BOOK REVIEWS

Black Neo-Victoriana, edited by Felipe Espinoza Garrido, Marlena Tronicke, and Julian Wacker; pp. xii + 263. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022, $131.00, €109.00.

Neo-Victorianism, **Empathy and Reading**, by Muren Zhang; pp. viii + 222. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, $120.00, £85.00.

Muren Zhang's monograph and the collection edited by Felipe Espinoza Garrido, Marlena Tronicke, and Julian Wacker make important contributions to neo-Victorian studies and speak to the thriving position of the field. *Black Neo-Victoriana* constitutes the first collection to examine extensively the ways in which neo-Victorian texts understand and engage with Black life and experiences, both now and in the nineteenth century. *Neo-Victorianism, Empathy and Reading* takes up a perhaps more established thread in neo-Victorian studies by understanding the genre as self-reflexive in its engagement with the affects, ethics, and politics of reading. The works are linked by their considered attention to the ethical status of neo-Victorian texts (and neo-Victorian scholarship) and by their embodiment of global neo-Victorian scholarship. Zhang is based at the East China Normal University (China), Garrido, Tronicke, and Wacker all work at the University of Münster (Germany), and their volume features contributors located in universities across Europe and North America. While there is, of course, still much work to do in decolonizing and globalizing the field, these texts follow the work of Elizabeth Ho in her 2012 *Neo-Victorianism and the Memory of Empire*, and *Black Neo-Victoriana* in particular speaks to the call made by Ronjaunee Chatterjee, Alicia Mireles Christoff, and Amy R. Wong in this journal in 2020 to "undiscipline" Victorian studies ("Introduction: Undisciplining Victorian Studies," *Victorian Studies*, vol. 62, no. 3 [Spring 2020], 367–91).

Zhang's monograph explores the ways in which "neo-Victorian fiction involves the reader in the (construction of the) textual world affectively" (11). In laying out the theoretical underpinning of her approach she connects with Lauren Berlant's work on the politics of affect to focus on the reader's understanding of history as empathic rather than discursive. She also draws on the work of Cora Kaplan, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Mark Currie, among others, to consider the reader of neo-Victorian fiction as oriented to a reparative future. The most compelling moment in this section was, for me, the application of Dominick LaCapra's idea of "empathetic unsettlement" to neo-Victorian narratives (36). As a means by which ethnographers or witnesses of traumatic events might be able to retain their understanding of the alterity of the Other while practicing affective engagement, empathetic unsettlement allows the reader to experience their own complicity in the Other's exploitation and the potentially wide-ranging consequences of that acknowledgement.

While Zhang takes a broad understanding of neo-Victorian texts to include literature, film, and cultural practices, the novel looms largest with some sparse attention to film. Zhang's chapters cover some canonical neo-Victorian novels including Margaret

Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996), Sarah Waters's *Tipping the Velvet* (1998) and *Affinity* (1999), and Julian Barnes's *Arthur & George* (2005). It also engages with fictions that have been given less critical attention, such as Michael Cox's *The Meaning of Night* (2006) and Graeme Macrae Burnet's *His Bloody Project* (2015). Almost all of these texts are structured to provide multilayered narratives (with contemporary framing devices, stories embedded within stories, doubled or multiple narrators) in which narrators might be strategic or unreliable. Structures that disable or problematize empathetic readerly engagement are just as interesting to Zhang as those that explicitly invite the reader into the world of the novel.

This book reads interestingly alongside critical texts that focus on empathy and affect in relation to Victorian fiction and readers, such as Tara MacDonald's recent *Narrative, Affect and Victorian Sensation: Wilful Bodies* (2023) or the work of Rachel Ablow in the influential collection *The Feeling of Reading: Affective Experience and Victorian Literature* (2010). Both Victorian and neo-Victorian fictions test out the possibilities of empathy, and neo-Victorian fiction can sometimes position itself self-consciously as inheriting a conviction of the reparative potential of empathetic reading. But Zhang's work does not posit a reader who comfortably finds pleasure in narrative immersion and unthinking identification with a Victorian past. By focusing on the discomfited or unsettled reader, both within the literary works and beyond them, she asks us to consider our own ethical responsibilities as readers as well as our desires and expectations.

Where Zhang's work focuses most fully on the neo-Victorian novel, the diverse nature of the *Black Neo-Victoriana* collection allows it to spread across neo-Victorian culture more broadly, and the editors sensibly divide the collection into parts organized around fiction, screen, and other types of Victorian refashionings. It takes in television in U. Melissa Anyiwo's chapter on *Penny Dreadful* (2014–16), film in Antonija Primorac's chapter on William Oldroyd's film *Lady Macbeth* (2016) and Lewis Mondal's section on Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation* (2016), photography in Maria Weilandt's chapter on the Black dandy in Yinka Shonibare's photo series, and country houses as neo-Victorian cultural sites in Corinne Fowler's piece. Neo-Victorian drama also receives attention here with Lolita Chakrabarti's play *Red Velvet* (2012), dramatizing the career of the Black actor Ira Aldridge discussed in Tronicke's chapter. As with many of these chapters, Tronicke uses the individual text as a jumping-off point for broader discussions concerning contemporary identity politics, in this instance around the politics of casting in contemporary theater. We are continually reminded of the resonance of these texts in engaging with Black experience both historically and contemporaneously.

Black Neo-Victoriana is part of the Neo-Victorian Series published by Brill and overseen by Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben. It further elaborates some of the questions brought forward by the earlier *Neo-Victorian Biofiction* (2020) edited by Kohlke and Gutleben around the complex work of recentering or revoicing marginalized voices and the ethical responsibilities therein. In *Black Neo-Victoriana* we see this particularly in Helen Davies's piece on recent appropriations of Sarah Baartman's life and body and in Susanne Gruss's chapter on Prince Alemayehu's afterlives in neo-Victorian fiction. Both Davies and Gruss open out the possibility of exploitation that contemporary novelists must reckon with as they approach the rewriting of Black lives in particular and reflect on the genre itself as inherently "dependent upon the cultural/historical appropriation of others" who cannot speak for themselves by virtue of their historical distance (81).

No easy answers are found by these writers, but a willingness to enter into these difficult debates and to reflect on their own positionality while doing so is apparent.

This spirit of self-reflection runs throughout the collection and is particularly notable in Jesse Ryan Erickson's chapter and Jennifer DeVere Brody's afterword. Brody maps her own academic career onto the rise of poststructuralist Black studies in the 1980s and 1990s and the ongoing investment by scholars like herself and her fellow contributors in "exposing racial theories at work in Victorian Studies" (254). Erickson's "Confessions of a Black Ouidaite: Autoethnographic Neo-Victorianism" positions itself at the meeting place of fandom and scholarship to understand the "guilty pleasure" of reading Ouida via contact points as diverse as Afro-American scrapbooking, Black women's clubs of the late nineteenth century, hip-hop culture, cosplay, and tea-drinking (37). While the chapters in this collection, including Erickson's, focalize structural racism, the insidious legacies of imperialism, and individual examples of racist prejudice, we are reminded here to take pleasure in our reading where we can and to make every effort to understand our own positionality in an ongoing network of readers of Victorian and neo-Victorian texts. This attention to positionality is beautifully blended with scholarly rigor throughout the collection. We see this rigor evidenced from the introduction onwards, where Garrido, Tronicke, and Wacker bring together key texts in postcolonial and Black British history and situate their own work at the intersections of those disciplines with neo-Victorian criticism. With some exceptions (such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Elleke Boehmer, and Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina), the collection shows how much space there is in this gap for further critical interventions that pay attention to the erasure that has facilitated "a misleading, homogenising concept of 'the Victorian' as a shorthand for a white Long Nineteenth Century" (3).

Both *Black Neo-Victoriana* and *Neo-Victorianism, Empathy and Reading* are well worth reading. The introductions of both texts will make particularly useful additions to undergraduate reading lists with their considered reviews of key debates that have structured neo-Victorian studies up to this point. But they both, *Black Neo-Victoriana* in particular, also point to a healthy future for neo-Victorian studies in which scholars engage with some of the most difficult questions of contemporary literature and culture.

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Victorian Women and Wayward Reading: Crises of Identification, by Marisa Palacios Knox; pp. vii + 233. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, $103.00, $29.99 paper.

The belief that the Victorian female reader was naturally predisposed to intensive identification with fictional worlds and beings was at the center of Victorian debates about the reading experience of women. Her susceptibility to states of uncritical immersion, her confusion of real and actual worlds, the narcissistic projection of herself onto a character, the interference of her sympathetic powers on her capacity for rational judgment—these readerly shortcomings of the female Quixote in a state of crisis have

received ample attention. Scholars have responded in different ways, some seeking to disprove these deficiencies of identification by redeeming the interpretive powers of real and fictional women readers, others dissecting the sexist and paternalistic hegemony from which the notion of the deluded female reader sprung.

Marisa Palacios Knox takes a different approach in *Victorian Women and Wayward Reading: Crises of Identification*. In Knox's study, identification emerges in the Victorian female reader as a deliberate exercise leading to personal and even political action. The term "wayward," which connotes both nonconformity and stubborn individuality, is a neat term that Knox uses "to denote the simultaneously deliberate and unpredictably multidirectional nature of this kind of identification" (3–4). Her project aims not to redeem the Victorian female reader from the stereotype of identification so much as shift our understanding of identification from passive self-effacement or deluded self-centeredness—understandings modern scholars have inherited from Victorian predecessors—to active self-possession and control.

In this way, Knox's own study is refreshingly wayward in its attempts to break through the narrative of crisis surrounding the Victorian female reader by creating new ways of understanding identification as a deliberate and empowering act. *Victorian Women and Wayward Reading* seeks to erode our own lingering assumptions about identification as poor critical praxis—a habit to be trained out of our students, for instance, in favor of objective detachment. Though Knox's discussion of pedagogy comes last in her study, it is worth beginning with her insistence that attention to reader identification can be a teaching strategy that produces results. How can tracking the identifications that spring up within us as we read tell us something about our own ethical, aesthetic, or political priorities? And then, what wayward identifications can we deliberately make—with other characters and different perspectives—that might pose productive challenges to our original response to a text? This grasp of identification as a process of action and self-understanding informs Knox's study of female readers, real and fictional, throughout the Victorian era in multiple fruitful contexts.

Knox describes how vicarious identification with the subjectivities of male characters allowed female readers to "claim the privileges that they were asked only to imagine" even as critics sanctioned identification with men as sympathetic training for the absorptive self-effacement constituting marriage under coverture (25). Revising the connotations of reader identification as the relinquishing of self to text, Knox presents evidence for reader identification as a deliberate action from which women could write their own lives. If Aurora Leigh's identification with male artists "promotes an aesthetic instead of political paradigm of female agency," readers like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Susan B. Anthony nonetheless "chose to identify with Aurora's agency more than her artistry, translating that readerly affinity into political protest" (48). The sensation novels of Mary Braddon, on the other hand, in presenting readers with no "consistent or comfortable vehicle for identification," invite readers to use their perceptive powers to choose to identify with some characters over others (60). Connecting this elective process with the incipient suffragist movement, Knox argues that female readers of sensation fiction "could thereby rehearse the process of selecting her aptest representative" (76). In *The Doctor's Wife* (1864), her adaptation of *Madame Bovary* (1856), Braddon's own female Quixote Isabel Sleaford demonstrates the ethical integrity of a female reader's choices when they are exercised, despite the judgements and low expectations of protective men.

Though the first chapters focus on readings of Victorian novels, the book's second half interprets readings in multiple contexts, from the Victorian actress reading lines to the spiritual medium channeling the dead in psychic readings and, finally, to the literary studies classroom reading together to practice interpretive criticism. Knox shows how the actress and the medium, both believed to be vulnerable passive vessels inhabited by others, could instead use their professions to assert their individual selfhood; bringing together commentary from actual Victorian actresses like Sarah Anderton, Alma Murray, and Anna Cora Mowatt with representations of acting in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) and Wilkie Collins's *No Name* (1862), Knox shows how strategic performance choices and self-command frame acting as the "deliberate exercise of imaginative mobility" (80). Similarly, Knox rethinks female mediumship as agentive rather than self-abandoning: "Though ostensibly speaking for others, female mediums themselves could thereby assert their right to speak authoritatively and thus transgressively as women" (104). Knox reads Bertha's resistance to telepathic intrusion in George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* (1859) and Mina's ability to redirect Dracula's telepathic intrusions back at the villain in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as bucking the prevalent stereotype of the medium as a passive and morally bankrupt female vessel susceptible to penetration.

In a later chapter, *Victorian Women and Wayward Reading* centers a different kind of female reader—the professional woman reading from a detached perspective—to show the double bind of identification's two poles: "As women's passionate identification with literature had often been correlated with pathology throughout the nineteenth century, the dispassionate response attributed to female literary scholars, professionals, and artists acquired the label of morbidity" (120). Using George Gissing's Marian Yule and Rhoda Nunn as her main examples, Knox shows how "under-identification" or affective absence became associated with morbid sterility and sexual unfulfillment, and how this association occurs frequently in New Woman novels by Charlotte Riddell, Mary Cholmondeley, and George Paston at the fin de siècle (122).

Victorian Women and Wayward Reading represents a strong contribution to studies of the Victorian female reader. If the argument at times seems too capacious compared to the space devoted to it, this only shows how the association between identification and deliberate action is fertile ground for future investigations.

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Victorian Women Writers and the Other Germany: Cross-Cultural Freedoms and Female Opportunity, by Linda K. Hughes; pp. xiv + 282. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022, £75.00, $100.00.

The "other Germany" in the title of Linda K. Hughes's study derives from Vernon Lee, the last of ten Victorian women writers whose careers and writings she analyzes here. In *Genius Loci: Notes on Places* (1899), Lee describes the Germany of her experience and imagination not as "the one which colonises or makes cheap goods, or frightens the

world in various ways," but as a fertile ground for intellectual development and artistic creativity (qtd. in Hughes 1). As evidence she cites an all-male pantheon: the Brothers Grimm, Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. By shifting to female examples, specifically English expatriates, Hughes's book reveals the ways in which Germany fostered the creative growth and flourishing of a diverse group of English women: Anna Jameson, Mary and Anna Mary Howitt, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Jessie Fothergill, Michael Field (the corporate publishing pseudonym of poet-lovers Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper), Amy Levy, Elizabeth von Arnim, and Lee. Just as England offered opportunities for German political exiles, as documented in Rosemary Ashton's *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (1986) and several subsequent studies, so too did Germany represent broader horizons for literary English women. Hughes tells this largely untold story in a series of richly detailed chapters that supplement existing scholarship while offering highly original, critically acute, and often revisionist readings of specific texts. Throughout, *Victorian Women Writers and the Other Germany: Cross-Cultural Freedoms and Female Opportunity* offers vivid, fine-grained narratives of individual lives and careers transformed by their encounters with Germany.

New Woman themes appear throughout Hughes's study, since all of her subjects in varying ways challenged prevailing social, religious, and gender norms. Their interactions with educated German women encouraged this radicalism, allowing them in many instances to "experience a more expansive life as a woman that allowed greater physical movement, social interaction, and intellectual equality free from the social policing that in England often labelled such women 'unfeminine'" (7). Hughes has been a pioneer in New Woman studies for over thirty years; she was among the first to expand the field to include women poets and women's poetry, notably in *New Woman Poets: An Anthology* (2001) and *Graham R.: Rosamund Marriott Watson, Woman of Letters* (2005). *Victorian Women Writers and the Other Germany* extends this project, especially in its analysis of novels by Fothergill and von Arnim. In her chapter comparing Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) to Fothergill's neglected but originally best-selling novel *The First Violin* (1878), she makes a compelling case for the latter as the first in English fiction to represent a New Woman—five years before Olive Schreiner would do so in *The Story of an African Farm* (1883). Hughes reveals the ways in which *The First Violin* is in dialogue with both *Daniel Deronda* and Paul Heyse's 1873 novel *Kinder der Welt* (*Children of the World*), describing it as "an intricately woven fabric of Anglo-German cultural exchange and language that anticipates New Woman fiction and, like all works discussed in this study, demonstrates the rich possibilities and opportunities that Victorian women writers and their fictional characters discovered in Germany" (128).

In the case of Australian-born English immigrant von Arnim, who became a German citizen upon her 1891 marriage to a German count, Hughes concedes that, like Lee, she was a "foot-dragging feminist," but notes that she "relished the freedoms and career opportunities trailblazed by New Women" (162). While she is best known for her semi-autobiographical novels *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* (1898) and *Vera* (1921), her three expatriate-themed novels are Hughes's focus, and they grow in stature under her critical gaze: *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen* (1904); *The Princess Priscilla's Fortnight* (1905); and *Fräulein Schmidt and Mr Anstruther, Being the Letters of*

an Independent Woman (1907). In analyzing the complex literary structure of the latter, Hughes describes in convincing detail the "proto-Modernist technique" of what she calls its "subliminal narrative," which in some ways resembles Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness. Rendering the struggles of the "independent woman" of its title, von Arnim represents her letter writing, in Hughes's words, as "a cover over complex psychological and emotional processing going on out of sight. . . . [W]hat Rose-Marie thinks to quote in a given letter and her sudden turns of thought are clues to what motivates her" (181).

While her focus is English women, Hughes begins and ends her study by discussing Ottilie von Goethe, the daughter-in-law of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Her lively intelligence, generous spirit, and network of heterodox female friends animate Hughes's first chapter, just as her ghostly spirit haunts the margins of her last. Though ill served by history, Goethe was a formidable figure in her own right, a poet and critic (whose work circulated privately) with a deep knowledge of German, English, and French literature. She welcomed Anna Jameson to Germany and into her social circle in 1833, and the two formed a close, complex relationship (characterized by unrequited love on Jameson's part) that lasted until Jameson's death in 1860. And just as Goethe, Hughes writes, "was in every sense Jameson's gateway to Germany," Jameson's subsequent writing about the country inspired other outward-looking English women contemplating their own German sojourns (15). Goethe returns in Hughes's concluding chapter about Lee, in which Hughes emphasizes that beyond the widely recognized role of German aesthetic theory in shaping Lee's literary sensibility, her encounters with German culture and literature, which began in childhood, had a profound role in waking her "to the realms of wonder and imagination, large ideas, and profound affection," and that this influence "was directly connected to the hauntings that characterize her writing" (188). Hughes's analyses of these hauntings, primarily in relation to Lee's supernatural tales and her novella *Ottilie: An Eighteenth Century Idyl* (1883), culminate in an audacious reading of the latter that brings her study full circle.

Hughes calls Lee's semi-autobiographical *Ottilie* a "proto-feminist" work that anticipates Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), specifically the life Woolf imagines for Judith Shakespeare: "Ottilie *is* the novella's main character, but her story is trapped, almost extinguished by overlying male narratives just as this highly intelligent, gifted woman is trapped into constricted possibilities by the men in her life" (200). While acknowledging that Lee's title is likely not an allusion to Ottilie von Goethe, Hughes proposes an interpretation of the novella that evokes her life and influence. Noting that *Ottilie* is "both a story and a metafiction that reflects on how history is written and the contingent, incomplete result" (205), Hughes "resituate[s]" the narrative as "an alternative, imagined history of the German woman who did so much to set in motion the fascination, beckoning freedoms, and literary opportunities of Germany for Victorian women writers" (206). The ghostly Ottilie haunting Lee's *Ottilie*, Hughes writes, "is a salutary reminder of all in Goethe's complicated social, sexual, emotional, psychological and intellectual life, by turns vibrant and painful, that was once unquestionably present but eludes documentary history today" (207).

The achievement of Hughes's book, founded on consummate scholarship, documented history, and piercing critical insight, is to shed new light on the richly complex

lives of her ten subjects, as well as their shared attraction to a country where, in Hughes's words, "a woman's life could harmoniously combine sociability and intellectuality as a living reality and not as an imagined dream" (207).

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Chains of Love and Beauty: The Diary of Michael Field, by Carolyn Dever; pp. xv + 261. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022, $37.00, $26.95 paper, $37.00 ebook, £30.00, £22.00 paper, £30.00 ebook.

The story of Michael Field continues to fascinate, and we can now celebrate the fact that we have a whole book devoted to exploring the diary of Michael Field. This has long been wanted and needed; but who would undertake a project with numerous large volumes of barely decipherable Victorian handwriting? Luckily, Carolyn Dever has, and the result is *Chains of Love and Beauty: The Diary of Michael Field*, a beautifully written book that brings the story to us through a new frame, making the case for it being the great unknown novel of the nineteenth century.

Michael Field was the assumed name of two women, Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper: an aunt and niece who lived, loved, and wrote together from the 1880s to their deaths in 1914 and 1913. They left a vast oeuvre of literary works (poems and verse dramas primarily) that have found a new audience since the renewed interest in women writers in the 1990s. Pioneering work by Angela Leighton, Holly Laird, Martha Vicinus, and others opened a door that many of us have since walked through in order to build, collectively, a vast body of knowledge about this collaborating pair and their work. There is no question that their self-fashioned queer identity has been a key driver of this recent interest. Resisting the new categories of sexology, Bradley and Cooper created their own queer aesthetic to express the love they had for one another, and a desire that refused to fold into any one space or another.

Their vast manuscript diary is of equal interest and a major legacy. Left in their will for their executor to preserve, it is now in the British Library manuscript collection. Transformed into microfilm in the 1990s, and then digitalized into freely accessible online images in the second decade of the twenty-first century, this diary has not lacked engaged readers. However, it has most commonly been read in the service of exploration of other works and other questions. Only a few pieces have been published on the diary as a work in its own right. Dever's remarkable book is sure to remain the definitive work for quite some time.

How to explore several decades of diary writings within the confines of one standard-sized monograph? Dever solves this challenge by choosing to focus on deep dives into just a few years. First, she takes the anomalous 1867 and 1868 volume (written by Bradley alone at the age of 22), and pairs it with the first volume of the collaborative Michael Field diary from 1888 to 1889. The second focal point is 1892 to 1893: a tumultuous year in which aspirations in love and work seemed to be rising to a pinnacle of

achievement, only to be dashed in ways that set the course for the remainder of their career. 1897 saw the death of Cooper's father (Bradley's brother-in-law) and the women's own pledge to one another: the cementing of their life together. 1899 sees that life played out through the domestic and material construction of their first independent home together as they buy and furnish a new home in Richmond. 1906 to 1907 sees their conversion to Catholicism and a transformation of their articulation of their union into a holy trinity with their new-found god. The book comes to rest in a brief consideration of endings and the heart-breaking notation of the women's deaths in 1913 and 1914.

Dever "treat[s] these individual volumes as encapsulated experiments on their own terms." Through these volumes she tracks a "complex politics of time, space, and cognition" (35). Ultimately, Dever reads the diary as a novel, tracing through it a number of fictional conventions and frames that had been central to the language developed by the nineteenth-century novel to enable the representation of life. Indeed, the diary is a romance story. If there is a frustration with it as a document, it is its lack of the documentary. Reality, one feels, is always held at one remove by the women's artistry and their desire to write an aesthetic life. This is true even at the most anguished of moments, which becomes meaningful when one considers what is not present in this diary rather than what is. We rarely see a reflection on politics or poverty (a "heap of gross human refuse" encountered close to home is an aesthetic blunder, for them, not part of a sociopolitical commentary [Bradley qtd. in Dever 133]). The diary delights as a literary and aesthetic work more than as a journalistic one. Which is not to say it is a purely personal story—it is ambitious in its aesthetic scope, but it is ultimately an aestheticist construal of a life and its context. To Dever's great credit she does not hold back on pointing out the consequences and limitations of this strategy as well as the benefits. Dever describes their dependence on a servant class as an "open secret in the diary" as they record the departure of their maids without a shred of self-awareness. Similarly, in relation to their independent income stream founded on the tobacco industry and their uncritical investment in the beauty of the commodity, Dever notes they are "absent EBB's [Elizabeth Barrett Browning's] ethical stance concerning the commodity and the means of its production" (156). They were indeed the archetypal bourgeois aesthetes that Jonathan Freedman so potently outlines in his study *Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism, and Commodity Culture* (1990).

As to Bradley and Cooper's queerness, Dever argues persuasively that Michael Field deals with their eschewal of a reproductive legacy by crafting in their art "a strategy for futurity" (35). There is certainly a recurrent concern with legacy throughout the diaries that Dever rightly highlights. At the outset, Dever raises the question of the potentially incestuous nature of Bradley and Cooper's relationship, and she answers it by aestheticizing it: "My point has nothing to do with moral judgement about an erotic arrangement. It has to do, rather, with the structural enclosure of both Bradley and Cooper in an endogamous or centripetal marriage plot" (11). This move in itself shows both the value and the limitations of Dever's approach. Reading the diary as an aesthetic document, she uncovers the way it uses literary tropes and plot-frames to construe the story of their life. She engages with it on its own terms: as an aesthetic construction. What might it look like, though, to press more on a reading between the lines, and to trouble more this aestheticization? To do so might risk falling foul of suspicious reading habits that are

politically predetermined. However, Dever's own recognition of their interest in the role Edith's father plays as a signifier of difference between them (he was not a blood relative of Bradley in the way Cooper's mother was) should be taken seriously (203). Dever tells the Michael Field story as one of "sameness" ("'sameness' was the axle of devotion for Michael Field, almost to the very end"), yet I see in it a much more nuanced dance of sameness and difference, and for me this is at the core of their erotic, and at the core of their unique contribution to queer theory (11).

To invite such debate is the triumph of this book. For the first time, a book-length engagement with the story of the diary represents a huge and meaningful achievement. Dever's eye for the detail is as beautiful as her own prose, and this study will be a touchstone for very many years to come, opening up new research avenues for all scholars of the period. It is both a delight to read and an essential read for all of us in the broader field. "We cannot possess what we experience," writes Katherine Bradley in the 1888 and 1889 volume (23). This phrase is undoubtedly at some level a piece of Pater-light, but it is a testament to both the diary and Dever's own study that they draw out something significant from it. Our own experience is never owned by us in any simple way, and seeking an objective record will always be an impossible pursuit. The aesthetic writing and reading of a life become particularly meaningful within this frame.

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Convalescence in the Nineteenth-Century Novel: The Afterlife of Victorian Illness, by Hosanna Krienke; pp. viii + 227. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, £75.00.

In a world that does not yet know the full ramifications of long COVID, Hosanna Krienke's book about the slow time of convalescent care feels timely. While we habitually wish each other a speedy recovery, the Victorians, she argues, recognized the importance of a long, restorative convalescence. In *Convalescence in the Nineteenth-Century Novel: The Afterlife of Victorian Illness*, Krienke interleaves an insightful cultural history of convalescent care with close readings of the meandering middles of nineteenth-century novels. She develops the critical concept of "convalescent time," a temporality that was—for the Victorians—fitful, indeterminate, and agonizingly nonlinear (6). Yet she argues that it was this indeterminacy that made convalescence and its narrative forms a "multipurpose salve" for the pathological pressures of modern life (4).

Across her five chapters spanning the period 1820 to 1914, Krienke explores a convalescence renaissance in Britain when this form of care was re-evaluated along with its discursive significance. Convalescence provided a repose from the harried chaos of modern life, representing a time scale removed from the pressures of efficiency and productivity. As part of a widespread nineteenth-century investment in extended rehabilitation, patients were encouraged to embrace the uncertainty of this transitional period, which might last weeks, months, or years and resolve into a range of outcomes including full recovery, chronic impaired health, relapse into acute illness, or even death. The virtues

of rest, fresh air, good food, and diverting activities (like novel reading) were lauded and made available in philanthropic convalescent homes to a span of sufferers including insane asylum inmates, soldiers working across the empire, and the urban poor. However, the privileges afforded by such institutions also accentuated social disparity. By providing the working classes with temporary access to the middle-class ideal of well-aired domestic space, for example, convalescent homes emphasized the deeply classed aspects of recovery and the complex systemic, economic, and environmental axes of ill health. Individuals' ongoing health negotiations were beset not only by the biological realities of disease, but also by the social challenges of poverty, urban pollution, poor diet, overwork, and mental anxiety.

This shift toward the quotidian contexts of ill health allows Krienke's book to excavate the well-trodden ground of Victorian illness in new and compelling ways. Positioning herself in dialogue with scholars like Talia Schaffer, she identifies a "precise meeting point between convalescent ideology and historical reading practices" that illuminates tensions between the slow, incomplete recuperation anticipated by domestic caregiving and the ideal of efficient and complete recovery championed by scientific medicine (11). In chapter 1, for example, she examines how the unresolved ending of *Bleak House* (1852–53) and its ragtag cast of convalescing characters can be read in the context of a burgeoning movement of philanthropic convalescent caregiving. Doing so allows us to see long delays of plot not as authorial indulgence, or even the material pressures of producing serialized fiction, but as a form of readerly training akin to the skill of managing the uncertainty of illness itself. By setting these narrative delays against the act of detection (with its hunger for definitive answers), Charles Dickens ensures that readers have "a deliberately reoriented relationship to narrative closure long before the novel's famous final dash" (46). Thus, Krienke reveals how nineteenth-century novelists encouraged their readers to delight in unresolved endings and in the often-boring cessations of plot that described and echoed sickroom life.

She further illuminates the power of pausing, both narratively and physiologically, in her third chapter by examining the act of novel reading as a convalescent experience. Writers for magazines like *Fraser's* (1830–82), *Blackwood's* (1817–1980), and *Saturday Review* (1855–1938) championed healthful masculine reading as a respite from the stresses of modern life, providing a compelling counter narrative to that of the nervous female reader overstimulated by tales of sensation. In a particularly sophisticated analysis, Krienke illustrates how Wilkie Collins uses scenes of rehabilitative leisure to punctuate his plot in *The Moonstone* (1868). Readers are invited to indulge in the healthful diversion of Betteridge's aimless narration and at the same time to enjoy the delicious suspense of sensationalist mystery, thereby disrupting critics' bifurcations of male- and female-coded genres.

Krienke's expansive understanding of narrative time offers a departure from discussions of the success or failure of the detective as a proxy for science and recognizes the detective genre's capacity for narrative and moral complexity—an element that Clare Clarke has identified as a common lacuna in critical scholarship (*Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* [2014]). Krienke also reads against the grain of existing gendered critiques of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853) by placing the novel in dialogue

with religious devotionals that sought to manage patients' emotions in pursuit of spiritual growth. Such texts analogized spiritual redemption with the slow, piecemeal, and sometimes nonlinear return toward physical health, encouraging their often-convalescing readers to resist forecasting eschatological outcomes. In making the juxtaposition, Krienke reveals how "the timescale of prolonged convalescence can thwart easy assessments of redemption, punishment, and reform" in relation to the seemingly punitive death of Gaskell's titular protagonist (49).

She similarly marshals convalescent autobiography to reflect on the development of radical cross-class and gender empathy in *The Moonstone*, and explores how the ethical interventions of the After Care Association, a charity for discharged asylum patients, bolster Samuel Butler's surprising investment in community sympathy in his satirical novel *Erewhon* (1872). It is notable how well her chapters flow from and speak back to one another, holding in suspension the many nuances of convalescent discourse across readerships and genres. To balance her study, Krienke recovers a parallel, militarized convalescent dogma that was produced at the interstices of empire, excavating the "vexed ways in which practices of physical rehabilitation were implicated in the imperial project" (122). This history provides a context within which she rereads Frances Hodgson-Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) as demonstrative of tensions between the ideals of "empirical (and imperial) rehabilitation" and conventional convalescent care (124). In a nuanced deep dive into the nationalist and classed anxieties of *The Secret Garden*, Krienke provides a bridge from the Victorian ascendency of charitable, egalitarian convalescence to its demise following the First World War when it was replaced by an anxious insistence on speedy recovery.

Krienke encourages reflection on how convalescent time may help us reorient our relationships to cure and recovery as we add long COVID to a growing list of indeterminate health challenges such as burn out, chronic pain, autoimmune disorders, and the under-recognized stress of living in remission. In addition to offering a new critical paradigm for accessing the narrative complexity of nineteenth-century novels, this book throws into stark relief the socioeconomic and psychological challenges that are often downplayed in discussions of illness—both historically and in the present. The exclusion of working-class and female voices is to be lamented: with the exception of the two female novelists and Florence Nightingale, the tone is set by male, middle-class professionals and male, middle-class autobiography. In this regard, the book offers a highly intellectualized or narrowly specific window into the *experiences* of convalescence. It would have been fulfilling to see the recovery of underrepresented patient and reader voices—answering calls for more archival history from below. Nevertheless, Krienke successfully delivers an interdisciplinary and theoretically ambitious study of "the afterlife of Victorian Illness" (in all senses of her subtitle). Thoroughly researched and accessibly written, *Convalescence in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* illuminates the classed overtones of striving for health and the temporality of able-bodiedness, recovering a lost ethics of community care that has much to teach us in the twenty-first century.

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Colonising Disability: Impairment and Otherness Across Britain and Its Empire, c. 1800–1914, by Esme Cleall; pp. xi + 299. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, £67.00, $114.95, $99.99 ebook.

Esme Cleall opens *Colonising Disability: Impairment and Otherness Across Britain and Its Empire, c.1800–1914* with an exploration of the life of author, activist, and blind person Tilly Aston. Aston, a white Australian born in Victoria in 1873, was a vocal advocate for Australia's blind community. Drawing on Aston's writing, Cleall explores how both racism and imperialism shaped Aston's activism and, more generally, her understanding of blindness. In a poem about an Indigenous classmate, a boy Aston refers to as "Black Wanda," Aston asserts that, unlike white settler students, Wanda failed to learn how to read by touch; instead, he pined for "his native bush," eventually dying of a "broken heart" (2). Cleall's analysis of Aston's poetry initiates her book's extended and informative analysis of the interconnectedness of experiences of disability and race in Britain's colonies in the nineteenth century. Like other case studies shared in the course of the book, Cleall's work with Aston's oeuvre is instructively focused on an individual's lived experience of disability. Importantly, Cleall's work on Aston is also representative of this book in that it focuses on the experiences of a white settler, sharing a colonizer's, rather than a colonized person's, perspective. Our knowledge of the life and death of Wanda is limited to what Aston shared.

A core argument Cleall makes in *Colonising Disability* is that "discourses of race and disability, whilst not one and the same, were not simply related discourses but mutually constituted" (28). Cleall's elucidation of this argument is, she acknowledges, guided by Western definitions of disability and not by Indigenous understandings. Focused on white settlers such as Aston, Cleall has comparatively little to say about Indigenous or Black communities' experiences of disability, including disabilities resulting from colonial violence, privation, displacement, and disease transmission. While Cleall calls persuasively at several points in her book for more scholarship on the history of disabled people of color, her own focus lies elsewhere.

Ambitious in its scope, this book explores the history of a range of disabilities, including deafness, mobility-related disabilities, and intellectual disability. Especially successful and original is Cleall's work on the emergence of the category of feeble-mindedness. This book is equally ambitious in its treatment of diverse geographical areas. Australia and Canada are areas of focus, as is, fittingly, Britain. Notably, Cleall does not hesitate to extend the reach of her study to explore the history of disability in the United States. A judicious choice, the inclusion of American content allows Cleall to both identify and explore the importance of international networks that developed between people with disabilities in the second half of the nineteenth century. While interested in the flow of ideas and information, Cleall is equally attentive to the movement of people across borders. As she demonstrates, disability was frequently used to discourage or prevent the immigration of disabled people. Of particular note is Cleall's work on Jane Groom, a deaf, white British woman who organized the relocation of deaf people from the United Kingdom to the Canadian prairies. Cleall explains that Groom's project "relied upon the imaginative and practical possibilities of an

expansionist psyche in which land could be taken from indigenous occupiers, and re-purposed" (179). With her exploration of deaf people's migration, Cleall elucidates how perceptions of disability not only shaped able-bodied settlers' reception of disabled immigrants but also motivated white people with disabilities to participate in the colonial project.

Especially commendable is Cleall's thorough and thoughtful engagement with census records. Her compilation and analysis of, for example, six decades of English and Welsh census records reveals not only the prevalence of disability but also changes in how bodily or intellectual differences were labeled. Cleall demonstrates that the enumeration of disabled populations both paralleled and supported the work of nondisabled educators and philanthropists who sought out disabled individuals with the goal of intervening in their lives. Cleall's analysis of census records will hopefully inspire future work that will explore the uses to which disabled people put statistical information about themselves. How, we might ask, did knowledge of one's membership in a population of many thousands inform an individual's self-perception? To what extent and in what ways did this data guide the work of disabled activists?

An important exception to Cleall's focus on the experiences of white settlers is her work on disabled people of color who performed in freak shows. Of note is Cleall's discussion of the life of Tom Wiggins, an African American blind person whose prodigious musical abilities, including his abilities as a composer, attracted international attention. Cleall uses Wiggins's career to show how extraordinary ability is perceived as freakish in the case of an enslaved person who was not only blind but also neurodivergent. Her detailed and thought-provoking engagement with this case study enriches her work on freak shows, a topic very thoroughly treated by other scholars in recent decades. In her exploration of this topic, Cleall emphasizes both the agency of disabled performers and the dual identity of participants who, in addition to being people with disabilities, were people of color.

Regarding race, Cleall is consistently careful neither to conflate nor to equate the experiences of racialization and disability. She describes nineteenth-century discourses about race and disability as connected but distinct examples of what she terms a "discourse of difference" (52). Focused on how disability functioned as a "tool of racialization," she reminds her readers: "My argument is not that race and disability were the same thing, but that their discourses fed off each other conceptually" (55, 250). This argument, like her identification of processes of empire-building and the formation of settler societies as "unquestionably ableist projects," will resonate with many readers (214). By more fully integrating the history of disability into the history of the British Empire, Cleall has made a noteworthy contribution to both fields. We can now eagerly look forward to the results of increased attention to the nineteenth-century histories of Indigenous and Black disabled people, attention Cleall accurately identifies as much needed.

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Twisted Words: Torture and Liberalism in Imperial Britain, by Katherine Judith Anderson; pp. xi + 214. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2022, $69.95, $49.95 ebook.

The core proposal of Katherine Judith Anderson's *Twisted Words: Torture and Liberalism in Imperial Britain* is that the persistence of torture in the modern world has "something interesting to say about liberalism" (7). Actually, it turns out the persistence of torture might in fact have *two* interesting things to say.

The first claim (call it argument one) is that the persistence of torture reveals "exceptional violence" to be "the foundation of liberal-capitalist empire" (9). Liberalism, according to this view, is a "false promise" (9). Its talk of rational consent, human equality, and restrained and lawful governance is simply an always-slipping cover story for what is, in its most essential facts, a program of violent, racist, and extralegal dispossession. "Atrocities," claims Anderson (working off a claim by Priyamvada Gopal), are "the constitutive dimension of liberal capitalism" (9). From this perspective, the "everyday, systemic violence imposed on citizen-subjects" in Madras and elsewhere simply offers a particularly clear view of the fact that "torture, as a tool of state, is foundational to Western modernity" (13).

Argument one sits alongside a maybe less familiar and certainly more challenging view (call it argument two) in which the persistence of torture is not proof of liberalism's false promises but derives from a more basic, and perhaps indefeasible, connection between politics and the body. Liberalism, from argument two's view, was not so much lying as radically overestimating the degree to which we might separate our political heads from our political hearts. It is true that a long tradition of liberal theory, from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jürgen Habermas, has emphasized minimally embodied activities: consent, ratiocination, discussion, deliberation, and so on. But the actual life of liberal citizenship regularly relies on an arsenal of somatically intense practices—for example, parades, air shows, community gardens, blood drives, military conscription, standing for the national anthem—in order to body forth and sustain political membership. By these lights, torture—and especially the (theoretically) nonlethal and momentary pain inflicted by what the Victorian period called "petty torture"—is not external to politics but a key site for generating what Anderson calls an "explicitly sensory citizenship" (56, 12). Quite against the ordinary liberal assumption that the most legitimate political order will be the one that most respects the autonomy of the rights-bearing individual, argument two suggests that it is in fact torture (or something like it) that creates citizens in the first place. Argument two will thus lead Anderson to describe torture as a "paradoxical" space "in which subjects could make a cultural claim for citizenship" (12) and, more arrestingly still, as a practice that "expanded the number people who could claim the rights of British citizenship as well as its responsibilities" (11).

The general, chapter-by-chapter drift of the book's narrative is from more argument two to more argument one ways of thinking. After an introduction defining some basic terms ("torture, terrorism, liberalism, citizenship"), both chapter 1 and chapter 2 concentrate on the work somatic ordeals (up to and including torture) did in producing liberal citizens. Chapter 1 deals with a set of martyrological novels from the 1850s and 1860s (for example, Nicholas Wiseman's *Fabiola, or the Church of the Catacombs* [1854] and William Henry Giles Kingston's *The Last Look: A Tale of the Spanish Inquisition* [1869]) as

well as John Henry Newman's *Callista: A Tale of the Third Century* (1855) and George Eliot's *Romola* (1862–63). Liberalism emerges in these texts not as a regime of disembodied abstraction but as a political order that "enlist[ed] citizen devotion" by means of "the body's sensations of touch, hearing, and sight" (13). Chapter 2 extends this embodied political subjectivity to the imperial context—looking at the ways in which torture perpetrated by tax collectors for the British government in Madras contributed to a new consensus about what constitutes torture as well as (in good argument-two fashion) "open[ing] up new possibilities for liberal citizenship for Indian subjects of the British Empire" (14).

Chapter 3 begins the project's step back from a full-blown commitment to argument two. Anderson focuses on the public scandal surrounding the British military's brutal response to the 1865 Morant Bay Uprising as an episode that lit up the difference between what she calls the military habitus (a set of customs and moral outlooks specific to the British military) and the broader ethos of liberal citizenship. In describing this divergence—between the "adrenalized" habitus of imperial violence and the "disinterestedness and objectivity" of liberal citizenship—we are firmly back in argument one, false-promise-of-liberalism territory (91, 94).

Chapter 4 rediscovers this same contradiction within the domestic sphere. Here, Anderson uses novels by George Meredith, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope to argue that the threat of torture also defined intimate spaces of marital life. And chapter 5 similarly argues via literature from both Oceania (George Lewis [Louis] Becke) and South Africa (Bertram Mitford and William Charles Scully) that the figure of the settler colonist emerges as a key emblem of the contradiction between liberalism's law-abiding ideals and the unrestrained violence of its reality. A coda—reflecting on a more recent history of state-authorized violence (including the murders of Michael Brown, George Floyd, and others)—suggests the links between a British liberalism that spoke of reason while it doled out torture and an American neoliberalism proclaiming freedom while "seeking our extermination" (180).

Space requires omitting some important aspects of Anderson's project. I have not touched on the book's discussions of the rhetoric of torture—the way the printed page might be made to communicate not just the fact but the somatic intensity of torture—or the various adjustments to subgenres of the novel that Anderson suggests. But I think the largest outstanding question for the project is really about how we are to understand the relation of the two co-present arguments I have outlined. On the one hand, both arguments one and two would clearly affirm the notion that torture was foundational to Victorian liberalism. But that consensus belies a fundamental disagreement about the place of freedom in politics. Argument one is anti-liberal in the limited sense that it decries the oppression that is the history of actually existing liberalism. But it also clearly looks forward to a not unliberal outcome in which human dignity, value, autonomy, and even the right to something like property (for example, a right to resources) would be respected. As for classical theorists of liberalism, the better politics, for argument one, is the politics that oppresses people the least. But this is not how argument two sees things. Because argument two sees citizenship as formed *out of* somatic subjection rather than less obviously somatic mental or reflective acts like consent or volition, it does not and cannot point to a future with more freedom in it. Argument two's somatic citizenship

would require that we, like the martyrological witness Anderson describes, "accept the expansion of [our] horizon through the effects of torture on [our] body" (21). I'm an argument-one person; but, if I were not, a promise like this would certainly be a good way to make me one. To be fair, though, there is still a glimmer of argument one even here: in the idea that our "accept[ance]" would have a place in this otherwise thoroughly somatic politics. And if acceptance matters, maybe the important question is about which somatic "expansions" we can accept and which we will refuse. That sounds to me a lot like a politics of autonomy and consent—a lot like argument one—which is perhaps where we have been all along.

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Narrating Trauma: Victorian Novels and Modern Stress Disorders, by Gretchen Braun; pp. viii + 222. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2022, $69.95, $34.95 paper.

Gretchen Braun's recent monograph, *Narrating Trauma: Victorian Novels and Modern Stress Disorders*, offers seminal contributions to the fields of literature, cultural and gender studies, psychology, and medical science—as well as an investigation of the overlapping discourses of these disparate disciplines. In recent years, many critics have made copious use of Sigmund Freud in discussing Victorian texts that center on trauma, narrative, gender, and subjectivity (for example, Carolyn Dever's *Death and the Mother from Dickens to Freud: Victorian Fiction and the Anxiety of Origins* [1998] and Alicia Mireles Christoff's impressive *Novel Relations: Victorian Fiction and British Psychoanalysis* [2019]). By contrast, Braun confines herself to using psychological discourse, both Victorian and contemporary, thus decentralizing psychoanalytic and poststructuralist readings of trauma in Victorian fiction in favor of tracing the evolution of nineteenth-century psychology and medical science into the eventual (and inevitable) twentieth- and twenty-first-century diagnostic bible: the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM). In so doing, Braun identifies "important parallels [between] pre-Freudian nineteenth-century psychiatric formulations of what was termed nervous disorder, nervous exhaustion, and nervous shock" and the first appearance of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the *DSM-III* in 1980, making the larger scope of the study essential to fathoming the Victorians' conceptualization of these phenomena with contemporary diagnostic understandings of our own parallel disorders and diagnoses (24).

Since Michel Foucault offers implicit warnings—particularly in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976)—about ahistorical readings, about (mis)using our own diagnoses when speaking of historico-cultural periods during which such designations and classifications did not exist in the same taxonomic terms, it might at first be easy to disregard Braun's project as one that is out of alignment with historical literary scholarship. However, as she writes, "key movements in nineteenth-century mental science show that prior to the Freudian shift and devastating effects of modern mechanized warfare, there was a significant, even dominant, conception of psychic injury as the result

of decentralized environmental and cultural factors" (21). In eschewing Freudian and Lacanian analyses, which many of the novels on which she focuses have already received in spades—novels as familiar yet as complex as Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860–61), Wilkie Collins's *No Name* (1862), George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895)—Braun reminds us quite insistently that the birth of modern psychology takes place during the time period in question. This historical situating of trauma also allows for a consideration of more "diffuse forms of trauma, which appear increasingly germane in the second decade of the twenty-first century, as we emerge hesitantly from [COVID-19] pandemic lockdowns to grieve a staggering loss of life that occurred without violence" (21). Indeed, as Braun continues, "Victorian medicine's overall privileging of diffuse and insidious forces over catastrophic or singular events differs in emphasis from twentieth-century theories of PTSD—while presenting parallels to our contemporary twenty-first-century moment" (40). Braun's project is, thus, an archeology, as Foucault would phrase it, of these various discursive strands, one that sifts through scientific and medical thought as well as fictional texts, while at the same time reflecting on our own continual reshaping of these discourses and diagnostic criteria.

Throughout the book, Braun offers impressive analyses of canonical texts, alongside some authors—like Emily Jolly—who have sadly been neglected by the canon; indeed, Braun's chapter on Jolly makes a tremendous case for more critical examination of the writer's work to be conducted, both in light of Victorian psychology and medical science and on its own singular terms. In a side-by-side consideration of Hardy's Jude and Dickens's Pip, for example, Braun makes much use of her conceptualization of "the self-unmade man" (164), an expression she borrows from Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852–53), wherein the character George Rouncewell gives an account of "a life made monotonous by economic lack and social irrelevance" (165); in *Narrating Trauma*, this phrase is one that allows Braun to examine both male characters' embodiments of "the psychic risk inherent in Victorian socioeconomic mobility" (164). Considering Jude and Pip alongside one another allows Braun to figure textually and historically the emergence of Victorian diagnoses of male neurasthenia, "the nervous hero" (165), and the ostensibly gender-neutral usage by Victorians of "neurasthenia or nervous exhaustion" as a causal link to "external event[s]" "and environmental stimuli" that often flagged such heroes as suffering from too much ambition in the fast-paced life of the modern world (171). Jude's and Pip's respective ends—the former's quite blatantly terminal, the latter's more "ambiguous" due to Dickens's "wrestl[ing] with" the ending—prove, in Braun's reading, to be symptomatic of the "Victorian medical and cultural model of thwarted [male] ambition" as caused by neurasthenia and "capitalist overexertion" (175).

Perhaps the strongest chapter in *Narrating Trauma* is Braun's in-depth evaluation of Lucy Snowe, the enigmatic, often maddening narrator of Brontë's *Villette*. Lucy's "omissions and evasions within the story" are interpreted rightfully as symptoms of trauma (43): Lucy's undisclosed, narratively repressed "traumatized consciousness" affords Braun's most detailed textual analysis in her study, as she brings Brontë's last novel into dialogue with Victorian theories of phrenology (of which *Villette* itself makes much use), hysteria, and neurasthenia, and more contemporary views on PTSD, trauma, and the "shattered psyche" (70). By drawing especial attention to Brontë's extended imagery of shipwreck

throughout *Villette* to figure Lucy's compulsion to repeat trauma, Braun ends this chapter with literary-historical considerations of the symbolism of shipwreck and destruction in Judeo-Christian and Greek epics, as well as actual Victorian reportage of shipwrecks which may factor into a kind of survivor's guilt on Lucy Snowe's part: "Shipwreck resonates with Lucy's ethical dilemma of survival in the face of overwhelming loss, both in the moment of struggle and in the aftermath" (71).

In Braun's view, analyzing Victorian authors', characters', and readers' responses to trauma narratives can tell us just as much about literary and cultural attempts to narrativize trauma and subjectivity as they can tell us about the shifts in psychology and medical science during this time—and how the transmutations from then until now in psychological discourse and diagnostic criteria can help us to revisit these texts anew; reassess them using a new lexicon; and see not only how groundbreaking these texts and authors were for their time, but how relevant they still are now, in spite of the epistemological sea changes of psychological diagnoses, taxonomies, and classifications. Indeed, Braun ends *Narrating Trauma* with a consideration of COVID-19, humanity's shared loss and suffering both during and after a global pandemic, and a call to reassess texts and history in the light of this shared traumatic experience. In Braun's closing notes, she emphasizes this historical predicament and this historical imperative: "nascent Victorian mental science, in its close attention to interplay between social and somatic stressors, offers salient connections to diffuse and less obvious forms of mental harm we are called to attend in the twenty-first century" (202).

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Disorder Contained: Mental Breakdown and the Modern Prison in England and Ireland, 1840–1900, by Catherine Cox and Hilary Marland; pp. xii + 303. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, $99.99, $39.99 paper.

Out of His Mind: Masculinity and Mental Illness in Victorian Britain, by Amy Milne-Smith; pp. x + 311. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022, £85.00.

Male Suicide and Masculinity in 19th-Century Britain: Stories of Self-Destruction, by Lyndsay Galpin; pp. vi + 194. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022, $108.00, $35.95 paper, $28.76 ebook.

Masculinity studies have, in some ways, fought for critical territory in discussions of gender construction, suicide, and mental illness in the long nineteenth century. A singular masculinity—a heteronormative man—to be embodied by all Victorian men is a nostalgic view of an idealized past that tends to read the idea of an upper-class gentleman as a particularized person with the capacity to be all things to all people: a boy then a son, brother, husband, and ultimately, patriarch who is a wise, benevolent provider. The Victorian age, like any time, did not make it easy for any one person to be a real paragon

of virtue. The ideal woman held up by Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* (1854–62) is disproven by the many facets of real womanhood. Similarly, if a man was thought to be of dubious morality and should he fall out with society over vice or crime, his behavior then raises the question of what should be done with our own rose-colored biases toward historical perfection. Even farther along in our consideration of the nature of Victorian masculinity in the nineteenth century is the confusion of criminality and mental illness. Three new books sort through this nexus of difficult questions.

According to Catherine Cox and Hilary Marland in their research-rich and meticulously documented *Disorder Contained: Mental Breakdown and the Modern Prison in England and Ireland, 1840–1900*, the inception of the modern prison system necessarily invoked questions regarding the production and exacerbation of mental despair and illness as well as the setting off of pre-existing mental health issues by excessive punishment, cruel separation, and negligible understanding of mental illness. They point out how, over time, the question has continuously risen whether incarceration in prison may have been responsible "for making its inmates mad" (2). In methodical and sometimes overwhelming detail, they trace the evolution of the prison system to ascertain the relationship between the modern prison and the recognition of mental breakdown, particularly in male prisoners in the English and Irish prison systems.

One of the most interesting aspects of their work is the awareness that as the prison system grew, there was an increasing need for distinctions in authority and decision-making around acceptable behavior/discipline, increased education, health concerns, and spiritual expectations. To do so, local magistrates, prison officials, medical officers, and chaplains all became key brokers in responding to mentally disordered offenders. Irish prisons in the 1860s became models of penal management for their success in reducing crime without expanding costs, and for being curative, as well as reformatory, for those men sent to incarceration, an advance over the colonial power's apparatus that had control via British oversight. Cox and Marland investigate how the idea of imprisonment of any man should be humane and reformatory, not merely to emphasize relative—or often excessive—punishment or spiritual accountability. Their exhaustive use of prison records, convict files, laws, and legislation supports their rigorous discussion of whether prisoners should enter a place of instruction and probation or a place of oppressive punishment.

Cox and Marland's study details how the development of the systems in Ireland and England included debates on the benefits of separation and silence; many of the chaplains advocated for separation so a prisoner might have silence, rather in the manner of a holy man, to contemplate then repent their sins to allow for the moral reformation that would allow a released man to re-enter society as a productive citizen. Silence allowed for some connection with other prisoners, but enforced quiet was effectively impossible despite extreme deterrents. These rival prison regimes were embroiled with ideas of legitimate punishment as well as ideas of the debt owed to society by a criminal actor; for some, the reformation of bodies and minds was thought to take place only in a corrective and "suitably punitive environment" without much thought to the increasing mental imbalance those same standards created (33). In the detail that is exemplary in this text, Cox and Marland work through the reformist agendas, the administrators, the architects, the public commissions, the legal acts, the experiments, and the failures of systems of

control with increasing recognition that such failures could also permanently change an individual's ability to cope with life and lead to sanitoriums rather than freedom.

English and Irish prisons had the same difficulties as those in the United States (like Pentonville), to which officials looked for other foundational ideas; increased cases of insanity and high rates of mortality proved that none of the systems used were truly effective. Issues of mental health—mania, anxiety, depression, delusions, and hallucinations—increased with separate confinement. The introduction of prison medical officers made it possible to separate the policies of the administrators—which were intended to "rationalise and produce uniformity"—from those actions which might benefit the incarcerated man. Cox and Marland consider how the prison doctors were "caught in a tension between supporting and enforcing the discipline of the prison" right down to diet and labor, and deciding on health and wellbeing, acting as middle-men seeking to improve the lives of the imprisoned men who were too often thought to be morally implicated in their own situation, often due to alcoholism, lack of work, unsympathetic circumstances, or mental illness (20). The incredibly nascent area of alienism or early psychological thought is brought home when the authors remind us that Oscar Wilde described prison medical men as "a class [of] ignorant men" with "no knowledge of mental disease of any kind" in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* in May of 1897 (after having experienced them for himself); Cox and Marland then track how the later period of 1860 to 1895 was a time of increased psychiatric expertise, and they outline the changes made to the penal systems as a result of this increased knowledge (qtd. in Cox and Marland 21).

Amy Milne-Smith's *Out of His Mind: Masculinity and Mental Illness in Victorian Britain* opens with an introduction provocatively titled "madmen in the attic?"—reminding the reader of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)—which raises the important question of the relationship between gender and mental illness. Milne-Smith's introductory study of the historical development of understanding male mental illness provides insight into the despair internalized by men. Those male members of society who were not able to live up to social standards, or who were not able to provide for their families, Milne-Smith asserts, suffered deeply but would not want to acknowledge their weakness. George Sala even records a Bethlehem hospital patient exclaiming, "Let me be crippled, deaf, blind, paralytic, mutilated even to the negation of outward form, such by Thy will, but not Mad, O Lord, not Mad!"; such was the fear of being insane or less than manly (qtd. in Milne-Smith 1). If men's authority was based in the ability to rule over their families, provide for dependents, and participate in the wider public arena, then a loss of reason or intellect, self-mastery, conscience, or individual responsibility negated one's manhood.

A loss of restraint over passions, bodily appetites, or pathological feeling could lead to being labeled a madman. Milne-Smith convincingly argues that this lack of control is exactly what "highlights the boundaries of masculinity, those who sought to police its borders, and those who contested these definitions. A madman was, by his very nature, a man who could or would not control himself," becoming a danger to himself or others "through violent, melancholic, or suicidal thoughts" (2). Such a man would, by definition, be seen as effeminate and ineffectual as a masculine presence, unable to live up to the standards of maleness of the nineteenth century. This question—what are the consequences of a diagnosis of insanity to normative values of masculinity?—leads Milne-Smith

to investigate cultural expectations and male responses to them in her examination of society's reactions to, as well as the real-world consequences for, men who suffered from mental illness.

Questions of defining masculinity (healthy or otherwise), male integrity, patriarchal authority, and social anxieties are well explored in this study. Milne-Smith invokes Elaine Showalter's focus on female madness in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830–1980* (1985) and other early works of mad studies that integrate gender as a key factor in the analysis of nineteenth-century mental illness to point out that there might have been "as many maniacs in the cellar as there were madwomen in the attic" in the period from the Lunacy Act of 1845 to World War I (6).

So, too, does Lyndsay Galpin's *Male Suicide and Masculinity in 19th-Century Britain: Stories of Self-Destruction*; it opens at a brisk pace to acknowledge the work of historians of masculinity like John Tosh and Michael Roper who drew attention to a crisis of masculinity and how its portrayal has long been tied to negotiations about power, as well as to Mark Breitenberg who focused on the idea of "anxious masculinity" as inherent to the construction of patriarchal culture (qtd. in Galpin 2). In a very strong addition to their arguments, Galpin's monograph removes preconceptions and reads the many narratives surrounding male suicide in the nineteenth century to see how constructions of stoicism and morality expected in a man were of detrimental effect to mental health. A particularly strong discussion in one chapter captures how a military man was expected to be stoic and brave, and any suggestion of mental illness would recast such a man as dishonorable rather than as a man able to uphold a sense of honor at a steep cost to his own sense of self. Galpin's investigation into the men's own stories, not just how society views them, casts a wider consideration over how conventions and mores did not always take into account the complexity of the male experience. Indeed, the variety of masculinities that existed prove that to be male was a multifaceted experience. Galpin's theorization includes discussions of changes in culture from gentry masculinity to industrial or urban masculinity in middle-class men, in addition to the increasingly problematic idea of the aristocratic man as effeminate, all of which argue against any consensus of a hegemonic masculinity.

Suicide is not a gendered act per se, but Galpin successfully reasons that using gender can be helpful in constructing narratives to understand what seemingly cataclysmic factors lead to self-destruction. Galpin makes clear, with strong support from her documentation, that not all suicides were driven by Wertherian romanticism or in response to spurned love; rather, the acts of self-destruction may have causes from external pressures like cultural perceptions, familial expectations, and others. On these historical grounds her work has its strength; comparisons to current day suicides are less contextualized and seem too far afield from the central argument.

The reactive nineteenth-century media and legal systems—carefully traced by Galpin in newspapers, reports, coroner's inquests, verdicts, and other sources—often posit some degree of sensationalism and shame to be accorded to the victim with the label of insanity because of self-inflicted or badly managed personal behavior. Such ostracization is a kind of blame-the-victim comfort that excuses society and alienates the suicide as a failure; chapter by chapter, Galpin maintains that suicides were more often victims of mental illness aggravated by poverty, unemployment, financial failure (fraud and/or speculation),

and honor—or even caused by colonial or war traumas—all of which, she points out, troubled conservative, patriarchal notions of masculinity, as did nonheteronormative sexuality, which also led to suicidal despair.

The luxury of reading these three excellent works together bestows the reader with the depth and breadth of the intersectionality of discourses of male imprisonment, mental health, and suicide in the nineteenth century from different scholarly approaches. Cox, Marland, Milne-Smith, and Galpin each fill in areas that complement the others' work to demonstrate that patriarchal masculinity was not a monolith of stoicism and correctness but a complex and multifaceted institution.

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Dickens and Victorian Psychology: Introspection, First-Person Narration, and the Mind, by Tyson Stolte; pp. viii + 276. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, $95.00.

Historians of science generally agree that Victorian-era psychology evolved from a science of the soul to a science of the brain. Numinous concepts like the soul, will, or mind, common in scientific writing of the 1830s and 40s, gradually gave way to empirical studies of the brain and nervous system that seemingly left little room for traditional Christian belief in the afterlife or immortal soul. According to Tyson Stolte's *Dickens and Victorian Psychology: Introspection, First-Person Narration, and the Mind*, Dickens stood firmly on the side of the soul, from his earliest novels in the 1830s until his final, unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), written after the materialist sea-change in psychology was well underway. While Dickens's understanding of psychology evolved along with the field in certain respects—his novels show an increasingly sophisticated understanding of reflex action, unconscious cerebration, phrenology, trance states, and dual personality, for instance—he nonetheless preserved a comparatively old-fashioned dualism wherein the immaterial mind or soul cannot be reduced to brain alone, and the Christian afterlife is rarely in question. Dickens's attitude toward psychology was in keeping with his deeply felt Protestant faith, which centered on the New Testament. As Dickens wrote to a friend mere days before his death, "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour" (qtd. in Stolte 230).

Stolte argues in *Dickens and Victorian Psychology* that Dickens's conservative views on religion and the immortal soul have prevented him from being recognized as an innovative psychological thinker. George Henry Lewes's 1872 article "Dickens in Relation to Criticism," written shortly after the novelist's death, set the tone for future writing on the subject. In this piece, Lewes praises Dickens's vivid imagination but describes his characters as two dimensional and unrealistic. George Eliot, too, criticized Dickens for offering up "frequently false psychology," while Henry James called Dickens "the greatest of superficial novelists" (qtd. in Stolte 4). Reviews like these gave rise to a broader critical perception that Dickens was "a gifted novelist, perhaps, but not a thinker, not a reader," an attitude that still influences literary criticism today (242).

Dickens and Victorian Psychology aims to set the record straight by documenting Dickens's investment in Victorian psychological debates as expressed in his novels and elsewhere. Stolte presents compelling evidence to this effect. For instance, Lewes, Eliot, and Dickens had a decades-long friendship in which they frequently discussed the latest psychological developments of the day. Lewes's complaints about Dickens, Stolte suggests, stemmed from the *type* of psychology the novelist embraced (Christian dualism as opposed to Lewes's materialism). In other words, "Lewes's attack on Dickens's fiction is as much a defense of [materialist] psycho-physiology as it is a fair evaluation of the artistic limitations of Dickens's writing" (14). Further, Dickens owned over thirty books on the workings of the mind, broadly defined, including "a number of essential psychological texts that articulate a wide range of positions, from the most orthodox dualism to the most controversial materialism" (38). This evidence does suggest that Dickens was more well informed about psychology than critics such as Eliot, Lewes, and James have allowed. It also suggests that his comparatively old-fashioned psychological dualism did not signal a lack of awareness of materialist psychological doctrines. On the contrary, Dickens's frequent efforts to refute materialist theories in his fiction suggest his acute awareness of psychological thinking that privileged the brain over the immortal soul, as Stolte demonstrates in this volume.

Individual chapters proceed chronologically and discuss how Dickens's novels treat specific psychological issues. Chapter 1 focuses on introspection, physiognomy, and phrenology in *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44). Chapter 2 turns to *David Copperfield* (1849–50), Dickens's first novel written entirely in the first person, and discusses this mode of narration as an appropriate vehicle for Dickens's "soul-based faculty psychology" (42). Chapter 3 argues that Esther Summerson's coy first-person narration in *Bleak House* (1852–53) "underscores the fundamental privacy of consciousness" (42). Chapter 4 examines mental latency or unconscious cerebration in *Great Expectations* (1860–61), while chapter 5 intriguingly reads John Jasper in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) as a case of dual consciousness. The throughline of the volume is introspection and its centrality to Victorian psychology, especially the more conservative, Christian strains of the discipline. For conservative psychologists, introspection provided the only reliable way to know the mind, in contrast to empirical methods favored by materialists, such as vivisection and clinical studies. Dickens embedded introspection in narrative modes like first-person narration and free indirect discourse, which he deployed in his fiction to "insist upon the immateriality and immortality of mind" and "the centrality of inward experience to identity" (241, 242).

Overall, Stolte succeeds in convincing the reader that Dickens was an informed contributor to the psychological debates of his era. He further demonstrates that Christian approaches to psychology remained viable, if increasingly rare, even in the final decades of the nineteenth century, a point literary critics have seldom addressed. He accomplishes all this while maintaining sustained, careful attention to narrative form. But while *Dickens and Victorian Psychology* contains much informative content, the style and organization leave something to be desired. The volume as a whole feels oddly static, even though each chapter treats a separate psychological issue. Perhaps this is because later chapters occasionally circle back to topics addressed in earlier sections; phrenology, faculty psychology, associationism, and physiognomy surface repeatedly.

Moreover, the consistent focus on Dickens's Christianity sometimes overshadows the ways in which his psychological thinking evolved over the course of four decades. Still, *Dickens and Victorian Psychology* should prompt a welcome reconsideration of Dickens's place in Victorian psychological thought.

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Psychic Investigators: Anthropology, Modern Spiritualism, and Credible Witnessing in the Late Victorian Age, by Efram Sera-Shriar; pp. ix + 222. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022, $50.00.

Psychic Investigators: Anthropology, Modern Spiritualism, and Credible Witnessing in the Late Victorian Age is an engaging and diligently researched book exploring the hitherto understudied relationship between the development of Victorian anthropology and nineteenth-century spiritualism. The four key chapters are each structured around individuals with identifiably different perspectives on spiritualism and its associated issues of belief and evidence. Alfred Russel Wallace is presented as the believer, Edward Burnett Tylor the skeptic, Andrew Lang the revisionist, and Edward Clodd the disbeliever. Through his examination of this spectrum of approaches and attitudes, Efram Sera-Shriar clearly disrupts any simplistic, monolithic notion of how Victorian science viewed séance phenomena. While arranged in broadly chronological order, the four studies do not (and are not intended to) suggest a collective move from Wallace's openness to Clodd's disbelief on the part of late Victorian British anthropologists. Rather, they serve to illustrate how personal biases and professional concerns informed how these four investigators engaged with spiritualism. *Psychic Investigators* shows how that undertaking led them to investigating many of the most famous British and American mediums of the second half of the nineteenth century.

These selected individuals demonstrate the way that anthropology was still evolving as a social science in the Victorian period. While Tylor would become the first Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oxford, Wallace was first and foremost a naturalist known for his theory of evolution. Lang's interest in anthropology existed alongside his work as a literary critic and collector of folklore and fairy tales, whereas Clodd was a banker and noted popularizer of science and anthropology. However, as Sera-Shriar convincingly demonstrates, all had interests in anthropology and turned to its evidence-gathering approaches as a way of framing their examinations of séance phenomena and mediumship. In doing so, Sera-Shriar nicely challenges a view of later nineteenth-century British anthropology as a pursuit of armchair enthusiasts who formulated views based on second-hand sources, be it printed scholarship or reports filtering back to Britain from the margins of the empire. The séance room is shown to be a place where these eclectic Victorian anthropologists undertook early fieldwork, a methodological innovation that is more often associated with the discipline's early twentieth-century practitioners such as Bronislaw Malinowski.

The book's claim to complicate the historiographical understanding of the relationship between science and religion has some merit but is largely one-sided. Given the book's focus is heavily skewed toward an anthropological understanding of religion, specifically the cultural evolutionary theory of animism, there is only limited attention given to Victorian religious perspectives and trends. The book is more persuasive when developing the claim that historians should not refer to a Victorian "crisis of faith" so much as a "crisis of evidence," although that phrasing again demonstrates its emphasis on science over religion (6). Sera-Shriar clearly indicates that while Wallace, Tylor, Lang, and Clodd sought to establish methods and controls that would bolster or discredit the evidence of séance mediumship or the testimony of its witnesses, each brought to the matter their own agenda. For example, Sera-Shriar speculates that it was Tylor's need to defend his theory of animism, championed in his *Primitive Culture* (1871), that drove him to personally investigate séance phenomena in 1872. Tylor's theory of animism purported to explain "primitive" mythologies and supernatural beliefs. If the existence of spirits in Victorian parlors could be verified then it "would mean that ancient animistic beliefs were possibly legitimate observances, and not superstitious misperception" (56–57). This would have caused his evolutionary theory of supernatural thinking to be brought into question. For Tylor, séances and the beliefs they fostered presented significant challenges to his intellectual and scholarly standing.

The decision to approach this topic through case studies of four individuals is both a strength and limitation of the book. It allows for richly detailed examinations of particular individuals' motives and approaches, but this raises issues that are never satisfactorily addressed by the author. It is claimed that, among them, the four individuals represented "the main Victorian stances on spiritualism" (12). However, we get no sense of how far each of these views was representative of broader constituencies within the anthropological or scientific communities of Victorian Britain. There is no indication of which of these views were more dominant or marginal, or whether they shifted over time. The emphasis on biographical case studies means they simply appear to be the idiosyncratic product of individual biases and concerns. Nor, according to this approach, did the Victorian "crisis of evidence" evolve or achieve any resolution. Whether it was fueled by an attempt to legitimize scientifically the phenomena of the séance room, to defend or advance a scholarly theory, or to generate doubt about the veracity of what was being presented, the debate rumbled on unresolved into the interwar period of the twentieth century, this book suggests. The author skilfully teases out differing perspectives, but his focus on individuals does not really permit us insight into how the perspectives developed or interacted beyond the lives of those four men. The epilogue employs Harry Houdini to illustrate the way these strands combined within his early twentieth-century investigations into séance phenomena, but again, there is little sense of his being representative of anything more than his own particular interests and concerns.

Psychic Investigators usefully complements Richard Noakes's recent study, *Physics and Psychics: The Occult and the Sciences in Modern Britain* (2019), and makes an important contribution to our increasingly nuanced understanding of how Victorian science engaged with spiritualism. It also valuably demonstrates how those scientists were products of cultural influences and biases that informed or predetermined how they approached, read, and interpreted evidence. Sera-Shriar's book speaks to issues that

hauntingly resonate with our own contemporary concerns: the questioning of expertise, the contestation of authority, the reliability of observers and evidence, and completely contradictory readings of the same data. Ultimately this is an intriguing study of anthropology's role in bolstering and unsettling notions of authority, evidence, and the credibility of both observer and observed in the séance room. While there was evidence of some psychic investigators adjusting their views in light of their experiences, for the most part they, like the séance attendees they observed, tended to see what they desired to find.

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The Science of Character: Human Objecthood and the Ends of Victorian Realism, by S. Pearl Brilmyer; pp. ix + 299. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022, $113.00, $33.00 paper.

Toward the end of *The Science of Character: Human Objecthood and the Ends of Victorian Realism,* S. Pearl Brilmyer speaks in the voice of the novels she has been discussing. "What *was* Victorian realism?" she imagines "these late realist works" asking. The past tense in which she puts the question is pointed. The novels to which she devotes her book "push [realism]—formally and philosophically—to its bitter end" (243). The nineteenth century is drawing to a close, and modernism looms around the corner. The novelists whose works Brilmyer studies can see the writing on the wall. But their writing is also strangely energized by the conceptual impasses and dead ends they reach. The less what she calls "the science of character" holds together as an explicatory framework, the more interesting becomes these novels' engagement with the question of personality—real-life as well as represented—and the clearer it becomes how these novels' preoccupations with embodiment and social relationality lay the groundwork for better-appreciated modernist treatments of these tropes.

The title of the book would at first appear to promise a new generalizable theory of character. However, that is not Brilmyer's aim. Hers is a work of intellectual and literary history focused on the novel's historical entanglements with philosophy and on novelists' own attempts at philosophizing. Brilmyer mines the works of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, Sarah Grand, and Olive Schreiner for insights into their understanding of novelistic as well as human character. She sees these writers as partaking of what she calls "dynamic materialism," a concept she explains as follows: "If materialism consists in the belief that reality is fundamentally material, and dynamism entails the claim that matter results from the dynamic action of forces, then what I call *dynamic materialism* names the theory that reality consists not of static, individuated things but rather forces that generate characters through interaction" (16). These forces include human bodies, rendered porous and fluid by affects and instincts, as well as the social environments in which these bodies exist and relate to each other.

Understood in these open-ended ways, humans paradoxically seem both more passively malleable and more willful. On the one hand, they become more difficult to reduce to predictable social or temperamental types; on the other hand, they seem very much not in control of the inner and outer forces that shape and reshape them. For Brilmyer, Arthur Schopenhauer provides the most powerful articulation of this paradox in *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), which was read and admired by several of the writers she examines. Schopenhauer's driving question, as Brilmyer succinctly paraphrases it, is: "How is it that bodies can be part of a physical world, their actions determined by natural law, and yet also be experienced as acting of their own volition?" (20). His philosophy names an indeterminacy that is also crucial for novelists' understanding of psychological realism: "What might appear to be the willing actions of a subject" could turn out to "be the passive compulsions of a hungry animal" (87).

I find much to admire about *The Science of Character*. Its bracing theory of late Victorian character construction builds a bridge not only between the Victorian and the modernist novel, but also between canonical late Victorian writers and lesser-known ones, giving female-identifying authors pride of place. George Eliot looms large over this book, with two chapters devoted to her writing. Brilmyer's opening reading of *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871–72) will certainly shift future critical conversations about it, even as it also provides a good blueprint for how the concept of dynamic materialism will be deployed throughout the argument. As Brilmyer puts it, "to elide the distinction between subjectivity and what I have been referring to as its dynamic material substrate—character—risks overlooking the extent to which human life in *Middlemarch* is presented as taking shape not only through intentions, thought, or speech, but through physical actions and reactions as well" (42).

However, by the last chapters of *The Science of Character*, Olive Schreiner's *From Man to Man* (1926) unexpectedly emerges as the true heart of Brilmyer's argument and a much more achieved literary work than critics tend to give it credit for. "Composed across the entirety of the period *The Science of Character* covers, *From Man to Man* weaves together many of the threads that I have been developing throughout this book" (182). Brilmyer's readings of Schreiner as inspired by Schopenhauer—and of Schopenhauer's philosophy as paradoxically and unexpectedly inspiring for late Victorian feminist writers "in its destabilization of historically gendered binary oppositions between subject and object, mind and body, will and drive"—are counterintuitive and memorable (149).

The Science of Character is written lucidly even though Brilmyer's prose can occasionally feel heavy, cluttered by nominalizations and by repetitive if/then and not only/but also clauses. Its argument is invariably persuasive, meticulously researched, and carefully embedded in broader scholarly conversations. Much ink has been spilled, especially in the last few decades, about the evolution of character construction across the novel's long history. Within this collective scholarly narrative, Brilmyer's volume fills a crucial historical gap.

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Strange Gods: Love and Idolatry in the Victorian Novel, by Timothy L. Carens; pp. x + 200. New York and London: Routledge, 2022, $170.00, $52.95 paper.

Jesus in the Victorian Novel: Reimagining Christ, by Jessica Ann Hughes; pp. vii + 188. London, New York, and Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, $115.00, $39.95 paper.

Individually and together, Timothy L. Carens's *Strange Gods: Love and Idolatry in the Victorian Novel* and Jessica Ann Hughes's *Jesus in the Victorian Novel: Reimagining Christ* will be welcomed by literary scholars, historians of religion, and cultural historians. These well-researched, readable monographs make persuasive arguments about the continuing influence of Evangelical Protestantism in Victorian England, even on those who had rejected Christianity. While each book approaches the question of Evangelical influence from a different angle, they share assumptions about the impact religious concerns had on novels. Both contextualize their readings of novels with abundant references to contemporary Protestant writings, including sermons, theological texts, and fiction. Their shared focus on canonical and once-popular novels leads to some overlap. Both discuss novels by Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, and in a useful retrieval of a once-popular work, both find John Keble's *The Christian Year* (1827), a collection of poems that follow the liturgical year, a key text for understanding nineteenth-century concerns. While each work stands on its own, reading them together reveals a nuanced, engaging, and complicated Victorian world.

Carens's starting point in *Strange Gods* is the pervasive Evangelical concern about idolatry, not in foreign lands or among Roman Catholics but within presumably devout Protestant individuals. He cites sermons, theological texts, fiction for adults and children, and Keble's *The Christian Year* as manifesting the concern that idolatry of self, of another, or of material goods or wealth would turn one from God. In chapters focused on individual works, he often links the concerns of religious texts to the fictional text under consideration, noting similar language, plot devices, and anxieties, thereby bolstering his argument about how even novels by nonbelievers evinced similar concerns.

Carens explores how, in six important novels, idolatry often leads to the collapse of the (usually heterosexual) marriage plot. In Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) and Kingsley's *Yeast: A Problem* (1848), death is the only cure for idolatrous love: Lucy Snowe loses M. Paul in a storm that sinks his ship on its return from the Caribbean, and Lancelot loses Argemone to typhus fever. Release from idolatry opens new paths for both protagonists, who have inherited their lovers' fortunes: Lucy gains independence and economic success, and Lancelot is freed to go with the mysterious Tregarva to seek for truth. Other novels shrug off concerns about idolatry. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* (1864) tackles the problem of "idolatrous reading," the fear that women who read novels would be diverted by fantasies and consequently reject their husbands and their domestic roles. Her heroine, Isabel Sleaford, reads to escape domestic drudgery before and after her marriage, but ultimately the virtues she absorbs lead her to reject an offer to become a mistress. She, too, is freed when her husband and rejected lover both die, and she is able to use their financial and aesthetic legacies to pursue philanthropy. In *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871–72), Eliot—who often uses the language of idolatry in her novels—is similarly unconcerned with the consequences of idolatry, as shown in

Dorothea Brooke's two marriages. Dorothea's idolatry of her first husband, Casaubon, is misplaced and does not survive their honeymoon, but she later, and more appropriately, idolizes the sunny and Apollo-like Will Ladislaw. It is only in the last two novels discussed that idolatry becomes a problem. In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), the title character's excessive self-love destroys first many of his acolytes and then ultimately himself, while in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament* (1897), the sculptor Jocelyn Pierston finally renounces his fruitless pursuit of the feminine ideal, which he calls "the Well-Beloved," and marries an earlier love, now an old and unattractive woman. In Carens's reading of these novels, we see not just the engagement with Evangelical fears about idolatry but varied responses to the concern that show the richness of these engagements.

While Carens examines the creation of idols by fictional characters, in *Jesus in the Victorian Novel* Hughes looks at representations of a figure who was widely worshipped in order to understand Victorians' views of Jesus as a historical man, as opposed to Christ the Messiah, and why he was so important in Victorian England. To do so, she reads eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century conversion narratives, which results in useful reinterpretations of important novels. She argues that reading Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850) as a working-class conversion novel and not a Bildungsroman shifts our understanding of the title character's encounter with Jesus mystically through a sickroom conversation with Eleanor. In contrast, Mary Augusta Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (1888) is a novel of deconversion, as the clergyman loses his faith but not his desire to do good work. Ultimately, his impact on his community is limited. He establishes neither a rapport with the workers he wants to help nor any lasting community. When he dies, following his attempt to save another, his final thoughts are of his wife and child.

Hughes's most notable contribution is to the conversation about representations of Jesus in nineteenth-century England. Questions about who Jesus was as a man, rather than the Messiah, emerged in the nineteenth century as Christians and skeptics sought to learn more about his life on earth. These investigations and imaginings constructed a figure who was a more active and compelling figure than the more passive and less interesting Jesus described by early modern atonement theories and conversion narratives that gave priority to the individual's story. Hughes details four different characterizations of Jesus in his three-fold office as prophet, priest, and king. Kingsley, the only Christian of the four novelists, describes a strong, revolutionary, and relatable man who is like a brother or a friend as he fulfilled his kingly role. The priestly Jesus figure embodied by the title character in Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) is a carpenter who is a mediator, able to combine justice and mercy, and angry only when it is justified. A rejection of the suffering, spiritualized Jesus, Adam Bede is a prosaic figure, effective in a smaller sphere of activity. If Eliot's vision of Jesus is a step away from but still related to Kingsley's vision, the Jesus figures in the last two novels Hughes considers, Ward's *Robert Elsmere* and Eliza Lynn Linton's *The True History of Joshua Davidson: Christian and Communist* (1872), are fully human and rather a failure in these speculations on how Jesus as a prophet would function in the modern world. Robert Elsmere comes to understand Jesus as a prophet and a moral teacher, who reassures him in a vision that his loss of faith in a divinity is acceptable and understandable. In contrast, Joshua Davidson rejects many different Christian representations of Jesus before deciding to live out Jesus's principles by founding a small

religious community, joining the Paris Commune, and finally being stoned to death when he returns to London.

These four representations of Jesus, three of them written by women who had rejected Protestant Christianity, help illuminate some important Victorian attempts to define a compelling and relatable figure. Their failure to do so is also significant. Kingsley did not create a convincing image of Jesus in Alton Locke's mystical encounter, mediated through Eleanor, and Ward's and Linton's updated and modernized Jesus characters were failures in their lives. Only Eliot created a sympathetic and realistic character, but his successes were prosaic and his sphere was limited. Thus these Jesus figures make it difficult to understand why Protestant Christianity was a significant cultural as well as religious force in Victorian England. It is unfortunate that publishing schedules meant that Hughes was not able to reference Meredith Veldman's *The British Jesus, 1850–1970* (2022), which offers a compelling account of Protestant representations of Jesus. Readers, however, will benefit from reading these two monographs together.

Both Carens and Hughes succeed in, as Carens says, "tak[ing] religion as seriously as the Victorians themselves" did (56). Together they erase the arbitrary secular/religious divide, which had little meaning for most Victorians, and thus they help us understand the more integrated world view of the Victorians. Some acknowledgement that Victorians' concerns about idolatry and the figure of Jesus were long-standing issues in the Christian tradition would have also shown Victorian Christians' understanding of their own place in that longer history. While both works limit their analyses to Protestant concerns and influences, they sometimes have a surprisingly expansive view of Protestantism, as when Carens designates John Keble and Felicia Skene Protestants. A similar error is Hughes's assertion that Keble and John Henry Newman supported the abolition of Irish bishoprics, when in fact their opposition to that was the starting point for the Oxford Movement. These minor errors do not detract from the important contributions both works make in our understanding of the impact of Evangelical Protestantism on Victorian culture.

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The Theological Dickens, edited by Brenda Ayres and Sarah E. Maier; pp. x + 273. New York and Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2022, $200.00, $54.99 ebook.

The Theological Dickens is an addition to the "Routledge Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Literature" series and is offered by its editors as "the first collection to investigate Dickens on his vast and various opinions about the uses and abuses of the tenets of the Christian Faith that imbue English Victorian culture" (4). It is encouraging to see Routledge extending its interdisciplinary list to include literature and theology: so far its publications in the field have been few, although handbooks, companions, specialist periodicals, and monographs have been exploring it for more than four decades. Yet the title of this collection signals more theological expertise than is provided. Dickens's dialogue with Victorian material culture as it relates to religious beliefs and practices is

well represented in chapters on graves (Daniel Stuart), ghosts (Christine Schintgen), bells (Julie Donovan), and houses (Brenda Ayres). Overall, however, the specifically theological dimensions of his work are not persuasively discussed. For most contributors, Dickens's so-called social gospel is sufficiently indicative of his theology. "Dickens and Religion" might have been a more appropriate title, had it not been used by Dennis Walder in 1981. Although coeditor Sarah E. Maier cites Walder's guideline that Dickens's "theological leanings" are best discovered "'embodied in the texture of his work'" (qtd. in Ayres and Maier 250), not all contributors make distinctions among the actions and pronouncements of the public man, the father who wrote his simple harmonization of the gospels for his children, and the complex theological thinking developed in the novels.

Foremost among the theological questions unsettling Victorians in the wake of the Higher Criticism of the Bible was that of its literal truth. For Dickens, in his later Broad Church years, the word of God was subject to accommodation, adaptation, and varying interpretations. His public repudiations of a vengeful Old Testament God are well known. Ayres's introductory statement that he "rejected the Old Testament as God's word and declared that it had no place in the Bible" needs qualification, however, in the light of Janet Larson's pioneering work on the biblical allusions to both Testaments in the novels (2). Ayres, in her opening chapter, "'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth' and Dickens' Non-Christian Theology," draws on her interpretation of 2 Timothy 2:15 to defend the "truth" of Christianity "as it is defined by the King James Bible, and enumerated in sets of beliefs in foundational, ecumenical creeds" against the "'false teachings'" she believes Dickens disseminated (2, 25). His early Unitarianism, and the relationship with Ellen Ternan that precipitated his shabby treatment of his wife, lead Ayres to question his reputation as a Christian writer.

Further reader positions emerge in the following chapters. Two essays read Dickens against the grain of his anti-Catholicism. Mary-Antoinette Smith, in "Dickens Demystified: The Jesuitical Journey of Ebenezer Scrooge: Through the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*," locates consonances between Scrooge and Saint Ignatius. Susan Johnston, in "Needful Things: Dickens, Social Justice, and the Meaning of Human Work," also breaks new ground in aligning *Hard Times* (1854) with the Catholic social teaching promulgated in a series of papal encyclicals. Lindsay Katzir, in "Ghosts of Dickens' Past: The Death of Judaism in *Oliver Twist* and *Our Mutual Friend*," contests the view that the later novel's depiction of Riah succeeded in compensating for the anti-Semitism pervading the earlier novel's depiction of Fagin. Katzir finds the estrangement of both men from "community" and "continuity" symptomatic of a Christian belief that the New Testament superseded the Hebrew Bible (192). Notwithstanding the odious baptism of the imprisoned Fagin, the sacred space created by Riah for Jenny Wren and Lizzie Hexam is arguably made more significant by Jenny's invocation of Ezekial's prophetic reminder of God's covenantal relationship with His people. The ongoing debate on supersession by Jewish and Christian theologians might provide an additional perspective.

Also exercising the imaginations of Dickens and his readers, well before Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species* (1859), was the teleological question raised by evolutionary science. Does Providence or chance direct the plot? Aaron K. H. Ho's discussion,

in "Theological Shifts in Dickensian Narratives Before and After Darwin's *Origin*: *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*," is based on the premise that Dickens's probable reading of the *Origin* between the writing of these two novels caused shifts in his thinking. This leads Ho to read the former as committed to "essentialism" ("protagonists in this deterministic world cannot change"), and to find in the latter a world of fluid identities and blurred moral boundaries such that "Lizzie Hexam and Bella Wilfer are in constant danger of degenerating into someone else with moral laxity and animalistic instincts" (217, 218). On firmer ground is Tony Schwab in "Teeming City, Tangled Web: Dickens' Affinity with Darwin." He suggests that in the writing of *Bleak House* (1852–53), "Dickens' life experience led him to find nobility in the law of a beneficent power overseeing this urban tangle and providing a way out of the labyrinth" (236). Schwab's question "what part does the transcendent play" is raised by two other contributors, and it takes them in somewhat different directions. Lydia Craig, in "'Gazing at All the Church and Chapel Going': Social Views of Religious Nonconformity in Dickens' Fiction," sees Stephen Blackpool and George Silverman discovering a "theosophic faith" (110). The establishment of Theosophy in 1875 would seem to postdate the work of Dickens, and its theology is not elaborated by Craig, except as a "religiosity" encountered in spiritual journey outside doctrine and institution and discerned in "the divine message" received through nature—Stephen's star and George's summer morning (117, 123). Marie S. Heneghan, in "The Gospel of Modernity: Idolatry as the Road to Grace in *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*," seeks to rehabilitate the "transgressive trope" of idolatry. Arguing that David's and Pip's worship of the beloved is "similar to the revivalist experience of God" (150), she reads these Bildungsromans as postsecular "fractured parable[s]" (153). Susan Colón is acknowledged in the bibliography, but this chapter would have benefited from further consultation of her work on parable.

The terms postsecular, postmodern, and neo-Victorian are deployed by several contributors. Postmodernism is summarily dismissed in Ayres's chapter, however: "Christians reject alethic relativism, reification and any postmodern theory that the truth is relative and arbitrary" (23). This may explain why the contribution made to literature and theology by literary theory has been so little considered. For Maier, in "Theology of the Street: *Dickensian* Characters for the Twenty-First Century," the adjective "Dickensian" does acknowledge postmodernism's investment in the afterlives of texts, licensing the freedom taken by writer-director Tony Jordan's television series of the same name in reclaiming Dickens's "iconic" characters for popular culture. By mixing up the characters and their stories, Jordan intended to give us an "authentic" and "truthful" Dickens. While Maier commends the challenge the series presents to Victorian society in its giving voice to gaps and silences in the prior texts, she admires the "sense of reverence" for Dickens and his views on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love as they are displayed in the streets and communities of this new-build Dickens world (247). She finds Bill Sikes a testing case for the "foreknowledge" readers of *Oliver Twist* (1837–39) bring to their viewing of the series. Within *Dickensian*'s refigured context, the murdering Bill becomes a nurturer, promising Nancy "his love and faithfulness" (258). For all our neo-Victorian willingness, today's responders might resist this rewriting of Bill Sikes's violent abuse of Nancy—even if, like Maier, we are prepared to see it as a more subtle form of manipulation.

The Routledge Interdisciplinary Series promises "cutting-edge, upper-level scholarly studies." This aim is not consistently fulfilled by *The Theological Dickens*. It contains some useful bibliographies, and a wide range of critical views is quoted. But it should be noted that these are not always well understood, engaged with, or correctly attributed.

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Dissent After Disruption: Church and State in Scotland, 1843–63, by Ryan Mallon; pp. x + 306. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021, $120.00.

In *Dissent After Disruption: Church and State in Scotland, 1843–63*, Ryan Mallon clearly and skillfully describes the convergences and divergences, co-operations and tensions that existed between the Free Church of Scotland and United Presbyterian Church as both sought to determine the present and future shape of Presbyterian dissent in Scotland between 1843 and 1863. Despite a shared antipathy toward the national or established Church of Scotland, overlapping evangelical ideas and enemies, and episodes of sincere co-operation, the core issue that caused tension between the churches related to the nature of the church-state relationship. Members of the United Presbyterian Church and other, smaller dissenting Presbyterian groups adhered to the principle of voluntaryism—that membership in all Christian churches should be a matter of choice, and that religious institutions should exist in modern society without government endowment or political coercion. The Free Church during the era in question took a different position. Though they seceded from the established Church in 1843 in an event known as the Disruption, they did not—at least not all of them—reject a belief in the benefit of national religious establishments. By situating these developments within a broader national context (ecclesiastical, political, social), the author ultimately concludes that while a shared dissenting identity was formed during the period, the inability to agree on the establishment principle became the sticking point keeping the United Presbyterian and Free churches from effectively challenging the established Church for ecclesiastical preeminence in early Victorian Scotland.

Along with an introduction and conclusion, the book is helpfully divided into four parts with two chapters per part. The first chapter surveys the origins and developments within Scottish Presbyterian dissent, with particular attention to the ways in which the political and social fortunes of dissenting churches rose in the age of industry and reform. It also describes the evolution of issues within the Church of Scotland that would lead to the Disruption of 1843. The second chapter follows the early years of the Free Church as the leaders and members continued, despite the Disruption, to adhere to a belief in the establishment principle. Theirs would be a church for the whole of the Scottish nation—a "people-endowed Church of Scotland" (38). Nevertheless, in subsequent decades, the Free Church was forced to adopt a "practical voluntaryism" in order to survive (47). Survive they did, but as Mallon concludes, doing so while "failing to shape fully the new body as a viable 'true' Church of Scotland" (64). The following

two chapters highlight the relationships between the various dissenting churches. Despite increased catholicity and partnership on some issues, the establishment principle remained a barrier. Indeed, while the Free Church leader Thomas Chalmers was said to have advised "co-operation without incorporation," it was the Free Church itself which often refused to co-operate unless its leaders and ideals prevailed (68). Nevertheless, organizations promoting greater Christian union like the Evangelical Alliance (established 1846) provided a foundation for later efforts toward both cooperation and incorporation. Chapter 4 walks us through the period of church union within Scottish Presbyterian dissent following the Disruption. In 1847, the United Secession and Relief Churches joined to form the United Presbyterian Church. Five years later, most of the members of the Original Secession Church joined the Free Church. While the church-state issue kept the Free Church and newly formed United Presbyterian Church from achieving a full ecclesiastical union in this period, "a loose dissenting identity had nevertheless been forged" that would eventually—in 1900—lead to the union of the two churches as the United Free Church of Scotland (109). The following four chapters articulate the ways in which this shared "dissenting identity" developed beyond the pews, as both churches tackled political and social issues facing a rapidly changing Scottish nation (17).

The fifth chapter traces the rise of a reinvigorated Scottish anti-Catholicism in the wake of the Maynooth College Grant in 1845 and the "papal aggression" of 1850 as a means of increased co-operation between Scotland's non-established Presbyterian churches (12). Yet here again, the differences between the Free and United Presbyterian Church on the establishment principle "prevented full practical agreement on the terms on which church union could be agreed and popery should be opposed" (150). The sixth chapter describes the rise of a radical-dissenting political alliance in the 1840s and 1850s which—for a time—dethroned the powerful Whig clique in Scotland by running effective single-issue campaigns based on anti-Maynooth sentiment. Yet as the Maynooth issue became less politically potent over time, the political unity achieved among the Free and United Presbyterian churches foundered on the insurmountable issue of church-state relations, couched this time in the context of debates on national education. Chapter 7 focuses on the churches' attempts at social reform in the years following the Disruption. Mallon excels here with an in-depth analysis of the ways in which Chalmers' vision of a godly commonwealth—though ultimately unrealized—provided inertia and common ground for the creation of a dissenting social identity. Chapter 8 presents the ways in which a broader common dissenting identity was further developed amidst debates on national education. Yet here too iterations of establishmentarianism and voluntaryism "halted any of the numerous attempts at compromise and conciliation" between the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church (259).

There is much to be admired in Mallon's study of Presbyterian dissent during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. Above all, the author provides careful and clear explanations of complex ecclesiastical minutiae throughout the text. Along with this precision and clarity, the writing is stylistically superb, balancing detailed analysis with summative assessment and punctuated by enjoyably pithy turns of phrase. Historically, the work both significantly advances the field of Victorian Scottish religious history and powerfully shows how religious institutions and ideas interacted with and shaped all

aspects of Scottish life. As an added bonus, Mallon also provides several examples of the ways in which developments in Scotland shaped and were shaped by the wider world of international Presbyterianism and evangelicalism. *Dissent After Disruption* would likely appeal most to scholars of nineteenth-century Scotland, Presbyterianism, or Victorian Nonconformity.

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The Reading Figure in Irish Art in the Long Nineteenth Century, by Tricia Cusack; pp. ix + 177. London: Anthem Press, 2022, $40.00, £25.00.

"To read in Ireland, to read while being Irish": this quote in Tricia Cusack's *The Reading Figure in Irish Art in the Long Nineteenth Century*, taken from Rebecca Anne Barr, Sarah-Anne Buckley, and Muireann O'Cinneide's *Literacy, Language and Reading in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (2019), seems to encompass much of what the author is exploring in her richly informative publication (14). This book concerns itself with more than how and what people read in the long nineteenth century or how that activity was employed in art works. It also considers who the Irish were in that period and the social mores of men and women.

If we are to understand the way women and men are depicted reading in paintings, we have to know about their respective relationships with literature in all its variety. Across five chapters, Cusack explains how it is more usual for women to be depicted reading than men. After all, men were expected to be hunting and shooting at the time, rather than engaging in such an unmanly occupation as reading. The author does not simply examine who is painting and who is painted, but also considers who is viewing. Whether images of figures reading are considered either as revealing reality or as imagined constructs is dependent on the artist, the sitter, and the viewer. A small number of case studies toward the end of the book open up the relationships among these three. One such study is of Sarah Purser's *Miss Jane Barlow, D.Litt.* (1894), in which the title of the work, with its inclusion of D.Litt., seems to sideline the book in the painting. The book, as much on display as the sitter, is nonetheless ignored by her.

At the beginning of her book, Cusack acknowledges people and institutions associated with art and art history. But this book is more than an art historical text, it is as much—if not more—a sociological study. This is not the first time the author has used art works in this way. In an edited collection of essays, *Art and Identity at the Water's Edge* (2012), she and her contributors explore how coastlines and riverbanks have contributed to the establishing of social identities and how that is manifest in their depiction. In the current publication, we learn much about the position of women in society in the long nineteenth century—that their role initially was "to service and ornament the lives of others," rather than to "seek intellectual and creative independence"; and that they should "be content with being inferior to men" (47).

But the very length of the century, from the Act of Union to the Easter Rising, 1801 to 1916, affords the opportunity for the emergence of the New Woman. As such, Cusack engages with the development of women and their intellectual pursuits in the period and identifies how the depiction of women reading—mostly by women artists—is used to underline this.

The images under discussion in the text are not all portraits. But portrait or not, why does an artist choose to include reading material? Because it gives the sitter—identified or anonymous—something to do or not do? The figure portrayed can be looking at or away from their reading material, affording the artist the opportunity to incorporate expressions of concentration or distraction. However, the book can also be little more than a painterly device, incorporated to bring light and/or color to an area of the canvas. Nonetheless its inclusion inevitably raises the question of what is being read, presuming that knowledge of the reading material will help inform viewers about the sitter. Comparison between this genre of painting in the hands of Irish (in its loosest sense!) artists and other—mostly European—artists suggests a disparity in treatment. Cusack concludes that the work of the latter shows little concern with the reading material and more concern with the bodies of the women—slippage of garments, nature of pose, and so on. In contrast, the "Irish" images depict women engaged in the serious matter of reading, whether or not one can identify the publication depicted.

This book gives little attention to sculptural images of men and women reading, or even accompanied by books. Passing reference to John Henry Foley's statues of Oliver Goldsmith and Henry Grattan scarcely does justice to the extent to which reading material is manifest in portrait and nonportrait sculpture in Ireland in the nineteenth century. There are several such details incorporated into the most public and best known sculpture in Dublin, the Daniel O'Connell Monument on O'Connell Street. Patrick MacDowell also gets a passing mention. His *A Girl Reading* (1837) could scarcely be overlooked. This seated, or perhaps more appropriately, perched figure, rather than standing as stated in the book, won huge praise for the sculptor at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1855 and notably from French poet Théophile Gautier. Pietro Magni's *The Reading Girl* (1856) in Iveagh House fails to make the grade!

The illustrations in the book, which concentrate on Irish work, are poor in quality. Cusack mentions, in her discussion of William Orpen's rather awkward portrait of *The Vere Foster Family* (1907), that the family was not happy with the painting. How much more unhappy would they be if they were to witness its reproduction in a faded illustration in the book! The author is to be applauded for the extensive research undertaken for this study of the reading figure in art, as is evident in the considerable and diverse bibliography, and she has tracked down an immense number of paintings to enrich her discussion. It is disappointing that her engaging text is accompanied by poor-quality reproductions, which are necessarily the focus of the study.

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Walter Pater's European Imagination, by Lene Østermark-Johansen; pp. xvii + 396. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, $130.00.

Walter Pater is a notoriously difficult writer to place. A classical scholar and don, Pater came to prominence with his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) as an impressionistic art critic, aesthete, and proponent of supposed decadent hedonism. Distinguishing himself as a writer of fiction in the 1880s, Pater also published authoritatively on an array of subjects in classical studies, literary studies, philosophy, and architecture. The compass of Pater's insight is daunting, especially given the modern tendency toward increased specialization: today's students and academics often pay lip service before the altar of interdisciplinarity but are rarely equipped for true service. Pater's example shows how far we fall short. He resists definition, as though by design, as when he quotes without attribution, alludes anachronistically, or translates without acknowledgment. Pater works seamlessly across languages, disciplines, and historical time, so one is never really certain that one can definitively place him at any given moment. Locating Pater becomes impossible, precisely since Pater disputes the very notion of disciplinary place, and because any act of placing him also involves displacing him from the various other places, spaces, and times which make up the text's context.

In *Walter Pater's European Imagination*, Lene Østermark-Johansen takes up the challenge of locating Pater by focusing on his "European imagination." As she shows, intercultural, international, and transhistorical exchanges define Pater's work, which actively engages in thinking about the wider "cultural and historical cohesion of Europe" (18). As Østermark-Johansen argues, "Pater raises questions about national identity, given that for centuries the borders between states and countries were being re-drawn," so that the very idea of the nation itself comes under pressure (84). To speak of Pater's European imagination means a number of different things: focusing on how Pater imagines Europe in his writing; how his imagination is European, formed in a transnational manner and by his wide-ranging interests in European cultural life; and how this imagination informed later European modernist culture. In the recent climate of increasing nationalism and Euroskepticism, there is a timeliness to Østermark-Johansen's book, with Pater challenging us to ask "what it means to be European" (26). This means considering not only space, place, and time, but the ways in which the character of the modern subject is formed in relation to their environments. In these ways, Østermark-Johansen implies Pater's continued relevance not only to contemporary intellectual and cultural life, but to some of the most pressing questions in modern European politics.

Pursuing this subject, Østermark-Johansen ranges across the breadth of Pater's corpus and the wider fields of art history, Victorian studies, and modernist studies. Like its subject, *Walter Pater's European Imagination* is somewhat difficult to place, so copious is its purview. The book resists synopsis, with excurses into subjects as diverse as Francis Galton's composite portraits, literary tourism in the Victorian period, and the history of the historical novel. Østermark-Johansen considers Pater's anticipations of the future through discussions of figures such as Sigmund Freud, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Schwob, and grants welcome attention to a number of less well-remembered figures who helped to curate Pater's legacy, including Edmund Gosse, Arthur Christopher Benson, Charles Lancelot Shadwell, and William Hurrell Mallock. Østermark-Johansen's command of the range of

Pater's works is impressive, not only treating the major essays from the *Renaissance*, and his imaginary portraits, but also the unfinished novel, *Gaston de Latour* (published posthumously in 1896). If one were being picky, the relative absence of discussion of *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas* (1885), Pater's only completed novel, as well as his essays on Plato's philosophy and classical art, is a touch surprising, even if Østermark-Johansen is primarily engaged with a modern rather than a classical Europe.

This is but a minor quibble, however. Østermark-Johansen exemplifies a Paterean interdisciplinarity, at home as much with the art historical as the literary contexts. Amongst many examples, take her close readings of specific art works, such as Giovanni Moroni's *The Tailor* (circa 1570), and her discussion of the contexts behind Pater's imaginary treatment of his namesake, Marie-Marguerite Pater, alongside her nuanced, well-informed discussions of literary contexts, such as the contemporary vogue for Henri Frédéric Amiel. The impressive discussion of William Rothenstein, Max Beerbohm, and Victorian caricatures of Pater raises vital questions about what it means to think about character. Also useful are the discussions of unpublished materials, and now somewhat-forgotten literary fads, such as the Victorian craze for Étienne Pivert de Senancour's hugely popular novel, *Obermann* (1804).

Østermark-Johansen has written a remarkable book, auspicious in its range, and richly illustrated with seventy-five color plates. This is a book that implicitly contests the homogenized idea of what an academic monograph should do, as a crushing by-product of the modern demand to optimize research outputs. Østermark-Johansen remarks that the book takes on "far too much material and too many ideas," but this is a matter of individual taste rather than an absolute (18). We are used to reading books that pursue a single big idea, but this book deals with many ideas, some larger, some smaller, without ossifying them. It lies at the cutting edge of the field, precisely in its rejection of the narrow and myopic. There is an allusiveness in the connections made and pursued by Østermark-Johansen that is perfectly in keeping with its subject—Pater, the "master of suggestiveness" (212). If the book taken as a whole "raise[s] more questions than it answers and does not result in . . . neat definition[s]," this is all to its credit (22). Readers of Pater could ask for no more fitting tribute. In *Walter Pater's European Imagination*, Østermark-Johansen gives us a sense of how much more there is to learn from Pater, and his vital place in understanding our European past and future.

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Literary Cosmopolitanism in the English *Fin de Siècle*: Citizens of Nowhere, by Stefano Evangelista; pp. xiv + 290. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, $95.00.

The female figure in *A Japanese Lantern* (1886) by the cosmopolitan Norwegian painter Oda Krohg invites us to look out onto a Nordic landscape illuminated by a Japanese lantern. Subtly, the jacket of Stefano Evangelista's *Literary Cosmopolitanism in the English Fin de Siècle: Citizens of Nowhere* prompts us to consider from a human perspective the

coexistence of the local, the national, and the cosmopolitan. We do not have to wait long, because he materializes our musings in the very first sentence of his magisterial book: "What does it mean to live in a cosmopolitan age?" (1).

Begun as an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant on the cosmopolitan utopian spirit of "the love of strangers," this book is an illuminating study of literary cosmopolitanism and the tensions it lived with, responded to, and created in a world turning to a zealous political defense of nationalism and imperialism (257). The book sets out to investigate two key ideas. "The first is that, in the years around the turn of the twentieth century, literature became an important medium for simultaneously promoting and interrogating cosmopolitanism," a topic he appropriately argues has been largely confined to philosophical discussion. His second, and perhaps a more important point, is that "cosmopolitanism was then, as it is now, a contested concept that generated debate and disagreement" (3). The bold question that starts his book (What does it mean to live in a cosmopolitan age?) is answered by looking at several writers who were, to borrow Evangelista's subtitle, citizens of nowhere.

This literary approach matters because, as he claims, a single philosophical focus "risks abstracting and disembodying the presence of the foreign other . . . reducing it to a potentiality, erasing its actual presence in and around the literary text" (29). Evangelista's knowledge of the period and its writings is vast, and his choice of texts and authors are both expected and delightfully surprising. He chooses as case studies Oscar Wilde, the little-known Lafcadio Hearn, and George Egerton to provide us with nuanced studies of their lives and the political and social controversies brought about by their writings in English and translations into English. In doing so, his book reveals how the languages, cultures, and literatures of France, Japan, and Scandinavia (though others are clearly possible) powerfully transformed English into an international, cosmopolitan literature, an idea that he reads through Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for whom foreignness was the most important element of national culture. How Evangelista navigates the boundaries and commonalities of the national and the cosmopolitan (boundaries often built with barbwire, especially around questions of xenophobic nationalism and empire), through a comparativist and world literature approach, is a model for future research on the transnational in the long nineteenth century.

After the case studies, the book takes two different yet interlinked turns. The first is to the periodical press, with a chapter on the American journal *Cosmopolitan* (1886–present) and the British *Cosmopolis* (1896–98) that examines how the press acted as both producer and transmitter of cosmopolitan identities in a multilingual landscape. A multilingual critic and a comparativist by training, Evangelista gives an attention to languages that is one of the most significant features of this book. His last chapter, "Those Who Hoped," is devoted exclusively to the study of the many artificial languages, including Volapük, Pasilingua, Spelin, and Esperanto, that were developed at the turn of the century. This philological turn brings out in arresting new ways that national languages are socio-political constructs. It also highlights the idealism of those who invented artificial languages to build shared identities across the world during a period of heightened nationalistic identities. Through this approach, Evangelista shows what kind of scholarship is required to explore the plurilingual and multigeographical spaces of the literature of the fin de siècle.

There is so much to love and admire in this book. To mention his analysis of Wilde's *Salomé* (1893) or of Egerton's translation of Swedish prose, or of Henry James's attack on Volapük, or of the utopian ideal of a "Cosmopolitan University," is to touch just the peak of the iceberg (173). One can easily imagine chapters being developed out the many writers, texts, and ideas he touches upon. But considering our own political moment, what one takes out most vividly from this study is that while Evangelista's focus is on the literature and ideas emanating during the fin de siècle, the book lays bare the intricacies of our difficult present. As he claims, those tensions still "preoccupy us today: the cultural and emotional challenges of migration and uprooting, the tolerance of cultural diversity in a liberal state, the uneasy balance between patriotism and nationalism, the limits of universalism and the pressure of ethical obligations towards strangers in a global society" (5). And, at a time when the study of literature has been brought into an existential crisis by major political players, Evangelista's emphasis on literature is most welcome. This book shows why we need cosmopolitan literary criticism in our global, yet deeply fragmented world.

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Literature and Revolution: British Responses to the Paris Commune of 1871, by Owen Holland; pp. xi + 251. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2022, $120.00, $39.95 paper.

Eric Hobsbawm observed that the Paris Commune, that briefly regnant and viciously suppressed revolutionary workers' government, "was more formidable as a symbol than as a fact" (*The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* [Vintage, 1996], 167). Among other achievements, Owen Holland's adroit study reveals just how much was condensed into that symbol, as its British interpreters saw in the Commune an inspiring harbinger of an emergent, democratic civilization—or, with far greater frequency, a glimpse into the infernal abyss.

Indeed, the supposition most widely held by the Commune's British exegetes is that culture and egalitarianism are ultimately antithetical, and that the Communards were animated by "a leveling impulse that would sacrifice high culture on the altar of social revolution" (5). Holland demonstrates how frequently British authors and intellectuals sided, imaginatively, with the Commune's suppressors, defending Paris (qua international capital of literature and culture) against the proletarian barbarians who, putatively, would vandalize it. The result is a dizzying ideological reversal: the Communards are identified with the very annihilatory violence to which they themselves were subjected by the vengeful French national government during the *semaine sanglante* (Bloody Week)—the worst massacre in Western Europe of the century. The Communards' own vision of a radically democratic and collective mode of cultural access that Kristin Ross influentially termed "communal luxury" is preemptively dismissed in the bargain (qtd. in Holland 4).

Literature and Revolution: British Responses to the Paris Commune of 1871 features a fascinating and capacious archive of newspaper and periodical reportage, illustrations, poetry, and a surprisingly large corpus of popular novels in which the Commune "served as their backdrop" (x), whether through its direct representation or, increasingly, via its symptomatic presence, in keeping with Scott McCracken's observation that the "paradox of the Commune" is that it is often "represented through a discourse of its nonrepresentation" (qtd. in Holland 96). One of the pleasures of *Literature and Revolution* is witnessing how deftly Holland constellates and moves among these heterogenous sources. His second chapter, for example, navigates seamlessly between, among other texts, Edward Bulwer Lytton's unfinished novel *The Parisians* (1872–74), Matthew Arnold's ambivalent musings in his correspondence, John Ruskin's oracular pronouncements on communism and class war in the seventh letter of *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* (1871), and depictions of the Commune and its partisans in Eliza Lynn Linton's *The True History of Joshua Davidson* (1872) and in contemporaneous illustrations by the Communard refugee Félix Régamey for the *Illustrated London News* (1842–2003). (This book is greatly enriched by the fact that Holland never loses sight of the legion of Communard exiles who found refuge in London, aided by, among others, the erstwhile members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.) While he eschews claims to provide a "comprehensive mapping" of his subject, the cumulative effect of Holland's assemblages is a laudably compendious delineation of the British response to one of the most portentous events of the century (168).

If this response is overwhelmingly negative, Holland demonstrates that it is by no means simple: it exhibits considerable variegation and range. *The True History of Joshua Davidson*, for example, reverses the emigration plot device utilized by several of the mid-century social problem novels by returning its Communard protagonist to Britain and thereby "painfully reopening the 'Condition of England' question" (45). Popular historical romances such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Under the Red Flag* (1883) and Anne Thackeray Ritchie's *Mrs. Dymond* (1885) evince a furtive, "dangerous sympathy" with the Communards (48). But both novels prudently exculpate their male protagonists by having their involvement in the Commune serve as a "source of disenchantment and regret"; Braddon and Ritchie thereby humanize "the individual revolutionary" at the expense of the cause for which he fought (68). (In a rare moment of missed contextualization, Holland does not mention that Walter Scott's *Waverley* [1814] is the urtext of this subgenre: it pioneered the subsumption of the protagonist's revolutionary political engagement by the romance plot and resolution in "bourgeois domesticity" [Holland 53].) The Communard's most vocal legatees were British socialists, many of whom eulogized the Commune in verse. Central here is William Morris's perennially undervalued narrative poem *The Pilgrims of Hope* (1885–86), which, Holland shows, negotiates the generic conventions of tragedy and epic in an effort "to convert the historical tragedy of 1871 into something resembling a heroic origin story . . . for the late-nineteenth-century socialist movement" (129).

For many readers, Holland's chapter-length examinations of George Gissing's *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1885–86), and H. G. Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) will be the book's centerpiece. Here, the Nietzschean topoi of *ressentiment* and eternal recurrence come to the fore. Both Gissing's and James's

texts vacillate between "[c]ompeting ideals of art and social improvement," but the ideologeme of *ressentiment* enables their authors to attribute the liberatory ideals that fueled the Commune to a fantasy of revenge driven by Nietzschean slave morality and thereby overcome their own sympathy for the working classes (80). In *When the Sleeper Wakes*, eternal recurrence performs the work of ideological containment, enabling Wells to deny the Commune's claim to represent "genuine rupture and transformation" and reduce it to a cyclical and foredoomed outburst of fury from below (158). The protagonists of all three of these novels die by suicide, offering a high-literary analog to the popular novelists' extraction of their ex-Communard heroes from the prospect of "sustained revolutionary commitment" through the romance plot (175).

A book that takes its name from a Leon Trotsky classic cannot be accused of obfuscating its own commitment, and the weaknesses of Holland's study are essentially the obverse of its strengths. Readers who would like to see a work of this kind address methodical challenges that have been posed to the Marxist categories of class and class conflict or engage with scholarship that probes the Communards' own multifarious political identifications, or who prefer ideology critique to be tempered by a generous quantum of interpretative charity, may find themselves frustrated at points. As Holland acknowledges, it is "somewhat unfashionable to write about 'revolutionary practice' today" (181). But that does not make it any less necessary.

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Who Owned Waterloo?: Battle, Memory, and Myth in British History, 1815–1852, by Luke Reynolds; pp. xvi + 272. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, $90.00.

A few months after the death of Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, the radical member of Parliament for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Richard Cobden, published a pamphlet denouncing the public's militarist sentiments, which he thought the funeral of the great warrior had done much to inflame. Britons' "pugnacious propensity," Cobden averred, manifested itself in their "fondness for erecting monuments to warriors . . . but above all in . . . our metropolitan cathedral, whose walls are decorated with bas-reliefs of battle scenes, of storming of towns, and charges of bayonets" (*1793 and 1853, in Three Letters* [W. & F. G. Cash, 1853], 90). Wellington's recent burial in St. Paul's could have been added to Cobden's list of those things which, in his view, desecrated that Christian temple. Cobden was, of course, unduly critical of his compatriots' seeming indulgence in militarism due to his own vigorous peace-mindedness. But he was certainly right in identifying a constant in British culture: the widespread commemoration of military figures and battles and their embedding into the cultural fabric and memory of the nation. The battle that fit this pattern, more than any other in the nineteenth century, was that of Waterloo. Many of the monuments and memorials Cobden had in mind undoubtedly related to it and its multifaceted cultural afterlife. Luke Reynolds's *Who Owned Waterloo?: Battle, Memory, and Myth in British History, 1815–1852* is an important

and well-researched guide on how this came to be, and the complex ways in which the decisive military victory against Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815 was incorporated into, and shaped, British national identity.

Reynolds provides a comprehensive examination of the commemoration, remembrances, and celebration of Waterloo, while demonstrating the victory's "nationalization" (138). Framing the book is the question of "ownership," which Reynolds defines as the "control of the battle's narrative and commemoration, and through that, the curation of Waterloo and the men who fought there in the nation's collective memory" (2). This makes the book's argument both original and compelling. Covering the period between 1815 and 1852, the book comprises six chapters, in addition to an epilogue, organized in loose chronology, each examining "a different vector of expression of ownership of Waterloo" (9). These vectors include nonfiction print media (histories and memoirs), battlefield tourism and relic collecting, annual commemorations and other forms of remembrance (for example, hippodramas), public exhibitions, visual culture, monuments, and material culture. The range of interesting images in the book—paintings, maps, posters, designs of medals, and monuments—makes for an engaging and entertaining read, despite some minor typographical errors (on page 208 in the hardback edition, the name of a design of a Hone and Cruikshank parody monument is given as *Victory at Peterloo* in the main text, and *Victory of Peterloo* in the caption on page 209, and on page 208 is wrongly identified as Figure 6.5 rather than Figure 6.6).

Reynolds's command of primary sources and extant scholarship is impressive. Apart from the aforementioned primary sources, he also examines a large number of pamphlets, newspapers, poems, and sermons. There are, however, perils in abundance. Parts of the book read more like an exhaustive record of material relating to Waterloo, with one formulaic description of a primary source following another. The book opens with a rather slow-paced and dense chapter 1. Its focus is on historical accounts published by civilians in the aftermath of the battle and the immediate years following June 18, 1815, as well as on veteran-authored memoirs published in the 1830s and 1840s. The chapter's narrative style is more descriptive than analytical, but this is not its only limitation. In regard to memoirs, Reynolds chooses to focus on three, not simply due to time and space constraints, but because they "fit the requirements"—especially because of what they tell us about their authors' "feelings on the ownership of Waterloo's memory" (28, 27). One wonders how prominent this question of ownership in memoirs really was after all, given that only three sources seem to match the author's argument according to his principles of selection. Reynolds could have also contextualized these memoirs by considering developments in Franco-British relations in the 1830s and 1840s, and how the new geopolitical context might have impacted veterans' memories of, and writings about, Waterloo.

Chapter 2 picks up the pace and charts the fascinating transformation of Waterloo into a site of "performative tourism" and for the collection of relics (45). The Vauxhall Garden's fete and Wellington's Waterloo banquet at Apsley House, as well as other events, were at the heart of annual commemorations of the victory, as chapter 3 clearly demonstrates, offering Britons a chance "for performative nationalism" (77). Chapter 4 is the most well written and cogently argued in the book, examining how exhibitions at Palmer's Waterloo Museum, Bullock's London Museum showcasing Bonaparte's carriage, and Madame Tussauds allowed civilians who curated them to lay claim to the ownership

of Waterloo and its place in British culture and memory. The hippodramas and paintings that chapter 5 examines demonstrate the extent to which Waterloo filtered into popular culture and entertainment. In an otherwise superb chapter 6 on commemorative material culture, the reader is left wanting to hear more about those dissenting voices who criticized the glorification of the bloody battle of Waterloo, but whom Reynolds regrettably only examines in passing. The nationalization of grief and, in Reynolds's brilliant phrase, "Wellingtonian thanatourism" serve as the focus of the natural epilogue to the book, with the burial of the great warrior "symboliz[ing] the beginning of the end of the commemoration of Waterloo as a lived event rather than an abstract cultural memory" (227, 232).

Notwithstanding a few minor limitations, Reynolds's book is an admirable specimen of cultural history and deserves to be read widely. Military historians, historians of modern Britain, Victorianists, and historians interested in cultural memory will also find this book full of interest. The book's appendix of military plays and hippodramas before and after Waterloo on pages 237 through 241 will also be of interest to students and scholars wanting to research this topic further.

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The Alternative Modernity of the Bicycle in British and French Literature, 1880–1920, by Una Brogan; pp. vi + 276. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022, £85.00, $120.00, $29.95 paper, $120.00 ebook.

Una Brogan's exploration of the literary and cultural history of the bicycle in British and French literature is a gem of a book; it combines distant and close readings of a large number of texts, while highlighting the importance of literature as a way of understanding history. While there are scholarly book chapters and articles on the literary bicycle (as well as full-length works on its social history), this is the first monograph on the topic. The book is a superb showcasing of the crucial importance of literary scholarship as a privileged field of study to understand society: Brogan shows how literary texts can capture the "newness" of encountering a phenomenon like the bicycle, and—within careful historical contextualization—bring back those experiences for readers and scholars (6).

The Alternative Modernity of the Bicycle in British and French Literature, 1880–1920 examines works from Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell's early cycling accounts to modernist narratives by Marcel Proust and Dorothy Richardson. It is definitely a book for Victorianists, with the majority of the works examined from the height of the "bicycle craze" in the 1890s (44). H. G. Wells is one key author throughout the book, with notes on his novel *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896) recurring to link discussion. The use of periodical material is impressive, with short stories and other forms of writing from magazines and newspapers; the analyses of these lesser-known texts are the most exciting ones. Interestingly, Brogan also links her examination of the bicycle's literary stories to previous eras, connecting bicycling to the Romantic period's poetic walking

as well as to twentieth-century narratives of mobility. The linking of British and French texts works well, given the key status of the bicycle as a symbol in both cultures during the time studied. While Brogan makes wider claims about the impact of the bicycle, her geographical and theoretical focus is a Western or Northern perspective; chapter 4 includes an interesting short section on the "colonizing impetus" of the bicycle, but without wider postcolonial framings (Zack Furness qtd. in Brogan 212).

The book is structured into an introduction that outlines the book's premise, four distinct chapters each examining separate themes (along with sub-themes), and a brief conclusion. Chapter 1 encircles the literary and material relations of text and transport; the ways in which cycling is used to explore new narrative possibilities. Nodding to the railway's influence on reading practices, Brogan argues that the "location of books and the manner in which they were consumed were intimately tied to changes in people's everyday mobility," something also seen in the case of the bicycle: the "novel form relies on movement . . . and it is the bicycle that provides the motor and sets the pace for this narrative mobility" (56, 33). This "motoring" includes using the bicycle as narrative device, or to structure new literary genres, or indeed to influence material production processes directly through smaller pocket-sized books demanded by cyclists on the go (33). Linkages between reading and cycling as practices are made, with a reproduction of the cover of the intriguing *Lyra Cyclus: Or, The Bards and the Bicycle: Being a Collection of Merry and Melodious Metrical Conceits Anent the Wheel* (1897) bringing home the argument. Chapter 2 interrogates relations of gender and class in cycling literature and culture; this is where the New Woman and Wells take center stage through a number of close readings of both canonical and neglected works. Chapter 3 and 4 are to the reviewer's mind the most interesting and novel: chapter 3 because of its focus on the phenomenological or sensory experience of cycling, and the specificity of the body-machine interaction (a "technology on a human scale, capable of reconnecting its users with their senses"); and how this fleeting "new" experience can be captured in literature (140). This chapter convincingly argues for something close to technological determinism in its embracing of the embodied experience of cycling and the ways in which the mechanical workings of the bicycle are democratic in themselves, in that users would be involved in the repairing of their machine and knowledgeable of its mechanics: the bicycle "democratised the spanner" (151). The chapter also celebrates the capacity of a literary text to freeze moments of experience in time and make them accessible to readers more than a hundred years later. Chapter 4 draws together the main argument of the book, exploring the "alternative" vision of time, space, and progress that the bicycle offers, with the conclusion then noting the resurging twenty-first-century interest in cycling and what this might mean.

What is meant by this alternative vision or "alternative modernity" of the bicycle? Brogan's main argument in the book is that the bicyclist interrogated "the very definition of modernity," by formulating an alternative, "empowering, human-centred vision of space, time and progress" (1, 195). Given that the bicycle needs no external energy source outside the user's human body, Brogan argues that bicyclists are not just "embryonic car drivers," but rather that they present an alternative vision of modern life: one without pollution, fossil fuels, or capitalist/imperialist exploitation (elements usually associated with the modernity of the Industrial Revolution) (250). This is an intriguing argument, and Brogan—though a criticism could possibly be made of too much a

utopian perspective—does really well in convincing the reader. Especially interesting is the definition of the bicycle as an industrial technology that stands apart from others in that it is a tool (controlled by a human agent) rather than a machine. Referencing Karl Marx, Brogan argues that the bicycle does not alienate but rather empowers its user. Continuing the analysis in chapter 3 of the bicycle as an "industrial machine that offered a means of escape from the pitfalls of industrial civilization," chapter 4 argues that the bicycle, unlike other industrial technologies, contests the strict binary between modern and anti-modern: the bicycle is "both participating in modernity and rejecting it" (141, 206). The cyclist both looks back to pre-industrial Romantic traditions of walking, and later flâneur figurations, and participates in a forward-looking automobile modernity. Part of a wider "mobility turn" within literary studies, the book also fits within the study of literature and technology (249). Brogan does not use a wider STS (Science and Technology Studies) perspective as a theoretical framing, but she specifically cites Wiebe Bijker's SCOT (Social Construction of Technology) framing of technology as something that is developed in social contexts, rather having fixed uses or meanings. She employs key technology and modernity scholars including Stephen Kern, Herbert Sussman, Lewis Mumford, Paul Virilio, and Bruno Latour, as a way of approaching the texts and historical moments in this book.

The book might be conceived as slightly sprawling in its focus, due to its breadth of authors, works, theorists, and themes. However, it is precisely this breadth of texts and perspectives, structured through a combination of distant and close approaches, that makes this book so impressive. Brogan has written a book not just for bicycle scholars and riders, or just for Victorianists, but for anyone interested in the relationship between literature and technology—or indeed for anyone needing reminding why literary works are key to understanding society.

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The Politics of Drink in England, From Gladstone to Lloyd George, by David M. Fahey; pp. xv + 341. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, £64.99, $99.95.

Imperial Wine: How the British Empire Made Wine's New World, by Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre; pp. xiv + 323. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022, £30.00, $34.95.

While these new monographs are about alcoholic beverages in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they are two very different projects in terms of audience, approach, scope, and intervention. Both books are valuable additions to the literature: David M. Fahey's *The Politics of Drink in England, From Gladstone to Lloyd George* will be an important reference text for researchers interested in the influence of special-interest lobbies and the regulation of alcohol consumption in British party politics; Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre's *Imperial Wine: How the British Empire Made Wine's New World* invites folks interested in the histories of alcohol and consumption to appreciate how imperialism and

colonialism shaped those histories (and vice-versa). Read together, they are a meditation on the ways that historical writing about Britain has changed in the last decades and what today's readers might want to get out of Britain's past.

Fahey, a professor emeritus at Miami University in Ohio, has had a germinal career in studying the histories of alcohol and temperance in Britain and the United States since his 1971 article in the *Journal of British Studies*, "Temperance and the Liberal Party—Lord Peel's Report, 1899." There and in his current monograph, he discusses how, in 1896, as a result of much pressure from temperance activists and drink trade lobbyists, the Conservative minority government commissioned the Liberal Arthur Peel to chair an enquiry into the pervasiveness of drunkenness and the regulation of alcohol sales. Peel's surprising conversion to the temperance movement during the enquiry split the committee. His influence on the resulting reports fueled future calls to lower the number of licensed houses and require pubs to serve food so as to make them more hospitable to women and, ultimately, more respectable, civilized spaces. While the enquiry cemented drink reform as a high political issue through 1908, it furthered complicated divisions within the Liberal party over the related questions of Irish Home Rule and adherence to the principles of free trade.

Since 1971, Fahey has been researching the longer and larger context of how drink became nestled within this constellation of competing interests, positioning his work as a more class-conscious sequel to Brian Harrison's 1971 *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872*. Fahey's 2020 monograph *Temperance Societies in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, also published by Cambridge Scholars, describes the middle- and working-class temperance societies that sought official support from the Liberal Party. The monograph under review here is a companion to that effort: it covers the same ground but from the politicians' side of the story and shows how pressure groups—temperance leagues as well as breweries and pub owners—cancelled out one another in their decades-long attempts to lobby Parliament. By the 1890s, the issue of drink regulation was at a stalemate. Most politicians, regardless of their stance on alcohol consumption, drank in their private lives and tended to view temperance activists as unreasonable zealots. Drink companies, usually proponents of free trade, could come out in favor of tighter licensing restrictions if it meant cutting out their competition and possibly gaining government compensation. When prohibition became so mired in controversy that it was politically unfeasible, attention shifted to how the trade could be managed. Interests were piqued by discussions of government "disinterested management" (also known as the Gothenburg Scheme), and other methods of licensing that had been tried (albeit unsuccessfully) in Scandinavia. Of particular issue was Local Veto, which could allow local constituencies to opt in or out of national regulations and had the potential to create dry counties. Fahey narrates the slow development of these political ideas between 1872 and the end of the First World War, paying particular attention to the period between 1888 and 1908 when the debate over drink reached its apex and became about managing (Regan-Lefebvre might argue "civilizing" would be a better word) the working classes. The reader is left with an appreciation for how drink regulation was deeply contingent upon the frailties of the Liberal Party and thus enmeshed with all other matters of high party politics of the time. While temperance activists worked hard to gain access to politicians, drink trade proponents had that access in spades and used it

to minimize reform; Labour Party activists used drink politics to proclaim their respectability. Fahey insists that his analysis is only about England, but there are several welcome moments where he discusses contexts in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, America, India, and Continental Europe. Readers interested in the socio-cultural dimensions of this history will be intrigued by the first chapter on "Drink and Sobriety" but might become frustrated by the high political focus and expositional style of the rest of the book. Such a deep treatment of this political history is not available elsewhere, though, and in providing it, Fahey has done a great service. Future scholars of alcohol consumption will find this foundational research crucial, and the book's footnotes feature a career's worth of primary source leads.

Regan-Lefebvre's monograph serves the field in another way by providing a charming and decidedly approachable history of colonial wine production and its uptake in Britain. Where Fahey's speaks to specialists, Regan-Lefebvre's book invites a broad audience, including casual wine enthusiasts and undergraduates, into academic conversations about how British imperialism and colonialism worked ideologically, economically, socially, and environmentally. Most commodity histories argue for the centrality of their subject to the making of Britain and empire, but Regan-Lefebvre is upfront about how wine consumption accounted for only a small proportion of all alcoholic beverages consumed and how colonial wines had a minor market share of that when compared to continental offerings. In the wine-producing colonies she discusses—Aotearoa (New Zealand), South Africa, India, and Australia—viticulture was barely profitable and required land, labor, and resources to a degree that made little economic sense. Yet, colonial planters prioritized it, and colonial wine took up notable space in the British imperial/colonial imaginary—long before it became standard, approachable fare for the average British consumer in the late twentieth century. To explain this apparent paradox, Regan-Lefebvre builds on Harrison's argument that wine consumption was linked to ideas of middling-class respectability and emphasizes how respectability inhered in ideas of civilization and the civilizing mission. Thus, colonial planters placed a premium on producing wine to demonstrate the success of their civilizing mission and their family's fitness as respectable colonizers. Imperial administrators protected these enterprises through tariffs for politically and socially symbolic reasons rather than economic ones, but those tariffs mattered in real material terms for how colonial wine developed. Everyday consumers, Regan-Lefebvre argues, did not know about the exploitative aspects of colonialism in colonial wine: "what also dissipated with distance was the consumers' sense of implication in the ethics of production" (38). A chapter on an Australian wine, the enigmatically named Echunga Hock, shows how settler producers could advertise the continental European qualities of their wines over colonial associations to entice consumers.

Regan-Lefebvre is a professor of history at Trinity College in Connecticut and has previously published on cosmopolitan nationalism in the Victorian period. *Imperial Wine* covers a lot of ground and is divided into many (nineteen!) short chapters, organized into four parts: "Origins, c. 1650–1830"; "Growth, c. 1830–1910"; "Market, c. 1910–1950"; and "Conquest, c. 1950–2020." The first two parts are the strongest and most relevant for this journal. "Origins" takes aim at how viticultural origin stories have become part of former settler colonial nation-building narratives by occluding information about colonial

violence. These chapters answer the call that consumption historian Erika Rappaport made in *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World*: "we need to pay special attention to the role of the planter in global history" ([Princeton University Press, 2017], 9). They show the agency of colonial planters in how "New World" viticulture developed. The "Growth" section emphasizes the imperial political, botanical, and economic structures that enabled colonial winemaking. Kew Gardens emerges as one player in the "imperial-botanical nexus" that populated colonial spaces with vines susceptible to the North American phylloxera aphid and then combated the global phylloxera crisis in the 1860s and 70s by circulating new hybrid plants and pest-fighting knowledge (119). Ties between colonial and continental spaces were as important as metropolitan ones. "Growth" also focuses on tariffs; Regan-Lefebvre argues that capitalism was a vital and understudied part of the (broadly understood) civilizing mission. Her sustained attention to tariffs is welcome, and while she overstates how capitalism is overlooked in other imperial/colonial histories, the point about needing to integrate economic structure with cultural analysis better is still valid.

Imperial Wine is an eminently accessible text, but this comes at the price of more in-depth analysis, particularly of consumer culture. The religious meanings of wine are discussed only briefly, for example, and the material culture aspect hardly at all—though a few visual sources are discussed in profitable ways. The emphasis on colonial violence and environmental exploitation throughout is an important reorientation for wine history but, at times, is more about narrating overviews than analyzing specifics.

While wine only features in Fahey's text in the first chapter, both of these monographs point to the centrality of wine culture to respectability in Britain in the nineteenth century and how multiple civilizing missions were built into that aspiration, at home and abroad. Because of this, politicians could promote prohibition while relishing their own wine consumption: it was all part of the same civilizing mission that separated wine from other kinds of drink. Both monographs also show how British politics, culture, and economy were constituted within a diverse and agential empire, as well as a global context.

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Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper: Representing the People, by Carolyn Vellenga Berman; pp. ix + 353. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, $125.00.

The formative effects of Dickens's early career as a journalist reporting the debates surrounding the reform of the franchise in 1832 for the *Mirror of Parliament* (1828–41) and *True Sun* (1832–37) are well known as having left him with a skepticism about politicians and a life-long distaste for Parliament as an institution. However, less attention has been given to the complex, continuing relationship between parliamentary and literary forms of representation evident in Dickens's writing throughout his career. Carolyn Vellenga Berman's richly researched *Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper: Representing the People* addresses the gap, bringing a fresh perspective to his engagement with questions of

politics and representative democracy. As she summarizes her aim in the introduction: "this book uses Dickens to interrogate parliamentary representation—and vice versa." To this end, she examines novels, periodicals, and state publications (the notorious "blue books") as rival technologies of representation that sought "to imagine a shifting set of People as both audiences and objects of public discourse" (5). The methodology is new historicist, closely reading popular fiction, journalism, correspondence, and blue books within a broader context of print capitalism to illuminate their shared investment in questions of representation.

The first of the book's three parts—"The Arts of Representation"—considers writing, Parliament, and print dissemination as interconnected systems undergoing modernization in the 1830s. Dickens's shorthand reporting is identified as an "evolving technology for breaching parliamentary privilege," for, until 1875, parliamentary debates were not officially published, and *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (1829–present) was initially a commercial enterprise, like the *Mirror of Parliament* for which Dickens reported (36). Examples from Dickens's fiction and autobiographical fragment—such as the "private Parliament" in which David Copperfield comically struggles to master Gurney's method of shorthand with the help of Traddles (45), Mr. Micawber's petition to Parliament for a change to the law regarding imprisonment for debt, and the petition got up by Dickens's father for "a bounty to the prisoners to drink his majesty's health on his majesty's forthcoming birthday" while in the Marshalsea (53)—are used to illustrate the spread of "political mimicry" throughout the social body (45). In chapter 3, Dickens's staging of a multiplicity of voices in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37) is compared to the forms of testimony in parliamentary debates and the Parliamentary Papers, showing how the availability of the latter for public purchase from 1835 forms a key backdrop for his new serial. Such examples allow Berman to demonstrate convincingly the reproduction of parliamentary discourse across an expanding social field.

Oliver Twist (1837–39) has long been recognized as a response to the New Poor Law. But in part 2, "A Parliamentary People," Berman traces a more specific indebtedness to the narrative forms of the 1834 Commission Report and its apprehension of the poor. Similarly, she finds a link between the trial involving the 1836 Report on Newgate Gaol, in which publisher John Joseph Stockdale sued *Hansard's* for publishing the Report's comment on "obscene" reading materials found in prisoners' cells (132), and Oliver's encounter with the "soiled" pages of the book given to him by Fagin on the "lives and trials of great criminals" (159). She relates the circulation of ragged clothes in the novel to its preoccupation with print capitalism through the function of rags as raw material for making paper, and from thence draws a link to "cotton production, and recycling to slave labor" (169). The tracing of such metonymic and/or metaphorical patterns forms a key analytical move throughout.

Chapter 5 reads *Bleak House* (1852–53) as a parodic mirror of Parliament with the Court of Chancery figuring its need of reform. That the alphabet game played with the names of the Boodles and Buffys conveys Dickens's satire of a parliament in need of reform is well known. But Berman also shows how the novel mocks parliamentary pretensions to represent the People through the double narrative which combines third-person report with individual testimony. The opening of Esther's narrative, for example, is seen afresh when shown to "mimic the introduction of witness testimony in blue book style,

omitting the examiner's questions" (193). As the House of Lords began to occupy its new chamber at the rebuilt Palace of Westminster in 1847, and the House of Commons moved into its new chamber in 1852, Berman argues that these structures may be just as important a prompt for Dickens's Condition-of-England novel as his well-known outrage at the triumphalism of the Crystal Palace. Noting Thomas Denman's unfavorable comparison of *Bleak House* with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851–52) in an 1852 article, Berman pursues the critique of slavery in the novel through the portrait of Mrs. Jellyby's "telescopic philanthropy," articles on slavery published in *Household Words* (1850–59), the black doll swinging from the door above Tom-all-Alone's in Phiz's dark plate, and Hannah Crafts's novel, *The Bondswoman's Narrative* (circa 1853–61), to show how *Bleak House* "explores Britain and its government with a perspective informed by the United States, canvassing slavery and equality alongside health and contagion" (204).

Part 3, "Decomposing Forms," contains chapters devoted to *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1855–57), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65) as Dickens's "late" ruminations on parliamentary representation and national insolvency (29). Chapter 6 reads Dickens's only industrial novel in the context of the blue books on working-class education, showing how *Hard Times* stages the sort of fact-finding interview represented, for example, in James Kay-Shuttleworth's report for the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. Berman demonstrates the way in which the novel's well-known opposition between fact and fancy draws upon the relationship between anecdotal testimony and statistics in the blue books to foreground the new relation between governance and knowledge in the development of the modern state. While critics have found fault with the portrait of Stephen Blackpool as representative of the working classes in Dickens's account of labor relations, Berman astutely argues that it is "less a worker's authentic voice than a satire of the way it is staged in parliamentary contests": the encounters between Stephen and Bounderby "parody not only the government's use of statistics to apprehend the condition of the working classes but also its efforts to exhibit the 'authentic voice' of the workers within its chambers" (230).

The intersections between novel and parliamentary discourse closely analyzed in *Hard Times* give way to more impressionistic readings of the interplay between print-capitalism and print-statism in the final chapters. Arguing that since "words resembling one another often invited comparison for Dickens . . . [t]his gives us license to consider the relationship between *circumlocution* and *circulation*," Berman follows tropes—such as "the lock of this world," connecting prisons, rivers, ports, and membranes in relation to ideas of circulation and insolvency in *Little Dorrit*—to reveal Dickens's critique of the transnational economic system (247, 262). Chapter 8 follows the "coal dust" across *Household Words* and *Our Mutual Friend* through a reading that again proceeds by association of ideas and images (281). While always interesting, this approach, to my mind, is less compelling than the textual analyses undertaken in the earlier chapters, where discursive formations are closely tracked, back and forth, between literary and parliamentary writings.

Dickens and Democracy in the Age of Paper will be of particular interest not only to scholars of Dickens and historians of parliamentary literature, but those working on Victorian materiality and print culture. The coda, which explores affinities between Victorian parliamentary debates and tweeting, the claims of populist politicians then and now, and the dangers of new surveillance technologies, brings Berman's study up to the present

moment. It thereby valuably underlines just how much we can still learn today from Dickens and Parliament in the nineteenth century.

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How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information: Commonplace Books, Scrapbooks, and Albums, by Jillian M. Hess; pp. xviii + 303. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, $90.00, $25.00 paper.

"Common is the commonplace": Alfred Tennyson's weary dismissal of the language of condolence registers two layers of grief laminated onto the loss of his schoolfellow, Arthur Henry Hallam. First, such losses are "too common" in this vale of tears: "Never morning wore / To evening, but some heart did break" (Tennyson, *In Memoriam A.H.H.* [Edward Moxon, 1850], section VI, lines 3–8). Second—and with immediate urgency for Tennyson's own elegiac art—the language with which humans enwrap their grief always tends toward cliché: words, like weeds, all cut from the same cloth. Jillian Hess's new monograph, *How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information: Commonplace Books, Scrapbooks, and Albums*, concludes with a nuanced reading of this latter thematic of *In Memoriam*, a poem shaped by the commonplace and one whose success depended on mediating between "general truths" and "particular experiences" (248). Throughout this fascinating study, Hess is interested in these central tensions visible in the handmade books kept by Britons across the nineteenth century: between aphorism and affect, received wisdom and personal experience, classical precedent and originality, objectivity and subjectivity. As she demonstrates in a series of compelling examples, the "commonplace books, scrapbooks, and albums" of the Romantics and Victorians are best approached as "technologies of memory" (260). They are sites of information gathering, of data capture and arrangement, and of social sharing, that reveal much about issues surrounding nineteenth-century identity, shaping and shaped by the evolving media landscape.

As Hess shows, John Locke's method for gathering and arranging quotations under indexed topics was the background against which the innovations of the nineteenth century played out. There was just no way that such orderly regimentation was going to work for Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose notebooks reveal a Romantic emphasis on "spontaneous musings," on-the-spot personal impressions, and associative, synthetic arrangements of ideas (71). As Hess writes, "Coleridge modified the commonplace-book form so that it fit within a Romantic paradigm that located the poet in nature," a figure who read the eternal language of the natural world rather than the sententiae of the ancients (73). Even when he was attempting philosophical abstraction, Coleridge found his mind tending to "synthesize disparate experiences," fusing ideas in ways that dissolved "the boundary between reader and writer" and rejected orderly organization under discrete topoi (84, 91). A similar Romantic messiness can be seen in Humphrey Davy's scientific notebooks. In a chapter on "Laboratory Commonplace Books," Hess explores Davy's "imaginative, loose-formed collections" of self-experimentation, at once objective qualitative

data and diaristic records of internal experiences under the influence of nitrous oxide (101). It was left to Michael Faraday, Davy's apprentice, to pioneer a more rational form of real-time scientific data collection—"a framework of precision"—in the laboratory notebooks upon which his scientific success depended (128).

A portmanteau chapter on Walter Scott, George Eliot, and James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps as collectors of historical evidence and documents reveals the consequences, both happy and somewhat disorienting, of Hess's method, based as it is on encounters with specific commonplace books and scrapbooks. Each of the specific case studies emerges in evocative detail, and readers will be grateful to Hess for her careful, elegant presentation of these artifacts. The chapter itself is held together loosely under larger conceptual headings, such as the fragment and the facsimile, and at times resembles a scrapbook of its own. And as Hess acknowledges at the outset, *How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information* itself partakes of the logic of commonplacing, insofar as Hess has "accumulated evidence in the form of quotations" and images and has presented it according to her own personal scheme of organization (13). In this way, her book demonstrates the ongoing resonance of her subject for twenty-first-century scholarly practice.

In part II, Hess considers collectively authored "social commonplace books" (such as friendship albums) and albums of mourning to explore the ways that "Romantics and Victorians used the commonplace method to represent people" (189). Handwriting and locks of hair became legible as metonymic representations of friends and family, of admired authors and lost loves. Hess attends to the "hand" of John Keats in scrapbooks kept by his family, and to the lock of John Milton's hair in Leigh Hunt's album, showing how the commonplace book became less about collecting information and more about collecting people. Death hovers somewhere over these practices, which were in many cases proleptic gestures of mourning: gathering handwriting and locks of hair was a pre-photographic mode of memorializing those who could be seen no more. Hess concludes with a brilliant engagement with the manuscript books in which Tennyson's *In Memoriam* grew, revealing how their arrangement and layout—including their blank spaces—speak not only to the development of Tennyson's masterpiece but also to how Victorian poetry was fundamentally involved with the affordances of the commonplace. Queen Victoria's own *Album Consolativum* (1862–86), with its many annotated extracts from Tennyson's poem, provides Hess with her final, moving example of how nineteenth-century Britons found language for their emotional lives and elaborated their own identities within the pages of handmade books.

How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information joins important recent work by Samantha Matthews, Lindsey Eckert, Michelle Levy, Michael C. Cohen, Simon Eliot, and Deidre Lynch, all of whom examine albums, scrapbooks, notebooks, and other instances of the handcrafted, do-it-yourself codex in the great age of the industrial book—the age in which books became common. Hess's title sells her wonderful book a little short, I think. In its rich collage of examples and observations, this book provides much more than a history of organizing information. It's really about *thinking with the commonplace*, both as a category and a bibliographic object. Hess gets at fundamental issues of the bibliographic imagination in the nineteenth century, with particular relevance to our own scholarly methods. Her book will be a crucial point of reference for scholars working on the dialectic of the commons and the individual, or the objective and the subjective,

in this period. It also opens a historical window on the textual regimes of collecting, organizing, and sharing excerpts in our time of digital cut-and-paste and social media. By attending to the commonplace, Hess has produced a singular and uniquely valuable work of literary history.

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LGBT Victorians: Sexuality and Gender in the Nineteenth-Century Archives, by Simon Joyce; pp. vii + 284. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, £81.00, $105.00.

While "queer" has often been the term and analytical lens of choice among academic historians of sexuality seeking to trouble fixed notions of identity, "LGBT" has remained largely the preserve of public and popular history makers. It has helped hook in audiences who might relate directly to the identities flagged by the acronym and has signaled an important contemporary political, social, and cultural alliance. Queer is also increasingly marshalled in those popular- and public-history contexts, but LGBT has not usually been taken up by academics as a useful framework for historical analysis. It has been seen as an anachronistic formulation in terms of the identities highlighted as well as their conjunction. Simon Joyce reverses this in his captivating *LGBT Victorians: Sexuality and Gender in the Nineteenth-Century Archives*. He shelves queer in favor of LGBT in his reassessment of gender and sexuality in nineteenth-century and largely British life writing, sexology, court cases, and pornography. Through careful analysis of texts and figures familiar in queer historical work, he demonstrates that if the identitarian terminology was absent then, there was a mesh of connections between emerging ideas about sexual identity and gender crossing and confirmation. In this way he effectively historicizes the LGBT alliance, suggesting that its political utility in our present is not only pragmatic but has historical roots and was significant to the subjective composure of queer Victorians. Though others have marked the close association between sexual and gender identification in this period, Joyce provides the most systematic analysis to date of the historiographical and critical turns over the last 30 years that have led us to the pat assumption that the LGBT conjunction is uniquely of our present. The book thus not only offers a reappraisal of nineteenth-century figures and sources but also a critically engaged survey of queer scholarly assessments of them.

Across three sections Joyce systematically unpicks familiar readings of Victorian sexual discourse. Part one, "Coalescing Concepts," looks at ideas of sexual identity forming in conversation with gendered difference at either end of the nineteenth century. The first of the section's two chapters explores the varied testimony from the early 1820s of Yorkshire woman Anne Lister, Scottish teachers Marianne Woods and Jane Pirie, and Vermont cohabitees Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake, marking out the ways in which gender and crucially also religion are at stake in "modalities of lesbian emergence." The second chapter turns to the intricate and ultimately unworkable classificatory system German lawyer Karl Ulrichs developed some forty years later and via which he attempted

to link degrees of sexual dissidence to gendered expression and presentation. Joyce demonstrates how the ultimate failure of Ulrichs's detailed schema to account for his associates and correspondents indicates the complexity of the dance between desire, sex, and gender in people's lived experience.

Joyce demonstrates in part two ("Victorian Sexology and the Problem of Effeminacy") that the particular Hellenic and literary bent of sexological writing in Britain (as opposed to continental Europe) unevenly orientated understandings and idealizations of male-male sex and relationships toward a martial, manly ideal. This contributed to what he describes as an especially elite and especially British femmephobia. Class and closely related educational inequality emerge in consequence as pivots for understanding and experiencing same-sex desire for men like classicist John Addington Symonds, Joyce's key case study here. Other British theorizations tug against this, however. While signaling how Edward Carpenter's work resonates with that of Symonds's in the second chapter of this section, Joyce's examination of the working and final drafts of *The Intermediate Sex* (1908) shows the romantic socialist and female suffrage supporter drawing gender crossing and indeterminacy into his conceptualization of sexual identity and desire. With characteristic subtlety, Joyce marks the difference national cultures and socio-economic structures can make to queer desires and self-conceptions. He describes a distinctively British texture to Symonds's and Carpenter's writing, resisting pat conflation with contemporaneous work in Germany, Austria, and France especially.

Part three, finally, looks first at the notorious trials (in both senses) of Fanny and Stella, also known as Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park, in the early 1870s and then at bodily transformations in late nineteenth-century pornography in order to think through nascent trans identities and to show how they overlapped with emerging categories of sexuality. We glimpse here lived experience and circulating fantasies and also see what was visible or imaginable to late Victorian urbanites. The book's coda takes us into the more broadly familiar territory of Oscar Wilde's trials, suggesting how the infamous playwright—or rather the historiographical fixation with him—has misdirected our understandings of Victorian sexuality. Wilde, Joyce suggests, was more attuned to the erotic dynamics of socio-economic inequality trailed by Symonds than to the conjunction of same-sex desire and different modes of gender crossing that was commonplace alongside (and indeed literally alongside Wilde in the figure of his codefendant Charles Taylor). Wilde might have represented one type and way of understanding sexual dissidence, but he has, Joyce argues, been unduly dominant in our analysis of the emergence of modern sexual mores and types.

Joyce is an incisive analyst of these cases and documents, developing and drawing out his argument with subtlety and conviction. The material he looks at will be familiar to historians of sexuality and the Victorian period, as will the scholars he interrogates alongside. He holds few prisoners in his critique of their analytical tendencies and missteps, and while this critical conversation is important, it could perhaps have been dialed down to allow for more direct evidence from the period. The book is instead orientated toward an insider academic audience familiar with the debate and historiography to date. This is a shame because what Joyce is doing here is developing an argument of much broader and indeed urgent significance about the historical dimensions of the LGBT conjunction. I was puzzled too by the decision not to discuss the B (bisexuality) in any

depth. There is a suggestive paragraph in the coda in which Joyce rightly critiques the presumption that marriage for queer men was necessarily a masquerade, but I'd hoped for more of a sustained through-line in the book leading to this important moment. This could have drawn into clearer (and queerer) critical focus the many figures he deals with who had sexual and sustained emotional relationships across the gender spectrum and so shown some of the ways in which the B was historically entangled with the L, G, and T. The book nevertheless remains a really important intervention and a foundation for further thinking not only about the B in historical perspective, but also about the recent odd interregnum Joyce identifies during which gender and sexuality were figured apart in discourse and politics.

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