beauty in relation to nature, God, morality and character to a modern conception of beauty as produced in and through consumer culture. While beauty has often been approached in relation to aestheticism and the visual arts in this period, this monograph offers a new and significant focus on how beauty was reshaped in girls' and women's magazines, beauty manuals and fiction during the rise of consumer culture. These archival sources reveal important historical changes



in how femininity was shaped and illuminate how contemporary ideas of female beauty, and the methods by which they are disseminated, originated in seismic shifts in nineteenth-century print culture.

***Victorian Alchemy: Science, Magic and Ancient Egypt*, by Eleanor Dobson (London: UCL Press, 2022), 276pp., £25.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781787358492, also available as open access e-book**



Victorian Alchemy explores nineteenth-century conceptions of ancient Egypt as this extant civilisation was being 'rediscovered' in the modern world. With its material remnants somewhat paradoxically symbolic of both antiquity and modernity (in the very currentness of Egyptological excavations), ancient Egypt was at once evocative of ancient magical power and of cutting-edge science, a tension that might be productively conceived of as 'alchemical'. Allusions to ancient Egypt simultaneously lent an air of legitimacy to depictions of the supernatural while projecting a sense of enchantment onto representations of cutting-edge science.

Examining literature and other cultural forms including art, photography and early film, Eleanor Dobson traces the myriad ways in which magic and science were perceived as entwined, and ancient Egypt evoked in parallel with various fields of study, from imaging technologies and astronomy, to investigations into the electromagnetic spectrum and the human mind itself. In so doing, counter to linear narratives of nineteenth-century progress, and demonstrating how ancient Egypt was more than a mere setting for Orientalist fantasies or nightmares, the book establishes how conceptions of modernity were inextricably bound up in the contemporary reception of the ancient world, and suggests how such ideas that took root and flourished in the Victorian era persist to this day.

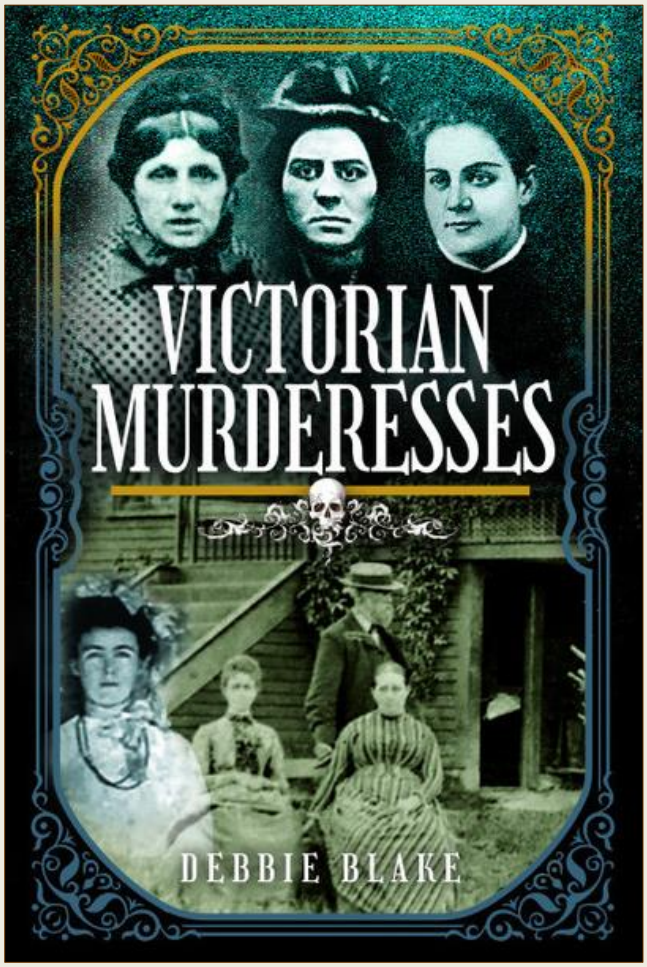
***Victorian Murderesses*, by Debbie Blake (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2022), 232pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399094511**

- Explores some of the most notorious murder cases of the nineteenth century.
- Some are famous, some lesser known, each very different in temperament and status, who resorted to murder for various reasons.
- Drawing from primary and secondary sources, each chapter explores each of the women's lives.
- Delves into each of the women's lives, the circumstances that led to their crimes, their committal and trial and the various reasons why they resorted to murder.
- Includes English and American women.

The Victorian belief that women were the 'weaker sex' who were expected to devote themselves entirely to family life, made it almost inconceivable that they could ever be capable of committing murder. What drove a woman to murder her husband, lover or even her own child? Were they tragic, mad or just plain evil?

Using various sources including court records, newspaper accounts and letters, this book explores some of the most notorious murder cases committed by seven women in nineteenth century Britain and America. It delves into each of the women's lives, the circumstances that led to their crimes, their committal and trial and the various reasons why they resorted to murder: the fear of destitution led Mary Ann Brough to murder her own children; desperation to keep her job drove Sarah Drake to her crime. Money was the motive in the case of Mary Ann Cotton, who is believed to have poisoned as many as twenty-one people. Kate Bender lured her

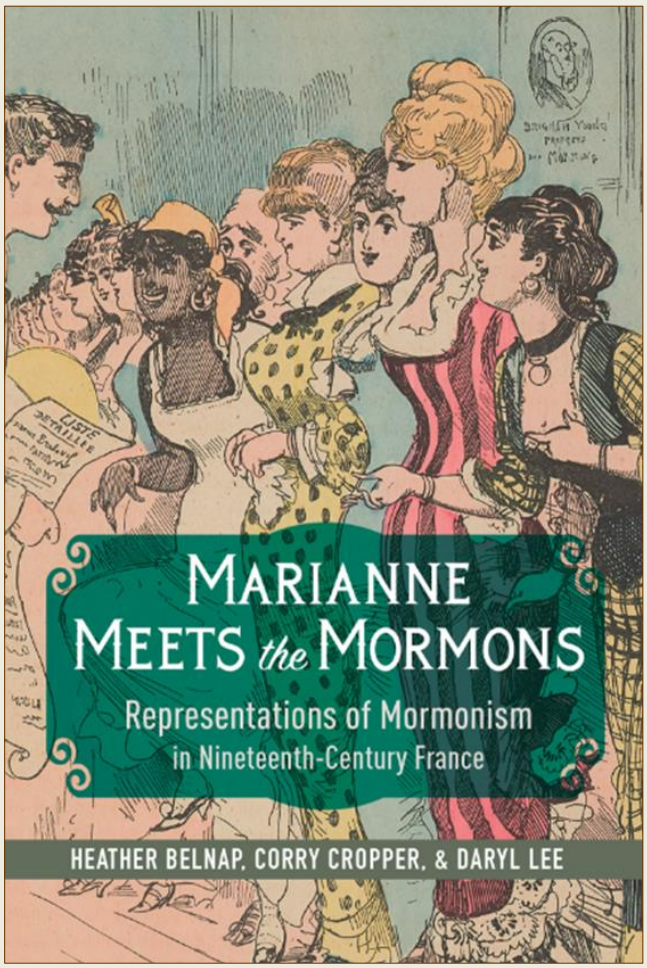
unsuspecting victims to their death in 'The Slaughter Pen' before stripping them of their valuables; Kate Webster's temper got the better of her when she brutally murdered and decapitated her employer; nurse Jane Toppan admitted she derived sexual pleasure from watching her victims die slowly and Lizzie Borden was suspected of murdering her father and stepmother with an axe, so that she could live on the affluent area known as 'the hill' in Fall River, Massachusetts.



***Marianne Meets the Mormons: Representations of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century France*, by Heather Belnap, Corry Cropper, and Daryl Lee (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2022), 220pp., £25.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780252086762**

In the nineteenth century, a fascination with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints made Mormons and Mormonism a common trope in French journalism, art, literature, politics, and popular culture. Heather Belnap, Corry Cropper, and Daryl Lee bring to light French representations of Mormonism from the 1830s to 1914, arguing that these portrayals often critiqued and parodied French society. Mormonism became a pretext for reconsidering issues such as gender, colonialism, the family, and church-state relations while providing artists and authors with a means for working through the possibilities of their own evolving national identity.

Surprising and innovative, *Marianne Meets the Mormons* looks at how nineteenth-century French observers engaged with the idea of Mormonism in order to reframe their own cultural preoccupations.



BAVS Funding Reports

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

BAVS Annual Conference 2022

I am extremely grateful to have been the recipient of one of the BAVS ECR Bursaries, which funded my attendance of the BAVS 2022 conference at the University of Birmingham. Thanks to the bursary, I was able to spend three nights in the University of Birmingham's (very new and comfortable) Chamberlain residence, and to attend the conference in full. This was my first BAVS conference, largely due to the fact that the COVID19 pandemic had prevented it from taking place in 2020 and 2021. It was well worth the wait—I had a wonderful three days at the conference, and was able to engage with a fascinating range of research.

Having made my way through the beautiful UoB campus, I arrived at the first day of the conference (Thursday September 1st) just in time for the excellent keynote by Jane Hamlett and Julie-Marie Strange on the 'Pet Revolution' of the nineteenth century: the creation by the Victorians of the 'pet culture' we recognise today. As an avowed pet lover, I was particularly excited about this paper, and it did not disappoint. Professors Hamlett and Strange discussed various examples of nineteenth-century approaches to pet keeping, from J. G. Wood's disobedient terrier Roughie (whose muddy tail ruined the wallpaper in his home), to the ill-fated attempts of Eliza Brightwen to domesticate a recalcitrant badger. Beyond these amusing case studies was a broader examination of human engagement with the natural world, and the complex dynamics created by the incursion of nonhuman animals into the Victorian home and family order.

While I do not have the space here to describe each of the excellent papers and panels I went on to see over the next several days, particular highlights for me include Richard Fallon's discussion of 'psychometric' readings of geological/ palaeontological fragments (I am now desperate to get hold of a copy of 'The Autobiography of a Boulder'), Frankie Dytor's paper on late nineteenth-century recreations of Italian renaissance dress, and the poignant and uniformly brilliant panel 'Anxious and Haunted Expressions of Child Loss'. This last saw Emily Vincent unpacking grief and ghostliness in Margaret Oliphant's fiction, Jen Baker exploring nineteenth-century manuals for bereaved parents, and Krissie West locating unexpectedly uncanny elements in the story of Tiny Tim. The papers mentioned here, only a small snippet of those I saw and enjoyed in person, give a good sense of the vast diversity of topics covered at the conference.

Illustration by Billie Gavurin, inspired by Professors Strange and Hamlett's keynote on Victorian pet culture

On Friday afternoon, I presented my own paper, which examined the relationship between mythography, evolutionary science, and mythic animal-human hybrids, in late nineteenth-century culture. I was delighted to have been placed on a panel with two other papers on evolutionary themes in Victorian literature: Anna McCullough looked at positive depictions of 'regression' in Andrew Lang's fairytales, while Andrea Selleri drew connections between the evolutionary writings of T. H. Huxley, and H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. Both of their papers were hugely interesting and illuminating, and it was a privilege to speak alongside them, as well as to engage with the knowledgeable and thought-

provoking questions asked by the attendees of our panel.

Friday's presentations were rounded off by Joseph Bristow's keynote on 'Making Mistakes and Committing Errors in Victorian Studies', which touched upon Naomi Wolf's now-notorious misinterpretation of the term 'death recorded' in nineteenth-century legal records. Professor Bristow's paper was at once gently humorous—reflecting on the minor errors to which we all fall prey in the course of academic research and writing—and also made a wider point about the dangers of assuming that our initial interpretation of historical sources is correct. After this, we all trooped off to the Edgbaston Park Hotel for the very enjoyable conference dinner. This was an opportunity to chat with and get to know more of our fellow attendees, facilitated in part by a nineteenth century themed quiz. On our way back through the wooded campus grounds after dinner, we were excited to spot a large badger ambling past—although, learning from Eliza Brightwen's mistakes, we made no attempt to tame it.

The conference concluded on Saturday with a superb presidents' panel on Transnationalism in Victorian Studies, featuring contributions from three scholars at different stages of their academic careers. Rohan McWilliam discussed the difficulties and rewards of aiming for a truly transnational perspective on the nineteenth century, Kostas Boyiopoulos explored decadent exophonic literature of the *fin-de-siècle*, and Gursimran Oberoi addressed the diverse global reverberations of G. F. Watts' art. The three papers complemented one another beautifully, and it felt like the perfect note upon which to end this international conference.

I am extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to attend BAVS 2022 under the ECR Bursary. It allowed me to spend more time at the conference, and to engage more fully with all it had to offer. The breadth of research on display was extraordinary, and I came away with the knowledge that my perspective on Victorian studies had been hugely enriched. I very much look forward to attending again next year.

Billie Gavurin (University of Bristol)

BAVS Annual Conference 2022

Attending my first ever international conference as a second year PGR had seemed like an incredibly intimidating prospect. But with financial resources kindly allotted to me from the BAVS committee, I was able to spend three days attending various presentations at the BAVS 2022 conference in Birmingham. Moreover, I also had the good fortune of being able to present my own research at this conference. It was nice to see some familiar academic faces in-person that I had only seen online through the harrowing years of the pandemic. I got to meet several other PGRs who were first-timers, as well as new ECRs and the old guard who seemed like they had been attending the conference forever! I cannot overstate how kind and accommodating everyone was. I felt very confident and supported as I delivered my paper and had a really wonderful experience over the three days!

On my academic Instagram, I promoted the conference as much as I could, posting images of posters, pictures from the keynotes or the various panels I attended while also resharing uploads from the BAVS page. I have also tried to engage with fellow Victorianists at Bristol in encouraging them to attend or present at future BAVS conferences. I would definitely be very keen to attend the conference again next year and will hopefully have newer, fresher research to share with my fellow Victorianists.

Tarini Bhamburkar (University of Bristol)

'Repairing Research in Victorian Studies', London Victorian Studies Colloquium 2022

The LVSC, held 7-9 April 2022, was a space for PG and ECR students to make connections, share research and develop their own research community—something which has been greatly missed for the past few years. For many delegates, even those two or three years into a PhD, it was their first in person event. The generous funding from BAVS meant that we were able to reduce the overall cost of attending, which was especially valuable considering the career stage of our delegates. We had eighteen delegates in total and just under half of our delegates chose to stay on campus at RHUL, creating a residential environment in which delegates could build meaningful professional relationships.

Our first talk was given by Vanessa Meade, curator at the Museum of the Home. Meade discussed the museum's recent 'Pet Life' exhibition. Many of our attendees work on interdisciplinary projects, with a focus on heritage, so Meade's talk provided insight into potential career progressions and demonstrated how academia and the heritage sector can work alongside each other.

Professor Lauren Goodlad (Rutgers) gave our first keynote lecture, which doubled as the postponed Sally Ledger Memorial Lecture. Goodlad unpicked George Eliot's use of fiction to consider human and non-human relationally across widely spread networks, without losing the nuance often flattened out through emergent fields of data acquisition and

statistical modelling. This talk was made available to the wider research community in hybrid format. Forty-eight people registered to attend, on top of those already attending as part of the LVSC. Our ECR keynote was given by Dr Ushashi Dasgupta (University of Oxford). Dasgupta's lecture questioned what it means to keep coming back— to read, and then re-read, considering the relationship between re-reading, self-knowledge, love, and memory. Dasgupta joined us for most of the colloquium and tied in her paper with many of those given by our delegates, this was a really wonderful way of demonstrating links between research, which encouraged the forging of new academic relationships.

Our delegate papers covered a wide range of topics and gave the opportunity for MA, PhD and Post-Doctoral students to share research. Topics included the nineteenth-century amateur rowing club, south sea voyaging and the Victorian male body, the professionalization of the armed services, the implications of repair for Jenny Wren in *Our Mutual Friend,* community repair in Ethel Carnie's writing, using Rosetti's poetry to understand death in the COVID-19 Pandemic, and re-reading the poems of Emily Brontë with Charlotte Mew.

We held a 'Writing Historical Fiction' panel, in which two RHUL PGR students gave more detailed papers on their work. This discussion explored using archival research to retrospectively write marginalised voices back into the centre of the narrative, through Joanna Brown's work-in progress, *The Listening*, which brings into focus the lives and perspectives of Black women in early nineteenth century London. Nat Reeve then discussed their newly published work *Nettleblack* (Cipher, 2022) which delves into the delights, perils and practicalities of queer and trans Victorians finding their place in the world.

Dr Nicola Kirkby (RHUL) and Dr Rebecca Hutcheon (RHUL) provided a workshop entitled 'From PhD to Postdoc'. This discussed the avenues available after postgraduate studies, informed by their own experiences. This provided some invaluable demystifying of post-PhD life, which reflected the concerns and needs of our delegates. Dr Kirkby also led the closing workshop, which evaluated the critical potential of repair in Victorian studies today, and interrogated the extent to which we can understand recovery as a cultural form. This was an opportunity to establish the most pressing stakes of our individual works-in-progress, and support one another in producing research with reach.

Without generous support from BAVS, which covered speaker expenses and offset delegate fees, we would have been unable to host the LVSC in this format and to open up participation to as many delegates as we did. Feedback from delegates showed that they found it an intellectually stimulating, constructive and positive environment in which to share work in progress and feel themselves part of a field that is opening itself to new challenges and methodologies to address urgent questions in the past and present.

Anya Eastman, Katie McGettigan, and Ruth Livesey
(Royal Holloway, University of London)

Devotional Criticism: Women's Iconography and Reading As Pilgrimage

In November 2019 I was awarded a BAVS Research Funding Award to complete vital archival research at the Angeli-Dennis Collection of the University of British Columbia for my first monograph, *The Matrilineal Heritage of Louisa May Alcott and Christina Rossetti* (Routledge, 2021). I booked return flights to Canada for the summer of 2020. Following the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, these flights were cancelled. Given that I was working towards a deadline of 1 January 2021 for submission of my manuscript, I enquired as to whether the archive would be able to scan the required materials under these exceptional circumstances. Although this is not their usual policy, the UBC Rare Books and Special Collections scanned me all of the necessary materials for the completion of my manuscript, and the book was subsequently published in July 2021.

After Canada reopened its borders in January 2022, I rebooked my flights. I have since started a new research project, *Devotional Criticism: Women's Iconography and Reading As Pilgrimage*, which draws on my secondary research specialism in Creative Writing to develop a creative-critical methodology for examining the devotional writings of nineteenth-century women. This project applies the rituals surrounding the creation of an icon to the interpretation of nineteenth-century women's devotional writing, thereby developing a critical framework that endeavours to enter into the worldviews of nineteenth-century women of faith. Iconography, as an artform, provides a model of devotional artistry based on embodied experiences; it is a record of divine revelations received in ritual and prayer. Therefore, it provides a fruitful model of artistic expression rooted in the individual's metaphysical experience of their faith, rather than their relationship with the institutionalized structures of the church. As such, it counteracts many of the dominant critical paradigms in feminist scholarship concerning nineteenth-century women of faith, including patriarchal authority, institutional

indoctrination, sexual repression, and feminine submission.

Before travelling to Vancouver, I contacted the Epiphany Sacred Arts Guild of the Vancouver Archdiocese. I am in the process of interviewing a number female iconographers for my project, so as to gain insight into how iconography has shaped their experiences as women of faith. Contemporary women's iconography is an especially appropriate medium for me to explore the creative ways in which women respond to the challenges of working within ancient religious traditions because, in the Orthodox Church, women have only been officially permitted to practice the art over the last fifty years and, across all Christian denominations, women continue to face hostility from male practitioners. My interviews explore my subjects' journeys to becoming female iconographers; their experiences as women working in the discipline; the ways in which they bend the tradition to expand its representations of women and the effect that the tradition's ritual practices has had on their spiritual lives.

During my time in Vancouver, I stayed with Patricia Ballard—a painter who produces modern art, sacred art, and traditional iconography. Having worked in a range of artforms, Patricia was able to provide extensive insight into how the ritual processes of iconography transform the painter's vision. Patricia put together an itinerary of meetings with female iconographers alongside visits to contemporary iconography exhibits.

On arriving in Vancouver on 30th March, I attended a demonstration in Patricia's studio where she had prepared a short presentation on the development of the Byzantine icon and its subsequent influence on Eastern and Western sacred art. Thereafter, she provided me with a demonstration on the 'egg tempera' technique of icon-painting. The iconographer paints using egg yolk and earth pigments; the egg represents the potential for life, while the ancient pigments symbolise eternity. Patricia cracked an egg, separated its yolk from its white, pinched the membrane, and drained the contents into a glass where it was mixed with white wine. After selecting the pigments she would use, Patricia ground them in her palette and mixed them with egg emulsion. Icons are painted from dark to light using multiple layers of emulsion; they take months, or even years to paint, and at least two weeks to dry.

After preparing her egg emulsion, Patricia demonstrated some of the other specialised techniques associated with iconography. These included preparing the gesso—a combination of whiting of plaster of Paris and rabbit skin glue, which is applied to the wooden base of the icon to create a pure white surface. Having applied the gesso to the wooden board and left it to dry, Patricia opened her portfolio and showed me a range of her cartoons. Although these designs were handed down by the early Church Fathers, they possess great versatility. Indeed, the same design looks radically different when it is executed by two or more iconographers. As a Catholic iconographer, Patricia has more stylistic freedom than an Orthodox practitioner and she talked me through some of the variations she has made to the ancient designs over the years.

Finally, Patricia displayed her gilding board containing detailed instructions and samples of the various gilding techniques including tooling and burnishing. The gold leaf is applied to bole, or red clay, which is mixed to the consistency of cream and covered over the icon's surface in several layers. The gilding process is delicate and painstaking, taking months at a time. Fine layers of 24 carat gold are transferred onto the icon using a horsehair brush and fixed to the board through blowing on its surface. When the gold is firmly in place, the iconographer uses special tools to embellish it. Patricia's demonstration allowed me to witness the techniques of iconography in action and to form an impression of the daily rhythms and routines that such techniques establish for the artist.

Following Patricia's demonstration, we attended a studio visit with her colleague—the Brazilian iconographer, Ana Maria Silva. Ana Maria is a craftswoman who creates vestments, porcelain, embroidery, calligraphy, and miniature carvings, as well as icons. She explained that her collection is solely for private use and that she never sells her work. Her icons are created for exclusively devotional purposes and incorporate aspects of Brazilian folk art

At Patricia's studio

– including personalised and idiosyncratic facial expressions. Each icon reflects a particular intercessory prayer that Ana Maria has made during an important moment of her life. Meeting Ana Maria enriched my understanding of the relationship

between the iconographer's artistic practice, their spirituality, and their prayer life.

The following day, Patricia organised for us to view the private collection of icons belonging to the Archbishop of Vancouver at the John Paul II Pastoral Center using a special VIP pass. The Archbishop is an enthusiastic patron of sacred art and owns one of the most extensive collections of contemporary iconography in Canada. Since iconography is often regarded as a 'dead art form' by many curators and collectors, it is rare to find an exhibition of contemporary icons. Today, most iconographers are commissioned by the clergy, or private patrons, and it can be challenging to exhibit their work publicly. The Archbishop's private collection included a dazzling array of modern icons in the Coptic, Greek, Russian, Roman, Spanish, Syrian, Croatian and Ukrainian traditions, which are a testament to the vibrant cultural life of Canada's immigrant communities. Most of these icons are tokens of the artists' gratitude for the Archbishop's continuing patronage of sacred art within the Archdiocese. I was in awe of the range of techniques and designs within the collection, which refute the common misassumption that iconography is a repetitive and monotonous artform. Instead, I began to see it as an international art practice that has been stylistically adapted by various local communities around the world.

Before leaving the Pastoral Center, we viewed Patricia's masterwork, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, after the fourteenth-century painter, Jacopo di Mino del Pellicciaio, in the Archbishop's private chapel. The work is 33.5 by 55 inches and is inspired by the transitional period when iconographic techniques began to be infused with Renaissance developments. Patricia pointed out the aspects of the painting that were in the style of the traditional icon, and those that reflected the Renaissance vision of the world. While she painted using the egg tempera process and utilised traditional gilding techniques, the facial expressions, hair, and hands of the angels were personalised and realistic. Likewise, the folds of the fabric and patterns of tiles reflected Renaissance conventions concerning composition and perspective. However, the facial features, postures and gestures of Christ and the Virgin embodied the stylised appearance of an icon, which indicates that its subjects are divine beings whose physical appearance has been subject to transfiguration.

On the other side of the chapel was an example of Patricia's miniature work: an image of the *Annunciation* painted after Fra Angelico. I enjoyed learning about the changes Patricia made to the original image: after she accidentally smudged the white wings of the angel, she changed them so that they became rainbow-coloured. Later, when she realised that she had miscalculated the painting's scale, she added a thin panel portraying the fall of Adam and Eve on its left side—thereby investing the work with a typological dimension. Patricia spoke to me about her journey from training as a modern artist at the Universities of Alberta and British Columbia through to studying the varied techniques of sacred art independently after her retirement from teaching. Today, she continues to produce modern work alongside her iconography and sacred art painting.

The following day, we made another studio visit to Patricia's mentor in gilding, Ana Diaz Drew, who comes from a family of five generations of artists in Madrid. Ana is a certified master gilder and her fifteenth-floor apartment in central Vancouver includes a breath-taking collection of gilded works in both sacred and secular styles, including Art Nouveau-inspired furniture, ceramics, and glass. Ana also proudly displays the work of her mother, Pepita Moreno Ramirez, who specialises in embossed silver icons.

Over afternoon tea, Ana shared her journey to becoming a master gilder. No other member of her family specialises in gilding, and she wanted to establish a distinctive artistic identity. She embraced the medium after enrolling on a course in Russian iconography as an undergraduate in Madrid. Like Patricia, she prefers Renaissance-influenced sacred art, but will produce icons on commission. Today, she trains iconographers in traditional gilding techniques. Before I left, Ana asked if I owned an icon. When I answered in the negative, she gave me the only true icon that remains in her possession. It is the first icon she ever made as a student in Madrid. "It might as well go to someone who really appreciates icons", she told me, "My husband finds them stern and formidable, and I don't make them anymore because I prefer other artforms". It was truly the best present I have ever received.

Having introduced me to her female colleagues, Patricia ended the week by taking me to visit the community of the Queen of Peace Monastery, Squamish, so I could view the spiritual function of iconography for those in the religious life. Nestled in the mountains, the monastery overlooks forests and farmland, and, on occasion, an unsuspecting tourist can run across a black bear or lynx en route to the community. Most of sisters take up iconography as a form of devotional recreation after they have taken their final vows and any profit made from their work goes towards the larger upkeep of the community.

We were privileged to attend "recreation" with the sisters in the early afternoon when they rest from their daily duties and socialise one another. Seated in a circle, we introduced ourselves and spoke about why we are attracted to iconography. After a brief conversation, the nuns displayed a selection of

their work. A young nun, Sr Mary Thomas, showed us one of her most treasured possessions—an icon that she created while preparing for her final vows. This icon is a depiction of the Virgin Mary adoring the Christ Child, which contains a miniature image of a hedgehog—the symbol of monastic life—in the bottom lefthand corner. Contrastingly, the work of Sr Mary Thomas's peer, Sr Mary Stephen, is abstract and expressionist. Trained in modern art, St Mary Stephen produces devotional work in crayons and acrylic that deliberately transgresses the prescribed techniques of iconography, so as to express her private devotional experience. Meeting the sisters allowed me to see how iconography can function as a record of the daily lives of women of faith—creating a space where private devotion and professional practice meet.

My week with Patricia Ballard, the Epiphany Sacred Arts Guild, and the sisters of the Queen of Peace Monastery, was culturally enriching, intellectually stimulating, and spiritually uplifting. In addition to learning about the history and practice of iconography, I was welcomed into the studios of many talented female artists from around the world. They shared the transformative impact iconography has had on their lives and my experience meeting them, along with the interviews I conducted, will shape my practise-based project going forward. I am grateful to BAVS for the opportunity.

Azelina Flint (Lancaster University)

Calls for Submissions

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

Fantasy and the Imagination in the Long Nineteenth Century

MMU's PGR/ECR Long Nineteenth Century Interdisciplinary Research Seminar Series
26 January 2023

The *PGR/ECR Long Nineteenth Century Interdisciplinary Research Seminar Series* is organised by volunteer PGRs and ECRs at Manchester Metropolitan University aimed at fostering inter-institutional and multi-faculty networking and offers platforms for its community to share the latest research on topics that have a focus in the long nineteenth century. The seminar series is an opportunity for PGRs/ECRs to promote and encourage discussion on the interdisciplinary aspects of new approaches to long nineteenth century research.

For its event on Thursday, 26 January 2023 from 17:30-19:00 GMT (on-line) the theme is: *Fantasy and the Imagination in the Long Nineteenth Century*.

Fantasy, 'the very home of the imagination and invention, flourished and produced some of its finest, and wildest, examples' (Manlove, 2003: 17) in the period between the late Victorian and modernist 1920s. This was a time of significant social and political (perhaps even sexual) change that saw authors 'drawn to the fantastic as a mode of writing that seemed to offer an opportunity to imagine a world whose contours were less definite and whose ways of life were less reified' (Daly, 2019: i-ii). Such works often produced subversive narratives within imagined worlds that acted as 'an antidote to the increasing dominance of the scientific and the materialistic' (Sharoni, 2017: 125). Overlapping with gothic and weird, the fantastic, however, cannot always be assumed as subversive and like its cousin genres, often underpins contemporary political ideology. Moreover, fantasy has generally been associated with children's literature and with the fairy tale re-gaining popularity in the nineteenth century alongside the rising interests in phantasmagoria, spiritualism, dream interpretation and a focus on the imagination, fantastic narratives became more responsive to the world around the reader.

PGRs/ECRs from any discipline are invited to submit a 300-word abstract for paper presentations of approximately 20 minutes (other formats will also be considered) to be followed by a Q&A session. Please send your abstract and a short bio (50-words) to long19cmmu@gmail.com indicating the event title in the subject line by **6 January 2023**.

For information about the group and its activities, visit our website: https://long19century.wordpress.com/

Daly, Nicholas. 'Foreword', *The Female Fantastic: Gendering the Supernatural in the 1890s and 1920s* edited by Lizzie Harris McCormick, Jennifer Mitchell, Rebecca Soares (New York: Routledge, 2019).
Manlove, C. N. *From Alice to Harry Potter : Children's Fantasy in England* (Cybereditions, 2003).
Sharoni, Josephine. *Lacan and Fantasy Literature: Portents of Modernity in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Leiden/Boston: BRILL RODOPI, 2017).

Hidden Histories / Recovered Stories

Victorian Popular Fiction Association, 15th Annual Conference
12–14 July 2023, Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK

Keynote Speakers
Professor Patricia Pulham (University of Surrey, UK)
Dr Adrian S. Wisnicki (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, US)
Professor Nathalie Vanfasse (Aix-Marseille Université, FR)

Call for Papers
The Victorian Popular Fiction Association is dedicated to fostering interest in understudied popular writers, literary genres and other cultural forms, and to facilitating the production of publishable research and academic collaborations amongst scholars of the popular.

This conference celebrates the ways in which Victorian popular culture, fictions and artistic productions addressed topics and subjects, and experimented with stories and genres, that went unacknowledged, were repressed or censored by the mainstream. We are interested in, on the one hand, the hidden, lost, forgotten, and on the other hand the recovered, reclaimed, remembered.

The conference seeks to re-centre the popular, from gruesome murder stories to sensational tales of sexual violence and adultery, discussions of pseudo-sciences like spiritualism, to addressing miscegenation, and Victorian historical fiction that reimagines the lives of marginalised figures. It wants to also highlight the ways in which current scholarship is rediscovering hidden aspects, characters and narratives of the Victorian period.

We also invite papers exploring the relevance of forbidden or unspeakable themes in neo-Victorianism. Silenced by Victorian mainstream culture but obliquely voiced in such popular genres as the sensation novel, the penny dreadful and the bodice-ripper, these themes have taken centre stage in today's fictionalisation of a past that tends to be reimagined in all its deviant, arousing and disquieting aspects.

Possible topics include:

- Forgotten and/or ignored global Victorians
- The 'lost world': nature, animals and the environment
- Challenges to the myth of progress, the monstrosity of science
- Rediscoveries in Victorian and Neo-Victorian writing
- Historical fiction (both Victorian and neo-Victorian)
- Disability, diversity, and inclusivity
- Decolonising and undisciplining
- Forgotten aspects of Empire
- Ethnical encounters, rehumanising the Other
- Hidden genders and illicit sexuality
- Translation and the transnational
- Hidden, secret, forbidden spaces
- The unspeakable, violence, and taboos
- Fears of national and imperial weakness
- Theorising the margins, the unspoken and affect
- Censorship, targets of political repression and the spectre of social upheaval
- Life writing, travel writing and the epistolary
- Experimentation with forms and genres

Please send proposals of 250–300 words, a 50-word biography, twitter handle (if you have one) to Dr Claudia Capancioni, Prof. Mariaconcetta Costantini and Dr Laura Gill at: vpfaconference@gmail.com. The conference will take place at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln as an in-person event, but online participation will be possible for accessibility. Please indicate in your abstract if you anticipate being unable to attend in person. Proposals for roundtables and reading group meetings responding to the conference theme are also welcome.

Deadline for proposals: **Wednesday 8th February 2023.**

Membership of the VPFA is necessary to attend the conference. To find out more, please visit the VPFA website: http://victorianpopularfiction.org/vpfa-annual-conference/.

For up-to-date information, please check the conference page on the VPFA website: https://victorianpopularfiction.org/vpfa-annual-conference/.

Home and Away in the Long Nineteenth Century

A one-day PGR and ECR interdisciplinary conference, hosted by LNCSS-Grad Strand
Saturday 11th February 2022 at Senate House, London,
Keynote Speaker: Dr Mary Shannon (Roehampton)

The nineteenth century was a period in which industrial and technological advancements enabled national as well as international travel. This in turn to a clear differentiation between what was meant by 'home' and 'away'. With nineteenth century citizens denied the mobility that we enjoy today, this conference intends to discover the ways nineteenth century citizens facilitated and engendered ideas of the home and that of being away, through written words, technological inventions or the exchange of material things.
We welcome proposals for 10-minute lightning talk papers or 20-minute standard papers examining all types of nineteenth-century communities, relationships and networks. Papers might consider the creation and consolidation of the home in domestic, social, emotional, nurturing, moral, ethnic, or religious terms; or the reasons for and ideas of being away from home, as well as the ways in which one is away from home, Papers arc also welcome that challenge and deconstruct the implications of home as domestic and away as work, endeavour and exploration.

Proposals are invited but are not limited to:

- Cultural translation and hybridity
- Tourism
- Encountering the 'Other'
- Transatlantic exchange
- International exhibitions
- Travelling objects
- Globalism
- Voyages
- The home as workplace
- Inheritance, wills anti legacies (i.e. the home across generations)
- Childhood, child care and child rearing
- Connecting with the Empire (i.e. Telegraphy, the imperial penny post etc)
- Modes of travelling
- Gender in the home
- The home and class
- The urban home or the rural home
- The emotional connection to home, nation, freedom, family and friends

Proposals should be up to 300 words and submitted with a brief CV or bio (150 words) by 9/1/2023 to: lncssgs@gmail.com

Please state if you wish to present for 10 or 20 minutes.