



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

The BAVS 2023 conference is now just around the corner. It's shaping up to be a fantastic few days at the University of Surrey: [take a peek at the provisional programme here](#).

You can secure an early-bird ticket for the conference if you book before 6 August. There are also reduced rates for PGR and unwaged attendees. [See the conference website for full details](#).

For postgraduate and early-career colleagues professionalisation workshops will take place in the afternoon of Wednesday 30 August (the day before the conference kicks off). These will consist of parallel sessions focusing on professional development within and beyond academia. [You can book for the professionalisation afternoon only or add it on to full conference attendance](#).

The BAVS Online Writing Retreats are continuing throughout the summer to help you work through your to-do list in a supportive and friendly co-working environment. Everyone is welcome to join. [You can find out more and sign up for future sessions here](#).

If you would like to contribute to the *BAVS Newsletter*, please do get in touch to join our reviewer pool or propose a review of a publication. Authors of new work on any aspect of Victorian studies are also invited to get in touch to suggest titles for review. [Full details can be found on the BAVS Newsletter webpage](#).

Best wishes,

Clare Stainthorp & Sarah Wride  
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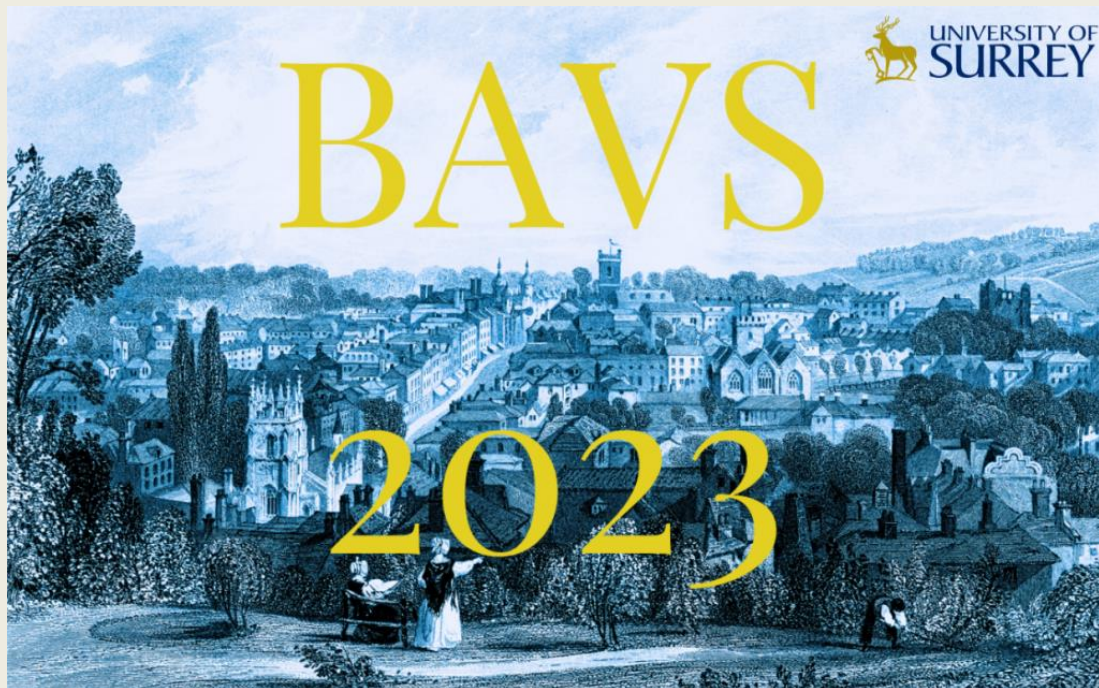
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# BAVS News

BAVS CONFERENCE  
31 August – 2 September 2023



## Programme:

<https://bavs2023.wordpress.com/programme/>

The draft programme for BAVS 2023 at the University of Surrey is now live.

If you would be interested in chairing a panel at the conference, please email us at [bavs@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:bavs@surrey.ac.uk).

## Keynotes:

- Prof. Ruth Livesey (Royal Holloway, University of London), 'The Common, the Middling, and the Immersive: Three Ways of Finding *Middlemarch*'
- Prof. Jennifer DeVere Brody (Stanford University), 'Moving Stones: About the Art of Edmonia Lewis'
- Prof. David Amigoni (Keele University), "'Monstrous Fine": J.M. Barrie's *Quality Street* and the Romance(s) of Ageing'
- Prof. Michael Hatt (University of Warwick), 'Sculptural Bones, Imperial Flesh: The Sculptural Armature of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata'

## Registration:

<https://bavs2023.wordpress.com/registration/>

**We are offering early bird rates up until Sunday 6 August.**

When booking your place at the conference, you will be able to choose whether you would like to attend the full three-day conference, or one specific day only. Reduced PGR/unwaged rates are available.

University of Surrey accommodation including breakfast (Stag Hill Campus) is available for £48 per night.

## PGR/ECR Workshops:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bavs-2023-pgrecre-professionalisation-afternoon-tickets-657694862037>

**The postgraduate professionalisation workshops will take place in the afternoon of Wednesday 30 August.** These will consist of parallel sessions focusing on key aspects of professional development within and beyond academia, followed by an informal pay-as-you-go dinner in Guildford.

PGR colleagues can book for the PGR professionalisation afternoon only, or you can book for full conference attendance including the professionalisation afternoon.

## Reviews

The BAVS Newsletter is always looking for writers, particularly among postgraduate, early-career, and independent researchers, to review recent works on any aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture. To express an interest in reviewing, please email your name, affiliation (if applicable), five research keywords, and any titles or digital resources that you are interested in reviewing to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com). You will also find a list of books currently available to be sent out to reviewers on the [BAVS 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.

***Serial Revolutions 1848: Writing, Politics, Form*, by Clare Pettitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 456pp., £90.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780198830412**

The second instalment of Clare Pettitt's *Serial Forms* project, a longitudinal examination of the impact of media on political and literary culture from 1815 to 1918, is a striking and detailed intervention in Victorian media history. As the title, *Serial Revolutions 1848: Writing, Politics, Form*, suggests, this middle volume in the series focusses on 1848 as a turning point from which local issues of labour, land, and region became global issues of citizenship, nationhood, and human rights. The reason this year marked a turning point, Pettitt argues, is the media: old forms being replaced by the new.

Pettitt's central argument offers a new focus on seriality, which offered 'a way of modelling movement. The form of the serial moves onwards through calendar time: by its dynamic forward trajectory, it seems to unspool into the empty future' (p. 1). The distinctively revolutionary and volatile international politics of 1848 were reliant on this sense of seriality in writing and politics. With the mass production and consumption of news, literature, and political writing, geographical movement was likewise made 'dynamic' between communities across the globe. Significantly, seriality enables us to understand how such communities saw themselves and each other: a 'self-consciousness' that was configured not as "nation", "class", or "industrial labour" but 'about raggedness, constitutional democracy, and the city-polis' (p. 2). This approach reframes 1848 not as a linear series of revolutions starting in Paris, but as a more circular and discursive attempt to overcome different injustices informed by local character and tradition. Pettitt joins the material and the rhetorical through exchanges of newspapers, poetry, novels, and letters from across America, Britain, and the newly self-identifying nations within Europe. While initially the focus on canonical writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Charles Dickens may not seem particularly radical, their positionality as well-

connected and mobile writers enables a broad-ranging view from London to Paris, New York to Rome, Dublin to Berlin. By matching the geographical and temporal dynamism of serial forms, Pettitt offers a more global and interconnected history of 1848 than previous works. Painstakingly detailed, each chapter offers something for every scholar of the nineteenth century.

The introduction offers a range of accessible and convincing redefinitions of 'seriality', 'nationalisms', and 'citizenship' in the specific moment of 1848, emphasising the importance of this single case study within previous linear histories of revolution in Europe and America. Pettitt's historiography offers a concise overview of existing thought, neatly explaining why 'there is a general feeling that [the 1848 revolutions] *must* have been important', despite their apparent failure to radically overhaul capitalist society (p. 11). This creates the foundational premise of the book: the creation of citizenship debates in 1848 were dependent on serial forms, which incorporated constructions of gender and race, exemplified through Frederick Douglass's attendance of the Seneca Falls Convention. Chapter One, 'Revolutionary Tourists', explores the intersection of travel and leisure in the 1840s, following the 'many English writers who chased the revolution to Paris, hoping to see it actually "transacting"' as their Romantic-era predecessors had before them, aiming to spectate from within but often not quite understanding the relationship between belonging, participation, and performance (p. 39). Chapter Two, 'Moving Pictures', builds on this to explore cross-country connectivity through technological advancement. The 1791 Haitian Revolution's seriality arising from sailors' mobile oral networks of communication is compared to the transmission of 1848 European revolutions through 'real time' illustrated newspapers which captured the violence and dynamism of the revolutions. Pettitt disputes the claims of Eric Hobsbawm and others that 'new telegraph and transport systems facilitated the copycatting of the February [1848] events in Paris across Europe', demonstrating that, if anything, these revolutions delayed the rollout of telegraphic systems (p. 77).

Chapters Three and Four, 'The Ragged of Europe' and 'The Inter-National Novel', offer new readings of class, symbolism, and visibility in journalistic and novelistic writings. Pettitt follows iconography associated with Emerson's thesis that a "ragged coat looks revolutionary" across Britain, Ireland, France, and Italy (p. 119). Chapter Five, 'Under Siege', focusses primarily on epistolary communication to connect orality and writing as a means of escapism from confinement, contrasting American journalist Margaret Fuller and British poet Arthur Clough's respective "[writings] from a barricaded Rome" (p. 192). This relationship between orality and print extends through Chapter Six, 'Serially Speaking', contrasting Emerson and Douglass's lectures on the antislavery circuit as a 'new genre' based on 'novel combinations of the oral and the written [...] the essay and the performance' (p. 235).

The volume's most effective transnational history comes from Chapter Seven, 'Slavery and Citizenship', which importantly broadens the geographical scope of historiography of 'citizenship' between Europe and America. Pettitt emphasises that the intrinsic relationships between these two continents arises from resistance to, not just economic motivations behind, the slave trade. Seriality is transformed from a form of mobility into a form of escape, illustrated by Douglass's conception of intersectional Liberty which "cannot be bound by geographical boundaries or national restrictions" (p. 267).

The final portion of the book astutely asks, 'what happens when you are both at home and not at home during a revolution?' (p. 290). Fortunately Barrett Browning's poem *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), told from the window of her Florentine drawing-room, tells us. The poem's immediate translation into Italian marked the Brownings' membership of 'the Italian and expatriate nationalist community', community and familial identities are explored through personal letters, illustrated English and Italian newspapers, and architecture and urban space (p. 291). Barrett Browning's positionality is contrasted with Dickens's editorial writings, through which Pettitt offers a nuanced exploration of how these writers, and their readers, conceptualised their recent histories.

Pettitt's afterword concerns Gustave Flaubert's speculations about what would come from 1848. Pettitt argues that we still don't quite know: the revolutionaries of 1848 'worked to put a permanent end to a certain kind of despotic government in Europe, but they inaugurated a nationalism that, even by the 1860s, was being used as an alibi for racism and imperialist violence' (p. 401). This had similar repercussions for their utopian uses of

telecommunications, as well as 'demand for full employment' which have resulted in a connected world being a dangerous and weighty tool, and increasing labour and economic precarity. Pettitt's monograph is an ambitious and fascinating read: deftly crafted and filled with detailed and painstaking research (although at times the breadth of this makes it hard to follow). However, there is no doubt that this is a timely and important reassessment of this moment of political awakening and turmoil.

*Victoria Clarke (Durham University)*

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***Pre-Raphaelites in the Spirit World: The Séance Diary of William Michael Rossetti*, edited by J.B. Bullen, Rosalind White and Lenore A. Beaky (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2022), £36.05 (paperback), £35.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781789974423**

This edition of William Michael Rossetti's previously unpublished séance diaries is an invaluable resource to scholars of the occult and provides a fascinating glimpse into a growing culture in mid-nineteenth-century London. The title is a little misleading. Rossetti's séance diaries make up the first part of the text, then the séances themselves are reproduced – there are 20 in total recorded – followed by a list of eclectic attendees. The second section is an 1856 letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti from poet and children's author Anna Mary Howitt. It was an exercise in automatic writing in which Howitt channels her newfound clairvoyant skills in order to let Rossetti know that he was, in her words, 'one of the greatest painters ever yet born', according to her spirit guides (p. 117).

J.B. Bullen and Rosalind White's Introduction is rich and meticulously researched, drawing on archival work to guide the reader through the growth and popularity of the spiritualist movement in mid-nineteenth-century London. The text reconstructs the vibrant networks of believers and non-believers who frequented séances, including a wealth of names associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement: William Michael Rossetti and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; Ford Madox Brown and his daughters Lucy and Catherine; Elizabeth Siddal, Fanny Cornforth, and Jane Morris. The spiritualist craze acted as an extension of Pre-Raphaelite culture, as people of all social classes rubbed shoulders in these environments. Popular mediums of this period would often refuse to charge a fee in order to dissuade sceptics from the assumption that they were motivated by payment. Mediums themselves appeared to occupy a comparable social role to artists' models, in that through their (supposedly) natural gifts they could frequent high society. One

such medium was Mary Marshall, a washerwoman from Holborn who puzzled the Royal Society through her illiteracy, but, as this introduction notes, such coarseness was considered 'proof of her powers' (p. 57).

The Introduction also details the prominent role of other eminent Victorians who were not associated with Pre-Raphaelitism, including Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Barrett Browning was such a strong believer in spiritualism she considered offering herself as the spiritualist correspondent of the *Atheneum* but decided against it on account of her public image; while spiritualist séances had garnered popular success among London's literary intelligentsia, it was still taboo (in part because these séances were often completely secular affairs). The Introduction's chronological structure is inconsistently applied, with information from different decades appearing in the wrong sections or occasionally repeated. Given the density and variety of research on display here, it might have been more straightforward to have adapted a thematic structure. Nevertheless, Bullen and White provide a strong grounding knowledge of the spiritualist networks, including where one might be invited to a private séance, such as the Howitt's Hermitage at Highgate or Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Cheyne Walk.

William Michael Rossetti is often sceptical of the activity he records, and incredulous at his brother's willingness to believe full-heartedly in the knocks and rappings; he declared he did not know 'what to infer about the phenomena, still less whether "spirits" have anything to do with them' (p. 4). Yet Pre-Raphaelitism lends itself to spiritualism. Attunement to the precision of the natural world and a focus on metaphysical elements explain to some extent why an artist like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in works such as *Beata Beatrix* (1864-1870) and *How they Met Themselves* (1850-1860) which focus on themes of death and resurrection, would become so invested in spiritualism. In the séances, however, it is striking how banal the conversations with the dead are, which was perhaps a result of many of the attendees' beliefs in the teachings of an eighteenth-century Swedish theologian, Emmanuel Swedenborg. His views about the afterlife, such as an anthropocentric and multi-faith heaven, allowed the attendees to conceive of the afterlife as an extension of the domestic space in which they conducted their spiritual work. Rossetti appeared to view the space, in part, as a means to contact his deceased wife and assuage his guilt for his philandering ways while she was alive, and to ask her opinions about his new paintings.

This new volume will of course be useful to scholars of the occult, but will also prove fascinating

for fans of Pre-Raphaelitism. It is a wonderful glimpse into the beliefs, practices and lifestyles of the Pre-Raphaelites beyond the art they produced.

Megan Williams (University of Surrey)

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**William Harry Rogers: Victorian Book Designer and Star of the Great Exhibition, by Gregory Jones (London: Unicorn Publishing Group, 2023), 312pp., £50.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781911397175**

William Harry Rogers (1825-73) was what we would today call an industrial designer although he is best known for his book cover designs. From about 1848 to 1872 he produced an astonishingly large range of complex designs that transformed the mundane rectangle we know as the front of a book into exquisitely complex golden geometries. A precursor to the early-twentieth-century concept that a useful object can be valued for itself separate from its utility (its 'thingness'), in the middle-1800s Victorians feverishly took up the hobby of collecting. The book became valued as an object distinct from its intellectual content and demand for beautiful books soared. The market was wide open for someone with Rogers's unique artistic predilections. He also designed tableware, wallpaper and playing cards and dabbled in other areas like designs for wood carving and interiors.

The stated goals of this book are to bring together "many new discoveries [...] and provide in effect a catalogue raisonné for the artist". Indeed, it is the first book-length work on Rogers and, without question, it achieves its aims and exceeds expectations by being both thorough and readable.

Rogers was a product of his era and this book places his life and achievements well in their cultural context. Rogers's creations reflect changes occurring at the time. For example: Manufacturing processes became more automated and cotton was readily available so book covers were not restricted to hand-tooled leather one-offs. Increased rates of literacy among a growing middle class boosted demand for more widely distributed print material. The rise of the children's genre followed on from stricter regulations against child labour and an expanding school system. More disposable income and higher rates of literacy meant book retailing was a growing sector where an appealing book cover could improve sales.

Rogers had a family to support and, like most artists, would take commissions that required skill but not necessarily creativity. Much of his work documents other people's product designs in the days before photography. Additionally, many of his commissioned illustrations appear to be merely

decorative. So, the reader might legitimately ask if Rogers was capable of personal creative expression as an artist in the true sense of the word or might he have just been a talented illustrator? And, while he may not have pushed the envelope or presaged Modernism as did Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the example on page twenty-nine, excerpted from the interior of *Quarles' Emblems* (1861), should settle the debate.

When Rogers had the opportunity to let his imagination flow it was a formidable thing to behold. *Quarles' Emblems* reveals a playful yet haunting convergence of flora, fauna, flying skulls and fabulous creatures set into a deceptively-beautiful graphic context. It is a sign of his highly-cerebral approach to illustration that Rogers flirts with the third dimension. Is the dark circle of flames a hole in the page? Is the hand of love restraining a flying orb from speeding into a gaping maw? It is difficult to divert one's eyes.

An even more extreme example showing the true nature of Rogers's genius is a book he created from start to finish called *Spiritual Conceits* (1862) which is given a chapter of its own in Jones's book. It is a staggering revelation from first page to last as Rogers developed his own illustrative symbology to accompany a collection of religious and poetical inspirational passages. Only an artist emerging from a culture of heraldry and monarchical symbols could have created this elegant language so convincingly.

That said, one feels some trepidation when on page ten, after listing Augustus Pugin, William Burges, Christopher Dresser, Rossetti and William Morris as his contemporaries, the author states, "it can be argued, [Rogers is] THE great artist-designer of the Victorian period". Rogers's primary competitor, the better-known John Leighton, is given mere paragraphs and dismissed by Jones as "competent but mundane". Leighton lived to be ninety so his output was many times that of Rogers and it allowed him to develop his talent over a much longer creative arc in a way that Rogers could not; we can see how his skills developed and his work gained in creative confidence over the decades. He was very prolific and his work varied from imaginative to ordinary and commercial. But cursory research shows that, in fact, Leighton was the equal of Rogers in ways that matter: he was witty; he played with illusion and symmetry; his technical partnership with his bindery resulted in a large body of beautifully produced books. Without taking anything away from Rogers, it would have been instructive to have a more in-depth comparison of the two artists. Because of Jones's clear admiration for his subject the book sometimes veers towards hagiography.

Sadly, we will never know how far Rogers's talent could have taken him. His productive years

were cut short by an early death from tuberculosis at the age of forty-seven. Still, this book, like all good reference works, provides the basis for further research by future academics; sources are meticulously documented, footnotes and robust appendices are informative reading, even if Jones needed to make a stronger case for Rogers's "star" status. Identification of book marks, signatures and labels mean this book is a must-have for collectors and dealers of Victoriana.

As a side note, given the topic of this book, a review cannot end without some reference to its design. Rogers's deliciously textured books were characterized by a layering of extremely intricate hand-cut dyes stamped with gleaming gold foil and blind debossing. Sadly, this effect cannot be reproduced today; rather than attempting to so do here, the publisher should have opted for a well-designed dust jacket.

*Ann E. Gray (Independent Researcher)*

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***Byronism, Napoleonism, and Nineteenth-Century Realism: Heroes of their Own Lives?* by Tristan Donal Burke (New York and London: Routledge, 2022), 204pp. £130.00 (hardback), £38.99 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9780367749033**

In *Byronism, Napoleonism, and Nineteenth-Century Realism*, Tristan Donal Burke explores the shift in dominant literary form from poetry to novel that took place during the early-nineteenth century, concurrent with changes in ideas about heroism. He does so by focussing on two historic figures, Byron and Napoleon. Burke uses representations of these men to illustrate the move from the aristocratic and historically rooted heroism depicted in the epic poetry of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, to the new bourgeois heroism of the mid-nineteenth-century realist novel, which was more personal, acknowledged labour, and was less reliant on world events. He also uses the continued importance of both figures to challenge, quite successfully, an established critical belief that during the nineteenth century the hero disappeared from both culture more generally and from the novel specifically.

The book is divided into four chapters, split into two strands, the first dealing with the Byronic and the second with the Napoleonic. Together the chapters cover five novels. Chapter One discusses two Russian novels, *Eugene Onegin* (1833) by Alexander Pushkin and *A Hero of our Time* (1840) by Mikhail Lermontov, which are examined in the light of the peculiar political and economic Russian situation in the nineteenth century. The chapter particularly

focusses on the importance of the Decemberist revolt of 1825, and how it illuminated 'a socio-historical and materialist backdrop to the mutation of the Byronic Hero into nascent bourgeois professionalism' in both novels (p. 55).

Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850) is the focus of Chapter Two, which stresses both the importance of self-narration and the backdrop of the July Revolution in France in 1830. It looks closely at the relationship between two central characters, the novel's 'hero' David and Steerforth, a more ambiguous figure. Burke suggests that 'Steerforth offers a form of Byronic heroism, and David offers a form of bourgeois heroism' (p. 74), and that while bourgeois heroism seems to emerge as the dominant form, it is 'nevertheless haunted by the Byronic in Dickens in a manner that disrupts the smooth functioning of bourgeois subjectivity' (p. 93).

Chapter Three investigates a French novel, Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* (1830), again reflecting on the 1830 July Revolution. This chapter, however, is focussed on the role of Napoleonic heroism, and places history at the centre, arguing that *The Red and the Black* is 'one of the earliest novels to register the historical' (p. 115). Burke suggests that while the protagonist of the novel, Julien, models himself and his heroism on Napoleon, his is a mutated version 'shot through with the historical concerns of his own historical moment', and particularly directed by the new needs of a demilitarised civil society and the economics of the bourgeoisie (p. 126).

Chapter Four explores William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848), foregrounding the novel's subtitle 'A novel without a hero'. Burke questions whether, rather than having a hero, the novel instead has a heroine, and suggests that Becky Sharp is 'a radical free agent, perhaps the only truly disruptive revolutionary hero described in this book' (p. 175). Beyond her role as a revolutionary heroine with clear links to Napoleon, Burke also argues that Becky breaks down bonds of stable representation and is both absolutely modern and a-historic.

This book tries to do a great deal. While examining five novels, it attempts to explore literary, social and political culture across three countries and languages, spanning a period of twenty-five years, and touching on four different revolutionary events. This is, perhaps, too much. Therefore, while each chapter individually is well constructed, strongly argued, and insightful, the book struggles to make an overarching statement. Burke recognises this, and his conclusion notes the broad distinction between the Byronic and Napoleonic strands. He highlights that Byron's legacy is built largely around his writing, which plays an active role in the move from poetry to novel, and from aristocratic epic to bourgeois realism. Napoleon, on the other hand, is not a literary

producer in his own right, and the myth of his life is much more central. He is also a much more ambiguous figure, and, as the book demonstrates, pinning down 'Napoleonic heroism' is trickier. As a result, while the two Byronic chapters hang together as a discussion of the development of models of subjectivity, Burke finds it more difficult to draw conclusions from the Napoleonic chapters. The chapter on *Vanity Fair*, in particular, stands outside of the larger arguments that Burke seeks to make.

That being said, this book provides a useful and engaging discussion of the shift to realism and of changing ideas of heroism, asking many pertinent questions, and providing new ways to approach these concepts.

Beth Gaskell (*British Library*)

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***Male Suicide and Masculinity in 19th-Century Britain: Stories of Self-Destruction*, by Lyndsay Galpin (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 193 pp., £85.00 (hardback), £28.99 (paperback), £76.50 (e-book) ISBN 9781350264892**

Lyndsay Galpin's new book explores how gender and masculinity shaped the experience of suicide in nineteenth-century Britain. Drawing upon diverse sources including medical journals, court records, suicide notes, and literary texts, Galpin presents a nuanced portrayal of how masculinity and suicide intersected in this era. The book comprises six chapters, shedding light on topics such as love and jealousy, poverty and unemployment, fraud and speculation, and military trauma and dishonour.

Galpin begins by establishing the social and cultural backdrop of nineteenth-century Britain, characterised by rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and the rise of the middle class, alongside newfound forms of leisure and entertainment. However, because of these transformative changes, the period was also marked by deep-seated anxieties and uncertainties as traditional social hierarchies and moral values were challenged. Against the backdrop of Victorian masculinity and its ideals of strength, emotional control, economic pressures, and notions of honour and dishonour, Galpin argues that suicide held particular significance for men due to expectations that pressured them to conform to traditional gender roles. She posits that suicide served as a form of protest against rigid gender norms, allowing men to express their feelings of despair, isolation, and powerlessness amidst social and economic upheavals. Nonetheless, Galpin acknowledges the absence of a singular definition of masculinity and recognises that men may experience and express it differently. She also emphasises the multifaceted

nature of suicide, avoiding oversimplification and offering a more sophisticated analysis. This book therefore contributes to the existing scholarship on nineteenth-century masculinity, complementing the works of scholars like Megan Doolittle, Sonya O. Rose, John Tosh, Helen Goodman, and Janet Oppenheim.

Chapter One delves into narratives of jealous lovers and explores male suicide associated with love, highlighting instances of murder-suicides. Galpin reveals that as late as the 1890s, there was a prevailing belief that few men would take their own lives due to romantic rejection. Galpin challenges the notion of a simple masculine/feminine binary and presents these cases as tragic examples of male violence towards women.

Chapter Two focuses on the impact of economic struggles on men's sense of self-worth and how society perceived them. Galpin elucidates that suicides resulting from economic hardships often stemmed from shame and the desire not to burden their families or society with their perceived failures. The book highlights the shame associated with deviating from the Victorian middle-class ideal of the breadwinner and how this ideal expanded into the masculine ideal of working-class men.

Chapter Three delves into how economic pressures affected men's mental health, particularly in fraud and failed speculation cases. During this time, 'just as the economy was seen to be a self-regulatory system, so too were men expected to exert self-regulation over themselves' (p. 100). Galpin explores these expectations, illustrating how a breach in control could contribute to suicidal tendencies. This chapter also examines the impact of failed financial activities on upper-class men, and how media portrayed these men as villains.

Chapter Four addresses trauma and dishonour, also exploring alcoholism, cowardice, and sexuality. Galpin acknowledges that while some medical practitioners recognised the psychological impact of war, 'insufficient evidence' means that 'it would be ahistorical to write them as clear narratives of military trauma and suicide' (p. 130). The importance of honour and shame in policing masculinity is highlighted, with case studies demonstrating the intersection of scandals related to sexual activity (predominantly homosexuality) and potential consequences. The psychological impacts of physical ailments, such as sunstroke and rheumatic fever, and the overconsumption of alcohol and its prevalence in military suicide narratives are also examined, providing an overview of how such suicides were reported in the press and influenced literary accounts.

Throughout the book, Galpin's analysis is centred around individual narratives, offering a deep contextual understanding of suicide at the time.

Through coroner's court reports, news articles, and individual testimonies, she sheds light on the experiences and attitudes surrounding male suicide, humanising a typically statistic-based field of study. A significant strength of Galpin's work lies in her ability to draw from a wide range of sources, incorporating literature, art, and popular culture. This interdisciplinary approach allows Galpin to present a rich and detailed picture of the social and cultural context of male suicide in nineteenth-century Britain. One notable contribution lies in the book's analysis of suicide notes, which Galpin argues provide valuable insights into the complex emotional and psychological factors that led men to take their own lives. She demonstrates how these notes reveal deep feelings of loneliness and isolation resulting from work, family, and social life pressures. Moreover, these notes challenge traditional gender norms by expressing emotions often deemed unmanly, such as fear, sadness, and vulnerability.

Despite these strengths, the analysis has some limitations. For example, Galpin does not extensively explore the intersection of race and class with the experience of suicide, despite acknowledging their potential influence. Additionally, while upper- and working-class men are mentioned, the focus on white, middle-class men restricts a comprehensive examination. Nevertheless, this opens avenues for further research, particularly from an intersectional approach.

*Male Suicide and Masculinity in 19th-Century Britain* is a thought-provoking analysis of a complex and crucial issue. Galpin's interdisciplinary approach, nuanced analysis, and utilisation of diverse sources make this book invaluable for studying history, gender studies, and mental health. It is highly recommended for those interested in understanding the history of suicide, madness, masculinity, and gender in nineteenth-century Britain.

Erin Tilley (University of Sussex)

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***The Adventurous Life of Amelia B. Edwards: Egyptologist, Novelist, Activist*, by Margaret Jones (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 219pp., £45.00 (hardback), £14.99 (paperback), £13.49 (e-book), ISBN 9781350293953**

Amelia B. Edwards was a novelist, traveller and Egyptologist who founded the Egypt Exploration Fund (now the Egypt Exploration Society). Among her best-known publications are 'The Phantom Coach' (1864) and *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (1877). Many biographies of Edwards exist, and it would be easy to revisit well-trodden ground. Margaret Jones's new biography, *The Adventurous Life of Amelia B. Edwards:*

*Egyptologist, Novelist, Activist*, does not fall into this trap, however. While Jones's monograph does not present us with new information about her life, it is well researched, presents the chronology of Edwards's life in an interesting thematic way, and will provide a useful introduction for readers unfamiliar with Edwards.

The book is roughly divided into two parts, the first offers an account of Edwards's life. Starting with her youth, her early passion for writing and art, and her provincial existence (Chapter One), Jones continues to explore Edwards's loneliness as she navigated her relationships with various women, including Lucy Renshaw, and her *ménage à trois* with Ellen Byrne and her husband, the Reverend John Rice Byrne (for which Rice Byrne held a private 'wedding ceremony') (Chapter Two). Jones goes on to describe how Edwards, an adventurer through and through, explored the difficult terrain of the Dolomite Mountains with Renshaw and traversed the cultural topography, characterised by rigid sexual norms, in which she found herself (Chapter Three). The final three chapters in this part consider Edwards's engagement with Egypt – first, her trip to the Nile (Chapter Four), second, her research of ancient Egypt (Chapter Five) and, third, her founding of the Egypt Exploration Fund despite the difficulties posed by resistant museum directors and business people (Chapter Six).

The second half of the biography – Chapters Seven to Eleven – examines some of the activities and passions that defined Edwards, particularly in her later years. Jones questions to what extent Edwards was sequestered from public life and investigates her personal relationships with her close friends and colleagues (Chapter Seven). Jones then summarises many of Edwards's novels (Chapter Eight), before outlining Edwards's biggest academic tour in America, despite her declining health, during which she was presented with an honorary doctorate (Chapter Nine). Jones then engages with Edwards's political and moral campaigns for two (often still polemicising) causes: gender equality – she especially supported the vote for women – and animal rights. Jones concludes that Edwards was a known political character in the period (Chapter Ten). Finally, Jones looks beyond Edwards's death to the legacies she left behind: for her friends, former romantic partners, and the world of archaeology and history (Chapter Eleven).

While Jones draws attention to three facets of Edwards's life in the book's subtitle – Egyptologist, novelist and activist – throughout her biography, she demonstrates that Edwards was also much more than this. She was, above all, a passionate artist in every sense of the word. Jones shows that Edwards was a lover of others' music, painting, and writing. These

reverberate as intertexts throughout her works. She also harnessed her skills as a writer and artist to advance her professional position and political campaigns, for example, by writing persistently to prominent politicians and business people and publishing articles in popular newspapers to found and encourage support for the Egypt Exploration Fund.

*The Adventurous Life of Amelia B. Edwards* is accessible and thus suitable for general audiences. Jones re-examines Edwards's life through the lenses of adventure and sexuality in order to increase public awareness of her hobbies, skills, relationships and lasting impact on literature and Egyptology. She brings her subject matter to life through interesting anecdotes and retellings of events. Jones's biography would benefit from a more critical reading of Edwards's engagements with race and sexuality, which often give way to Jones's creative reimagining of events. But, as in *Founder, Fighter, Saxon Queen: Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians* (2018), Jones's is a meaningful contribution to our understanding of the life and legacies of a determined historical woman.

Ross Conway (University of Birmingham)

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***Virginia Woolf and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers: Victorian Legacies and Literary Afterlives*, by Anne Reus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 224pp., £85.00 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781474485623**

*Virginia Woolf and Nineteenth-Century Women Writers* is an ambitious project. Anne Reus analyses Woolf's assessments of Victorian women writers through a focus on her rhetorical strategy. Readers therefore get to gain an understanding of Woolf's motivations at various points across her career as she reiterates and/or revises her representations of those literary predecessors. Woolf's instrumental role in establishing the female literary canon is shown by Reus to fundamentally hinge on the duality of demonstrating her own one-of-a-kindness in opposition to their limitations and solidarity with the challenges that they faced.

The monograph includes chapters on the following writers: Jane Austen; Mary Russell Mitford and Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Charlotte Brontë; professional women writers consisting of George Eliot, Mrs Humphry Ward, and Margaret Oliphant; and, finally, Woolf herself. Skilfully and carefully navigating between the fiction, diaries, and letters of nineteenth-century women writers, alongside reviews and biographical works written about them during and after their lives, Reus traces the influences on Woolf's positioning of these writers. Reus then

weaves this material through analysis of Woolf's own reviews – both published and private – which often reflect differently on the same cases-studies. On top of this, Reus provides insights from Woolf's own fiction and essays, as well as the myriad biographies and literary critical assessments of Woolf herself.

In the opening analytical chapter, Reus reveals that, for Woolf, Austen was limited by her domestication, trackable in her more satirical juvenilia; Woolf also troubled the popular perception that Austen wrote effortlessly to demystify women's writing as hard intellectual work.

Subsequently, Reus identifies the haunting figure of the patriarchal father as central to Woolf's reassessments of Mitford and Barrett Browning's writings. In doing so, Reus cannily demonstrates Woolf's submission to her own father's ideas in his position as editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Indeed, Leslie Stephen is shown to cast a long shadow over Woolf's interpretations of nineteenth-century women writers.

In Woolf's strategic representations of Mitford, there is a 'reorientation towards the private sphere' which both enables Woolf 'to examine the impact of Dr Mitford's exploitation' and to herself domesticate Mitford's professional standing (p. 83). Woolf's interpretations of Mitford foreshadow her later argument from *Three Guineas* (1938) surrounding 'the impossibility of challenging the system from within' (p. 83). Reus goes on to speculate that it was *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1930) that sparked Woolf's return to Barrett Browning, whereby Woolf credits *Aurora Leigh* (1856) as a 'genre-defying experimental poem and an important social commentary on women's position in Victorian society' (p. 93). Nevertheless, that Woolf's most prominent assessment of both Mitford and Barrett Browning comes in her biography of Mitford's gift to Barrett Browning, her dog Flush, typifies Woolf's marginalisation of their professional accomplishments.

Reus's chapter on Woolf's re/assessments of Brontë exemplifies the strength of this work. Beginning with a sense of Woolf's appreciation for Brontë's transgressive femininity, Reus traces Woolf's changing perspective as she comes to pit Brontë's life against her works: influenced by Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) as well as Leslie Stephen's criticism, Brontë's rebellion is absorbed into Woolf's own broader feminist agenda. Of all Reus's chapters, this on Brontë 'In Protest' most perfectly testifies to Woolf's manipulation of Victorian women writers and their legacies.

In the following chapter on professional women writers, Reus gives a cursory glance to the late-Victorian women writers associated with the New Woman phenomenon and Woolf's strategic

overlooking of their contribution to women's writing through reference to Mary Jean Corbett's work. It is a shame that Reus becomes somewhat complicit in Woolf's erasure of the likes of Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and George Egerton; the monograph, as a result, feels as if it is missing a chapter. The professional women writers whom Reus does discuss – Eliot, Ward, and Oliphant – are considered in light of Woolf's denial of the 'high-art woman of letters' and perpetuation of the image of women writers as domestic amateurs in her most explicit feminist essays *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own* (1929) (p. 30).

In lieu of a traditional conclusion, Reus opts to review Woolf's own biographical gaps in an analysis of two texts, 'Reminiscences' and 'A Sketch of the Past' (1976). Having charted to such an impressive extent the manner in which Woolf shaped the legacies of nineteenth-century women writers, the alternative option of using the concluding chapter to re-evaluate the afterlives of these writers might have been more fitting for the project's overarching message. Nevertheless, for readers interested in criticism that engages with the instrumental role of biography and reviews in shaping literary legacies and canon formation, Reus's study is a stellar example. It makes Woolf's strategic positioning of herself in relation to her peers plain to see and reveals the murky origins of the feminist canon.

*Isobel Sigley (Loughborough University)*

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***Wilde Between the Sheets: Oscar Wilde, Mail Bondage, and De Profundis*, by David Walton (London: Lexington Books, 2021), 251pp., £90.00 (hardback), £35.00 (e-book), ISBN 9781793614216**

*Wilde Between the Sheets* is the first modern scholarly monograph to take Oscar Wilde's prison letter *De Profundis* as its sole subject. David Walton utilises a deconstructive method, combined with textual criticism and the investigation of social, political, material and cultural contexts, to explore this intricate work, concluding that neither its title, its genre, nor its intended audience can be satisfactorily established. The author argues that *De Profundis* (first published in an abridged form in 1905) is a 'multiform document' – Walton borrows the adjective from Wilde's description of man in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) – in that it crosses genres from apologia to love-letter to essay to memoir, and in that its various addressees have changed over the course of its textual history: it began life as a recriminatory missive to his boyfriend Lord

Alfred Douglas and exists now as part of Wilde's prose canon (p. 35).

Walton draws on Stephen Greenblatt's concept of 'self-fashioning', the constructing of one's own identity, to articulate his view that the kaleidoscopic nature of *De Profundis* allows Wilde to represent himself in multiple ways, just as it simultaneously permits a multitude of interpretations of its author, for instance, Wilde as homosexual martyr or Wilde as blinded by romance (p. 4). Walton's critique persuasively establishes the supposition that Wilde was both the fashioner of, and fashioned by, this text. For example, by expanding his previous research to offer a Bakhtinian reading of the 'chronotopes' of pre-, present and post-prison time, Walton contends that creating *De Profundis* served to reconstruct Wilde's sense of self, in preparation for his life after release (p. 109). In Chapter Nine Wilde's intertextual references to William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Dante Alighieri, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Algernon Swinburne, as well as, most significantly, Wilde's idiosyncratic portrayal of Christ, are framed as typical of his posture as 'master busker or improviser – a virtuoso riffing on ideas' (p. 186). This 'riffing' is not simply a response to the conditions under which the text was produced, that is, in Reading Gaol on an improvised desk with limited stimuli, but a technique by which Wilde restores his artistic identity in the wake of legal and social condemnation. For Walton, Wilde should be seen not 'as a sexual transgressor defeated by the penal system, but considered a resourceful fighter adopting essentialist or anti-essentialist positions for his own strategic ends' (p. 2).

Unusually, Walton opts to cite from and refer to the text as 'OMS', that is, the British Library's 'original manuscript', rather than *De Profundis*, the name given to the letter by Wilde's literary executor Robert Ross, or *Epistola: In Carcere et Vinculis*, Wilde's suggested title (p. 2). This enables Walton to disentangle his reading from the various abridged and edited versions of the work, and facilitates his discussion of material aspects of the document, including paratextual elements like stains and annotations. It also has the advantage of being accessible, since it is available on the institution's [website](#), although it is somewhat inconvenient to consult this while reading the hardback. Walton assumes his reader's familiarity with the content of *De Profundis*; he might have addressed this decision explicitly and would undoubtedly have made stimulating remarks on the text's resistance to summary.

In line with the title, one of the chief pleasures of the book is the allusive, punning subheadings, for example 'Dr. Jekyll and Montgomery Hyde: The Journey to Holland, or the Trials on Trial' (p. 51). This

refers to Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, the author of *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (1948) and to Wilde's grandson Merlin Holland (whose *Irish Peacock and Scarlet Marquess* (2003) is the authoritative account of the *Queensberry v. Regina* libel trial) respectively. While delightfully convoluted, this subheading is followed by just two pages of text that fail to fully deliver on its promise, being chiefly a list of problems with Hyde's transcript. Elsewhere there are also minor errors of fact, for instance, the Criminal Law Amendment Act which defined the offence of 'gross indecency' was enacted in 1885, not 1886 (p. 43).

The author experiments with dialogue and epistolary forms, paying explicit homage to Wilde. These interludes often feel more Joycean than Wildean; having read the book twice, they never cease to be intriguing because they never quite become fully comprehensible. The final chapter, 'Playtex(i)t: A Dialogue', serves as an 'open-ended rounding off [...] rather than a set of synthesizing conclusions' (p. 195). It sees Wilde and Walton, along with Crites of John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668) who serves as a foil to Wilde's studied levity, engage in a serio-trivial comic dialogue that is frequently interrupted by the critics referenced throughout. The section teeters between the ludic and the ludicrous, as when Wilde expert Ian Small interjects his epistemological critique before 'dissolving into thin air' (p. 209). However, the way these arguments and critical voices are meshed represents a sophisticated and thought-provoking engagement with Walton's conception of *De Profundis* as a composite work that defies categorisation and resists reductive reading. To say, therefore, that *Wilde Between the Sheets* is the foremost but not the definitive work on Wilde's *De Profundis* is, one thinks, to aver the overall success of Walton's scholarship.

Aaron Eames (University of Leicester  
Global Study Centre)

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***Picturing the Reader: Reading and Representation in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Beth Palmer and Amelia Yeates (Oxford: Peter Lang Verlag, 2022), 270 pp., £73.50 (hardback and e-book), ISBN 9781788747127**

When to read is always 'to decipher black forms on a white page', to perform an 'inherently visual act', it is safe to say, with Beth Palmer and Amelia Yeates, that the 'textual is not privileged over the visual' in our everyday life (p. 1). Challenging our understanding of what reading entails, Beth Palmer and Amelia Yeates's new study generously reflects on how we have irremediably fallen into readerships predominantly oriented towards the visual. Divided

into three sections, including a very informative introduction by Palmer and Yeates and Mary Atwood's poignant coda about the future of the field, *Picturing the Reader: Reading and Representation in the Long Nineteenth Century* offers an excellent overview of how what the editors call 'iconographic representations of readers' were conceived and interpreted in relation to both visual and written customs (p. 1).

The first section, 'Framing the Reader', consists of three essays revolving around the diverse methods certain artists employed to devise reading practices in their works. 'Visual Representations of Readers', the second section, reflects on how the aesthetics of illustration, painting, and photography are affected when readers are represented in those media. The third section, 'The Reader in the Text', analyses how readers were described in novels and subsequently visually represented in illustrations derived from those texts. The book strives to contribute to an ever-expanding subarea of Victorian Studies specialising in the proliferation of books and reading practices after the unprecedented advances in the print and distribution industries, the abolition of the so-called taxes on knowledge, and the rise of consumerism. This is a field that has increasingly become somewhat saturated over the last three decades, ranging from seminal texts such as Jacqueline Pearson's 1999 *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835* and William St Clair's 2004 *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* to more recent works such as Andrew Piper's *Dreaming in Books* (2009) and Juliet John and Matthew Bradley's *Reading and the Victorians* (2016) – all of which appear in the book's bibliography. However, the interdisciplinary lens through which *Picturing the Reader* has been conceived makes it a unique, fresh, insightful, and well-informed book that advances, enriches, and strengthens research in the discipline.

Noteworthy contributions can be found, for instance, in the first chapter, in which Palmer draws on Mary Watt's unpublished diaries to weigh the effects of her wide range of reading upon the dynamic relationship between her professional activity and her domestic space. In the third chapter, Garth Wenman-James muses on new ways of tackling the reader/spectatorship relationship by inviting us to enter Charles Dickens's novels through the slumming practices performed by both its characters and us as readers. Colin Cruise, in the following chapter, explores the ways in which artists like George Romney and the poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti appropriated the highly-commodified trope of passive female readers, an heirloom of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, in their artworks. In Chapter Seven, Ashton Foley-Schramm offers an original perspective on how male readers were

described in opposition to female readers by questioning how far these norms applied to the over-studied Robert Audley of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862). Chapter Eight, in which Katie Halsey analyses Jane Austen's characters as different kinds of readers, distinguished by their different psychological dispositions, draws the collection to a close. As part of her investigation, Halsey carefully looks at the few illustrations that depict those readers, in spite of the ubiquitous presence of books and readers in Austen's works, as tabulated on pp. 233-34.

I want to highlight the works of Catherine J. Golden (Chapter Two), Yeates herself (Chapter Five), and Charlotte Boman (Chapter Six), as they exceptionally examine what, to use Golden's words, 'reading like a Victorian' is (p. 43). This concept, coined by Golden in response to Paul Goldman's 2012 *Reading the Victorian Illustration*, could become an outstandingly helpful notion for students, researchers, and all those interested in literature and the visual arts. By meticulously close-reading both texts and illustrations published in periodicals by artists such as George Cruikshank and writer-artists such as William M. Thackeray, Golden reminds us of the critical ways in which Victorian literary and artistic instalments shaped our current relationship with reading. Yeates's chapter delves deeply into how women readers such as Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* (1848) and Mrs Hale in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854-55) put books aside and become non-reader figures; they challenged the contemporary consensus as to what a woman reader should be or look like and reading practices more generally. Looking at Britain through its domesticity, Boman invites us to fathom the boundaries transgressed by the readers depicted in Victorian photographs. A powerful picture of Dickens reading to his daughters is revealed to us; although portrayed sitting down and thus lower in height than his standing daughter, Dickens's authoritative posture and gesture and way of firmly holding his book contrasts with the *cartes de visite* of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. In these, the couple's authority, genders, and character constantly merge and blur through how they engage in both their reading and, to use Yeates's idea, non-reading practices inasmuch as they interrupt these to converse with each other.

Born from a symposium funded by the British Association for Victorian Studies, this well-structured, clear, and enjoyable book will also be a real asset to anyone examining the works of Dickens, Lewis Carroll, the Pre-Raphaelites and Royal Academy artists, to whom generous space has been given throughout.

*Almudena Jiménez Virosta (University of Geneva)*

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***Food Restraint and Fasting in Victorian Religion and Literature*, by Lesa Scholl (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 154pp., £85.00 (hardback), £28.99 (paperback), £26.09 (e-book), ISBN 978-1-3502-5651-4**

Lesla Scholl's *Food Restraint and Fasting in Victorian Religion and Literature* is motivated, as the author confirms, by an 'ambivalence' towards the 'kind of excess' which lead to waste 'in light of the poverty that persisted in Britain' (p. 15). The book seeks to interrogate the nature of restraint and its place in Victorian culture through diverse lenses of theology, ethics, nutrition, economics, and its manifestation in historical, theological, and literary contexts. Scholl opens by drawing attention to how twenty-first century conversations revolving around food and health often focus on anorexia or obesity, while a closer look at the nineteenth-century socio-historical matrix reveals how deeply food and health were connected with ethics and social narratives of vegetarianism or fair trade, which has found greater relevance in our own times. The well-structured introduction sets out to argue why 'food restraint' was problematic throughout the nineteenth century, with references to the arguments of Robert Bentley Todd, Edward Pusey, and Amartya Sen among others.

The book looks at the works of four women writers – Elizabeth Gaskell, Christina Rossetti, Josephine Butler, and Alice Meynell – repositioning feminine religious practice and writing in relation to food consumption within broader contexts of ecocriticism, economics, and social justice. In the first chapter, 'Elizabeth Gaskell, Ethical Economics and Ethical Eating', Scholl highlights the controversial and contrasting opinions generated by the 1834 New Poor Law, which divided Britain into two camps: those who thought the laws pushed the poor to 'certain death' and those that which believed 'industry should have its food, and idleness its hunger' (p. 24). The chapter foregrounds how Gaskell wrote emphatically about the socio-economic actions enacted by women under the influence of religious conviction. Her Unitarian position did not deter her from voicing both establishment and dissenting narratives concerning economic privilege in Victorian society. Scholl probingly brings out how *Ruth* (1853), *Cranford* (1853), and *North and South* (1854) articulate Gaskell's practical theology whereby for 'food restraint to be ethical, there must be genuine outward-focused concern' (p. 29). Peripheral scenes of poverty and starvation reinforce the precarity faced by the economically privileged central characters, as a reflection of the vulnerability in others. For Scholl, this awareness is at the 'core of

Victorian ethical restraint', promoting a compassion common to both Gaskell and Rossetti's theological and literary representations (p. 43).

Chapter Two, 'Christina Rossetti, Spiritual Growth and Social Justice', studies Rossetti as both poet and theologian. The chapter situates Rossetti's materialist theology, for the first time, in the broad spectrum of Eastern Orthodox Theology, demonstrating the influence of J. M. Neale and R. F. Littledale alongside Puseyite championing of a reunification of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Anglicanism. Hinging on the precept of 'the Body of Christ', Rossetti's ideas about food and fasting ultimately translate into an ethical understanding of eating for need and not excess, and treating fasting as a 'physical discipline' to train one in providing for the poor as part of Christian duty (p. 55). The chapter effectively utilizes Rossetti's poetry and theological writings to reveal her views on food restraint, aligning her with medical practitioners' advice on resisting gluttony and overindulgence in any form.

Chapter Three 'Josephine Butler's Hagiography as Social Prophecy' situates Butler, an acknowledged Anglican saint figure and social prophet, in the context of her social justice work rooted in a practical theology founded upon Christ's words. Butler's championing of women's equality and fasting as a tool to alleviate social injustices hinged upon empathy. For example, she drew nineteenth-century readers' attention to parallels between Catherine of Siena's times of excess and use of her food restraint as a protest and their own times. Scholl identifies how Butler's biographical writings (about saints and her family members) operate as hagiography, with a moral and ethical dimension that reveals her 'spiritual convictions through acts of social justice' (p. 103).

Chapter Four 'Alice Meynell's Fasting and the Health of the Body' reinstates Meynell's importance as a literary figure, suffragist, and president of Society of Women Journalists. This chapter highlights how fasting was at the centre of her spiritual discipline and how this intersected problematically with Meynell's health issues. Scholl close-reads poems such as 'Ode to the Body' (1921) in terms of Meynell's liturgical beliefs and alternations of fasting and feasting, bringing out the symbolic relation between the individual body and the Body of Christ. Meynell's vision, for Scholl, lay in her Christian socialism and the Church's social duties to feed the community.

Scholl's conclusion highlights the intertwining of nineteenth-century medicine, religion, and literature as an ethical bridge between the individual and the community. She justifies her choice of four female authors based on the pervasiveness of their social impact, not just as

litterateurs but as proponents of public health and spiritual well-being in Victorian England. They united ongoing conversations around food restraint in medical and theological sectors and opened it up to affirm British society's responsibility to address inequities within itself. Though at times very dense, the book is unique in its handling of lesser-known facts about these figures. Scholl's depth of research and originality of inferences will prove to be useful for researchers of Victorian medical and theological practices, food studies, and those in the medical humanities.

Oindrila Ghosh  
(Diamond Harbour Women's University)

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***Florence Nightingale at Home*, by Paul Crawford, Anna Greenwood, Richard Bates, and Jonathan Memel (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 263pp., £22.99 (paperback), £17.99 (e-book), ISBN 9783030465339**

*Florence Nightingale at Home* by Paul Crawford, Anna Greenwood, Richard Bates, and Jonathan Memel is the first book to examine Florence Nightingale through the perspective of the home and its changing meanings throughout her life. It is ironically fitting that the book was published during the Covid-19 pandemic, a time when ideas of nursing and people's relationship to the home were changing. Lockdowns caused the home to take on new meanings – becoming a place of work, education, confinement, and sanctuary all at once – and temporary NHS Nightingale hospitals increased public awareness of this culturally significant figure. *Florence Nightingale at Home* assumed a new immediacy in ways the authors could not have foreseen.

The book begins with the premise that home contained 'multiple meanings at different points in Nightingale's life' (p. 10), contesting that her experience of home 'fluctuated between the sweet and the bitterly sour' (p. 11). This claim is further developed throughout nine chapters chronologically exploring Nightingale's life, travelling through her childhood, employment as a nurse, life as a 'housebound invalid' (p. 200), and cultural afterlife. This useful and effective construction allows Nightingale to break free from her mythologised image, allowing her other concerns, projects, and personal life to come to the forefront.

The first section of the book explores Nightingale's early life at home. While Chapter Two highlights her idyllic childhood, involving an extensive education in classics, literature, history, politics, language, and medicine from her father (influenced by his university studies), Chapter Three explores Nightingale's developing perception of the

home as a place of restrictive entrapment. Nightingale's education and emerging interest in matters of health and sanitation influenced her desire to escape the domestic expectations associated with her social status as an upper-class woman.

Chapters Four to Six investigate relationships between work, home, and health. Chapter Four demonstrates how the home lay at the heart of Nightingale's efforts to promote sanitary reform and domestic nursing at a time when public health was in its infancy. Chapters Five and Six explore how Nightingale extended the concepts of home and domesticity into professional nursing both in England and abroad during her employment in Kaiserswerth and Crimea. Home comforts were distinctive and popular aspects of her nursing work in Crimea, resulting in her enduring cultural status as 'The Lady with the Lamp'.

Chapter Seven 'Working from Home' is the most interesting section of the book as it provides new insights into Nightingale's life as an 'invalid' after she returned from Crimea. After rebelling against her confinement in the home as a young woman, Nightingale was now housebound due to spinal pain, muscle weakness, exhaustion, and depression. Despite her seclusion, this chapter highlights the national and global outreach of her work; she continued advocating for nursing reform in Britain and addressed sanitary reform in India. During this period of 'invalidism', Nightingale found solace in her faith, the focus of Chapter Eight (p. 180). The concluding chapter 'Afterlife' recognises Nightingale's enduring cultural significance today and the new relevance her conceptions of nursing and sanitation have assumed in the time of Covid-19.

The absence of Nightingale's relationship with contemporary nurses appears as an omission. The authors emphasise their deliberate decision to avoid the 'often reductive controversies' within discussions of Nightingale in relation to Mary Seacole, another influential voice in both nursing reform and practice during the Crimean War (p. 12). Despite this justification, I believe that acknowledging the increasing public interest surrounding Mary Seacole could have enriched the text's explorations of the relationship between race, gender, nursing, and imperialism, especially concerning the investigation of Nightingale's work both in Crimea and India. This analysis could be an avenue for future research.

Overall, this book certainly fulfils its authors' desire to offer a new perspective on Nightingale's biography and her fluctuating relationship with the home. The depth of research is admirable: this book draws on materials within the Nightingale family archive and is also the first major study to be able to use all sixteen volumes of Lynn McDonald's *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid

Laurier University Press, 2001–12). These understudied materials offer valuable new insights, especially into lesser-known aspects of Nightingale's life upon returning from Crimea. This book is a valuable read for scholars of Nightingale and those working more broadly on the history of medicine and Victorian domesticity, as well as the public with an interest in this famous historical figure.

Charlotte Wilson (*University of Oxford*)

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### Author response

**Madison Marshall's review of *Julia Wedgwood, the Unexpected Victorian: The Life and Writings of a Remarkable Female Intellectual*, by Sue Brown (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2022), 384pp., £100.00 (hardback), £25.00 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9781839984112**

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to Madison Marshall's review of *Julia Wedgwood, the Unexpected Victorian* in the *BAVS Newsletter* (Spring 2023), which is seriously misleading both about my book and about Julia Wedgwood's literary career. By concentrating on her brief period as a novelist and two articles setting out her father's ideas on the origin of human speech (covered in about 15 of the 300 pages of text that make up the volume), Marshall sticks with the subject of her own PhD thesis and fails to give an accurate sense of how my book illuminates Wedgwood's remarkable range as a non-fiction writer. She was, as my book shows, a regular contributor to the *Spectator*, *Contemporary Review* and other periodicals on the Classical world, Darwinism, theology, mysticism, the relationship between science and religion, and literature. In addition to her biographies of John Wesley and Josiah Wedgwood, she wrote two very ambitious books: *The Moral Ideal* published in 1888 (revised edition 1907), and *The Message of Israel* (1894). The first traced man's aspiration after the divine from ancient Indian, through Persian, Greek, Roman, early Christian and medieval civilisations up to her own day. The second made the findings of German Biblical criticism accessible to the thoughtful churchgoer. Wedgwood also published *Nineteenth Century Teachers* (1909), a collection of her published profiles of some of the eminent Victorians she had known including Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, F.D. Maurice, Dean Stanley, George Eliot, and R. H. Hutton. She excluded others she had known even better including Robert Browning, Harriet Martineau, and her uncle, Charles Darwin, whose influence she criticised only after his death, having earlier written reviews of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) which impressed him. E. M. Forster, who knew her

well in her later years, thought highly of her 'fine qualities of the heart as well as the head', a quotation Marshall uses but without identifying its author (p. 4). Although deafness kept her off public platforms, Wedgwood was also a leading feminist who wrote several important articles and a pamphlet on female suffrage, campaigned with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, and acted as informal tutor to the first intake of what became Girton College.

Marshall's suggestion that my book is a 'salvation' biography with 'panegyric undertones' is equally misleading. My book gives a sympathetic portrait of Wedgwood (as biographers generally try to do with their subjects) but does not skimp on highlighting her tense relationships with her family and broken friendships. Nor did I need to 'fill' Wedgwood's 'silences' with my own voice, as Marshall claims. An unusually large amount of her correspondence survives from which I have quoted freely, revealing Wedgwood as a highly gifted, sometimes difficult and unhappy, but brave and unconventional woman. Marshall has, however, identified a few relatively inconsequential errors (of which the most unfortunate is my misremembering of her surname). I fear that slips of this kind inevitably creep into a volume of this length. She, in turn, has misattributed quotes from my book or spliced them together to create the opposite impression to what I say.

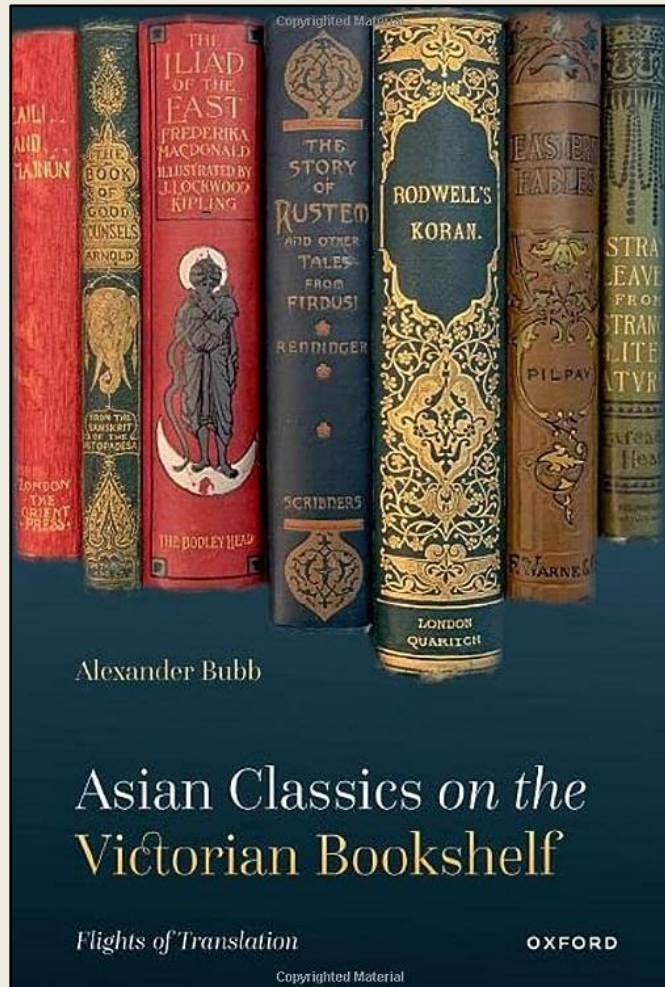
In *Women Philosophers in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2022), Alison Stone remarks that of all the women she considers in her book, Wedgwood is 'the most fully and unjustly forgotten' (p. 136). I trust that Marshall's review will not deter readers of the *BAVS Newsletter* from discovering more about the remarkable Julia Wedgwood, whose unconventional life and unexpected literary range I have sought to bring to light in the first in-depth biography of her, drawing on both her published writings and her extensive correspondence, much of which has not previously been explored.

Sue Brown

## Recent Publications

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

***Asian Classics on the Victorian Bookshelf: Flights of Translation*, by Alexander Bubb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 304pp., £78.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780198866275**



The interest among Victorian readers in classical literature from Asia has been greatly underestimated. The popularity of the *Arabian Nights* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is well documented. Yet this was also an era in which freethinkers consulted the Quran, in which schoolchildren were given abridgements of the Ramayana to read, in which names like 'Kalidasa' and 'Firdusi' were carved on the façades of public libraries, and in which women's book clubs discussed Japanese poetry. But for the most part, such readers were not consulting the specialist publications of scholarly orientalists. What then were the

translations that catalysed these intercultural encounters? Based on a unique methodology marrying translation theory with empirical techniques developed by historians of reading, this book shines light for the first time on the numerous amateur translators or 'popularizers', who were responsible for making these texts accessible and disseminating them to the Victorian general readership.

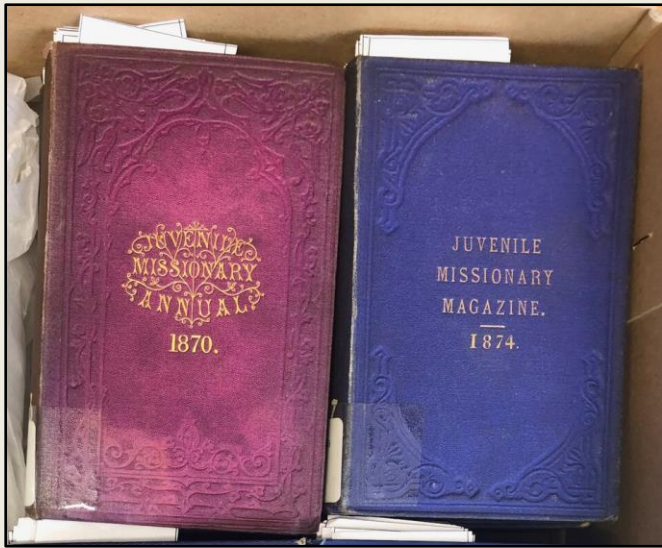
*Asian Classics on the Victorian Bookshelf* explains the process whereby popular translations were written, published, distributed to bookshops and libraries, and ultimately consumed by readers. It uses the working papers and correspondence of popularizers to demonstrate their techniques and motivations, while the responses of contemporary readers are traced through the pencil marginalia they left behind in dozens of original copies. In spite of their typically limited knowledge of source-languages, *Asian Classics* argues that popularizers produced versions more respectful of the complexity, cultural difference, and fundamental untranslatability of Asian texts than the professional orientalists whose work they were often adapting. The responses of their readers, likewise, frequently deviated from interpretive norms, and it is proposed that this combination of eccentric translators and unorthodox readers triggered 'flights of translation', whereby historical individuals can be seen to escape the hegemony of orientalist forms of knowledge.

### **New Digital Publication: BIPOC Voices in the Victorian Periodical Press (2023)**

BIPOC Voices in the Victorian Periodical Press (<https://onemorevoice.org/html/bipoc-voices/bv-home.html>) is a new publication that identifies, documents, publishes, and critically studies a series of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) voices from Victorian missionary periodicals.

Through its critical essays, editions of 64 primary texts, and overall intervention, "BIPOC Voices" aspires to take the initial steps towards modeling an appropriate, mindful process of engagement with these voices while being aware of the many source text limitations.

The project also includes two formal sets of



recommendations: the first shares best practices with scholars who might take up similar archive-based research; the second offers guidance to digital publishers who seek to foreground relevant periodical pieces among their digital holdings.

The project is the outcome of a two-year grant-funded initiative that brought together an international team of scholars and students from One More Voice (<https://onemorevoice.org/>) and COVE (<https://editions.covecollective.org/>) with Special Collections, SOAS Library and Adam Matthew Digital.

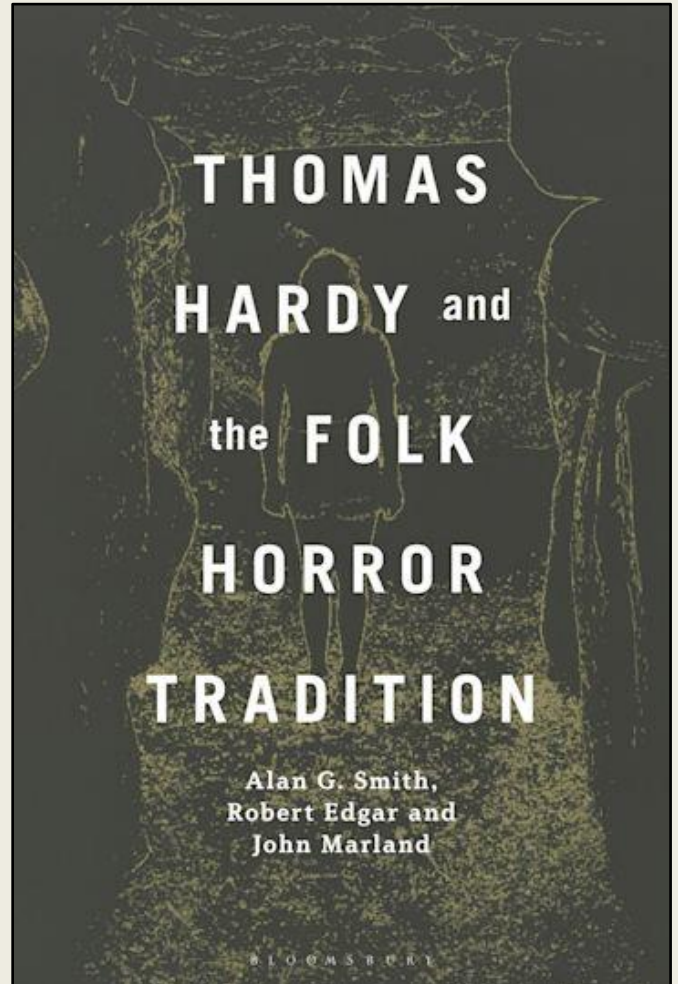
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***Thomas Hardy and the Folk Horror Tradition*, by Alan G. Smith, Robert Edgar, and John Marland (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023), 192pp., £75.00 (hardback), £67.50 (e-book), ISBN 9781501383991**

*Thomas Hardy and the Folk Horror Tradition* takes the uncanny and unsettling fiction of Thomas Hardy as fundamental in examining the lineage of 'Hardyan Folk Horror'. Hardy's novels and his short fiction often delve into a world of folklore and what was, for Hardy the recent past. Hardy's Wessex plays out tensions between the rational and irrational, the pagan and the Christian, the past and the 'enlightened' future. Examining these tensions in Hardy's life and his work provides a foundation for exploring the themes that develop in the latter half of the 20th century and again in the 21st century into a definable genre, folk horror.

This study analyses the subduing function of heritage drama via analysis of adaptations of Hardy's work to this financially lucrative film market. This is a market in which the inclusion of the weird and the eerie does not fit with the construction of a past and their function in creating a nostalgia of a safe and idyllic picture of England's rural past. However, there are some lesser-known adaptations from the 1970s

that sit alongside the unholy trinity of folk horror: the adaptation for television of the Wessex Tales. From a consideration of the epistemological fissure that characterize Hardy's world, the book draws parallels between then and now and the manifestation of writing on conceptual borders. Through this comparative analysis, *Thomas Hardy and the Folk Horror Tradition* posits that we currently exist on a moment of fracture, when tradition sits as a seductive threat.

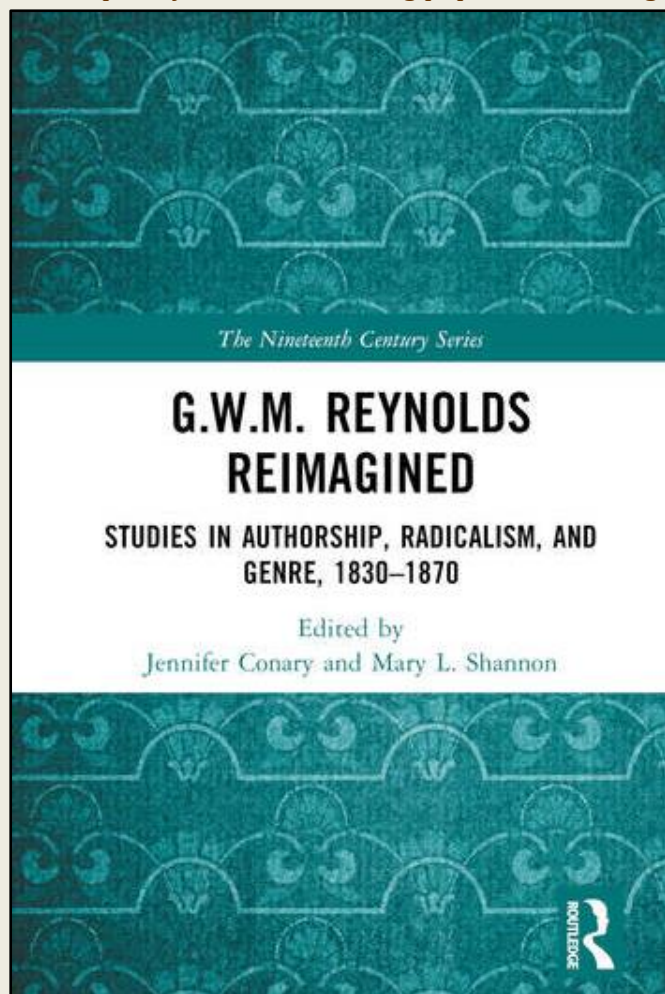


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***G.W.M. Reynolds Reimagined: Studies in Authorship, Radicalism, and Genre, 1830-1870*, edited by Jennifer Conary and Mary L. Shannon (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 348pp., £108.00 (hardback), £27.99 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9780367715434**

This essay collection proposes that G.W.M. Reynolds's contribution to Victorian print culture reveals the interrelations between authorship, genre, and radicalism in popular print culture of the nineteenth century. As a best-selling author of popular fiction marketed to the lower classes, and a passionate champion of radical politics and "the industrious classes", Reynolds and his work demonstrate the

relevance of Victorian Studies to topics of pressing contemporary concern including populism, working-



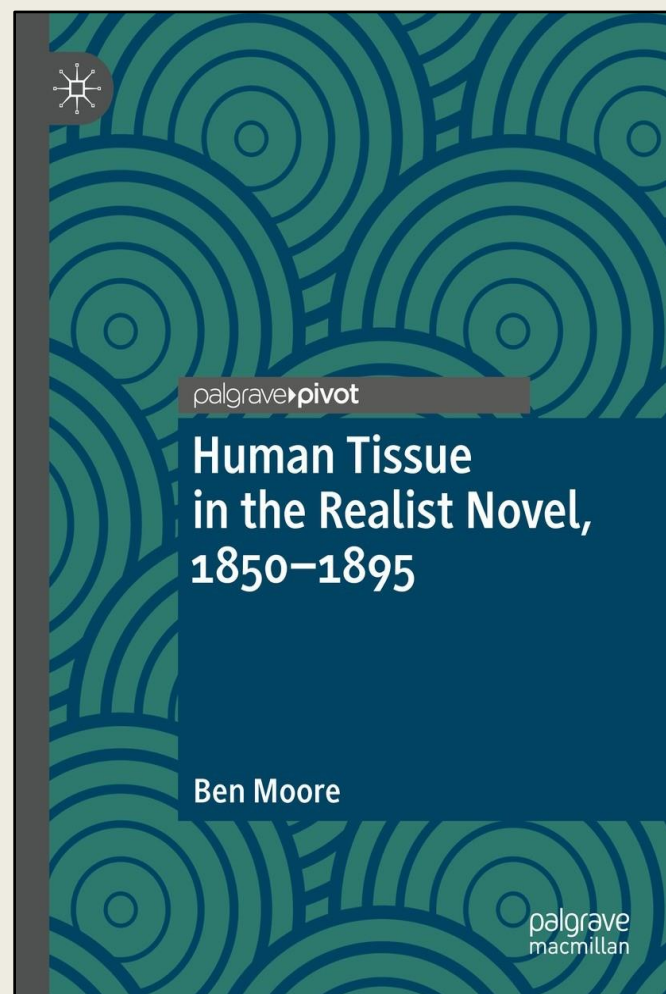
class fiction, the concept of 'originality', and the collective scholarly endeavour to 'widen' and 'undiscipline' Victorian Studies. Bringing together well-known and newly-emerging scholars from across different disciplinary perspectives, the volume explores the importance of Reynolds Studies to scholarship on the nineteenth-century. This book will appeal to students and scholars of the nineteenth-century press, popular culture, and of authorship, as well as to Victorian Studies scholars interested in the translation of Victorian texts into new and indigenous markets.

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***Human Tissue in the Realist Novel, 1850-1895*, by Ben Moore (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 109pp., £34.99 (hardback), £27.99 (e-book), ISBN 9783031266393**

This Palgrave Pivot engages with current debates about anthropocentrism and the Anthropocene to propose a reappraisal of the realist novel in the second half of the nineteenth century. Through three case studies, it argues for 'human tissue' as a conceptual tool for reading that brings together

biology, literature and questions of layering. This new approach is shown to be especially salient to the Victorian period, when the application of 'tissue' to biology first emerges. The book is distinctive in bringing together theoretical concerns around realism and the Anthropocene – two major topics in literary criticism – and presenting a new methodology to approach this conjunction, demonstrated through original readings of Charles Kingsley, George Eliot, and Emile Zola and two English-language writers he influenced (George Moore and Vernon Lee).



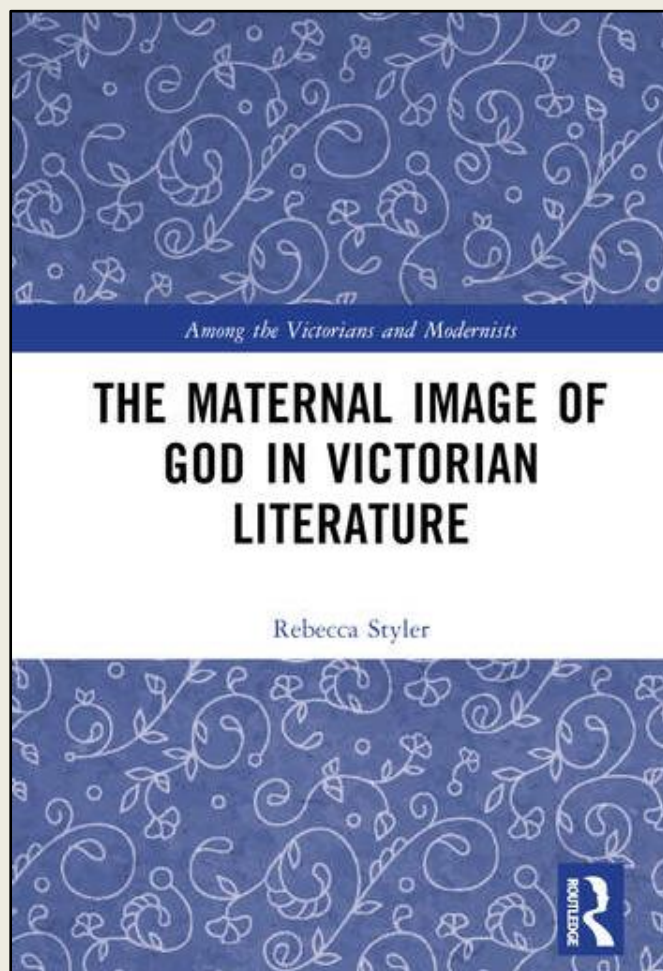
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***The Maternal Image of God in Victorian Literature*, by Rebecca Styler (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 226pp., £104.00 (hardback), £31.19 (e-book), ISBN 9780367473631**

This book is the study of a religious metaphor: the idea of God as a mother, in British and US literature 1850-1915. It uncovers a tradition of writers for whom divine motherhood embodied ideals felt to be missing from the orthodox masculine deity. Elizabeth Gaskell, Josephine Butler, George Macdonald, Frances Hodgson Burnett and Charlotte Perkins Gilman independently reworked their inherited faith to

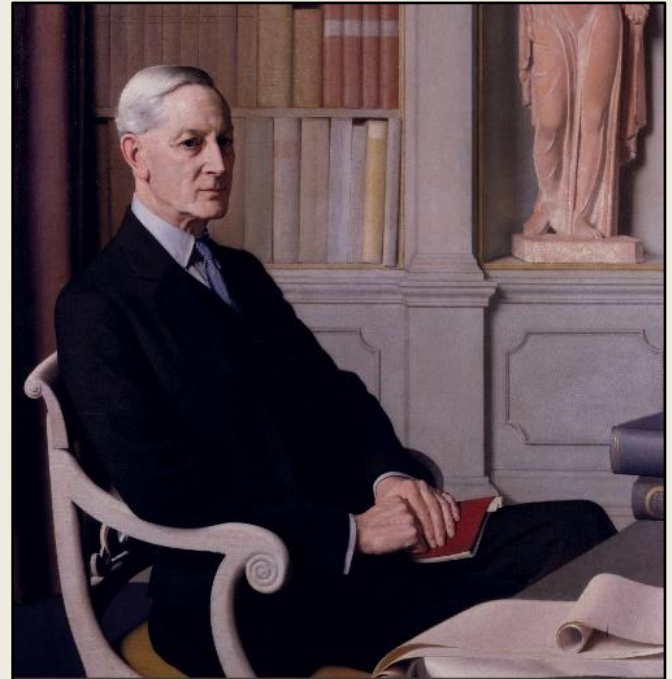
create a new symbol that better met their religious needs, based on ideal Victorian notions of motherhood and 'Mother Nature'. Divine motherhood signified compassion, universal salvation and a realised gospel of social reform led primarily by women to establish sympathetic community. Connected to Victorian feminism, it gave authority to women's voices and to 'feminine' cultural values in the public sphere. It represented divine immanence within the world, often providing the grounds for an ecological ethic, including human-animal fellowship.

With reference also to writers including Charlotte Brontë, Anna Jameson, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Charles, Theodore Parker, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Baker Eddy and authors of literary utopias, this book shows the extent of maternal theology in Victorian thought and explores its cultural roots. The book reveals a new way in which Victorian writers creatively negotiated between religious tradition and modernity.



***Playing the Game: Selected Poems of Henry Newbolt*, edited by John Howlett (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), 256pp., £35.96 (paperback and e-book), ISBN 9781789761368**

Two of Henry Newbolt's poems *Vitai Lampada* and *Drakes Drum* became staples of poetry anthologies and were known and recited by



## PLAYING THE GAME

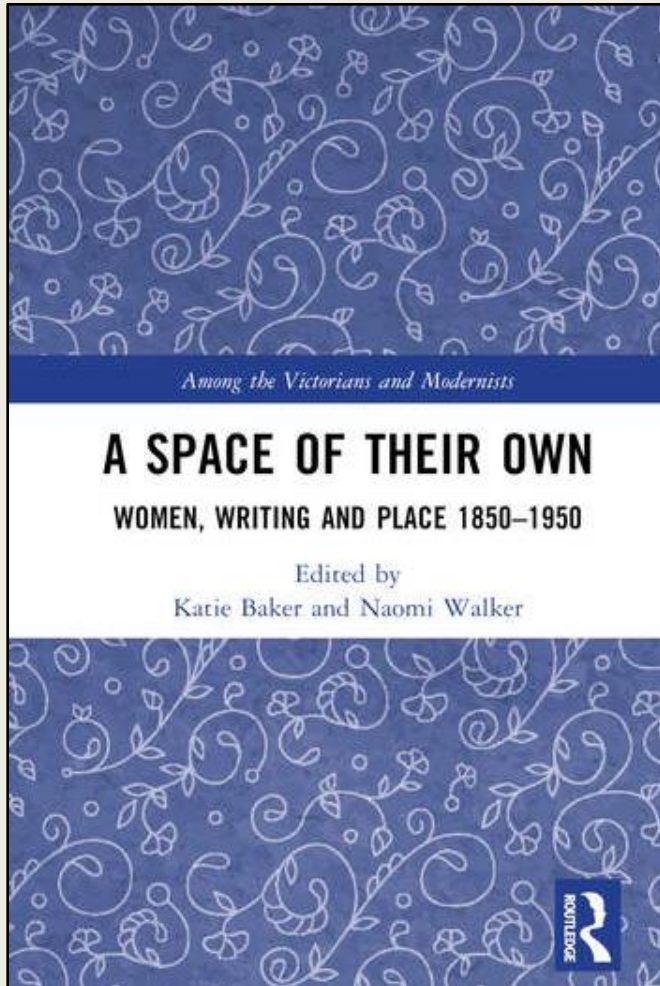
Selected Poems of Henry Newbolt

EDITED BY John Howlett

every school-boy. His poetry helped in constructing ideas around late Victorian/Edwardian imperial manliness. In this respect, Newbolt's work mirrors that of W.E. Henley, who also wrote poems which became part of a national lexicon and celebrated empire and the virtues of a stiff upper lip attitude to life. The *Selected Poems* is the first critical scholarly edition of his work. Despite in his own time being a well-known and immensely popular poet, Newbolt has since fallen into comparative critical neglect bar Susan Chitty's (1997) biography and Victoria Jackson's (1994) study. The aim here is to place the poet's literary work in a broader context that has hitherto not been addressed. Comparison with other literary works of the time reveal the mind-set of the period. But of particular interest is Newbolt's active public life. He contributed widely to government committees and debates on education, as well as working for the propaganda bureau in World War One, advising on the Irish question. The possible links between his pedagogical interests and the forcefulness of his poetic verse are investigated in terms of the massive socio-economic changes underway in the British Isles. The social forces putting education of the masses at the forefront of cultural activity is a primary theme of John Howlett's

substantive Introduction to the work. This work is an essential research tool for Victorian and Edwardian cultural studies.

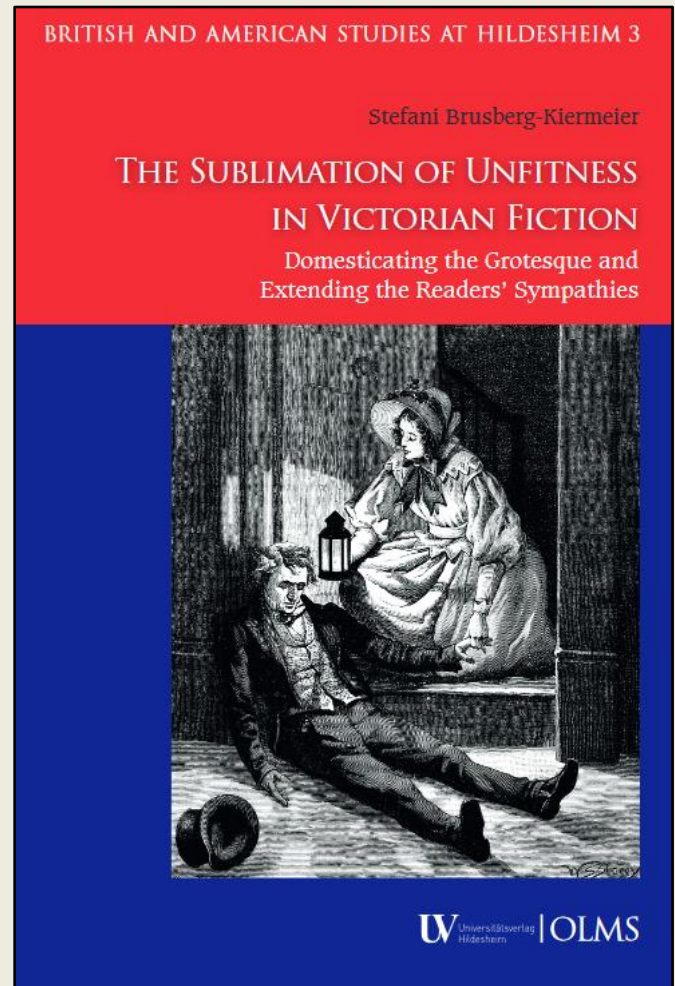
***A Space of Their Own: Women, Writing and Place 1850-1950***, edited by Katie Baker and Naomi Walker (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 190pp., £96.00 (hardback), £31.19 (e-book) ISBN 9781032218090



This collection explores how nineteenth and twentieth-century women writers incorporated the idea of 'place' into their writing. Whether writing from a specific location or focusing upon a particular geographical or imaginary place, women writers working between 1850 and 1950 valued 'a space of their own' in which to work. The period on which this collection focuses straddles two main areas of study, nineteenth century writing and early twentieth century/modernist writing, so it enables discussion of how ideas of space progressed alongside changes in styles of writing. It looks to the many ways women writers explored concepts of space and place and how they expressed these through their writings, for example how they interpreted both urban and rural landscapes and how they presented domestic spaces. *A Space of Their Own* will be of interest to those studying Victorian literature and modernist works as

it covers a period of immense change for women's rights in society. It is also not limited to just one type or definition of 'space'. Therefore, it may also be of interest to academics outside of literature – for example, in gender studies, cultural geography, place writing and digital humanities.

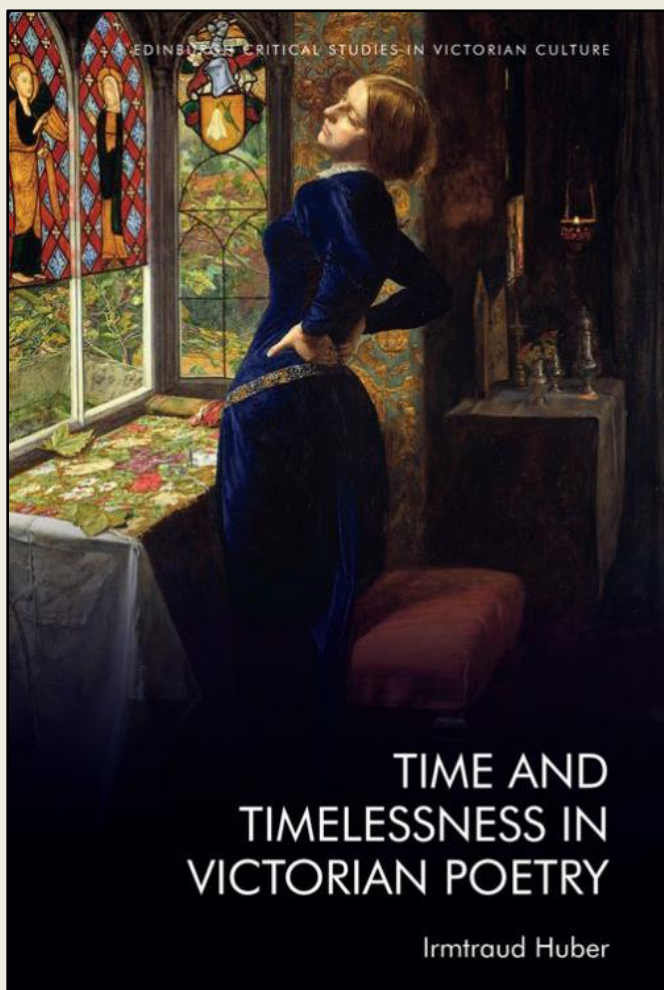
***The Sublimation of Unfitness in Victorian Fiction: Domesticating the Grotesque and Extending the Readers' Sympathies***, by Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier (Hildesheim: Universitätsverlag Hildesheim, 2023), 494pp., open access e-book



Inspired by Erving Goffman's understanding of stigma management, Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier takes a fresh look at the representation of Otherness and transgression in Victorian fiction in different forms – social and moral as well as physical, in terms of gender and mentality as well as aestheticism. In reaction to current disability studies, Brusberg-Kiermeier proposes the term 'unfitness' as a more appropriate and holistic concept for the examination of Victorian texts and implies that it was unfitness that was suspended over the heads of the Victorians like the sword of Damocles. In contrast to studies on the Gothic or enfreakment, this investigation places

the inclusive strategies of the texts in the limelight and argues that the narratives were often motivated by reformative ideas. For their white middle-class didactic project the authors appropriated the concept of sympathy – which Darwin established as a biological one – as the ‘social glue’ to bind different members of society together. The conceptualization of the investigation has also been inspired by the Victorians’ fascination with categorization and classification. The categories adopted, adapted, and questioned in this scholarly ‘cabinet of curiosities’ are derived from the cultural constructions of the time and reflect the Victorians’ views of unfitness.

***Time and Timelessness in Victorian Poetry*, by Irmtraud Huber (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 296pp., £90.00 (hardback) and open-access e-book, ISBN 9781399511810**



*Time and Timelessness in Victorian Poetry* explores the question of poetry’s relation to time and argues that this relation is historically contingent – as the concept of time changes, so too do the shaping forms and definitions of poetry. Victorian literature provides a rich testing field for its hypothesis, since

the nineteenth century saw momentous changes in the ways people thought about and experienced time. This book demonstrates that these changes were an important factor for some of the long-term developments in Victorian poetry, like its loss of cultural prestige, the popularity of mixed genres like the poetic sequence, the dramatic monologue and the verse novel, and the demise of metrical poetry as the norm. Moreover, the historical perspective offered questions some widely held assumptions, not only about poetry, but also about time itself. Thus, the theoretical relevance of this study extends well beyond its Victorian context.

***Subsurface*, by Karen Pinkus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023), 236pp., \$100 (hardback), \$100.00 (hardback), \$25.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781517914790**

A bold new consideration of climate change between narratives of the Earth’s layers and policy of the present.



Long seen as a realm of mystery and possibility, the subsurface beneath our feet has taken on all-too-real

import in the era of climate change. Can reading narratives of the past that take imaginative leaps under the surface better attune us to our present knowledge of a warming planet?

In *Subsurface*, Karen Pinkus looks below the surface of texts by Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Sand, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Jules Verne to find the buried origins of capitalist fantasies in which humans take what they want from the earth. Putting such texts into conversation with narrative theory, critical theory, geology, and climate policy, she shows that the subsurface has been, in our past, a place of myth and stories of male voyages down to gain knowledge—but it is also now the realm of fossil fuels. How do these two modes intertwine?

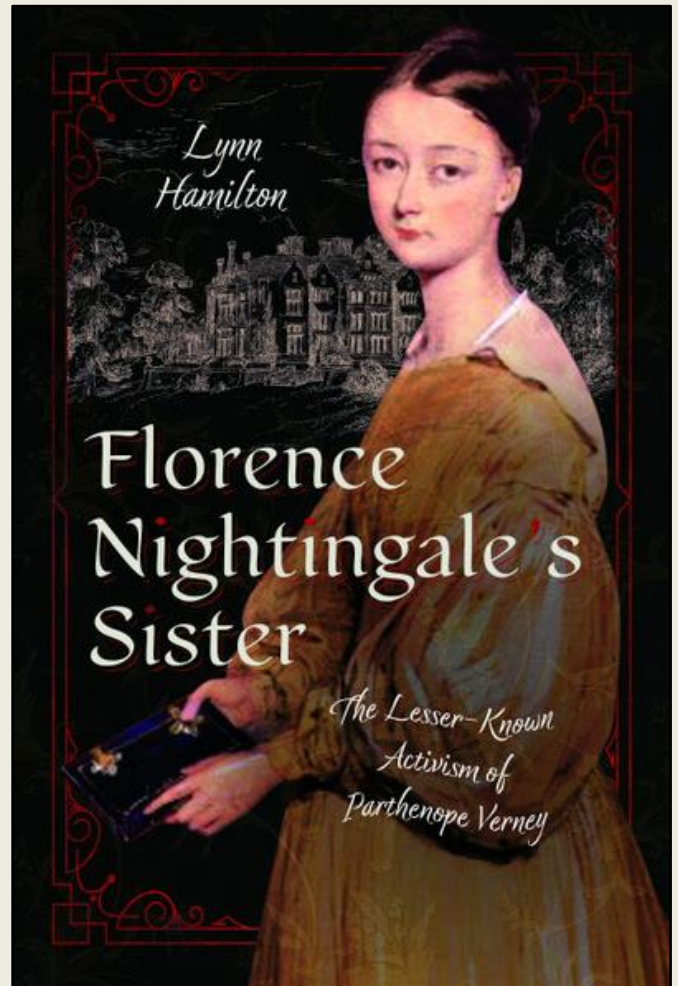
A highly original take on evocative terms such as extraction, burial, fossils, deep time, and speculative futurity, *Subsurface* questions the certainty of comfortable narrative arcs. It asks us to read literature with and against the figure of the geological column, with and against fossil fuels and the emissions warming our planet. As we see our former selves move into the distance, what new modes of imagination might we summon?

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***Florence Nightingale's Sister: The Lesser-Known Activism of Parthenope Verney*, by Lynn Hamilton (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2023), 224pp., £22.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399066808**

They say that behind every great man is a hard-working woman. Behind the titanic that was Florence Nightingale, there was a lesser-known sister, Frances Parthenope. While Florence achieved iconic fame for her work with wounded soldiers in the Crimea, Parthenope spent her days gathering supplies for those same soldiers, especially the ever-needed dry socks, and sending them overseas. With hands badly damaged by rheumatic fever, Parthenope tirelessly penned letters to Florence's supporters and tactfully requested donations. Eventually, Parthenope

married and turned her writing talents to fiction and non-fiction that exposed Victorian injustices toward the poor and women. Florence Nightingale's older sister never achieved the fame that came to the "Lady of the Lamp." However, in her own right, Frances Parthenope Verney was a great Victorian. A novelist, journalist, and activist, she supported her sister's reform of the medical profession while being a thought influencer on the subject of the urban poor and the British peasantry.



## BAVS Funding Reports

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

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### Victorian Transformations Conference

Hosted by Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies in collaboration with the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship, with sponsorship from the British Association for Victorian Studies, 24-25 May 2023

The theme of 'Victorian Transformations' for this conference attracted a wide variety of both historical and literary papers. A key purpose for the conference was to mark and celebrate the bi-centenary of the best-selling author, Charlotte M. Yonge (1823-190), and papers on Yonge's exceptionally long literary career were featured over the two days while parallel panels focused on alternative types of literary and artistic transformation occurring throughout the nineteenth century. An additional pleasure was the venue: Weetwood Hall on the outskirts of the city is a substantial 4-star hotel in large wooded grounds which specializes in providing conference facilities and the sun shone throughout.

Although individual papers on aspects of Yonge's writing occasionally appear at academic conferences, it is rare to find one where her work features as a central theme. For those of us whose research centres on Yonge, it was exciting and rewarding to be amongst enthusiastic scholars of her writings who were already experts on the plots, their large families and the interwoven sequels, and who were keen to discuss them. The variety of Yonge-related topics bore witness to the extraordinary range of her lifetime's work.

Participants came from near and far. As well as those attending in person, others contributed via the web, some from as far-afield as India and Singapore. Unfortunately, this method of involvement was hindered halfway through the first day when there was a major breakdown in the internet in Leeds. This necessitated some quick reorganisation by those running the conference. This glitch had a knock-on effect on the roundtable on Yonge on the second day where a number of contributors, both present in Leeds and via the internet, were to talk about their essays in the recently published *Charlotte Mary Yonge: Writing the Victorian Age*, eds Clemence Schultze, Julia Courtney and Clare Walker Gore (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). Only the five authors present in Leeds were able to contribute to what was, nevertheless, a lively discussion.

Special mention was made at the conference of the Revd Prof. Rosemary Mitchell (1967–2021), the former Director of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies. Her chapter in the 2023 essay collection, 'Charlotte Mary Yonge and the Concept of Conservative Community', was the last publication she completed before her too-early death. We remembered her with affectionate gratitude for the way she was so encouraging to many of us in the early years of our research.

Susan Walton (University of Hull)

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### The New Woman Illustrator at the British *Fin de Siècle*

I used my BAVS research funding award for a three-day visit to two sites in London, the British Library and the Women's Library at the London School of Economics and Political Science Library, to complete research on my project 'The New Woman Illustrator at the British *Fin de Siècle*'. This project, which feeds into my PhD thesis looking at women illustrators at the British *fin de siècle* and their relationship to the New Woman, aims to not only consider the professionalism of women illustrators but how these women contributed to the New Woman's visual representation. My hope for this research trip was to discover further imagery of the New Woman that went beyond caricature, by consulting illustrated editions of poetry, little magazines, and feminist/suffragist periodicals. I also hoped to view children's books, as this research would add to a chapter of my thesis on the ways in which women writers and illustrators used the genre of children's literature as a space for subversion and the exploration of their socio-political values.

Visiting the British Library was incredibly useful for my research. I was able to study several undigitalised books illustrated by women such as Celia Levetus and Florence Harrison. Both women illustrated in the style of Pre-Raphaelitism and this research will feed into the Amy P. Goldman Fellowship in Pre-Raphaelite Studies at the University of Delaware Library and the Delaware Art Museum that I will be undertaking this August. One of the most surprising things I discovered during my

time at the British Library was the small size of one of the illustrated books of poetry I ordered. It was an edition of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1899) illustrated by Levetus. So far, all the books I have handled have been a standard size, even though they were for children. When I picked up my books at the counter, I was puzzled by one of the small boxes that they handed to me. This is an aspect of primary research I would miss out on if I had not had the chance to see these items in person. While digitisation is great for extending access, knowing that the size of Levetus's illustrated edition was tailored to children changes my experience studying the illustrations. Another set of items I consulted at the British Library was little magazines that were associated with art schools such as the Birmingham School of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art. I was able to view un-digitised illustrations that expanded my knowledge of the women included in little magazines at the *fin de siècle*, feeding into a Dissertation Fellowship I will be undertaking at the Harry Ransom Center in Texas in September.

I made another interesting discovery at the Women's Library. Among the suffragist and feminist

periodicals, I had the chance to view a full set of *Womanhood* (1898-1907), a magazine that I had come across while researching online during the pandemic. The volumes I discovered online were badly digitised and it was difficult to see the illustrations, but I knew Levetus had contributed to the magazine. I also could only locate Volume 3 onward, meaning that Volumes 1 and 2 were missing from my search. It was exciting to receive these volumes in my research cubbyhole and experience the thrill of seeing a unique piece of Victorian material culture in person. I was very pleased to discover that there were significant illustrations by Levetus in Volume 1, which extend the New Woman's visual representation. Thanks to the BAVS funding, I was able to make this exciting discovery in the history of women illustrators' involvement with feminist periodicals that I would not have been to do without visiting the Woman's Library. I hope to explore this research further in my PhD thesis as well as in a future paper for the BAVS Annual Conference.

*Michelle Reynolds (University of Exeter)*

# Calls for Submissions

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

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## CFP: Victorian Transfictions and Transmedia Storytelling Special issue of *Victorian Popular Fictions Journal* (Autumn 2024)

Henry Jenkins used the term ‘transmedia’ in 2006 to explore the ways in which stories, characters, and entire fictional worlds are created across different media platforms such as comic books, films, television, computer games, printed books, internet fan fiction and many other platforms. While this concept has primarily been used to analyse twenty-first century storyworlds such as the *Star Wars* series or the *Marvel* universe, scholars have begun to investigate the ways in which Victorian storyworlds were similarly mobile, capacious and flexible. Transfictionality, defined in 2001 by Richard Saint-Gelais, occurs when ‘two (or more) texts share elements such as characters, imaginary locations or fictional worlds’ (“Transfictionality” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (Routledge, 2008)). Transfictions may occur within the same medium, whereas transmedia describes narrative across media platforms. We might think of Anthony Trollope’s *Barsetshire* as a storyworld setting activated, modified and extended across several popular novels. Or we might consider the letters written to authors and published in periodicals suggesting alternative endings to popular novels as a form of fan fiction that renegotiates priorities and prejudices. We might consider Sweeney Todd, Jack Sheppard, or Lady Audley as criminal characters deployed in differing ways across narrative, visual and dramatic media.

We invite papers on transfictional and transmedia practices at work across the British nineteenth century. We would like authors to join us in utilising the constellation of ideas around tranfictionality and/or transmediality to re-think notions of originality and fidelity and to widen the networks of connections we make across and between popular fictions.

Articles could address, but are not limited to, the following:

- Transfictions across the periodical press
- Transfictions and seriality
- Audience consumption or audience participation
- Transmedia characters
- Transfictions and commercialisation
- Global transfictions
- Visual and dramatic storyworlds

Abstracts of up to 500 words for proposed articles due September 1, 2023

Full articles of about 7-8,000 words due February 28, 2024

Email proposals to [erica.haugtvedt@sdsmt.edu](mailto:erica.haugtvedt@sdsmt.edu) and [b.palmer@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:b.palmer@surrey.ac.uk)

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## CFP: Yellow Nineties Biographical Essays

YELLOW NINETIES 2.0 is an open-access scholarly resource for the study of eight British fin-de-siècle little magazines in the context of their production and reception. In addition to a searchable digital edition of each magazine, we provide a critical overview of the title and a scholarly introduction for each volume in the series, as well as a historical archive of contemporary promotional materials and reviews. Two biographical tools – essays on individual contributors and the Y90s Personography – facilitate discovery of the people and networks that created the artwork and literature in these magazines.

The Y90s Magazine Rack contains eight digital editions: *The Dial*, *The Evergreen*, *The Green Sheaf*, *The Pagan Review*, *The Pageant*, *The Savoy*, *The Venture* and *The Yellow Book*.

We are currently looking for specialist scholars – at any career stage and with or without institutional affiliation – who wish to provide biographical essays on persons (e.g. literary or journalistic contributors, illustrators, artists, engravers, printers, publishers, editors) with substantial links to the little magazines available from our website. All submissions undergo peer review, and essays are usually published within six months of final acceptance.

All biographies published so far can be found here: <https://1890s.ca/biographies/>.

We welcome your own suggestions, but we can also supply you with a list of subjects that we ourselves are particularly hoping to commission. If you are interested, please contact the Biographies Acquisitions Editor Koenraad Claes ([koenraad.claes@aru.ac.uk](mailto:koenraad.claes@aru.ac.uk)) or the General Editor Lorraine Janzen Kooistra ([ljanzen@torontomu.ca](mailto:ljanzen@torontomu.ca)).



## Of Victorianist Interest

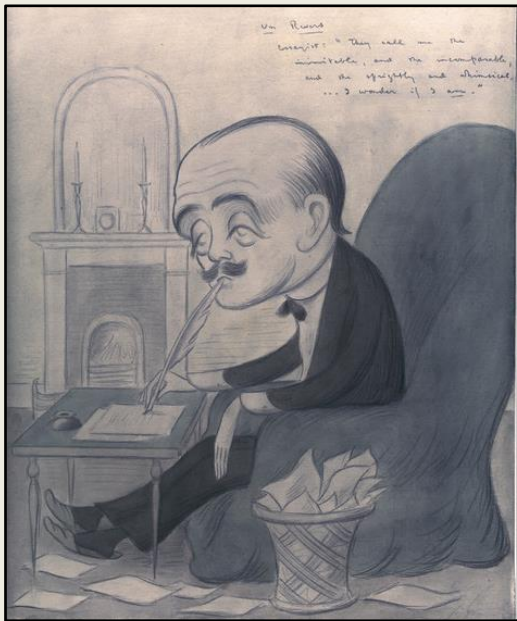
Please email relevant notices to [bavsnews@gmail.com](mailto:bavsnews@gmail.com) for inclusion in future issues.

### **Exhibition: Max Beerbohm: The Price of Celebrity**

The New York Public Library  
Stephen A. Schwarzman Building  
Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III Gallery  
Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street, New York, NY  
**20 October, 2023–4 February, 2024**

Today we live in a world of celebrity culture. Celebrity became an international industry in the late-nineteenth century, and the English artist and author Max Beerbohm (1872–1956) was at the center of it. From the 1890s through the 1920s, to be a celebrity meant the hope—and fear—of turning up in a drawing or a parody by “Max,” as he was known in both Britain and the U.S. His brilliant skewering of famous people in his visual caricatures and of their writing styles in his satirical works made him a celebrity himself. This was an identity he enjoyed, but later shrank from. In essays and fiction, he explored the price in human terms of achieving and maintaining celebrity status in ways that still resonate with us now.

This exhibition maps the career of Sir Max Beerbohm (knighted in 1939) in relation to the idea of celebrity, following him from his early days in the Decadent circles of Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley through his late career as a radio performer on BBC broadcasts during World War II. Along the way, he knew, drew, and wrote about many other celebrities, from Henry James to Virginia Woolf and George Bernard Shaw to members of the Royal Family.



**Max Beerbohm, *Un Revers*. Self-caricature. Pencil, ink, and watercolour on paper, [1909]. Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press**



**Max Beerbohm, *Oscar Wilde*. Pencil on paper, undated. George Arents Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations**

The New York Public Library is the perfect place for this show. A wit and a dandy, renowned for always being impeccably dressed, “Max” was as popular in New York City as in London. He has continued to live on, too, as a subject of interest and also of caricatures in the *New York Review of Books*, the *New Yorker*, and other New York-based publications. Drawn from the extensive holdings of the Library, along with loans from private and institutional collections, *Max Beerbohm: The Price of Celebrity* includes rare original caricature drawings, manuscripts, photographs, books from Beerbohm’s library, and personal items, most on public display for the first time.

The exhibition is curated by Margaret D. Stetz, Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women’s Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware, and Mark Samuels Lasner, Senior Research Fellow, University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press.

For more information, please contact the exhibition’s coordinating curator, Julie Carlsen, Assistant Curator, The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, [juliecarlsen@nypl.org](mailto:juliecarlsen@nypl.org)

## Petition: Bring Back the Kate Greenaway Medal

The Kate Greenaway Medal is the oldest British literary award focused on illustration. This year, CILIP (formerly the Library Association) decided to remove the name of the beloved artist, Kate Greenaway (1846–1901), and replace with Andrew Carnegie's name because of marketing expediency. Kate Greenaway is an important woman in the history of illustration and should not be erased.

We'd like to call on CILIP to reinstate Kate Greenaway's name on this award before the 2024 nominations.

Petition: <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/bring-back-the-kate-greenaway-medal>

More information: <https://archive.ph/4wA12>

Petition created by:

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