RRR

Romance, Revolution and Reform

Issue 6: Feeling
in the Long Nineteenth Century

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Editorial: Feeling in the Long Nineteenth Century

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(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

> [I]s feeling possible where nothing is felt; and if the mind does not feel the feeling, what does it feel? Should it be urged that our whole mental life consists in a series of fleeting sensations and ideas, that we cannot tell whence they come nor whither they go; that we do not know whether they have objects or whether they have none, and that therefore we are not warranted to conclude that there is anything but sensations and ideas in the universe; that in these is our whole knowledge.[1]

FEELING AND ITS discontents have their own complicated history in the long nineteenth century, one which is deeply embedded in the social, philosophical, religious, scientific and literary dynamics of the period. From debates over passion and reason in the eighteenth century, to Freud's super-ego and id in the early-twentieth, the period demonstrates an unprecedented preoccupation, especially in its range and prevalence, with the forms and functions of feeling. In the course of the century, feelings went through many names – passions, sentiments, affections, emotions – each with their own inflection of meanings and uses.[2] These steady attempts at classification ultimately affirmed the conceptual fluidity of feeling and typically turned as a result towards the more workable matter of its management. Feelings could be both usefully harnessed and spin dangerously out of control.[3]

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[1] John Cunningham, 'Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, *The Edinburgh Review*, 124 (July 1866, 120-150 (p. 126).

[2] See Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] For overviews of the social benefits and dangers of feeling in the period see Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000) and Gesa Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) respectively.

The extract above comes from John Cunningham's review of John Stuart Mill's *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865) in *The Edinburgh Review*. It represents the view of one of the century's most influential thinkers, writing in one of its most influential publications. It is an intervention in a very specific debate against idealism, but it also asserts the wider dominance of feeling as a system of knowledge. In doing so, it foregrounds the kind of epistemological anxieties – reflected in the form of that second sprawling question which in its confusion becomes a sentence – that feeling provoked for mid-nineteenth century thinkers. The movement towards materialism and developments in nineteenth-century psychology would go some way to solving the practicalities of these questions with regard to the mind-body problem, but the possibilities of feeling would remain endlessly fascinating to theorists across the sciences and humanities; both then and now.[4]

My choice of extract also serves a pedagogical purpose. It showcases the ways in which studies of feeling have always been and must continue to be engaged in a cross-disciplinary web of enquiry, 'in the encounter with words, worlds, people, animals, and a variety of things'.[5] The set of questions that emerges for Cunningham (a historian) as a challenge to his source materials (philosophical treatises) around the absence of feeling – what happens when 'nothing is felt' – have recently received powerful critical reappraisal. Works like Wendy Ann Lee's *Failures of Feeling: Insensibility and the Novel* (2019) and Xine Yao's *Disaffected: The Cultural Politics of Unfeeling in Nineteenth-Century America* (2021), which explore the challenge unfeeling or feeling otherwise poses to the biopolitics of feeling, continue to push modern studies of affective experience in the period in new directions.

This kind of scholarship requires a certain degree of humility, an embracing of that 'we do not know', and a revaluation of what we do. Sketching out a particular

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[4] Research groups in affective neuroscience retain their presence at top academic institutions including UCL, Oxford (OCEAN), Dartmouth, Harvard (CARE) and Rice, while The Max Planck Institute in Berlin, QMUL, Manchester and Melbourne continue to attract researchers in the history of emotions.

[5] Lauren Berlant, '*The Hundreds*, observation, encounter, atmosphere, and world-making', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 18.3 (2019), 289-304 (p. 290).

aspect of Mill's philosophy of mind, Cunningham is the first to admit that 'we have had the greatest difficulty in understanding it'.[6] Studies of feeling are enshrouded in difficulty, but difficulty can be a productive starting point. As Leon Hughes writes in the first article in this issue, we might not be able 'to account for the actual emotional experience of late eighteenth-century readers' but we can grapple with 'the socio-political effects' of such feelings. The ineffability of feeling itself demands critical reorientation; it necessitates creative workarounds, or that we ask different questions.

In inviting papers on 'feeling' in the broadest sense this issue upholds the commitment recently articulated by the editors of *The Affect Theory Reader 2* to 'an abundance of pluri-affective imaginaries'.[7] By insisting on the active aspect of the term – 'to perceive or be affected by', *OED* v.1a – I wanted to encourage a range of approaches to feeling, historical and theoretical alike, and to show in the process that these need not be mutually exclusive.[8] This has made for a deliberately eclectic issue, in which these various imaginaries touch across spatio-temporal as well as disciplinary boundaries. Thus we start in the midst of the French Revolution and end with the age of polar exploration, moving across different moments, media and methodologies. Despite this temporal and thematic range, many connections readily arise between the papers in this issue. At the widest level, they all deal with narratives of feeling: political and personal, biographical and aesthetic, writerly and readerly, unifying and isolating. While these, too, are permeable boundaries, they speak to the ongoing importance of relationality to affective meaning-making.

In his article on the print images published in the major revolutionary newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* between July 1789 and February 1794, Leon Hughes foregrounds

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[6] Mill replies to this point in a letter, which Cunningham incorporates into his preface to *A New Theory of Knowing and Known: With Some Speculations on the Border-land of Psychology and Physiology* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1874).

[7] Gregory J. Seigworth and Carolyn Pedwell, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader 2: Worldings, Tensions, Futures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023), p. 6.

[8] The definition evokes Spinoza's *affectus*, and later Massumi's affect, as 'an ability to affect and be affected'. Brian Massumi, introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. xvi.

the role of a neglected medium in a well-known narrative. Hughes argues that the editor of the *Révolutions*, Louis-Marie Prudhomme, not only wrote, but 'visually script[ed] the quasi-mythological origin story of the early Revolution'. More than this, Prudhomme's careful construction of the prints became a significant tool in the process of 'sentimental discipling': teaching his audience how to feel, or at least how to display their feelings, towards events ranging from the 1790 Fête de la Fédération to the executions of the Capets in 1793. As Hughes demonstrates, the projected affective responses to these events were not straightforward, but much like Prudhomme's favourite representational device, the crowd, unstable and at times ambiguous.

If Hughes alerts us to the ways in which these prints 'worked to produce and orient revolutionary bodies-in-space', Eric Tyler Powell focuses on the making of one particular body: Percy Bysshe Shelley's. In his article on the reception of Shelley after his death, Powell argues that a 'blurring of textual and physical bodies is central to nineteenth-century criticism of Shelley's poetry'. As Powell shows, Shelley's critics and defenders alike converged in their reading of the poet as 'hypersomatic'. This reading drew on the contemporary language of associationism, a mind science that appealed especially to Mill's idealist tendencies. Whether framed as a fine impressionability or diseased sentimentality, Powell argues that 'the construction and diagnosis of Shelley's physical body authorized the lyricisation of his body of poetry', divorcing it from his more radical body of work. Thus Powell exposes the political tensions underlying the criticism of Shelley in the period 1824-1840, while calling more broadly for a revaluation of the ways in which subsequent generations of critics continue to be affected by this legacy.

Jemma Stewart's article also digs below the surface narratives of feeling. Focusing on the 'language of flowers' books popular throughout the nineteenth century, marketed chiefly at women looking to conduct their romantic affairs through the art of floriography, Stewart asks: 'Was there a community of feeling between the authors and readers of this genre?' Stewart's close attention to paratextual material in her case studies reveals the variety of ways in which these books were used 'to strengthen or establish connections, to negotiate or communicate feelings'. Through

the dedications, quotations and even original poetic compositions prefixed to these books in the process of gift-giving, Stewart argues that 'these connections regularly fell outside of the sphere of romance, occurring most often between women and hinging on feelings of friendship, familial love, even grief and mourning'. The reflections of the author on their own role as collector of these anthologies attest to the enduring affective power of material objects.

In the final two articles, a need for narrative-making emerges in particular around experiences of grief and mourning, though not all would put in words the grief they felt. Claire Cock-Starkey's article on the persistence of folkloric beliefs surrounding the rural deathbed in the nineteenth century showcases 'a diversity of behaviours and beliefs that challenge the totalising stereotypes of dying and grieving largely gleaned from urban settings'. The piece explores a number of recurrent customs recorded by nineteenth-century folklorists in their observations of rural working-class communities, from those practices believed to delay or hasten the moment of death, to those enacted after death had taken place. These rituals, Cock-Starkey argues, allowed 'the living to feel some power and agency over the fate of their loved one's spirit and offered a way to practice emotion through embodied actions', with structure and tradition offering a comforting counterpoint to the volatility of feeling.

Taking us into the early twentieth century, Deborah Wood examines the additional difficulty of managing private grief in the face of public mourning. In light of recent historical attention paid to the women left behind in the 1914 *Terra Nova* Antarctic expedition, Wood's article focuses on the divergent experiences of two widows, Kathleen Scott and Lois Evans, in the immediate wake of their husbands' deaths. Wood highlights the acts of 'emotional labour' this required from both widows, acts 'unquantifiable and incomparable to one another due to the radically different circumstances that these families found themselves in'. The article allows us to think in new ways about how to deal with archives that are often structured to exclude the evidence of affective experience. Wood concentrates in particular on the press campaign which defined the experience of Evans's family, allowing them no 'chance to construct a personal memory, nor to take any control or ownership over his legacy'.

Wood's contribution serves an important reminder that who is permitted to feel what, when and in what way continues to be shaped by conceptualisations of (among others) gender, class and regional identity.

All six of the articles in this issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* offer up new material or bold re-visitings of prints, essays, books, records, diaries, letters, reports and photographs in their attempt to partially re-construct the myriad narratives of feeling in the long nineteenth century. Unlike the Victorians, their authors are less interested in uncovering the psycho-physiological workings of feeling on an individual level – 'whence they come and wither they go' – and more in their sometimes explicitly palpable, sometimes quieter workings across various socio-political channels. The wealth of original material and insight they bring together in these pages is further proof that the study of feeling in all its forms is more than another academic trend. It is my hope that in the same way these articles explore the site of encounter between bodies, objects and theories, this issue can spark new encounters with feeling for its readers.

'Exposé aux regards du peuple': Sentimental Disciplining in the Print Images of Louis-Marie Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris*

LEON HUGHES

ABSTRACT: One of the most important radical newspapers of the French Revolution, Louis-Marie Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris*, included 133 print images over its four-and-a-half-year print run (18 July 1789-28 February 1794). These prints were a medium for visualising the rapidly changing events of the Revolution. This article situates itself in the developing field of histories of emotional experience, where consideration of cheap popular media, such as prints, has largely been missing from the historiography of the French Revolution. Seeking to redress this gap, this article argues that through these prints Prudhomme taught revolutionaries how they were meant to feel towards the represented events. It advances this argument through three distinct, but linked, visual themes: the presentation of crowds, both celebratory and violent, reciprocal surveillance and a pedagogical urban environment, each of which was never stable, but dynamically produced throughout the corpus of 133 prints.

KEYWORDS: French Revolution; *Révolutions de Paris*; Prudhomme; Prints; Sentimentalism

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SITTING TIED TO a chair on the raised scaffold, Pierre Nicolas Perrin was subjected to the crossed arms and furious looks of the crowd gathered at the Place de la Révolution, 20 October 1793 (Fig. 1). Perrin was a man of renown in the Revolution; a deputy from the department of the Aube and member of the National Convention's *Comité de surveillance des marchés*, but had been condemned to 12 years in 'irons' and 'hard labour for the benefit of the State', after having abused his governmental position to steal 400,000 *livres* over two months.[1] However, before being transferred to the *bagnes*

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[1] Art. VI. Première Titre. *Code pénal de 1791*; André Zysberg, 'Au Siècle des lumières, naissance du bagne' in Jacques-Guy Petit, ed., *Histoire des galères, bagnes et prisons. XIIIe-XIXe siècles. Introduction à*

of Toulon, Perrin was subjected to 6 hours on the Place de la Révolution, 'exposed to the public gaze'.[2]
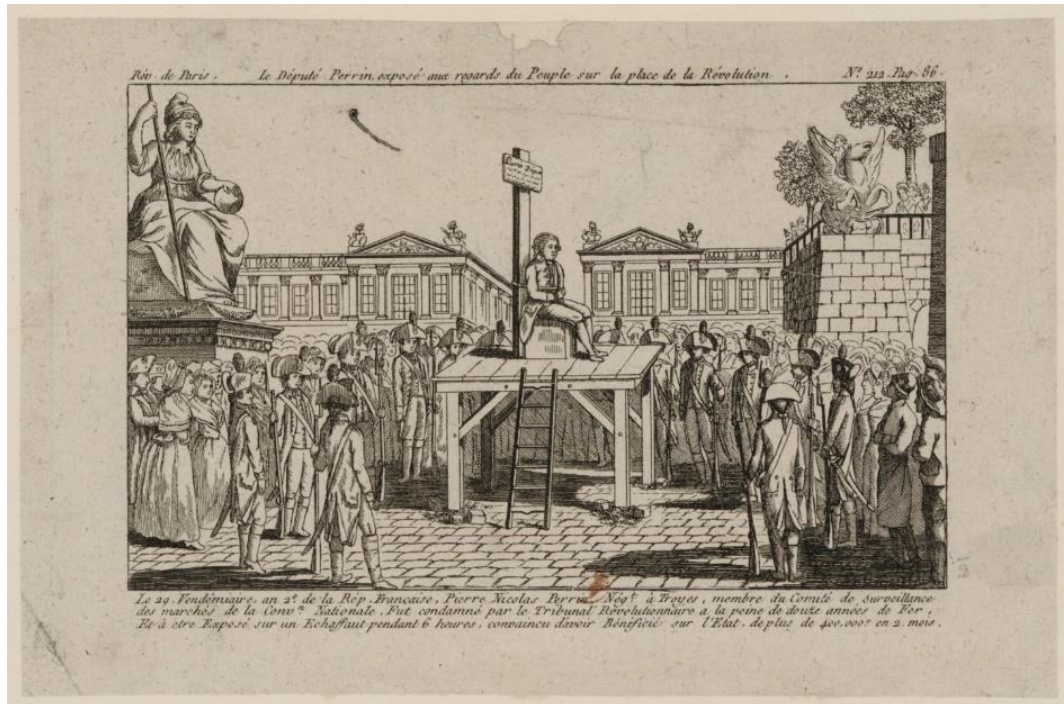
Fig. 1. 'Le Député Perrin exposé aux regards du peuple sur la place de la Révolution', *RdP*, No. 212, du 3 août au 28 octobre 1793, p. 87.

The title of the print, 'exposé aux regards', was established in the *Code Pénal*, 6 October 1791. Used four times throughout the legal code, 'exposé aux regards' established punishment-through-exposure, or the staging of convicted individuals in highly visible places where they were publicly denounced for their crimes; an intended solution to contemporary criticism of *ancien régime* judicial obscurity and promiscuity.[3]

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l'histoire pénale de la France (Toulouse: Privat, 1991), p. 186; Adolphe Robert, Edgar Bourloton and Gaston Cougny, eds., *Dictionnaire des parlementaires françaises* (Paris: Bourloton, 1891), t.IV, p. 597.

[2] This was the second gravest form of punishment after execution (when the placard would remain erected for 12 hours). There were two lesser degrees of punishment: 4 hours and solitary confinement without chains, termed the 'gêne', and 2 hours and enclosure in a confined space, termed 'détention', Titre I, Article 28 and Titre III Article 2, *Code pénal de 1791*. See Pierre Lascoumes, Pierrette Lenoël and Pierre Poncela, eds., *Au nom de l'ordre. Une histoire politique du code pénal* (Paris: Hachette, 1989).

[3] Robert Badinter, ed., *Une autre justice, 1789-1799. Contributions à l'histoire de la justice sous la Révolution française* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), p. 13; Jacques-Guy Petit, *Ces Peines obscures: la prison pénale en France (1780-1875)* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp. 27-28. On visibility during the Revolution see Dan Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature and the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 180-186. On parallels between revolutionary politics and

Justice was confirmed by its collective witnessing as well as by educating those onlookers of the crime. Punishment-through-exposure was a solution for revolutionaries who were at pains to 'authentically' perform their emotional engagement with the Revolution, whilst rooting out those among them with suspected hidden motivations.[4]

Yet, this punishment-through-exposure, and the performance of emotions it solicited, was enacted not just in the physical space of the Place de la Révolution, but also in representational media, such as Fig. 1.[5] This question of how representational media informed revolutionary 'structures of feeling' is central to this article. Ben Anderson updates Raymond Williams's original figuration of 'structure of feeling', defining it as 'collective affective qualities that dispose bodies'.[6] Despite the extensive work on the print and visual culture of the French Revolution, there has been a decided lack of engagement in the field of histories of emotional experience.[6] This is to the

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theatre see Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[4] Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2004), p. 44. On historicising the idea of 'authentic' experience see Rob Boddice, 'Authenticity and the Dynamics of Experience', *Digital Hex Handbook*, 19 September 2022 <https://sites.tuni.fi/hexhandbook/theory/rob-boddice-again-authenticity-and-the-dynamics-of-experience> [accessed 15/08/2023].

[5] This is informed by Henri Lefebvre's mutually constitutive spatial triad of 'spaces of representation', 'representational space' and 'spatial practices', *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

[6] Ben Anderson, *Encountering Affect: Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014), p. 119. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 132.

[6] Lynn Hunt noted that visual sources could be a way out of the 'interpretative cul-de-sac' of French Revolutionary historiography, but this call has not been sufficiently taken up yet, Lynn Hunt, 'The Experience of Revolution', *French Historical Studies,* 32.4 (2009), p. 676. For revolutionary print culture see, among others, Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary, 1789-1810* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Joan B. Landes, 'More Than Words: The Printing Press and the French Revolution', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25.1 (1991), pp. 85-98. There are several notable exceptions, but they all deal with painting rather than print: Colin Jones, *The Smile Revolution in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Amy Freud, *Portraiture and Politics in Revolutionary France* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2014); Sophie Matthiesson, 'Facing the Unknown: The Private Lives of Miniatures in the French Revolutionary

detriment of such scholarship for the Revolution saw a huge outpouring of visual sources, especially in the quotidian journal and newspaper media, which were increasingly mediating daily revolutionary experience relationally to contemporaries living through these events.[7] To include print media in such accounts is particularly important because the population in late eighteenth century France was, for the most part, illiterate, and because, as Richard Taws notes, it is a form that has been historiographically downplayed in favour of the more traditional aesthetics of painters like Jacques-Louis David.[8]

Popular forms of visual media have been invariably difficult to analyse due to their ephemeral quality.[9] This ephemerality, as argued by Richard Taws, was necessary for revolutionaries who were constantly trying to contend with the provisional quality of their politics.[10] The felt transience of the Revolution hence became coupled with the post-1789 'media event', enabled by the removal of censorship laws, reduced production costs and growing public demand.[11] Print media became a device to both comprehend events felt to be out of control and, with the expansion of the public sphere, a tool to guarantee popular liberty, which reduced reliance on the traditional authorities of the First and Second Estates.[12] This was compounded by the growing contemporary 'incommensurability of human perception and historical facticity', as

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Prison' in Mette Harder and Jennifer Ngaire Heuer, eds., *Life in Revolutionary France* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), pp. 318-335.

[7] Rolf Reichardt, 'Prints: Images of the Bastille' in Darnton and Roche, pp. 223-251.

[8] Richard Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional: Art and Ephemera in Revolutionary France* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013), p. 3.

[9] See James Leith, 'Ephemera: Civic Education Through Images' in Darnton and Roche, pp. 270-290.

[10] Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional*, p. 1.

[11] There was a daily Parisian circulation of 130,000 newspapers in 1791, peaking at 150,000 in 1797, see Rolf Reichardt, 'The French Revolution as a European Media Event', *European History Online* (2012) <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/reichardtr-2010-en> [accessed 11/10/2023]. Etchings could be produced within roughly a week and production costs reduced from c.1 *livre* to a couple of *sous*, see Rolf Reichardt, and Hubertus Kohle, *Visualising the Revolutions: Politics and Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century France* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 35.

[12] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989). See also David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Stephanie O'Rourke argues, whereby empirical certitude was questioned, generating various apparatuses to confirm individual experience.[13] Print media could function in this incommensurability and, combined with the semiotic unmooring of the visual during the Revolution, became a dynamic channel for expressing ideas to the popular masses.[14] To quote Reichardt and Kohle, 'a centuries-old cultural framework, represented by the person of the king, had to be replaced by an entirely new one'; this led to many contemporaries believing that 'the radical overturning of social relations was doomed to fail unless it was bolstered by appropriate forms of visualisation'.[15] This double transience of both material ephemerality and representational semiotics led to an unprecedented rise in popular images and caricatures such that, as Lynn Hunt provocatively puts it, during the Revolution 'words were rushing to keep up'.[16]

This felt acceleration was both effected by, and responded to, visual media during the Revolution which held a 'collective affective quality' to re-cite Anderson. This is why the history of emotions provides such an important analytic through which to study Revolutionary prints: it asks how contemporaries felt in the embodied contextual conditions, and then how these print media instrumentalised such feelings representationally.[17] This can be considered next to recent developments in French Revolutionary historiography whereby embodied emotional experience has been foregrounded and confirmed through collective ritualised displays of feeling.[18]

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[13] Stephanie O'Rourke, *Art, Science and the Body in Early Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 178.

[14] On the increasingly elastic boundaries between different aesthetic media see Richard Taws, 'The Guillotine as Anti-monument', *The Sculpture Review*, 19.1 (2010), p. 34.

[15] Reichardt, and Kohle, p. 107.

[16] Hunt, 'The Experience of Revolution', p. 673.

[17] Rob Boddice and Mark Smith, *Emotion, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Histories of emotion have often been overly logocentric, coming from intellectual history and poststructuralism. On 'emotives' as 'emotional speech acts' see William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and on 'emotional vocabularies' see Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[18] David Andress, ed., *Experiencing the Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Francesco Buscemi, 'The Importance of Being Revolutionary: Oath-Taking and the "Feeling Rules" of Violence (1789-1794)', *French History*, 33.2 (2019), pp. 218-235; Adrian O'Connor, '"Through the Bonds of Sentiment":

However, studies of revolutionary emotional experience must incorporate the visual form more sufficiently into their analysis. This is especially due to the dominant late eighteenth-century conceptualisation of emotions through the prism of 'sentimentalism'.[19] Sentimentalism was underpinned by Lockean Sensationalism: the mental *tabula rasa* was impacted by senses inscribing the exterior world onto the interior mind, but which developed throughout the eighteenth century to include affective responses to such stimuli as well as raw stimulation.[20] Hence, the human was understood as 'having the ability to be, and to feel, moved' and consequently developed from passive impressionability, an active, 'positive and formative moral response'.[21] This moral response was seen as the emotional basis of the socio-moral order; sensibility, properly trained in the Rousseauian tradition, was meant to foster a collective social conviviality and *bienfaisance*.

Humans were hence conceptualised as sensibly impressionable, and sentiment became understood as a 'key political resource and a crucial solution to […] how to secure the socio-political order'.[22] By openly performing sentimental emotions, individuals could assure others of their common feelings. Civic sentiments became a preservative for social and national bonds amidst the uncertainty and anxieties of a revolution in free flow.[23] This politicisation of sentiment led to an array of 'sensory pedagog[ies] of everyday life': music, dance, festivals, paintings, sculpture, prints were all thought to instil civic sentiments in the *citoyens* and *citoyennes* of the Revolution through a 'kind of opening up to vivid impressions'.[24] This article does not attempt to

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Fraternité and Politics in Revolutionary France' in László Kontler and Mark Somos (eds), *Trust and Happiness in the History of European Political Thought* (Leden: Brill, 2017), pp. 176-201.

[19] Reddy calls this the revolutionary 'emotional regime', although this term hasn't been used by the author as it is felt to be overly programmatic, Reddy, p. 124.

[20] Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 1-17; Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), pp. 94-112.

[21] Jones, pp. 65-66.

[22] Edward Jones-Imhotep, 'The Unfailing Machine: Mechanical Arts, Sentimental Publics and the Guillotine in Revolutionary France', *History of the Human Sciences,* 30.4 (2017), p. 12.

[23] Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class,* p. 46; Vincent-Buffault*,* pp. 77-88.

[24] Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 74-76; Jones, p. 66.

account for the actual emotional experience of late eighteenth-century readers. Rather, it contends that by positioning sentimentalism at the centre of one's analysis of visual media, one asks how revolutionaries conceptualised the socio-political effects of such media for affectively ordering society. In representing revolutionary bodies-in-space, the sensible impact of such visual media on their audience were implicit in their production.

To return to 'Le Député Perrin exposé aux regards du peuple sur la place de la Révolution' (Fig. 1), this was a print produced for Louis-Marie Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris* (18 July 1789 to 28 February 1794).[25] The *Révolutions* was one of the most successful revolutionary papers with 225 issues: Desmoulins (over)estimated 200,000 weekly subscribers at its peak, and it enjoyed a long print-run, counterfeits, international readers, and contemporary praise and envy from other journalists.[26] Prudhomme was the primary editor and owner of the *Révolutions*, but it would be wrong to solely attribute it to him, as it was run as a professional venture with a large team of writers and printers all contributing to its production.[27] However, it is difficult to sufficiently explicate the relationship between Prudhomme, his editors (the two principal ones were Antoine Tournan, who collaborated on the first 12 editions before leaving to set up his own journal, and Élysée Loustallot, who died 19 September 1790 and was seen as setting 'spirit of the popular *Révolutions*') and the printers.[28] Yet, as Prudhomme held final editorial authority, this article treats the print representations of the *Révolutions* as ultimately reflective of his politics. Prudhomme was sensitive to the commercial opportunities of the printed newspaper: he chose a small octavo form to facilitate the

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[25] Claude Labrosse et Pierre Rétat, *L'instrument périodique. La fonction de la presse au XVIIIe siècle* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1985), p. 143; Christophe Palierse, 'La Révolution du droit naturel dans les *Révolutions de Paris* (juillet 1789-septembre 1790', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française,* 285 (1991), p. 353; Eugène Hatin, *Histoire politique et littéraire de la presse en France* (Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1860), t. IV, pp. 317-364.

[26] Censer, *Prelude to Power*, p. 25.

[27] Hugh Gough, *The Newspaper Press in the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 56.

[28] Jack R. Censer, *Prelude to Power: The Parisian Radical Press, 1789-1791* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 23.

easy dissemination of the *Révolutions* by street hawkers in the urban *voie public* and printed separate images (133 in total) to be combined afterwards by subscribers.[29]

This article, using twelve key examples from the 133 prints of the *Révolutions,* asks how visual media was used by a radical journalist such as Prudhomme to visualise the Revolution.[30] Informed by contemporary histories of emotion, it contends that Prudhomme attempted to establish, and develop, certain themes in his visual media that both made coherent and representationally stabilised a Revolution felt to be out of control.[31] Three themes in particular - the presentation of celebratory and violent crowds, reciprocal surveillance, and a pedagogical urban environment – worked to produce and orient revolutionary bodies-in-space. These themes were never stable in the *Révolutions*, but reiteratively negotiated by Prudhomme relative to the rapidly changing events of the Revolution. This thematic dynamism was enabled due to contemporary attempts to use ephemeral media to respond to the 'ongoing incompletion' of the Revolution.[32] Print ephemera, in its ability to be produced cheaply and quickly, enabled fast reaction to transient events. Through these prints, Prudhomme could react to the instability of the Revolution and hold it momentarily in some form of representational coherence.

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[29] The octavo format involved one or more sheets of paper on which 16 pages of text were printed and folded; Prudhomme used 3 sheets, to make 48 pages of c.6x9 inches. Robert Darnton, 'An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *The American Historical Review,* 105.1 (2000), p. 9; Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789-1799* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 99.

[30] The radical press was generally characterised by distrust of constituted authority, saw popular sovereignty as a genuine political force, and couched its arguments in high emotional pitch, see Censer, *Prelude to Power*.

[31] On the print functions of standardisation and dissemination see Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[32] Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional,* p. 2.

I. Prudhomme, the *Révolutions de Paris*, and the Production of Revolutionary 'Event'

Print ephemera hence enabled Prudhomme to respond quickly to ensuing events; this was reflected in the *Révolutions*'s rhythms of production. The table below (Fig. 2) shows the total print run of the *Révolutions* with red indicating an edition without a print, yellow indicating an edition with a map and green an edition with a print (although there could be multiple prints included in one edition). The data illustrates that across its four-and-a-half-year print run the paper itself was remarkably consistent in production: an edition was produced weekly until August 1793, when it became significantly more irregular. However, this regularity did not extend to the print images, which underwent lengthy hiatuses in production. At the start of the Revolution this was due to the adjustment to the technical and commercial aspects required for running such a large press: it was only in February 1790 that some coherence to the prints was achieved. This was followed from May 1790 with an impressive production of one departmental map each week for all 83 new *Départements*, with singular prints intermixed. However, by late spring 1792 to the beginning of November 1792, Prudhomme was producing print images much more regularly to coincide with the height of popular involvement in the Revolution, something that the radical Prudhomme was at pains to highlight. By the end of 1792, this regularity decreased, with a momentary spike around Louis XVI's execution in late January-early February 1793. From late February 1793 to the start of August 1793 prints became sparse, and then from August 1793 to February 1794 the editions themselves became incredibly sporadic. This relates to the tightening of controls relative to the Committee of Public Safety and the Revolutionary Tribunal; Prudhomme himself was imprisoned on 4 June 1793, which partly explains the ending of the *Révolutions*'s regular print run.[33]

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[33] Prudhomme commemorated this in a print, 'Le citoyen Prudhomme expulse de sa Maison ainsi que son Epouse et ses Quatre enfans, pour avoir depuis 1788, osé montrer le patriotisme le plus ardent et dévoilé les faux patriotes', *RdP*, No. 204, du 1 au 8 juin 1793, p. 464.
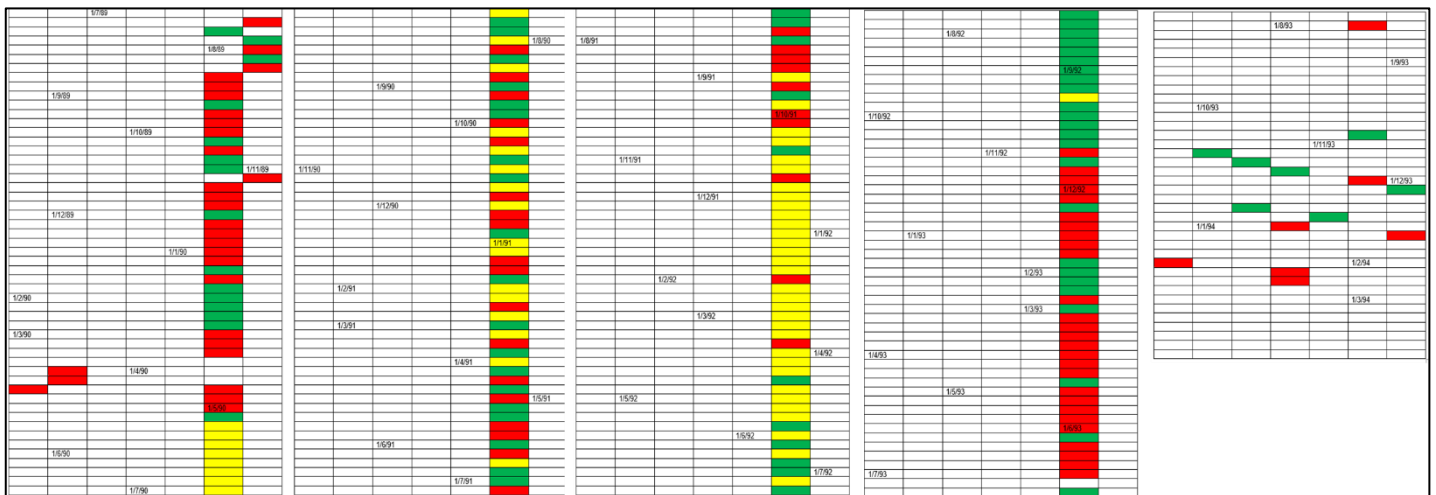
Fig. 2. *RdP,* 18 July 1789 to 28 February 1794. Each row is a week, from Monday to Sunday. Red indicates no print image. Yellow indicates a map but no print image. Green indicates one, or multiple print images in one edition.

Hence, prints in the *Révolutions* were used sporadically throughout the Revolution, in conjunction with a reliably consistent text-based journal. The octavo format of the publication leant itself to narrative continuity as news was reported in a continuous sequence with an intimate journalistic voice.[34] The prints were attempts by Prudhomme to take this continuous reportage and hold it in a singular representation. Prudhomme was using the print medium to highlight certain chosen revolutionary events which, to quote Koselleck, were moments 'separated *ex post* from the infinity of circumstance'; produced after their occurrence and named.[35]

During the first months of production, prints were often produced retrospectively; they were sent to subscribers months later, or produced when editions were reprinted. The frontispiece of No. 1 (12-17 July 1789) records that it is the ninth edition of that first number, whilst it is noted in No. 12 (26 September-3 October 1789) that 'the delivery of the introduction, that we have promised free to our subscribers, was only delayed due to an engraving that we intend to put on the frontispiece'.[36] The introduction that Prudhomme mentions here was published three months later as a

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[34] Claude Labrosse, 'Fonctions culturelles du périodique littéraire' in Labrosse et Rétat, p. 59.

[35] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 107. See Lynn Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History* (Budapest: Central University Press, 2008), p. 76; Sanja Perovic, *The Calendar in Revolutionary France: Perceptions of Time in Literature, Culture and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 4.

[36] *RdP,* No. 12, du 26 septembre au 3 octobre 1789, p. 1.

standalone piece, on 30 January 1790, suggesting either the care that his editorial team were taking over this engraving, or their desire to focus on the engravings for events in the editions preceding the introduction, notably the 12 prints included in No. 1, 12-17 July 1789.

This plethora of prints led Prudhomme to produce a retrospective list, the 'Avis au relieur pour placer les gravures' (Fig. 3), which detailed where 'bookbinders' – *les relieurs* – should insert their images. Through this device, Prudhomme emphasised the active participation of the *Révolutions*'s subscribers in the combination of the textual journal with the prints. This list includes the three prints from the introduction, and so can be adjudged to have been produced after 30 January 1790. This list acted as a process of completion whereby Prudhomme provided subscribers with a method of knowing if they owned or had seen all the prints produced by the *Révolutions*, a method of visually scripting the quasi-mythological origin story of the early Revolution.[37] Yet, Fig. 3 only mentions 10 prints of the 12 in No. 1 (numbers 4-12, with an extra print listed under number 9): 'Nuit du 12 au 13 juillet 1789 à Paris' and 'Vue intérieure de la Démolition de la Bastille' are not included in this list. Thus, the visual production of events in the early revolution was ongoing past 30 January 1790, and the process of listing suggested in Fig. 3 was not definitive.

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[37] On lists as a modality of control see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1994). On revolutionary scripts see Keith M. Baker and Dan Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).
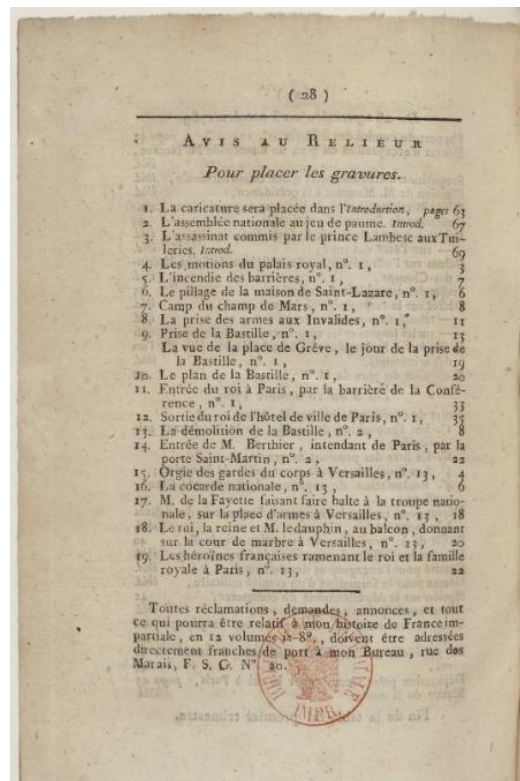
Fig. 3. 'Avis au relieur pour placer les gravures', *RdP,* No. 13, du 3 au 10 octobre 1789, p. 28.

Hence, the *Révolutions*'s prints functioned as singularities which represented named events in the Revolutionary 'historical narrative', and so can be treated as standalone representations, but also as part of a larger corpus intentionally put together by Prudhomme and his editorial team, to be recombined by subscribers *post-facto*. To consider these prints as representational singularities intersects with the previous discussion of sentimentalism for, in producing this series of discrete images, Prudhomme attempted to discipline visually the *impact sensible* of each image on his audience. This was a complex and non-linear process whereby the visual themes of the *Révolutions*'s prints were in constant flux as Prudhomme implemented his own kind of sentimental, sensory pedagogy. The following three sections will develop this argument around three distinct but connected themes which were dynamically produced across the *Révolutions*'s 133 prints: the first two – crowds and surveillance – centre on the conditioning of revolutionary bodies, whilst the third considers the iterative production of the urban environment through which these bodies moved.

II. Sentimental Crowds

Crowds were ubiquitous yet contentious visual tropes in revolutionary prints: *le peuple*, the calm, magnanimous collective made visible the new social contract of *la patrie*, but could easily slip into *la foule*, the violent, carnivalesque throng descending into chaos.[38] The line between these two crowds was thin, and yet the emotional valences of each were distinct. In the early Revolution, the promise of *le peuple* inspired a nascent optimism, epitomised by the first Fête de la Fédération (14 July 1790): 'Pacte Fédératif des français le 14 juillet 1790' (Fig. 4) shows the celebration on the Champ de Mars, and 'Bal et Illumination aux Champs Elisées, le 18 juillet 1790 au soir' (Fig. 5) the festivities on the Champs Élysées a few days later. These prints made revolutionary society visible, not just as abstract discourse, but as an observable object.[39] The mass of bodies populating space enabled Prudhomme to construct an embodied authentication of the new civic social relations, and a hopeful affective pedagogy, as this visible *peuple* witnessed and partook in proceedings.[40]
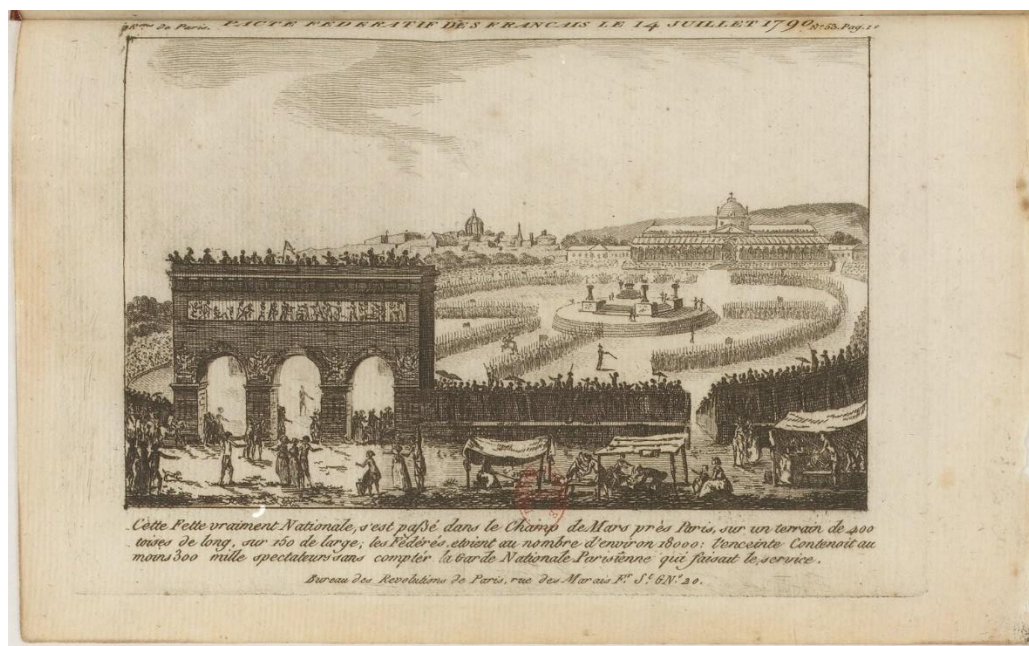
Fig. 4. 'Pacte Fédératif des français le 14 juillet 1790', *RdP*, No. 53, du 10 au 17 juillet, p. 1.

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[38] Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, 'Imaging the French Revolution: Depictions of the French Revolutionary Crowd', *The American Historical Review,* 110.1 (2005), pp. 38-45. On the historiography of the crowd in the French Revolution see Micah Alpaugh, *Non-Violence and the French Revolution: Political Demonstration in Paris, 1789-1795* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-23.

[39] Hunt, 'The Experience of Revolution', pp. 677-8.

[40] Lynn. Hunt, 'The World We Have Gained: The Future of the French Revolution', *The American Historical Review,* 108.1 (2003), p. 11; Palierse, p. 375.

Fig. 5. 'Bal et Illumination aux Champs Elisées, le 18 juillet 1790 au soir', *RdP*, No. 54, du 17 au 24 juillet 1790, p. 55.

At the front of both these prints, specific individuals are emphasised in various moments of fraternal interaction. Dancing, conversing, hand-shaking and embracing dissolve the previously rigid class divisions in an atmosphere of joy and wonder at such world-altering proceedings, as gestured to by the child at the bottom of Fig. 4.[41] These moments are mirrors for the kind of interactions which were happening throughout France during these celebrations; through these embodied signifiers of sentimental individuals authentically 'becoming revolutionary' contemporaries could begin to be taught how to feel and act in such situations.[42]

Moreover, behind these individuals another disciplining is ongoing as the figures picked out fade into a crowd amorphic in its generality. This crowd is a commanding *thing*, receding into the background of the print in an unbounded spectacle of *la patrie.*

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[41] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press)*,* p. 33, 41; O'Connor, p. 419; Marcel David, *Fraternité et Révolution française, 1789-1799* (Paris: Aubier, 1988), pp. 43-59.

[42] Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: the deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). On Paris-provincial emotional interactions see Micah Alpaugh, 'Les émotions collectives et la mouvement des fédérations (1789-1790)', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 2.372 (2013), pp. 49-80.

It is a hopeful promise of the always-more, *la patrie* as infinite persons coming together in fraternity to produce, through their social bonds, a new form of sovereignty. This crowd positions and directs the gaze of its audience. It is a visual tactic of phenomenological orientation whereby gazes are gathered around revolutionary event-centralities.[43] The monumental, as Henri Lefebvre writes, is established through consensus, and Prudhomme establishes it through the multiplicity of onlookers, in conjunction with the viewer of the print.[44] As stated in the *Révolutions*, upon seeing the Fête de la Fédération the crowd 'opened their eyes to the first dawn of *liberté*' and the audience of the print, in looking with this crowd, could open its eyes too.[45] This visual orienting through collective witnessing formed an invitation to viewers to look, and crucially feel, *with* the crowd toward the unfolding event, eliciting not passive engagement but a necessarily participatory affective response.[46]

However, Prudhomme's affective pedagogy becomes complicated when one moves from the celebratory, festive crowds to collective demonstrations and gatherings which slipped into violence. 'Vue de la Place de Grève le jour de la prise de la Bastille' and 'Malheur arrivé à Paris le 21 octobre 1789 à 8 heures du matin' (Figs. 6 and 7) depict violent collective justice and the adjudicating function of *le peuple* from the early revolution (July to October 1789). Both prints complicate the simple euphoria of the 1790s Fête de la Fédération, as the *Révolutions*'s representation of crowds becomes thematically unstable. They reveal Prudhomme's struggle with whether to direct his audience to condemn or condone these two crowds.

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[43] Lefebvre, p. 386.

[44] Lefebvre, p. 144.

[45] *RdP*, No. 68 du 23 au 30 octobre 1790, p. 116.

[46] Buscemi, p. 224.

Fig. 6. 'Vue de la Place de Grève le jour de la prise de la Bastille', *RdP,* No. 1 du 12 au 17 septembre 1789, p. 19.

Fig. 7. 'Malheur arrivé à Paris le 21 octobre 1789 à 8 heures du matin', No. 15 du 17 au 24 octobre 1789, p. 26.

In Fig. 6, the decapitated heads of Bernard-René Jourdan de Launay, the ex-governor of the Bastille, and Jacques de Flesselles, the *Prévot de Marchands* suspected of ordering Launay to fire on those storming the royal prison, are paraded through the Place de Grêve (present day Hôtel de Ville) on the afternoon of 14 July 1789 to the acclaim of a huge crowd. Fig. 6, much like the Fête de la Fédération, features defined individuals at the front directing gazes to the cortège at the centre of the print, and a receding amorphous multitude at the back. All the onlookers are turned towards the procession, confirming the righteousness of the violence of the already-effected popular executions. There is no ambiguity here, popular justice has already happened; the 'monsters', as Prudhomme terms Flesselles and Launay, who were responsible for the 'crimes' of the Bastille had been brought to reckoning.[47]

This can be contrasted with Fig. 7 which details, one month later, a Parisian baker, François Boulanger, being escorted from his shop to be executed after rumours abounded that he was selling mouldy bread. Yet, the same visual tactics of crowds directing the viewer's gaze are not as clear in Fig. 7. Boulanger is not in the centre of the print, but slightly off to the left and surrounded, even obscured, by a throng of people who are not unanimous in their judgement but are rather shown to be in conversation, or confrontation, raising their arms and blocking each other. The dog in mid-bark and the close focus on Boulanger's removal add 'noise' to this representation, creating an urban cacophony which differs markedly from Fig. 6. This confusion in the visual form of print reflects Prudhomme's own perplexity as he condemns the 'seditious' crowd, acting 'without waiting for justice to be rendered'.[48] Prudhomme is at pains to note that 'honest neighbours follow him [Boulanger]' and 'all the *coeurs sensibles*' pity the widow and child he leaves behind.[49] This complicated the idea of the crowd as a visual authentication of Revolutionary justice; the sentiment that the audience of the *Révolutions* are meant to feel towards this episode is modified by what Prudhomme finds to be an unlawful act of collective justice.

Flesselles and Launay, and Boulanger were all executed on the Place de Grêve on the 14 July and 21 October 1789 respectively. Prudhomme explicitly notes this point: 'the unfortunate François has finished his honourable life where Flesselles and de

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[47] *RdP,* No. 1, du 12 au 17 septembre 1789, p. 18.

[48] *RdP*, No. 15 du 17 au 24 octobre 1789, p. 26.

[49] *RdP,* No. 15, pp. 27-28.

Launay perished'.[50] For him, this is where the comparisons between the two events end. Prudhomme chooses to represent these two instances of crowd violence at different points in their 'historical narrative'; thereby attempting to dictate how his audience feels towards each event. In Fig. 6 Flesselles and de Launay are already executed, their decapitated heads symbols of summary justice which the celebratory crowd condones in their gestural acclamations. On the other hand, Fig. 7 represents Boulanger before his execution, the fear visible on his face: his emotions become part of a comment on the injustice of this collective violence. Through the presentation of such violence pre- or post-event, Prudhomme was constantly negotiating the representation of collective violence as a form of popular justice.

III. Reciprocal Surveillance

Despite Prudhomme's difficulty establishing a consistent representation of crowd violence throughout his corpus, these masses of spectators were active invitations to *look with* and witness such revolutionary events. These active judgements of events enabled the audience of the *Révolutions* to educate themselves sentimentally, but it also worked as a quasi emotional litmus test: an injunction for its readership to root out others that were not sentimental enough. The prints showed both authentic and inauthentic emotional performances: virtuous individuals committed to the Revolution as well as duplicitous individuals seeking to harm it from the inside. In depicting such divergent emotional performances, these prints acted as a double pedagogic, best epitomised through the second theme of this article: reciprocal surveillance. Surveillance was imperative to the success of the revolutionary project: constant vigilance was required as anxieties about *seeing* and being *seen* abounded.[51] Throughout the prints, almost all the urban scenes feature windows crowded with individuals watching the represented event unfold. These watchers create an atmosphere of pervasive public observation in the Parisian urban milieu.[52] Parisian urban life, as Daniel Roche and David Garrioch have argued, happened at windows, in

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[50] *RdP*, No. 15, pp. 27-28.

[51] Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right,* pp. 180-186.

[52] On urban atmospheres see Cigdem Talu, '"The Effect of London": Urban Atmospheres and Alice Meynell's *London Impressions*', *Emotions: History, Culture, Society,* 6.1 (2022), pp. 96-116. For affective atmospherics more generally see Anderson, pp. 137-162.

stairwells and on the street; these figures show how each event was watched and assessed by a multitude of onlookers.[53]

This pervasive surveillance can be seen in the prints already discussed; in 'Malheur arrivé à Paris le 21 octobre 1789 à 8 heures du matin' (Fig. 7) observers watch the execution of popular justice, to the right of the print. In this scene, there is a simple connection between Prudhomme's judgement of Boulanger's execution and the passive 'collective witnessing' of urban window-watchers. The representation of crowd representation is less straight-forward in 'Fameuse journée du 20 Juin 1792' (Fig. 8).[54] Set at the 20 June 1792 demonstration, this print once again directs the audience's gaze to a crowd composed of individuals at the front receding into an amorphous block, a display of 'all the people of the first city in the world, full of the *sentiment de la liberté* [...] the touching *fraternité* [...] where they were all mixed up and giving each other an arm'.[55] This textual description is slightly at odds with the visual scene which shows a cohesive group and looking in the same direction, assumedly to their objective of the Tuileries palace.

Fig. 8. 'Fameuse journée du 20 Juin 1792', *RdP,* No. 154, du 16 au 23 juin 1792, p. 549.

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[53] Daniel Roche, *Le peuple de Paris: Essai sur le cultur populaire au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1998)*,* p. 336; Daniel Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 21.

[54] O'Rourke*,* pp. 155-157.

[55] *RdP,* No. 154, du 16 au 23 juin 1792, p. 549.

These marchers direct readers' focus upwards via the vertical lines of their pikes to rest on the overlooking windows crammed with onlookers. Prudhomme suggests here that the crowd which marched on the Tuileries was distinct from those watching from above, the onlookers surveying the crowd for the authenticity of their revolutionary sentiments. Prudhomme describes how a 'frank joy animated this picture and passed through the soul of the beholders; gaining strength as we advanced, the crowd became immense'.[56] This distinction between 'beholders', the '*regardans*' - the deverbal noun of *regarder,* or to look - and the crowd, the '*rassemblement*', makes a formative distinction between crowd-as-instigator and those watchers-as-judgers. Here, the print functions as both an injunction to watch and adjudge others' emotional commitment during such events, then participate oneself if sufficiently 'animated' by this performance. The crowd and onlookers are thus intimately imbricated in an act of collective witnessing.

All the prints shown so far have taken place 'dans la rue', where observation can easily occur from residential buildings.[57] However, the street, in its public visibility, was an easy space to survey – what about events that happened in more discreet spaces? Prudhomme experimented in using the print medium to dissolve the private-public binary, rendering visible events that would otherwise have been hidden to assuage revolutionary anxieties of duplicity and obscurity. These instances where overhanging windows are free of observers can generally be categorised as taking place in an aristocrat residence, or at night. In removing onlookers, Prudhomme warns that there are instances when the revolutionary surveillance of individuals' sentiment has blind-spots to which attention must be paid.

In 'Départ de Louis XVI le 21 juin à minuit et demie' (Fig. 9), Louis XVI is shown leaving Paris in the dead of night before his flight to Varennes. A small torch in hand, the King is sneaking to the Hôtel de Marigny, before embarking on the waiting coach to the left of the frame. '[H]ow could a whole family escape from our hands in the heart of Paris?', Prudhomme asks, depicting the hunched figure of the king, inconspicuous in his cloak, beside a long textual exposition on how the Capets could have escaped, including questioning the palace guards.[58] Fig. 9 hence holds a notable silence: there is

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[56] *RdP*, No. 154, pp. 549-550.

[57] Arlette Farge, *Vivre Dans La Rue à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard-Julliard, 1979).

[58] *RdP,* No. 102 du 18 au 25 juin 1791, p. 530.

no one watching the King as he escapes in the dead of night from central Paris.[59] In the *Revolutions*'s production of this print *post-facto*, the audience can now witness this previously invisible act, judging Louis for his inauthentic profession of commitment to the Revolution; a sentiment that Prudhomme has now too made visible.[60]

Fig. 9. 'Départ de Louis XVI le 21 juin à minuit et demie', *RdP,* No. 102, du 18 au 25 juin 1791, p. 525.

The silences of Fig. 9 become clearer when one considers 'Diner de Louis Capet au Temple' (Fig. 10), which shows the Capets, captured after their escape, and interned properly in the prison of the Le Temple, north Paris. Three figures (one *guichetier* and two *officiers municipaux*) now surround and watch the Capets, along with the viewer of the print, remediating the lack of observation in Fig. 9. This scene shows the royal family dining together, an event that Prudhomme stresses happens three times a day, and during proceedings Louis and Marie-Antoinette are 'not allowed to speak to each other, by lowered voices or signs'; as the watching guards make sure.[61] The print frames this observation through the central placement of the Capets, the conical shape of the chimney behind them and the light focused on the table giving the impression of the

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[59] On revolutionary nocturnal anxieties see Philippe Bourdin, eds., *Les nuits de la Révolution française* (Clermond-Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2013).

[60] *RdP,* No. 102, p. 525.

[61] *RdP,* No. 171, du 13 au 20 octobre 1792, p. 165.

envelopment of the family. Nevertheless, Prudhomme reports in the text of the *Révolutions* that 'it seems boredom is the only *sentiment pénible* that the previous king experiences', with the scattered wine bottles at his feet pointing to his weakness of character.[62]

Fig. 10. 'Diner de Louis Capet au Temple', *RdP,* No. 171, du 13 au 20 octobre 1792, p. 164.

There is a sense of intrusive voyeurism in Fig. 10 as the print form enables viewers to inspect Louis from behind the walls of Le Temple. It is not only Louis's constant physical but emotional surveillance that is necessary, something that Prudhomme both encourages and enables through the printed form. In Figs. 8-10, Prudhomme can thus be seen representing moments to be scrutinised for embodied revolutionary commitment. These prints hold the implicit point that through these representations, the surveillance of revolutionary emotional authenticity should take place everywhere: outside on the street or in private moments of domesticity.

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[62] *RdP*, No. 171, p. 164.

IV. Pedagogical Urban Environment

The previous two sections have argued that in the *Révolutions'*s prints, representations of individual bodies oriented readers towards collective affective relationships, which were central to the publication's structures of feeling. In the prints examined so far, the feelings expected of the represented actants and the audience were always mediated relationally to the built environment: the terraformed Champ de Mars, the overlooking residential windows or the private aristocratic residence. This built environment was therefore an active component in Prudhomme's attempts to condition how his audience felt in various spaces. These sites were produced representationally by Prudhomme as part of the 'omni-pedagogic urban environment' of Paris – the urban environment used by revolutionaries to educate sensibly impressionable citizens in the new social order.[63] There are multiple locations that were iteratively produced across the prints, yet one of the most prominent, and the one that this section will focus on, was the Place Louis XV (present day Place de la Concorde).

The Place Louis XV is featured twice in the prints of the *Révolutions* before it becomes one of the pivotal centralities of revolutionary Paris from early 1793 as two guillotines were moved to its east and west corners.[64] The first time the Place de la Révolution was featured with the newly installed guillotine was at Louis XVI's execution, 21 January 1793 when Prudhomme produced a set of two prints to be inserted on the same page of the *Révolutions*. 'Mort de Louis XVI le 21 janvier 1793' (Fig. 11) depicts Louis XVI pre-execution, whilst 'Mort de Louis XVI le 21 janvier 1793' (Fig. 12) shows the moment immediately afterwards. Louis XVI's execution is understood by Prudhomme as the turning point in the Revolution – 'it is only since Monday 21 that we are republicans' – and both these prints centre on the guillotine with all the onlookers turned towards the ex-monarch.[65] However, this is a subtly different modality of collective witnessing to those described in sections II and III as the bodies represented in Fig. 11 and 12 are passive and inert; the movement in the print comes from the ex-

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[63] Goldstein, p. 84; Lefebvre, p. 34.

[64] See 'Anecdote arrivée à Louis XVI quelques jours après sa résidence à Paris', *RdP,* No. 16, du 24 au 31 octobre 1789, p. 22, which shows Louis XVI providing charity to a passing pauper boy on the Place and 'Place Louis XV', *RdP,* No. 161 du 4 au 10 août 1792, p. 240, which shows the iconoclasm of Bouchardon's equestrian of Louis XIV.

[65] *RdP,* No. 185, du 19 au 26 janvier 1793, p. 204.

monarch and his executioners.[66] There are no figures picked out in relief at the bottom detailing the fraternal sentimental gestures which could form the new social relations; engagement here was a passive spectatorship in the theatrical *mise en scène* of revolutionary justice.
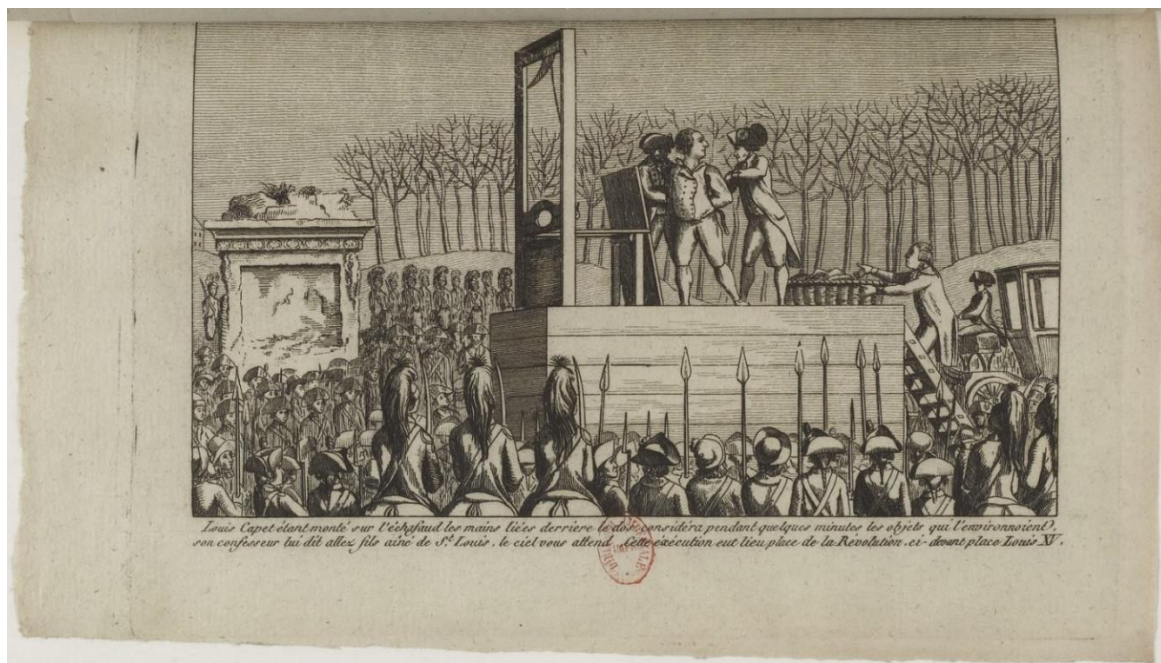
Fig. 11. 'Mort de Louis XVI le 21 janvier 1793', *RdP,* No. 185, du 19 au 26 janvier 1793, p. 203.

Fig. 12. 'Mort de Louis XVI le 21 janvier 1793', *RdP,* No. 185, du 19 au 26 janvier 1793, p. 203.

[66] O'Rourke, pp. 155-157, 168.

Printed media was important for rendering the act of guillotining cognisable to contemporaries, for, in the speed of the execution, onlookers struggled to see the fateful moment of Louis's beheading.[67] Instead, the effect of the sentimental machinery of the guillotine needed representational media to hold its eruptive moment in some coherence.[68] Prudhomme holds the execution in both the *before* and the *after*. The two prints render Louis's execution visible by first showing Louis upright and still living, and then horizontal with his head held up by Santerre as 'a call to look', both to the immediate participants on the Place, and the audience of the printed representation.[69] They are called on to verify the event that has just happened and to feel with the collective witnesses of this sensational event.

Prudhomme furthers the temporal rupture enacted through Louis XVI's execution by making a clear link to the resonant memories of the time *before*: 'it's there [on the Place de la Révolution] that several hundreds of citizens, of every age and every sex, miserably lost their life, victims of the awful police order obeyed at the wedding parties of Louis Capet and Marie-Antoinette'.[70] This spatial association between what came before and what was now removed is represented through the choice to leave on the left of both Fig. 11 and 12 Louis XV's ruined, crumbling, and crucially empty plinth.[71] Prudhomme uses these ruined plinths as a condemnation of Louis XVI, foretelling and condoning his execution by the iconoclasm occurring five months earlier. This blank site was a spatial instantiation of Lefort's phenomenology of democracy as 'empty space', in which there is an 'ever-present desire – and threat – of wanting to fill that gap, to close the uncertainty' between the social body and the institutions of power.[72] This ruined plinth was a hauntological reminder of the ruination

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[67] O'Rourke, p. 166; Daniel Arasse, *The Guillotine and the Terror* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 35-36.

[68] Jones-Imhotep, p. 13.

[69] O'Rourke, p. 169.

[70] *RdP,* No. 185, du 19 au 26 janvier 1793, p. 204.

[71] Taws, 'The Guillotine as Antimonument', p. 40.

[72] Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988); David A. Bell and Hugo Drochon, 'Preface' in Marcel Gauchet, *Robespierre: The Man Who Divides Us the Most* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), p. ix.

of the *ancien régime*; an artefact next to the Revolution's precarious, secular, and modern future.[73]

However, this plinth-as-ruined-absence does not sit comfortably in Prudhomme's visual schema. On 16 October 1793 Marie Antoinette was also executed at the Place de la Révolution, for which Prudhomme produced two prints, to be inserted two pages apart. In 'Exécution de la veuve Capet' (Fig. 13) the same ruined plinth as in Louis XVI's execution was used, but in 'La Veuve Capet à la guillotine' (Fig. 14) another type of plinth was produced: clean, garlanded, *Liberté*-surmounted. There is then a tension here in how Prudhomme wants to represent the queen's execution. On the one hand Fig. 13, like Figs. 11 and 12, uses the shadowed and barely visible ruin to position La Veuve Capet beside her husband: a remnant of a broken order.[74] On the other, Fig. 14 shows the plinth now topped by François Frédéric Lemot's plaster statue of the watching Marianne-*Liberté* as a visual framing device for the executions which will root out the inauthentic sentiments in the revolutionaries' midst.[75] Instead of showing the plinth as empty and ruined, it is re-made and re-used as a built memorial palimpsest.[76] The toppled monarch is now a-topped by the reigning figure of *Liberté* watching on, calling *la patrie* to defend her maternal figure as she judges the guilty in allegory.[77]

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[73] On hauntologies see Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero, 2014). On ruins in the French Revolution see Nina Dubin, *Futures and Ruins: Eighteenth Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010).

[74] Reichardt and Kohle, pp. 109-110.

[75] Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p. 93.

[76] On the ambiguities around Marie-Antoinette's trial and execution see Perovic, pp. 127-141.

[77] Joan B. Landes, *Visualising the Nation: Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Fig. 13. 'Exécution de la veuve Capet', *RdP,* No. 212, du 3 août au 28 octobre, 1793, p. 95.

Fig. 14. 'La Veuve Capet à la guillotine', *RdP,* No. 212, 3 août-28 octobre, 1793, p. 97.

The depiction of these plinths in the prints is indicative of Prudhomme's *post-facto* confusion at how to represent Marie Antoinette's execution as neither is historically accurate: Marie Antoinette was executed on a guillotine facing away from *Liberté*. This confusion was continued in the text of the *Révolutions* as Prudhomme attempted to justify why, despite 'a few weak spirits [who] looked unfortunately affected

by the execution of the widow Capet', she deserved to die.[78] Prudhomme does so by listing the crimes that she had committed, which, aside from just being the wife of Louis XVI, included 'the scandalous *moeurs* of her private life', spending huge amounts of money raised from taxation and the massacres at the Champs de Mars and the Vendée.[79] The disgraced queen's 'impure blood' was reflected in the ruined plinth; the *ancien régime* had wasted away due to its corruption. This ambivalence over how to frame Marie-Antoinette's execution is somewhat settled in the three further depictions of the Place de la Révolution in the *Révolutions* which all feature a clean *Liberté*-surmounted plinth (one of which is Perrin's *exposé*, Fig. 1) as Prudhomme begins to look to a brighter future, rather than holding onto a ruined, desecrated past.

V. Conclusion

Looking back to Perrin on the scaffold in the Place de la Révolution, one is struck by the range of prints that were produced by the *Révolutions de Paris* over the course of the Revolution. This was a project in adaptation as events were changing at such a pace over the four-and-a-half-year print run of the *Révolutions* that the visual style and themes had to change with them. However, one aspect of the *Révolutions* that never changed was that it always adopted what Pierre Rétat has termed its 'journalism of the present'.[80] The *Révolutions* explicitly put the reader, through the engaged and presentist journalistic voice, in the heart of the action. These prints formed a crucial aspect of this intimate engagement in a Revolution which was posited as the personal responsibility of each reader of the journal.

Print media was a dynamic form in the Revolution as it was purposefully made materially ephemeral and dislocated from its traditional symbolic moorings of the *Ancien Régime*. This article has sought to ask how, through a particular focus on one corpus of revolutionary prints, this was done by a radical revolutionary like Jean-Marie Prudhomme. This is by no means a conclusive study. There was a huge outpouring of printed media during the Revolution, and it would be productive to broaden our thinking in response to Lynn Hunt's call to more fully consider the role played by visual sources within the cultural constructions that mediated late eighteenth-century daily

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[78] *RdP,* No. 212, du 3 août au 28 octobre 1793, p. 97.

[79] *RdP*, No. 212, pp. 97-98.

[80] Rétat, in Labrosse and Rétat, pp. 145-150.

life. Central to this paper's argument has been that late-eighteenth century sentimentalism was conceptually linked to the printed form as a 'sensory pedagogy of everyday life', replete with possibilities for both printmakers and the audience that was interacting with it.[81] The themes identified in this paper are not exhaustive, but have focused on some of the most pivotal of the *Révolutions*'s 133 images, and the interactions between them as Prudhomme attempted to pause, elucidate and spectacularise certain revolutionary events. This was particularly so in 1789 and early 1790 when this event-production was enacted retrospectively.

This article has argued for the interconnection between these visual themes in this process: crowds, both celebratory and violent, surveillance (and subsequent lack thereof), and the iterative production of urban space. Informed by Lefebvre's spatial triad, it has asked how the representation of real bodies-in-space came together to produce a particular felt experience of the Revolution. The *Révolutions de Paris,* one of the most successful revolutionary papers, was an integral aspect of both reporting on and visualising the Revolution for the *menu peuple*. Hence, it is imperative to include it in our consideration of how representational media became a tool of affective conditioning during the Revolution.

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[81] Goldstein, p. 74.

Shelley Inc.: The Romantic-Victorian Making of Shelley's Corpus

ERIC TYLER POWELL

ABSTRACT: This essay reconsiders the standard account of Percy Bysshe Shelley's reception in the nineteenth century by returning to the early critical writing on Shelley's corpus—both his textual and physical bodies—in the Romantic-Victorian period from 1824 to 1840. Rather than a disembodying and etherealising of Shelley, as the standard account has it, what the early critical debate over Shelley's corpus reveals is the construction and diagnosis of a very unique body, which I call hypersomatic—a body at the mercy of the senses and emotions. The debate was rooted in associationist psychology, the most advanced mind science of the period, and part of a paradigm shift that occurred in the early nineteenth century. The effect of this critical construction of Shelley's physical body on his textual body was to sever his lyrics from his main corpus: in effect, a depoliticisation of his oeuvre.

KEYWORDS: Percy Bysshe Shelley; Romantic-Victorians; Associationism; Lyricisation; Emotion; Body

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THE STANDARD ACCOUNT of Shelley's fate in the Victorian period could be said to have Matthew Arnold's famous characterisation of Shelley as a 'beautiful *and ineffectual* angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain' as its terminus.[1] It was a process, in the words of Neil Fraistat, of 'etherealizing and disembodying' Shelley that began in the years after his death.[2] Frederick Pottle, in his classic essay 'The Case of Shelley', adeptly summarises the poet's transformation over the course of the nineteenth

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[1] Matthew Arnold, 'Shelley', in *Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by A. Dwight Culler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), p. 380, emphasis in the original. For insightful commentary on this line see Clement Dunbar, *Bibliography of Shelley Studies* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), p. xli.

[2] Neil Fraistat, 'Illegitimate Shelley: Radical Piracy and the Textual Edition as Cultural Performance', *PMLA*, 109.3 (1994), 409-423 (p. 410). Cf. the introduction to Karsten Klejs Engelberg, *The Making of the Shelley Myth: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism of Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1822–60* (Meckler: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1988), pp. ix–xxii.

century from 'a monster of immorality and impiety' to 'an angel, a pure unearthly spirit', which ends in a 'remarkable paradox': despite a persistent dissatisfaction with the content of Shelley's poetry, 'it is conceded as a matter of course everywhere in England and America [...] that he is one of the greatest English poets'.[3] However, close attention to the critical debate about Shelley in the period of the 'Romantic Victorians' from 1824 to 1840—an often-neglected but important, liminal period that would shape the reception of the Romantics for the rest of the century—reveals that the story is more complicated than the standard account lets on.[4]

In attending closely to the early critical debate about Shelley, and the discourses that were brought to bear, it becomes clear that, rather than a 'disembodying' of Shelley, what one finds is the construction of a very unique body, what John Stuart Mill calls the 'poetic temperament'.[5] Far from being made 'ethereal' or 'spiritual', Shelley is seen by his early critics as hypersomatic, almost diseased: a body that is at the mercy of the senses, much like the Aeolian harp is at the mercy of the winds, and produces poetry almost mechanically. This diagnosis of Shelley's corpus—blurring his physical and textual bodies—was, in the case of the Cambridge Apostles and Mill, rooted in associationist psychology, the most advanced mind science of the period, and part of a paradigm shift that occurred in the early nineteenth century.[6] The effect of this critical construction of Shelley's physical body on his textual body was to sever his lyrics from his main corpus in order to preserve them as the only part that was culturally valuable, to save them from a diseased and dangerous body of thought: in effect, I argue, it was a depoliticisation of his oeuvre.

This process—the cultural incorporation of Shelley in the Victorian period—must be considered from the standpoint of class struggle in the years leading up to the Reform Bill of 1832. Shelley's work and thought were vital to the development of early socialism in England; by the late 1820s and early 1830s, the chief antagonist of socialist

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[3] Frederick Pottle, 'The Case of Shelley', in *Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. by M. H. Abrams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 290.

[4] See Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824–1840* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

[5] J. S. Mill, 'Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties', in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. by John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger, 33 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), I, p. 358. Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'TP'.

[6] See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

thought was utilitarian liberalism, and the most important figure in this tradition in nineteenth-century England was John Stuart Mill. Mill's own incorporation of poetry into utilitarian thought, central to his transformation of Benthamism, was a result of his confrontation with Shelleyan radicalism, mediated through the Cambridge Apostles. The momentous 'reorientation of criticism' in this period, famously delineated by M. H. Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, culminating in Mill's two essays of 1833, 'What Is Poetry?' and 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', is the result of a critical impasse that centred on Wordsworth and Shelley.[7] Mill's solution to the problem was rooted in Wordsworth's understanding of poetry as the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', coupled with contemporary associationist psychology, of which his father, James Mill, was the leading contemporary proponent.[8]

Associationism developed out of the British empiricist tradition, particularly Locke and Hume, but found full expression in David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749), which developed a materialist psychology based on the association of mental states through their similarity and repetition in experience. The critical debate between the utilitarians and the Apostles over the Romantic poets was largely carried out in this language of associationism, through which poetry was tied back to the body and the nervous system. Drawing on this new mind science in his essays on poetry, Mill argues that Shelley was a poet of nature, while Wordsworth was a poet of culture. This argument, paired with Mill's theory of lyric as 'overheard' eloquence, would have important and lasting effects both for the theory and practice of poetry in the Victorian period and beyond.

Mill's essays, however, as much as they may seem to be products of pure analytical thought, did not arise in a vacuum. They were part of a critical debate over Shelley's poetry, and, centrally, its cultural value, that raged in that strange, liminal period from the publication of Shelley's *Posthumous Poems* in 1824—the year of

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[7] M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 23. Mill first encountered and began to think seriously about the two poets through his association with the Cambridge Apostles, especially his personal relationships with F. D. Maurice and John Sterling. See John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1870), esp. ch. 5, pp. 132–183.

[8] See W. H. Burston, *James Mill on Philosophy and Education* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) and Howard C. Warren, *A History of the Association Psychology from Hartley to Lewes* (Baltimore, MD: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921).

Byron's death and, some would say, the death of British Romanticism—until the Reform Bill in 1832, often seen now as the beginning of the Victorian period.[9] These were formative years for the major Victorian poets and critics: Mill had his mental crisis and found Wordsworth (as others find Jesus) in 1826, the same year that a young Robert Browning got his hands on William Benbow's piracy of Shelley's works, the profound effects of which are well-known; reading Shelley in these years had a similarly transformative effect on the young Cambridge Apostles, prominently Arthur Henry Hallam and Alfred Tennyson, but also F. D. Maurice and John Sterling.[10] A critical debate arose that pitted the Shelleyan Apostles against the utilitarians over the relative value of the work of the Romantics, in particular Wordsworth and Shelley, a debate that was deeply concerned with Shelley's body.[11] But the story begins with what could be called Mary Shelley's public relations campaign in the aftermath of Shelley's death, in particular the *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, published in 1824.

Ithuriel's Spear

> And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
> – 2 Corinthians 11:14

History has not always looked kindly on Mary Shelley's labours as an editor, biographer, and publicist of Shelley in the years after his death.[12] While it is certainly true that Mary Shelley acted as a kind of public relations agent for Shelley, selling a particular image of him, this activity must be considered from the perspective of different audiences, of various forms of censorship, and of Victorian class politics. Mary Shelley's most

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[9] See Joseph Bristow, 'Reforming Victorian Poetry: Poetics After 1832', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Bristow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1, where he claims: 'There are good reasons to justify why 1832, rather than 1837, should open the Victorian age'.

[10] See Mill, *Autobiography*; Pottle, *Shelley and Browning: A Myth and Some Facts* (Chicago: The Pembroke Press, 1923); Richard Cronin, 'Shelley, Tennyson, and the Apostles, 1828–1832', *Keats-Shelley Review*, 5 (1990), 14–40.

[11] See Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830–1870* (London: The Athlone Press, 1972).

[12] For a good recent summary, see the late Michael O'Neill, '"Trying to make it as good as I can": Mary Shelley's Editing of P. B. Shelley's Poetry and Prose', in *Mary Shelley in Her Times*, ed. by Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 185–197.

important work as an editor, as she clearly recognised, was to bring Shelley's body of work before the public—to keep him, and his thoughts alive, to 'scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth, / ashes and sparks' his 'words among mankind'.[13]

Mary Shelley's edition of *The Posthumous Poems* brought most of Shelley's previously unpublished poetry—in particular, his lyric poems—for the first time to the public. That she was concerned with recuperating Shelley's public image is clear from a letter to Hunt prior to the publication of the volume, where she suggests producing 'a specimen of how he could write without shocking any one'.[14] It was Shelley's overtly political verse that was apparently 'too shocking' to be included, in particular what Shelley had planned as 'a little volume of *popular songs* wholly political, & destined to awaken & direct the imagination of the reformers', a series of poems, including 'The Mask of Anarchy', written in the wake of the Peterloo Massacre.[15] The historical importance of the volume is summed up well by Charles Taylor: '*Posthumous Poems* [...] is foremost among the first editions of Shelley's verse' because it contained 'almost all of the lyrics which contributed so much to the steady growth of Shelley's reputation in the nineteenth century'.[16] By the end of the nineteenth century, Shelley would come to be regarded as England's greatest lyric poet.[17] It is this lyricised Shelley that was inherited by the modernists, and still informs critical debates about Shelley's work and the lyric genre.[18]

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[13] This is, of course, from Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' (1820).

[14] *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. by Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), I, pp. 396–397.

[15] *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, p. 191, emphasis in the original.

[16] Charles H. Taylor, Jr., *The Early Collected Editions of Shelley's Poems: A Study in the History and Transmission of the Printed Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 8.

[17] See Karen Weisman, 'The Lyricist', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shelley*, ed. by Timothy Morton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 45–66; Michael O'Neill, '"And All Things Seem Only One": The Shelleyan Lyric', *Essays and Studies*, 45 (1992), 115–131; David Duff, 'Lyric Development: Esdaile Notebook to Hymns of 1816', in *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Michael O'Neill and Anthony Howe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 240–255. The classic study of Shelley's lyrics is Judith Chernaik, *The Lyrics of Shelley* (Cleveland: Cast Western University Press, 1972).

[18] On lyricisation, see Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005) and *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

Mary Shelley's preface to *Posthumous Poems* strikes several of the keynotes of the Shelley Myth: otherworldliness, idealism and detachment from the practical. She writes:

> Hereafter men will lament that his transcendant [sic] powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable [...] He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him: to see him was to love him; and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale, which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.[19]

As revealed in her letters, Mary Shelley's preface was influenced by an unpublished review of the book by Leigh Hunt, which shows a shared set of tropes and themes, that seem to evince a concerted public relations strategy. The most famous part of Hunt's account of Shelley, later published in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries* (1828), reveals the shared rhetoric:

> He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb, and found itself in another Planet [...] When we heard of his death, it seemed as if this spirit, not sufficiently constituted like the rest of the world to obtain their sympathy, yet gifted with a double portion of love for all living things, had been found dead on a solitary shore of the earth, its wings stiffened, its warm heart cold; the relics of a misunderstood nature, slain by the ungenial elements.[20]

This is the classic statement of what Neil Fraistat has called a process of 'etherealizing and disembodying' Shelley.[21] But Fraistat's account—and the critical account of the Shelley Myth more generally—requires qualification. What one finds in the early accounts is no simple disembodying of Shelley, but rather the complicated construction

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[19] *The Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mary Shelley (London: John and Henry L. Hunt, 1824), pp. iii-iv. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *PP*.

[20] Leigh Hunt, 'Review of the Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley', unpaginated. The Brewer-Leigh Hunt Collection at the State University of Iowa, fMs H94po. *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, I, p. 409. Hunt refused Mary Shelley's invitation to write the preface for *Posthumous Poems*.

[21] Fraistat, 'Illegitimate Shelley', p. 410.

of a particular kind of body—both textual and, post mortem, physiological. This is true not just of Hunt and Shelley's early biographers, but also of Shelley's keenest early critics, such as William Hazlitt, Maurice, Hallam, and Mill.

Mary Shelley's preface and Hunt's review share what might be called a celestialising of Shelley, a tendency to portray him as unearthly, which also has a long life in the Victorian period, and had already prepared the ground for Arnold's ineffectual angel. Hunt makes reference, like Mary Shelley, to Milton: 'When sitting upright and looking at you attentively, his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited for a portrait of [...] one of the angels whom Milton describes as holding a reed "tipt with fire"'.[22] Mary Shelley uses the same Miltonic reference, but develops the theme more fully to counter the distorted public perception of the poet. Previously, in a public spat with Byron, Robert Southey, with an undeniable talent for branding, had called Byron, Shelley, and their circle 'the Satanic school'.[23]

It was this Satanic perception of Shelley that Hunt and Mary Shelley were aiming to dispel by wielding Ithuriel's spear. There are curious transformations and transferences involved in Mary Shelley's allusion in particular. For the passage from *Paradise Lost*—one of the most memorable in the poem—in which Satan sits 'squat like a toad' at the ear of Eve using his 'devlish art' to corrupt her, could be the exact passage that Southey had in mind when forging his brand.[24] Whereas in Milton, Satan is revealed in his true form by the touch of Ithuriel's spear, in Mary Shelley's turning of the image, the Satanic Shelley transforms himself, by his mere bodily presence, into an angel of light in the mind of the perceiver. And it is Shelley's calumniators who are turned into toads—toadies to the Tories—whispering 'in the ear of the ignorant world'. It is a brilliant twist on the Miltonic theme used by Southey.

Of course, Shelley was no longer around to transform public perception himself. This evokes one of the persistent critical problems in dealing with Shelley's corpus, carrying a constituent ambiguity between the poet's physical body and his body of work, identified perhaps most stringently by Paul de Man. 'The final test of reading', de Man writes in 'Shelley Disfigured', 'in *The Triumph of Life*, depends on how one reads

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[22] Hunt, 'Review of the Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley'.

[23] Robert Southey, *A Vision of Judgment* (London: Longman, et. al., 1821), pp. xx–xxi.

[24] John Milton, *Paradise Lost, The Poetical Works of John Milton* (London: George Routledge and Co., 1857), Book IV, ll. 799–814.

the textuality of this event, how one disposes of Shelley's body'.[25] He goes on to claim that: 'The apparent ease with which readers of *The Triumph of Life* have been able to dispose of this challenge demonstrates the inadequacy of our understanding of Shelley and, beyond him, of romanticism in general'.[26] For de Man, the interruption in the text of *The Triumph of Life*, which inescapably indexes Shelley's death, leaving the poem fragmentary, opens new horizons for literary criticism, horizons that he thinks should transform our understanding of Shelley and of Romanticism. With de Man the problem of Shelley's body becomes explicit; this, however, is just one of the most recent moments in a history of literary critical attempts to dispose of, or rather compose, Frankenstein-style, Shelley's body.

Hazlitt's Diagnosis

Perhaps the most prominent public response to the *Posthumous Poems* was a long review essay by William Hazlitt. But it is vital to return to Hazlitt's first piece on Shelley from 1820 to start with, because it introduces the major stress points of all subsequent Victorian criticism of Shelley. Hazlitt's first extended critique of Shelley is in the essay 'On Paradox and Common-place', which was clearly occasioned by the publication of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* in 1820.[27] The core of Hazlitt's argument is expressed at the very outset: 'I do not indeed swear by an opinion, because it is old: but neither do I fall in love with every extravagance at first sight, because it is new' ('PC', p. 349). Hazlitt finds these two tendencies, which he labels common-place and paradox respectively, pernicious because both represent an affront to sober reason, which ought to be the sole arbiter of ideas, whether old and venerated or brand new. He finds his example of the latter tendency—novelty for novelty's sake we might call it—in Shelley. Hazlitt proceeds by way of a distinction between originality and singularity: 'Originality implies independence of opinion […] whereas singularity is only the affectation of saying something to contradict other people, without having any real opinion of one's own upon the matter' ('PC', p. 350). The distinction is an important one, because the

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[25] Paul de Man, 'Shelley Disfigured', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 121.

[26] De Man, 'Shelley Disfigured', p. 121.

[27] William Hazlitt, *Table-Talk; or, Original Essays* (London: John Warren, 1821). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'PC'.

consistent crux of Hazlitt's criticism of Shelley's poetry was that he lacked originality. In his 1829 essay 'Poetry', for example, he argues: 'Mr. Shelley, who felt the want of originality without the power to supply it, distorted every thing from what it was, and his pen produced only abortions'.[28] Attention to Hazlitt's critique of Shelley is valuable here, because it would set the terms of the Shelley debate for nineteenth-century criticism. More importantly, for the purposes of this essay, Hazlitt's essay reveals that criticism of Shelley's poetry is constituted ab initio by notions of Shelley's body.

Hazlitt is from the start winding up for his attack on Shelley, the raison d'être of the essay. After a virtuosic prelude exhaustively delineating the characteristics of his two types, Hazlitt arrives at his target:

> The author of the Prometheus Unbound [...] has a fire in his eye, a fever in his blood, a maggot in his brain, a hectic flutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic. He is sanguine-complexioned, and shrill-voiced. As is often observable in the case of religious enthusiasts, there is a slenderness of constitutional *stamina*, which renders the flesh no match for the spirit. His bending, flexible form appears to take no strong hold of things, does not grapple with the world about him, but slides from it like a river... ('PC', p. 355)

The nucleus of the Shelley Myth is here—Shelley's unearthliness—but it is attached to a diseased body, perhaps even symptomatic of madness.[29] Many of the core features of accounts of Shelley's physical appearance are also present: the sanguine complexion, the shrill voice, the bent-over body, the gleam in the eye.[30] It is unclear, however, whether this diagnosis of a diseased body is meant to be taken as a literal description or as a kind of allegory for the body of Shelley's text. This blurring of textual and physical bodies is central to nineteenth-century criticism of Shelley's poetry, and is an early

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[28] *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: J. M. Dent and Sons LTD, 1934), XX, p. 211.

[29] As James Whitehead shows, 'Shelley was subjected to the invective of disease or mental disorder from his first appearance in print'. *Madness and the Romantic Poet: A Critical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 118. See also Ross Woodman, *Sanity, Madness, Transformation: The Psyche in Romanticism* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2005), esp. chs. 5 and 6.

[30] See, for example, Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries; with Recollections of the Author's Life, and of His Visit to Italy* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), I, pp. 294–296.

example of what Paul de Man identified as the problem of 'how one disposes of Shelley's body'.[31]

Hazlitt goes on to criticise Shelley for being untethered from reality, a consistent feature of virtually all Shelley criticism in the nineteenth century, positive or negative: 'He is clogged by no dull system of realities, no earth-bound feelings, no rooted prejudices, by nothing that belongs to the mighty trunk and hard husk of nature and habit' ('PC', pp. 355–356). This critique would later be at the core of the modernist onslaught against Shelley: Leavis and T. S. Eliot led the charge and the New Critics then piled on, indicting Shelley for a 'weak grasp upon the actual'.[32] Detachment from reality, then—a kind of otherworldliness or unearthliness—is at the centre of accounts both of Shelley himself, from his family and closest friends, and of the most strenuous critical objections to his poetry.[33]

Hazlitt's criticism also marks the beginning point of the lyricisation of Shelley, that is, the elevation of Shelley's short lyrics over his major works—the view that his 'genius' was 'essentially lyrical'. According to Virginia Jackson, the 'historical process of lyricization', is defined by 'the gradual collapse of various verse genres that had specific social functions into an idea of poetry as a genre'.[34] The case of Shelley is central to this development in the nineteenth century, and Hazlitt's essay introduces the argument, claiming that 'in his smaller pieces, where he has attempted little he has done most'.[35] Hazlitt offers a formula, which we might call the formula of Shelleyan lyricisation: 'The success of his writings is therefore in general in the inverse ratio of the extent of his undertakings' ('SPP', p. 266). This judgment, I argue, would take on the force of a critical

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[31] De Man, 'Shelley Disfigured', p. 121.

[32] F. R. Leavis, 'Shelley', in *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. by M. H. Abrams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 268–269; see T.S. Eliot, 'Shelley and Keats', *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England*, in *The Complete Prose of T.S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, ed. by Jason Harding and Ronald Schuchard, vol. 4 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), pp. 641–653.

[33] See Bysshe Inigo Coffey, *Shelley's Broken World: Fractured Materiality and Intermitted Song* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021), esp. the Introduction for a rereading and reassessment of this famous statement from Leavis.

[34] Virignia Jackson, 'Please Don't Call It History', *nonsite.org*, September 22, 2011 <http://nonsite.org/the-tank/being-numerous> [accessed 09/10/2023].

[35] William Hazlitt, 'Shelley's Posthumous Poems', *Complete Works*, XVI, p. 266. Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'SPP'.

axiom, and would allow for the dismissal of the main body of Shelley's work, a lyric reading of his corpus that detached his 'lyrical' poems from his body of thought and verse as a whole, and the concomitant political, philosophical, and poetic difficulties contained therein. Here I can offer a formula of my own: the construction and diagnosis of Shelley's physical body authorized the lyricisation of his body of poetry.

The politics of Hazlitt's critique are spelled out further in his 1824 review of *The Posthumous Poems*. 'The worst of it however was', Hazlitt argues, that Shelley 'gave great encouragement to those who believe in all received absurdities, and are wedded to all existing abuses: his extravagance seeming to sanction their grossness and selfishness, as theirs were a full justification of his folly and eccentricity' ('SPP', pp. 497–498). This is a standard liberal critique of the revolutionary left, familiar, for example, from the work of Isaiah Berlin. The early critical reception of Shelley's work was from the beginning a matter of politics, and even where—in the later criticism of the Apostles and Mill, for example—politics seem to be bracketed in favour of aesthetics, psychology or pure philosophical analysis, the construction of Shelley's physical and textual bodies was always already political.

Shelley's Apostles

The early Cambridge Apostles—F. D. Maurice, John Sterling, Alfred Tennyson, Arthur Hallam, Monckton Milnes, and others—were apostles of Shelley and Wordsworth.[36] Soon after Hallam arrived at Cambridge in 1828, he wrote a letter to his friend William Gladstone claiming that 'at the present day *Shelley* is the idol before which we are to be short by the knees'.[37] He wasn't yet a convert, but a few months later he was elected as a member of the Apostles, and a friend described him as 'a furious Shelleyist'.[38] Hallam made a pilgrimage to Italy to find a copy of *Adonais*, which the Apostles reprinted—the first publication in England of the poem. Peter Allen notes that Hallam 'gave out copies to friends and whatever converts he could make to the new cause'.[39]

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[36] See Peter Allen, *The Cambridge Apostles: The Early Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. vii, 1.

[37] *The Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam*, ed. by Jack Kolb (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1981), pp. 244–245.

[38] See Allen, p. 45.

[39] Allen, p. 46.

The intellectual lodestar of the Apostles was F. D. Maurice, who wrote about Shelley in his influential 'Sketches of Contemporary Authors' for the *Athenaeum*.[40] Maurice's account shares with Hazlitt's diagnosis a slippage between Shelley's physical and textual bodies, but it also differs in its ultimate assessment of the value of Shelley's corpus.

What for Hazlitt was the central weakness and vice of Shelley's verse—his inability to grapple with the real—is turned by Maurice into the central strength and virtue of his work. To Hazlitt's grounded Aristotelian criticism, Maurice counters a Platonic metaphysical vision in which the 'invisible principles within us or without, of which natural appearances are merely the clothing and the shadow' are 'the reason and truth of things' ('SCA', p. 194). For Hazlitt, Leavis, and other prominent critics of Shelley, his inability to stick to the phenomena, to hold an object steadily in view, is a sign of his mental weakness and effeminate sentimentality. For Maurice, this same feature elevates Shelley as a poet who did not seek to present objects in a pleasing light; rather 'his very perceptions seem to have been modified and exalted by his genius, and even his senses were inspired', allowing for 'such perfect unity of feeling' in his poetry ('SCA', p. 194). Shelley's mind, Maurice writes, 'was more fundamentally and uniformly poetical, than that of any other poet, at least in our day', claiming, importantly, that 'he thought and felt poetically' ('SCA', p. 193). As with Hazlitt, then, there is a blurring of physical and textual bodies, but in the service of starkly opposed critical conclusions. What differs between Hazlitt and Maurice is the critical values that are brought to bear upon the work in order to assess it. Hazlitt and Maurice are united in claiming that Shelley had a peculiarly poetic body.

In 'On Paradox and Common-place', Hazlitt had altered—by adopting male pronouns—some famous lines of John Donne's to apply them to Shelley:

> She, of whose soul, if we may say, 'twas gold,
>
> Her body was th'electrum, and did hold
>
> Many degrees of that; we understood
>
> Her by her sight; her pure, and eloquent blood
>
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,

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[40] F. D. Maurice, 'Sketches of Contemporary Authors: No. VIII—Percy Bysshe Shelley', *The Athenaeum*, 7th March 1828, 193–194. Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'SCA'.

That one might almost say, her body thought...[41]

In his first critique of Shelley, Hazlitt had attacked the 'fever in his blood' and his 'sanguine-complexion' as features that revealed him to be a 'philosophic fanatic'. In his kinder but sly later treatment, after Shelley's death, this feature of Shelley's physiognomy is made a sign of his feminised, lyricised body. It could be considered Hazlitt's response to Mary Shelley's preface to the *Posthumous Poems*. Donne's poem, written after the death of Dame Elizabeth Drury, contains a reading of the body that, like Mary Shelley's, says all that needs to be said: 'we understood / Her by her sight'. Compare Maurice's impassioned description of Shelley's 'muse' as 'a fair and prophetic priestess, in whom the wild gestures, the fire-flushed cheek, and the electric quiverings of every vein and nerve, accompany the rapture of no feeble song, and the oracles of no mean inspiration' ('SCA', p. 194). And as with Donne's Dame, Shelley, in Maurice's telling, 'thought and felt poetically': 'His whole being seems to have been absorbed and transfigured into poetry' ('SCA', pp. 193–194). Let us pause for a moment here— galvanised by Donne's 'electrum', Hazlitt's 'electrical experiments in morals and philosophy' and Maurice's 'electric quiverings of every vein and nerve'—to consider the early nineteenth century understanding of the nervous system, for diagnosing the peculiarly poetic structure of Shelley's nervous system was a central element in the critical incorporation of the poet.

It might seem that an electrical theory of the nervous system had been worked out by this point in the nineteenth century, but this was not the case. James Mill, in his 1825 *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, a development of David Hartley's associationist psychology, is frank about the contemporary state of ignorance with regard to the operation of the nervous system: 'As the nerves in every part of the body are covered', he writes, 'we know not how any external particles can reach them. We know not whether such particles operate upon the nerves, by their own, or by any other influence; the galvanic, for example, or electrical, influence'.[42] Others in the early nineteenth century still held to the old-fashioned notion that the nerves were little tubes through which the 'animal spirits' passed, allowing the communication between the

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[41] John Donne, 'An Anatomy of the World', *Selected Poetry*, ed. by John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 176, ll. 241–246.

[42] James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, ed. by John Stuart Mill, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), I, pp. 10–11.

body and the mind (Descartes's *res extensa* and *res cogitans*).[43] What was understood, however, was that it was the nervous system that was responsible for sensation, even if the exact nature of how this worked was a matter of speculation. It was a transitional moment in the history of science, not just of the nervous system, but also of theories of emotion.

Hartley's associationist psychological theory—so influential for the Romantics, including Wordsworth and Shelley himself—is now seen by historians of science as 'the earliest example of a fully worked-out neurophysiology'.[44] Thomas Dixon has also shown how associationist mind science was central in the transition from the terminology of the passions to that of the emotions which occurred in the course of the nineteenth century. 'It was the associationist mental scientists', Dixon writes, 'who provided the most influential early uses of the term "emotions"'.[45] It was, in other words, a kind of paradigm shift in mind science. In the empiricist-materialist tradition, Hartley accounts for all sensation, feeling, thought, and ideas through a theory which links Locke and Hume with Newtonian science. By deducing the basic laws of association between mental phenomena, all the mind's operations can be broken down into their basic elements and understood scientifically through cause and effect. The fundamental tenets of associationist psychology subtend and animate the critical debate under consideration here, and inform the notion of Shelley's 'poetic temperament'. Hallam's intervention into the debate about the relative merits and powers of Shelley and Wordsworth is likewise rooted in the new psychology, and is striking for its use of the term 'emotion' alongside more traditional references to poetic 'feeling'.

Hallam's review essay 'On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson' (1831) offers a re-evaluation of Shelley and

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[43] See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. by Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) and *Passions of the Soul*, trans. by Stephen H. Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989).

[44] C. U. M. Smith, 'David Hartley's Newtonian Neuropsychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 23 (April 1987), 123-126 (p. 124).

[45] Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 101. Dixon points out 'that the emotions did not exist until just under two hundred years ago', p. 1.

Wordsworth, and presents Tennyson's apolitical lyrics as a way forward for poetry.[46] He begins by praising *Lyrical Ballads* for 'awakening the minds of men, and giving a fresh impulse to art', but quickly goes on to identify what he thinks is the primary flaw of Wordsworth's work: 'Whenever the mind of the artist suffers itself to be occupied, during its periods of creation, by any other predominant motive than the desire of beauty, the result is false in art' ('CMP', p. 184). He then sets up a dichotomy between poets of 'reflection', such as Wordsworth, and poets of 'sensation', with Shelley and Keats as his two exemplars. 'Susceptible of the slightest impulse from external nature', Hallam writes,

> their fine organs trembled into emotion at colors, and sounds, and movements, unperceived or unregarded by duller temperaments. Rich and clear were their perceptions of visible forms; full and deep their feelings of music. So vivid was the delight attending the simple exertions of eye and ear, that it became mingled more and more with their trains of active thought, and tended to absorb their whole being into the energy of sense. ('CMP', p. 186)

Hallam is clearly indebted to Maurice here, especially his view that Shelley's 'whole being seems to have been absorbed and transfigured into poetry'. But Hallam brings to his theory the strong influence of contemporary mind science, in particular the psychological associationism of Hartley and the new category of the emotions, to argue for the supremacy of poets of sensation. Hallam's account, in this respect, differs substantially from others: the peculiar poetic temperament of the poets of sensation is a strength rather than a weakness. But again, it is worth stressing here that despite differences in evaluation and conclusions there is critical consensus on a particular diagnosis of Shelley's body as hypersomatic: Shelley's 'whole body' was taken over by his senses and emotions to produce poetry, 'trembling' under the strain.

Hallam turns Wordsworth's own critical theory against him to argue for the supremacy of the poetry of sensation at a historical moment, according to Hallam, in which poetry is alienated from society, and poetic powers are disunited (anticipating Eliot's dissociation of sensibility). The ultimate source of poetic truth in nature requires

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[46] Arthur Henry Hallam, 'On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson', *The Writings of Arthur Henry Hallam*, ed. by T. H. Vail Motter (New York: Modern Language Association, 1943). Hereafter cited parenthetically as 'CMP'.

poets whose bodies are most susceptible to the influence of the senses and who follow most closely the mechanical train of associations arising from them without the interference of the intellect in introducing falsehood. Mill would likewise base his critical intervention in the debate over the relative value of the poetry of the Romantics, Shelley and Wordsworth in particular, in cutting-edge associationist philosophy of mind—and, like Hallam, he deploys the new category of emotions—but the conclusions point to Shelley's deficiencies despite rather than because of his poetic temperament.

J. S. Mill and the Politics of the Poetic Temperament

As with the Apostles, in his 'Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties' (1860), Mill constructs a theory of Shelley's body—a body that was organised by nature into what might be called a poetry machine. According to Mill, reasoning machines (such as Bentham and his father intended him to become) could only be made by culture, whereas the 'poetic temperament' is a natural phenomenon. Like Hallam before him, Mill distinguishes between two different kinds of poetry exemplified by Shelley and Wordsworth: Shelley is the poet of nature, and Wordsworth the poet of culture. The distinction, as mentioned, is rooted in the associationist psychology that Mill was raised into by his father. He begins by saying that the received wisdom in the phrase *poeta nascitur* must be questioned by modern psychological principles, but that it will be found, as received wisdom often is, 'to contain some truth' ('TP', p. 354). While poets require effort and culture to realise poetic excellence, Mill nonetheless claims that 'there are poetic *natures*. There is a mental and physical constitution or temperament, peculiarly fitted for poetry' ('TP', p. 355). Mill's theory of poetry is grounded in the assumption of a Wordsworthian axiom: 'What is poetry', Mill asks, 'but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?' ('TP', p. 356).

The distinction between poets of nature and poets of culture is rooted in a kind of competition in the mind between thought and emotion for a central place in the chain of mental association. For the natural poet, emotion is always the central and guiding force, as a result of 'intense sensibility': 'The poet of culture sees his object in prose, and describes it in poetry; the poet of nature actually sees it in poetry' ('TP', p. 356). For the poet of culture, by contrast, thought is dominant in the process of association: 'In the one, feeling waits upon thought; in the other, thought upon feeling'. Mill then presents Wordsworth and Shelley, 'the two English authors of our own day

who have produced the greatest quantity of true and enduring poetry', as illustrative examples of his two kinds of poet ('TP', p. 357). In Wordsworth, thought is always the guiding force of the poem, and insofar as he is a poet, he had to achieve that status through sustained work and study, because he wasn't endowed with the 'poetic temperament' ('TP', p. 358). 'Shelley', however, according to Mill, 'is the very reverse of all this': 'For him, voluntary mental discipline had done little: the vividness of his emotions and of his sensations had done all'. This lack of mental discipline has generic implications, because a long poem requires 'consecutiveness of thought', which Shelley had not 'acquired' ('TP', p. 359). Ideas and images haphazardly appear and disappear in his work, entailing that 'his more ambitious compositions too often resemble the scattered fragments of a mirror; colours brilliant as life, single images without end, but no picture' ('TP', pp. 359–360). Shelley, not in control of sensation and emotion, had to rely upon the emotion itself for the unity required of successful poems. The implication here is clear: Shelley, untrained and unable to maintain a consistent train of thought necessary for long works, can only succeed with short, 'lyric' poems. This conclusion would have a long afterlife. But it is worth reflecting here on the remarkable reversal that has occurred in the critical development that this article has been tracing, and in a period of less than ten years.

For Hazlitt, Shelley's longer works fail because 'he was crushed beneath the weight of thought which he aspired to bear, and was withered in the lightning-glare of a ruthless philosophy' ('SPP', p. 266). There is too much thought in Shelley's main corpus, and he was too apt to get mired in metaphysics. Hence, his lyric poems are his best work. For Mill, on the contrary, Shelley's longer poems suffered from a lack of thought to sustain the work, a lack of philosophical culture, a paucity of sound metaphysics. Maurice and Hallam are intermediate between these two extremes; Maurice had argued that Shelley both 'thought and felt poetically' and, conspicuously among the criticism of these years, did not devalue Shelley's longer works aside from *Queen Mab* (1813). Neither does Hallam explicitly reject Shelley's longer works, though an implication of his argument is that Shelley's work is best when it is not caught up in politics and metaphysics. Constant in all of these critical accounts, however, is the notion of Shelley's poetic temperament, a hypersomatic body, which cannot be controlled by the mind. Like his own favoured image of the lyre, passively producing the music of the wind, Shelley is said to be at the mercy of his senses, producing poetry almost

automatically from the vividness of his perceptions and emotions. To stress the point: it is not a disembodiment and etherealising of Shelley that occurs in these crucial years, but in fact the construction of a very peculiar kind of body, a myth of Shelley as a kind of natural poetry machine.

Mill's 'Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties' would become a cornerstone of Abrams's inversion of the traditional hierarchy of poetic genres, which makes lyric poetry 'more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other: it is the poetry most natural to a really poetic temperament, and least capable of being successfully imitated by one not so endowed by nature'.[47] The 'genius' of the author of the *Lyrical Ballads* is, for Mill, 'essentially unlyrical' ('TP', p. 359). Shelley, the embodiment of the poetic temperament, is the lyric poet par excellence:

> Thus it is in many of his smaller, and especially his lyrical poems. They are obviously written to exhale, perhaps to relieve, a state of feeling, or of conception of feeling, almost oppressive from its vividness […] for the poetic temperament is usually, perhaps always, accompanied by exquisite senses. The exciting cause may be either an object or an idea. But whatever of sensation enters into the feeling, must not be local, or consciously organic; it is a condition of the whole frame, not of a part only […] it pervades the entire nervous system. States of feeling, whether sensuous or spiritual, which thus possess the whole being, are the fountains of that which we have called the poetry of poets; and which is little else than a pouring forth of the thoughts and images that pass across the mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it. ('TP', p. 360)

Here, we have come full circle, and as in Hazlitt, Shelley is almost diseased: his lyrics are meant to 'relieve' him from an 'oppressive' condition of feeling. It is not merely the dominance of emotion in the mind's process of association, then, that characterises the lyrical body, but its influence over 'the entire nervous system'; to come back again to the words of Maurice, that Shelley's 'whole being seems to have been absorbed and transfigured into poetry'. The poetic process here is not one of conscious control or thought, but rather a 'pouring forth' produced involuntarily, even mechanically by the

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[47] M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 23.

body. But how is Mill arriving at this diagnosis of Shelley's body? What is the evidence? Where are the symptoms?

Hazlitt knew Shelley, and was known to have known Shelley, hence his description of Shelley's person, as I have suggested, carries with it a constitutive ambiguity: is it the poetry, or is it Shelley being described? Or is it both? In the cases of Hallam and Mill, however, there is a circularity to the argument: a psychological and physiological theory of the poetry is deduced from the poetry itself and then posed as the explanation for the very poetry from which it was derived. To readers of poetry raised on the intentional and biographical fallacies, it seems strange, indeed, to be faced with the physiological fallacy.[48] Mill's description of Shelley's imagery, for example, is rooted in the 'susceptibility of his nervous system' and the 'fineness of organization' of his body, which produced an 'exuberance of imagery' ('TP', p. 360). Shelley's imagery itself can be the only evidence for this argument. But if the poet of culture can through 'skill and study' achieve the status of true poetry, could not a poet achieve the appearance of natural poetry through the same means? Or, more to the point, couldn't 'exuberance of imagery' be a matter of a style cultivated for particular purposes and effects rather than a matter of the nervous system?[49] Mill, it seems, did not consider these possibilities, in his otherwise rigorous analytical argument, which exposes the political tensions subtending his account. E. P. Thompson's magnum opus *The Making of the English Working Class* concludes with the Reform Bill of 1832 as the triumph of utilitarianism (that is, liberalism and capital) over working-class radicalism.[50] Mill's lyricisation and depoliticisation of Shelley's corpus—a body of work kept in print in the 1830s by working-class publishers and radicals like William Benbow, Richard Carlile, James Watson, Henry Hetherington—can be read as one aspect of this triumph.[51]

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[48] See W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', *The Sewanee Review,* 54.3 (July-September, 1946): 468–488; on the biographical fallacy, see Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

[49] See William Keach, *Shelley's Style* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[50] See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), esp. ch. 16, p. 832.

[51] On Shelley and working-class radicalism, see Paul Foot, *Red Shelley* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980); Michael Scrivener, *Radical Shelley: The Philosophical Anarchism and Utopian Thought of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Paul Thomas Murphy, *Toward a Working-Class Canon: Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals, 1816–1858* (Columbus: Ohio State

Conclusion: Shelley, Inc.

Why so much ado about Shelley's body? My hypothesis is that the construction of Shelley's body was an ideological manoeuvre against the body of thought that most fully presented in these years a leftist challenge to the liberal and utilitarian Reformists. Of course, the vast majority of Shelley's prose remained unpublished until 1840, and some of it—including, vitally, his *Philosophical View of Reform*, in which he most fully articulates his political philosophy, and does so in dialogue with Bentham—until much later.[52] For the eminent Victorians, the groundwork was laid for Shelley the lyric angel, the eternal child who died too young to realise his potential and see the error of his ways—'poor Shelley', as Coleridge condescendingly put it.[53] *Queen Mab* was banished to his juvenilia, *The Revolt of Islam* and his other major works were rarely read or studied, but his lyrics were celebrated and constantly anthologised—their prominence in *The Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics* (1861), of which Tennyson was the presiding influence and spirit, being only the chief example.[54]

The analysis presented in this piece also leads directly into the next major intervention in the Victorian construction of Shelley's corpus in the form of Mary Shelley's edition of *The Poetical Works* first published in 1839 and the *Prose Works* in 1840. Here, as a matter of necessity due to her inability to publish a biography as she had hoped, Mary Shelley interweaves both biographical details and critical commentary with Shelley's poems. Jeremy Davies has analysed how 'Mary's co-creation of the Victorians' Percy Shelley'—'the collaborative production of a Shelleyan corpus suited to early Victorian audiences'—'is especially, and fruitfully, ambiguous', not least because she 'claims that Percy's poetry was fostered in part by his chronic physical debility', his

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University Press, 1994); and M. Siddiq Kalim, *The Social Orpheus: Shelley and the Owenites* (Lahore: A Research Council Publication, 1973).

[52] On Bentham and the *Philosophical View*, see James Chandler, *England in 1819* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. ch. 9.

[53] Quoted in Howard Mills, *Peacock: His Circle and His Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 71. The 'eternal child' is from George Gilfillan, *First Gallery of Literary Portraits* (Edinburgh: James Hogg, 1851), p. 49.

[54] See Charlotte W. Hitchcock, *Tennyson, Palgrave and The Golden Treasury* (Baltimore, MD: The University of Maryland Press, 1972).

creative work was 'a function of physiology'.[55] Part of what I hope to have shown in this piece is that this dual construction, analysis, and diagnosis of Shelley's physical and textual bodies has a long history prior to Mary Shelley's decisive intervention in 1839. The groundwork had been laid for almost twenty years, and Mary Shelley was, of course, aware of this line of critical reception—was, indeed, herself a part of it. I hope, too, that my analysis opens possibilities for reconsideration of Mary Shelley's role as an editor and publicist.

Mill's lyric theory has had a deep and lasting impact, both on poetry and criticism. As already mentioned, Abrams identified Mill's theory as the culmination of a momentous shift from mimetic to expressive aesthetic theories during the Romantic period. He also points out that, to a remarkable degree, 'the innovations of the romantics persist as the commonplaces of modern critics', showing the similarity between T. S. Eliot's notion of the objective correlative and a similar passage in Mill's 1835 review of Tennyson.[56] And, indeed, the entire development of New Criticism can be read as a result, or elaboration, of the debate about the Romantics and the lyric genre, as is done, mutatis mutandis, in the two most influential contemporary accounts of lyric, Jonathan Culler's *Theory of the Lyric* and Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins's *The Lyric Theory Reader*. The role of Shelley in these developments, including the critical construction of his corpus from 1824–40, is pivotal. I hope that this essay has done some spadework to expose the ongoing problem of Shelley, Inc.—the way that the poet's bodies were culturally incorporated after his death. The case is not closed, we have still not disposed of Shelley's body.

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[55] Jeremy Davies, 'The Shelley's and the Art of Suffering,' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34.2 (2011), 267–280 (pp. 267–268).

[56] Abrams, p. 25.

An '"Electric Telegraph" of the Heart': A Community of Feeling in the Victorian Language of Flowers

JEMMA STEWART

ABSTRACT: The publishing craze of the language of flowers anthologies spanned the length of the nineteenth century. As a cultural fad and popular form allied to the gift annual and the gift book, the language of flowers anthologies were well-known and prolific. The floriography of the flower 'vocabularies' became diffused and disseminated throughout the cultural imagination, yet, the anthologies were initially marketed at a female, middle-class, 'genteel' readership, with the broad aim of advancing the romantic endeavours of the reader. In this article, I ask whether there was a community of meaning, authorship and readership of the language of flowers. Was a community of feeling established through the 'gifting' process inherent within this genre? Might the books have been meaningful to a wider range of relationships beyond the proposed remit of romantic entanglement? Looking to case studies of personalised inscriptions, together with the introductory and prefatory contents of the books, I will consider whether the language of flowers had a broader appeal than might be assumed, investigating just how far floral meanings became embedded in notions of feeling. Finally, I will speculate about how we might consider feeling through flowers now, in light of the many perceived foibles and failings of this nineteenth-century genre.

KEYWORDS: Language of Flowers; Floriography; Gift Books; Inscriptions; Readerships

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THE LANGUAGE OF flowers was a publishing craze allied to the keepsake, the gift annual and the gift book. An import from France, Charlotte de Latour's *Le Langage des Fleurs* (1819) was translated into English in 1834, and its adaptation and popularity spanned the length of the Victorian period, before waning in the early twentieth century.[1]

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[1] Anon., *The Language of Flowers* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1834) <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=x6NgAAAAcAAJ&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q&f=false> [accessed 21 February 2023].

Marketed specifically at women, the books were initially promoted as sentimental items for display, signifying social status and performative femininity, alongside their intended use as a means of managing love intrigues. As Beverly Seaton summarises, '[t]he language of flowers is best defined as a list of flower names and their associated meanings, most relating to the conduct of a love affair'.[2] Flowers were attributed human feelings and emotions in the vocabularies of these books, which often included suggested bouquets to communicate through the silent form of flora (Figs. 1 & 2). They were, in many ways, anthologies or florilegiums (a gathering of flowers) composed through intertextuality: botanical, folkloric, artistic and poetic.[3] Editors and compilers frequently cited or stole each other's prose, formats and style, as more and more books flooded the market. As the genre evolved or, as some scholars such as Beverly Seaton and Brent Elliott argue, degenerated, over the course of the century, readerships shifted as well, their appeal moving away from the genteel lady towards the lower middle classes, encompassing teenagers and even younger children.[4] These changes are apparent as cheaper language of flowers books eventually entered the market, which perhaps became increasingly available in tandem with the removal of taxes on paper.[5] Additionally, the artistic inclusions in language of flowers books began to render not only women as flowers, but children as flowers.[6] The language of flowers books likewise branched out into different formats as the century progressed, emerging as

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[2] Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), p. 68.

[3] See entries for 'anthology, n.', *OED* Online, Oxford University Press [accessed 22 February 2023].

[4] Brent Elliott, *Occasional Papers from the RHS Lindley Library, Volume 10: The Victorian Language of Flowers* (London: The Royal Horticultural Society, 2013), p. 48 <https://www.rhs.org.uk/about-us/pdfs/publications/lindley-library-occasional-papers/volume-ten.pdf> [accessed 19 September 2023]. Seaton, p. 30, 84, 150–153.

[5] Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' 1849–1869* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 8–9, 94–95, 168. You could, for example, purchase Robert Tyas's *Sentiment of Flowers* in 1838 for 6s; Silk 7s 6d; Morocco elegant 8s 6d; in 1876 you could buy the *Guide to the Language of Flowers with Coloured Illustrations* for 1s; in 1890 you could buy Nister's *Language of Flowers* for 2s, and in 1897 Maud Dean's *The Language of Flowers* for 6d.

[6] For example, see Kate Greenaway, *Language of Flowers* (London: Routledge, 1884) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160802>; Anon., *The Language of Flowers* (London: Nister, c. 1890) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160095>.

'guidebooks' or 'birthday books', awarded as school prizes later in the century, confirming the trends of altered audiences over time.[7]

This article will raise and debate questions about the language of flowers and feeling, asking what kinds of feeling the genre may have inspired, the level of genuine expression it enabled, and how we, today, might feel about it, given the ways that it foregrounded an entanglement between the botanical and the human. Could (and did) the genre instil meaningful feelings of connection, between people, and between humans and the natural world? After assessing key arguments relating to the value or disposability of the language of flowers, particularly with regards to its 'real use' and as a means of negotiating feeling, the article will turn to case studies that examine inscriptions found within the gift books. Inscriptions, I will argue, provide evidence of alternative forms of feeling with flowers to those that we might expect or imagine, namely, the genre's imbrication in what Elizabeth A. Campbell calls a 'botanical code that not only equated women and flowers, but also linked the two to love, courtship, marriage, sex, and reproduction'.[8] The case studies and appendices reveal that language of flowers books held appeal across classes, genders and professions; they were gifted to memorialise the end of life as much as the flourishing love affair; and they were important in consolidating family relationships and friendships as much as the budding romance. These assertions re-emphasise how widespread a cultural phenomenon this genre was, while opening up new ways to read and review its impact and legacy.

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[7] Changing formats include Anon., *Guide to the Language of Flowers* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1876); Maud Dean, *The Language of Flowers, Dean's Practical Guide Books* (London: Dean, 1897); Flora Klickmann, *The Language of Flowers. A Journal and Record for Birthdays* (London: Ward, Lock, [1899]). For an example of a prize book awarded in 1890, see the inscription in Anon, *Floral Poetry and The Language of Flowers* (London: Ward, 1877) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160012>.

[8] Elizabeth A. Campbell, 'Don't Say it with Nightshades: Sentimental Botany and the Natural History of *Atropa Belladonna*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35 (2007), 607–615 (p. 608).

Fig. 1, 'The Vocabulary', in Anon., *The Artistic Language of Flowers* (London: Routledge, 1890), pp. 3-4. Author's own collection. A previous owner, whether or not this was Beatrice Gibson (see Appendix A2: Mothers and Daughters), has marked on this page 'Acacia, yellow' as 'secret love' and 'Anemone (Zephyr flower)' as 'Sickness. Expectation'. There are further markings throughout this book.
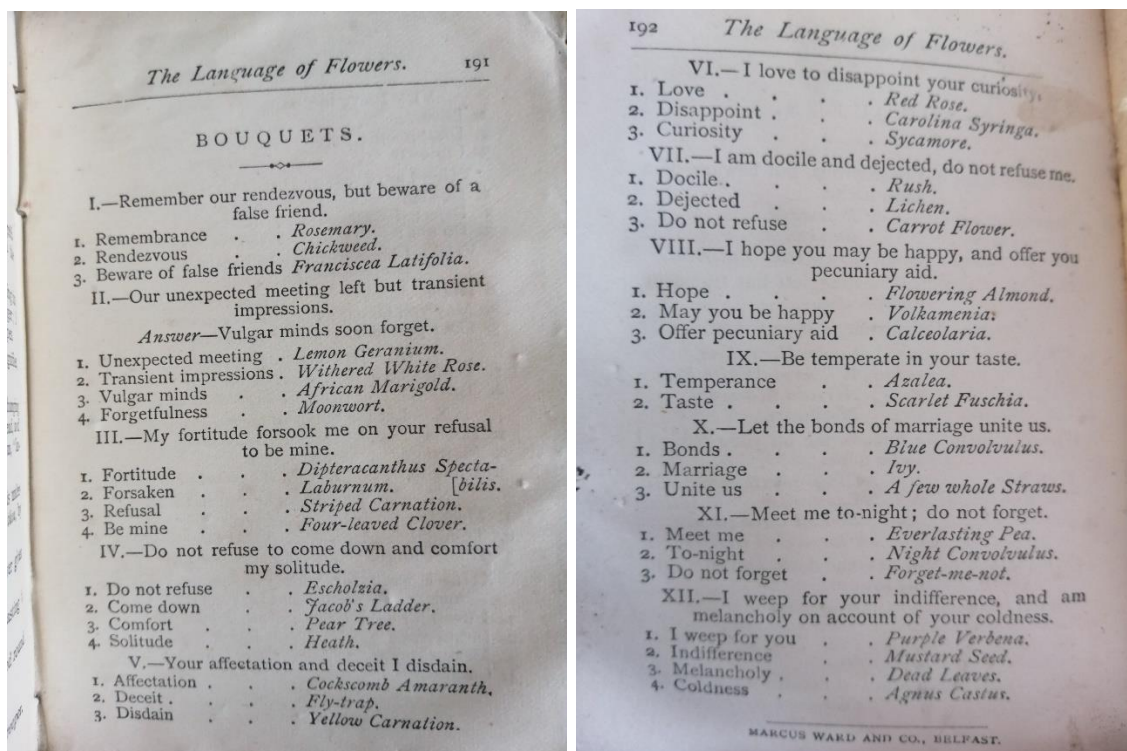

Fig. 2, 'Bouquets', in Anon, *The Language and Poetry of Flowers* (London: Ward, 1883), pp. 191–192. Author's own collection. The idea of actually assembling some of these feels far-fetched.

How was the language of flowers used to convey, or even generate, feeling? This is a genre declared in one publication to be the '"Electric Telegraph" of the heart', a description fusing the natural and the human-made, the technological and the organic.[9] It is easy to follow the logic of scholars like Susan Loy and Leora Siegel when they correlate the Victorian language of flowers and the social media or emojis of today.[10] In social media promotion, in fact, the idea of a 'community' — a network, a means of establishing connection — is constantly foregrounded. Highlighting the construction of communities of feeling, relationships and connections was ingrained in the marketing for the nineteenth-century language of flowers publications. Advertisements for the books suggested, for example, that 'with little difficulty a correspondence or conversation may be kept up simply by the exchange of nosegays'; and, in invoking Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters from Turkey as an inspiration behind floriography, that 'you may send letters of passion, friendship, or even news, without ever inking your fingers'.[11] Editors and compilers frequently appealed to the apparent universality of the floral tongue (while often, and inversely, championing its national characteristics), the ease of communicating feelings through its symbolic rules, and the moral, religious, and sensitive qualities innate in those who love flowers; implicitly, those buying, displaying and reading the books.[12] The genre supposedly offered an easy, enchanting and ethically sound method of managing and communicating feeling. A moral entanglement between women and flowers was also

[9] See 'To the Reader', in Anon., *The Language of Flowers; Containing the name of every flower to which a sentiment has been assigned* (London: Webb, Millington, 1858), pp. iii–xiv (p. xiii).

[10] Leora Siegel, 'Frances Sargent Osgood and the Language of Flowers: A 19th Century Literary Genre of Floriography and Floral Poetry', Biodiversity Heritage Library blog, 19 November 2020 <https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/2020/11/frances-sargent-osgood-language-of-flowers.html> [accessed 6 February 2023]. Susan Loy, 'Spread of Flower Symbolism: From the Victorian Language of Flowers to Modern Flower Emoji', in *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*, ed. by Stanley D. Brunn and Roland Kehrein (Switzerland: Springer, 2020), pp. 4059–4082.

[11] Anon., 'Flowers Have Their Language', *Morning Post*, 12 May 1834, p. 7; Anon., 'The Language of Flowers', *Examiner*, 16 February 1834, p. 112.

[12] Anon., *The Language of Flowers: Including Floral Poetry* (London: Warne, c. 1878), p. 1 <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160023>. Anon., *The Language of Flowers* (1858), pp. iii–iv. Frederick Shoberl, *The Language of Flowers; with Illustrative Poetry, to which are now first added the Calendar of Flowers and the Dial of Flowers. Revised by the author of the "Forget Me Not"*, 3rd ed. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1835), p. 16.

stressed in these books, and inextricably connected to class, eventually being coopted as a means of facilitating cross-class interactions and relationships. As Anna M. Lawrence has argued, the genre was bound to a middle- and upper-class morality that prompted a rise in flower missions, in philanthropic work with flowers and the urban poor, which relied upon female-gendered associations with flowers to imbue these missions with credence.[13]

Despite this link with seemingly kind feeling or good intentions, as Lawrence shows, floral philanthropy absorbed more complex motivations with middle- and upper-class moral imperatives that sought to instruct and regulate — by implication, a less-than selfless move to use communication as a form of control. As an extension of hidden motivations and regulatory concerns, then, the commercial aspect of the language of flowers publications has lent itself to much criticism, especially with regard to the relevance of the genre to genuine expressions of feeling. Sonia Solicari argues that '[b]eautifully illustrated editions of the language of flowers, for example, meant that emotions were often reduced to visual signs that became so established as to leave little room for independent interpretation'.[14] This massification and prescriptive emotional response system is linked by Solicari to the language of flowers books as commodities — perhaps suggesting that in the process of packaging feeling for consumers they lost any specificity and relevance to the individual. These arguments about control and prescription, crucially, undermine the genre's claims to convey sincere expressions of true feeling. In discussions of a more ephemeral yet allied genre, the valentine, Alice Crossley notes that, 'both public and private expressions of sentiment could also serve as a disguise, which highlighted the capacity of sentimentality to camouflage inauthenticity'.[15] The authenticity of feeling is, therefore, further called into question by the materiality of the book.

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[13] Anna M. Lawrence, 'Morals and mignonette; or, the use of flowers in the moral regulation of the working classes in high Victorian London', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 70 (2020), 24–35 (p. 27).

[14] Sonia Solicari, 'Selling Sentiment: The Commodification of Emotion in Victorian Visual Culture', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007), 1-21 (p. 4).

[15] Alice Crossley, 'Paper Love: Valentines in Victorian Culture', in *Paraphernalia! Victorian Objects*, ed. by Helen Kingstone and Kate Lister (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 229–243 (p. 230). See also an explicit use of the language of flowers in valentines in the Museum of London collection: <https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/search/#!/results?terms=language%20of%20flowers> [accessed 21 February 2023].

Beverly Seaton and Sam George perceive the diminutive size of many language of flowers anthologies as typifying the decorative impetus of the 'gift book trade, selling for appearance alone', sized as 'dainty pocketbooks and miniatures designed for the delicate hand of a Victorian lady'.[16] This idea is corroborated by contemporary reviews of the early language of flowers publications, which in fact emphasised the ornamental functions of the attractively bound books as being akin to 'a golden vase containing beauties' that should be on show and 'within the reach of every young lady of our acquaintance' as well as being suitable literature 'for a fair lady's boudoir'.[17] The books were not only beautiful objects in themselves but indicated the 'beauty' of their reader, owner and fellow object: woman. In this respect, as portable items that functioned as an extension of the body, the language of flowers books could be thought of as practical tools or game pieces in the conduct of love intrigues, not solely books containing symbols, but symbols in themselves as 'talismans of gentility and femininity', as Seaton notes.[18] When viewed as part of the gift book trade, the language of flowers anthologies might be perceived as a form of costume: valuable for aesthetics alone, displayed to signal wealth and respectability, to attract the opposite sex and to negotiate the marriage market. If flowers and feelings were commodified to sell the language of flowers books, the books were then used to effectively sell their owners: women. Thus, cynically and cyclically perhaps, the language of flowers merely perpetuated a patriarchal and capitalist exchange of women and nature, which reified gender and class stereotypes.

The commodification of sentiment and feeling is not the only criticism facing the language of flowers genre that might weaken its association with authentic, or even 'good', 'proper' or 'true' feeling. One important criticism concerns plant feeling in line

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[16] Seaton, pp. 93–99. Sam George, 'Conclusion: The Sequel: the Natural System and the language of flowers', in *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing 1760–1830: From Modest Shoot to Forward Plant* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 177.

[17] Anon., 'Review of *The Language of Flowers*, Anon., Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street', *Metropolitan Magazine*, July 1834, p. 74. Paratextual material — a review from 16 January 1836 in the *Literary Gazette* prefaces the main content to signal who this book was for and its particular qualities, in Robert Tyas, *The Sentiment of Flowers; or, Language of Flora*, 2nd ed. (London: Tyas, 1841), 1st ed. 1836 <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/281561#page/6/mode/1up> [accessed 31 January 2022].

[18] Seaton, p. 35.

with the 'vegetal turn' in ecocritical scholarship, which Gary Farnell describes as 'the direction of pro-plant-thinking in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries'.[19] The personification and instrumental anthropomorphising within the language of flowers genre has been seen by Richard Mabey, for example, as ascribing 'plant species with a code of arbitrary "meanings" which had no connection whatever with the lives of the organisms themselves'.[20] This criticism hinges upon the inherent anthropocentrism of a genre where plants are made to serve the interests of human romance, exposing little concern for the real lives of plants (see an example of arboreal feminised plant imagery in Fig. 3). Michael Marder highlights this extrinsic imposition further when he writes: 'When a plant is converted into a symbol, its own language all but disappears under a shroud of meanings humans throw over it. It is no longer possible to discern the self-signification of vegetal life, because the symbolic plant does not refer to itself but turns into a token for something else entirely'. [21] Moreover, the unstable, fluctuating and, to some, arbitrary vocabulary of the genre has been thought to expose the language of flowers as catering to mere shallow frivolousness. Take daffodils, for example: they can stand for 'self-love' and 'regret', but also 'regard', 'deceitful hope', or even 'chivalry' and 'folly'.[22]

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[19] Gary Farnell, 'What do Plants Want?', in *Plant Horror: Approaches to the Monstrous Vegetal in Fiction and Film*, ed. by Dawn Keetley and Angela Tenga (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 179–196 (pp. 187–188).

[20] Richard Mabey, *The Cabaret of Plants: Botany and the Imagination* (London: Profile Books, 2015), p. 7.

[21] Michael Marder, 'To Hear Plants Speak', in *The Language of Plants: Science, Philosophy, Literature*, ed. by Monica Gagliano, John C. Ryan and Patricia Vieira (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), pp. 103–125 (p. 105).

[22] 'Self-love', see Shoberl, *The Language of Flowers; with Illustrative Poetry*, pp. 55–58. 'Regret', see Arthur Freeling, *Flowers; Their Use and Beauty in Language and Sentiment*, pp. 97–98. 'Regard', see John Reid, *The Language of Flowers: being a lexicon of the sentiments assigned to flowers, plants, fruits, and roots* (Glasgow: Morrison, 1847), p. 14, 33. 'Deceitful Hope', see *The Poetry of Flowers; Containing Appropriate Illustrations of Flowers to which Sentiments have been Assigned* (London: Webb, Millington, 1859), p. 17. 'Chivalry', see Anon., *The Language and Poetry of Flowers* (London: Nelson, 1864), p. 16. 'Folly', see The Young Ladies of Gumley House, *The Catholic Language of Flowers* (London: Burns and Lambert, 1861), pp. 32–33.

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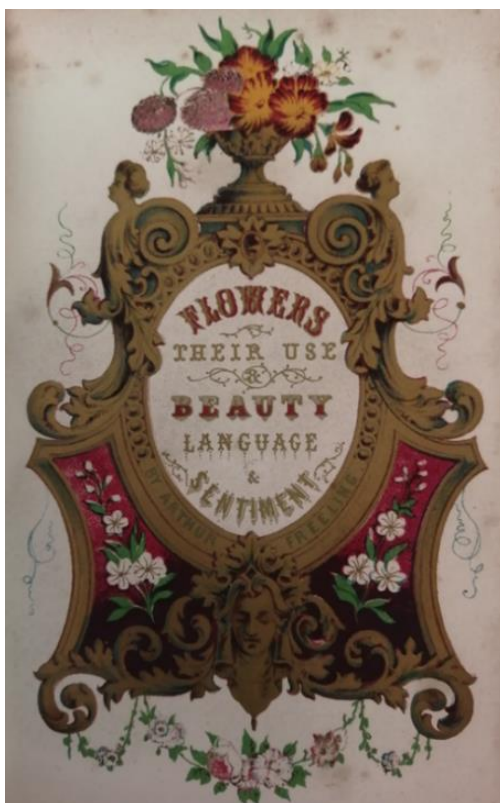
Fig. 3, Frontmatter, in Arthur Freeling, *Flowers; Their Use and Beauty in Language and Sentiment* (London: Darton, 1851). Author's own collection.

Another critical observation concerns the editing process inflicted upon this genre, which may have stifled the expression of feeling: in the translation process from French to English, the books were modified initially to align with British ideals of respectability and decorum. Seaton notes that 'it is interesting to discover the care that English and American editors took to purify the language for their audience'.[23] The romantic *raison d'être* of the language of flowers, outlining a covert method for men and women to communicate, prompted the Anglicisation process. Attention had to be paid to moral fibre by the editors in Britain. As Catherine Donzel points out, 'since moral virtue was gripping Britain, English books omitted everything that might shock: heliotrope henceforth symbolized "devotion" instead of "ecstasy, I love you", which was clearly unacceptable!'[24] In other criticisms, present-day ethical concerns continue: the influx of new additions to the floral vocabulary, and the collecting habits that imported

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[23] Seaton, p. 127.

[24] On the modification of the meaning assigned to heliotrope, see Catherine Donzel, *The Book of Flowers*, trans. by Deke Dusinberre (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), p. 105; Anon., *The Language of Flowers* (1834), p. 114 and Shoberl, *The Language of Flowers; With Illustrative Poetry* (1835), p. 186.

these featured flowers have been viewed as symptomatic of covetous colonial practices. For example, Elliott views the inclusion of cattleyas in later language of flowers publications as indicative of the growing fashion for orchids, a fashion which had devastating environmental effects in consequence of colonial collecting agendas.[25] Meanwhile, the Orientalism evident in the combined appropriation of, and xenophobia towards, the language of flowers origin story of the Turkish sélam, is at times unarguably racist.[26] This nationalistic or xenophobic drive in many works was reflected in the flower vocabularies, with 'exotic' or foreign species often allocated derogatory and negative meanings. Nancy Strow Sheley explores this in relation to the American tradition, with the dahlia from Mexico meaning 'instability', China pink meaning 'aversion', and cyclamen (with origins in Greece and Turkey) meaning 'voluptuous', to name just a few examples.[27] Some of these criticisms can, I think, be contested, or at least tempered, if considered closely. In many publications, the 'real lives' of plants are absolutely essential to the construction of symbolic meaning, through their growing habits, with reference to the Linnaean classificatory system, and through the dial of flowers and descriptive anecdotal passages that encouraged knowledge of flora.[28] Having said that, despite infiltrating many aspects of nineteenth-century life, from

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[25] See Elliott, p. 39, and Mabey, p. 300.

[26] For more on the Turkish origins of the genre, see Shoberl, 'Introduction', in *The Language of Flowers; with Illustrative Poetry* (1835), pp. 6–8. See also Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'Letter 41: Pera, Constantinople March 16, O. S. 1718', in *The Turkish Embassy Letters: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O'Quinn (Ontario: Broadview, 2013), pp. 160–63. Note the xenophobia prevalent in John Reid, *The Language of Flowers* (1847), p. 4 <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.169362>, and Orientalist tendencies in Henry Gardiner Adams, *Oriental Text Book and Language of Flowers* (London: Dean, c.1850), pp. 9–13 <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.158510>.

[27] See Nancy Strow Sheley, 'The "Language of Flowers" as Coded Subtext: Conflicted Messages of Domesticity in Mary Wilkins Freeman's Short Fiction', *Working Papers on Design*, 2 (2007), p. 13 <https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/12323/WPD_vol2_strow.pdf> [accessed 17 June 2022].

[28] See, 'Thrift' in Robert Tyas, *The Sentiment of Flowers*, pp. 266–67. Also Myrtle (pp. 27–28); Wallflower (p. 121); Acanthus (p. 29); Meadow Saffron (p. 126); Peruvian heliotrope (pp. 114–116); Holly (p. 163); Dandelion (pp. 101–2) in Anon., *The Language of Flowers* (1834). 'Linnaean Classes and Orders', in Arthur Freeling, *Flowers; Their Use and Beauty* (1851), pp. ix–xii. The 1857 edition is available online <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160084>. 'The Dial of Flowers', in Laura Valentine, *The Language and Sentiment of Flowers; with Floral Records and Selected Poetry* (London: Warne, 1867), p. 49. 1st ed. 1866 <https://doi.org/10.5962/t.175398>.

valentines, to fashion accessories, to needlework, fiction, monumental masonry, art and music, the question remains of the genre's relevance and applicability, both in the nineteenth century and beyond.[29]

To what extent or degree did real people use the floral code? Was there any consistency in its use? Scholars speculate that this was seldom, if ever, the case: Jack Goody views the language of flowers as an invented tradition, Elliott as a parlour game.[30] Seaton sees it as a 'consumer phenomenon' with only 'tenuous ties to real lives'.[31] There are occasional anecdotes of floriographic exchange between people that may be unearthed, but they tend to air on the side of comedy or even romantic failure.[32] Equally, the longevity of the genre has been seen as inducing a very different feeling to the thrill of romance: namely, boredom. For example, one girl depicted in George Dunlop Leslie's *The Language of Flowers* (1885, Fig. 4) has been thought of as looking rather tired with the rules of floriography by this late point in the nineteenth century. In a summary of the painting, curatorial staff at Manchester Art Gallery point out that '[t]he second woman, in a dark dress, lounges across the arm of the sofa, studying a pair of scissors in her hand in a slightly bored fashion'.[33] While the language of flowers clearly proliferated as an aspect of material culture, we might ask whether the genre really held meaning for people as a conduit for expressing feeling and emotion, and if it did, whether, perhaps, it branched out from its apparent remit of romance.

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[29] Some examples include Robert Canton, 'Language of Flowers' fan (1875), listed in *Antiques Trade Gazette* <https://pocketmags.com/antiques-trade-gazette-magazine/2543/articles/1152471/the-language-of-flowers> [accessed 21 February 2023]. F. H. Cowen, *The Language of Flowers; Le Langage Des Fleurs; Die Blumensprache: Suite de Ballet* (London: Metzler, 1880) <https://archive.org/details/imslp-language-of-flowers-set-1-cowen-frederic-hymen>. In fiction, some direct (although occasionally dismissive) mentions are found in William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1848) (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 45; Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Doctor's Wife* (1864) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 201; Rhoda Broughton, *Not Wisely, But Too Well* (London: Tinsley, 1868), p. 326; Edith Nesbit, *The Wonderful Garden* (London: Benn, 1947), p. 3, 5, 14, 17.

[30] Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 250–251. Elliott, p. 46.

[31] Seaton, p. 110.

[32] Donzel, p. 106. See Anon., 'A Peculiar Courtship'*, Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 30 May 1893, p. 4.

[33] George Dunlop Leslie, *The Language of Flowers* (1885), oil on canvas, Manchester Art Gallery <https://manchesterartgallery.org/explore/title/?mag-object-237> [accessed 7 March 2023].

Fig. 4, George Dunlop Leslie, *The Language of Flowers* (1885), oil on canvas, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester. Image courtesy of Manchester Art Gallery.

Was there a community of feeling between the authors and readers of this genre? As already mentioned, the language of flowers is frequently criticised for a lack of cohesion — its supposedly unstable and arbitrary floral meanings might not particularly lend themselves to notions of community or common feeling. However, Molly Engelhardt views the genre as often being constructed by women, for women.[34] There was a liberating potential in negative feelings or 'unfeeling' evident across vocabularies, which invites freedom of expression for women. From 'false riches' in the sunflower, to 'hatred' in the basil, 'decrease of love' or 'jealousy' in the yellow rose, 'deceit' in the Venus fly trap, 'inconstancy' in the evening primrose, and 'refusal' in the striped carnation — the opportunity to reject and rebuff was at least offered. Other critics have shown how the language of flowers could be inherently restrictive and conservative. Annette Stott, for instance, considers the language of flowers as partly informing the late-nineteenth-century artistic reaction to the New Woman embedded in American floral-female paintings. For Stott, these paintings of women and flowers were reasserting the value of female ornamentation, passivity and sexual purity in the

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[34] Molly Engelhardt, 'The Language of Flowers in the Victorian Knowledge Age', *Victoriographies*, 3 (2013), 136–160 (p. 143). See also Leora Siegel, 'Language of Flowers: 19th Century Literary Genre Offered Opportunities for Women Writers of Natural History', Biodiversity Heritage Library Blog, 30 March 2019 <https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/2019/03/language-of-flowers.html> [accessed 17 November 2021].

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face of burgeoning societal change in gender roles.[35] Equally, a conservative leaning was evident in the British tradition of the language of flowers from its early developments, where a group of male editors and compilers had reconfigured the French books into more didactic works about female conduct, exemplifying what Katherine D. Harris has termed 'patriarchal femininity'. 'Patriarchal femininity', evident for Harris in the sister genre of the annuals, was 'predicated on defining woman and feminine as passive, uneducated, domestic, impotent or simple'.[36] Male editors of the language of flowers texts in Britain followed the moralising directive of Henry Phillips's *Floral Emblems* (1825, 1831).[37] These editors included Frederic Shoberl (the first translator of de Latour), Robert Tyas, James Glass Bertram, Arthur Freeling, John Reid, Thomas Miller and Henry Gardiner Adams, all of whom worked towards a national, and masculine, didactic inflection of the genre.[38] While Harris considers the annual as being in its textual production a 'female body, its male producers struggling to make it both proper and sexually alluring, its female authors and readers attempting to render it their own feminine ideal', I would suggest that in the British tradition of the language of flowers genre, the situation was even more constraining.[39] Women and flowers are continually conflated, while the male editor and compiler is positioned as a gardener, addressing 'The Maidens of Britain [...] Beautiful human flowers', cultivating ideas of appropriate femininity and censoring the contents of the books to instruct the 'fairest flowers of the British Isles'.[40] Throughout the process of introducing the language of

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[35] Annette Stott, 'Floral Femininity: A Pictorial Definition', *American Art*, 6.2 (1992), 60–77 (p. 67, 72–73).

[36] Katherine D. Harris, 'Feminizing the Textual Body: Female Readers Consuming the Literary Annual', *The Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, 99 (2005), 573–622 (p. 592).

[37] Henry Phillips, *Floral Emblems* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1825) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.26640> and *Floral Emblems: or A Guide to the Language of Flowers, new edn* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1831) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160797>.

[38] See previous footnotes for Shoberl, Tyas, Freeling, Reid and Gardiner Adams. James Glass Bertram, *The Language of Flowers: An Alphabet of Floral Emblems* (London, Edinburgh: Nelson, 1846), pp. iv–v <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.158334>. Thomas Miller, *The Poetical Language of Flowers; or, The Pilgrimage of Love* (London: Bogue, 1847), pp. v–viii <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=KpVhAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false> [accessed 11 February 2020].

[39] Harris, p. 578.

[40] Robert Tyas, 'Preface', in *The Sentiment of Flowers; or, Language of Flora*, p. v. Henry Gardiner Adams, *Oriental Text-Book*, dedication.

flowers to British audiences, women and flowers were transformed into decorative and malleable objects to be shaped according to masculine taste, in the androcentric inscriptions made upon this genre by men. The books become representative of both garden and woman in the early British tradition, manipulated to serve men in the home and the marketplace. In light of this, women may reasonably have conceived many limitations of the language of flowers pertaining to their personal feelings or emotions. Moreover, if there was a sense of community established through these books, perhaps it existed predominantly within male editorial endeavours, with the overarching impetus to instruct and control.

While several criticisms of the language of flowers frequently still hold up, there are areas where their validity is disputable. Numerous floral meanings remained relatively stable, and often the variations that took place have been accounted for through positive ideas about editorial imaginative play. As Engelhardt argues, 'the quantity of floral dictionaries in circulation suggests an attempt by amateur botanists to resist the efforts of scientific botanists to know flowers by instead codifying them to extend the parameters of courtship and imaginative play'.[41] There are instances of editors, both male and female, asserting their right to modify the vocabulary based on their tastes and motivations, and some include their own original poetry among the presence of more famous works and authors.[42] Furthermore, Fabienne Moine writes that the flower poems, frequently framed in the language of flowers gift books as intertexts, enabled women writers to express emotion through verse, wherein 'poetical tools of femininity and gentility could also create pockets of resistance to conventional gendered discourse'.[43] Another area of contestation may be found through examination of the gift inscriptions regularly applied to these works, which suggest that this genre held more significance than may be supposed by critics today. Branching out from the textual contents of the language of flowers books in this way, we may discover

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[41] Engelhardt, p. 156.

[42] See 'Preface' in Anon., *The Garland of the Year, or, The Months: their Poetry and Flowers* (London: Ward, 1873) <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.160187> and Anon., *The Language and Poetry of Flowers* (London: Nelson, 1864).

[43] Fabienne Moine, 'Saying it with Flowers', in *Women Poets in the Victorian Era: Cultural Practices and Nature Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 51–98 (p. 53).

Issue 6: January 2024   www.rrrjournal.com

some hints of 'real use', a matter which plagues those interested in studying the language of flowers in culture as well as literature.

As an area of provenance research, deciphering and tracing inscriptions holds value beyond the study of libraries or the biographical details of 'distinguished people' in history. As David Pearson has shown, it is a move towards a consideration of 'the importance of books in society' and 'wider pictures of the patterns of book ownership'.[44] Personal inscriptions indicate how the language of flowers might have featured in relationships that went beyond the stated remit of romance to which it so conspicuously speaks. Cindy Dickinson, for example, considers gifting trends and the relationships behind the inscriptions of annuals and gift books in the American tradition. She shows how inscriptions could personalise these mass-produced books, reviewing some language of flowers books among other annuals, which reveal how the recipient's marginalia, annotations and inserted poetry became part of a process of identity formation. Dickinson writes that 'Inscriptions, whether written on the presentation page or elsewhere on the book's front leaves, helped to transfer literary annuals and gift books from the publishers' commercial marketplace to the world of sentiment'.[45] Additionally, her case study of Elizabeth Turner's marginalia in one language of flowers publication indicates how the text became 'a forum for defining and defending deeply held values and beliefs': essentially, I would suggest, it became and exercise in negotiating feelings about others.[46] The language of flowers books, unlike the annuals, did not contain a publisher's 'presentation page', as Dickinson describes it; the formal invitation for a gift inscription from giver to recipient. In this way, inscriptions in language of flowers texts become even more striking in the context of feeling, as the giver or owner chose to make a personal mark on the book without explicit invitation.

While the language of flowers relied on intertextuality in its very formation, inscriptions also often contained intertextual elements, including quotations from poems or fiction. The importance of intertextual practices in identity negotiation is

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[44] David Pearson, 'Introduction', in *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook* (London: British Library, 1994, 1998), pp. 1–11 (p. 2). See also 'Inscriptions, Mottoes & Other Manuscript Additions', pp. 12–53.

[45] Cindy Dickinson, 'Creating a World of Books, Friends, and Flowers: Gift Books and Inscriptions, 1825–60', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 31 (1996), 53–66 (p. 57).

[46] Dickinson, p. 65.

analysed by Charles Gough in the previous issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform*. Gough examines the 'unique intertextual fabric' created through poetic inclusions in John Addington Symonds's autobiographical *Memoirs* (1889 to his death in 1893) to construct a queer self, demonstrating the effective melding of forms and feelings to establish radical meaning.[47] Although applied to a different context here, the function of intertextuality in individual as well as more public or collective feeling is shown to be important, for example as a sympathetic response to grief in my second case study, and through a quotation that seems to have inspired or moved Elizabeth Lunnan, the inscriber, to see connections between the language of flowers, fiction and life (Appendix A, A2). Lunnan inscribed her book long before her marriage in her late twenties and the birth of seven children; she possessed and wrote in her language of flowers book at roughly fifteen years old. Her choice of quotation shows, to my mind, a teenage girl linking the language of flowers with its traditional notions of romantic love, in anticipation of one day marrying — in this sense, we see the language of flowers as conducive to daydreaming, to wishing, to identity formation through aspiration. This book, like my third case study, is another example of female inheritance, as Lunnan's daughter Edith eventually owned and made additional inscriptions in it. In terms of identification, inscriptions can indicate who owned these books, who gifted them to whom and sometimes they can hint at, or even make explicit, the motives behind the ownership or gift of the book. There are inevitable frustrations that have been encountered in pursuing this aspect of provenance research, which are enumerated effectively by Pearson: illegible handwriting, inscriptions defaced or washed out, a loss of detail through rebinding.[48] The background research conducted through genealogy resources is not consistently rewarding, especially when inscriptions are brief. However, the position of these floral anthologies as gift books can in many instances make tracing their ownership and exchange profitable, as a viable line of enquiry to establish individual interpretations of the genre and the expression of feelings that it inspired.

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[47] Charles Gough, 'Re-reading the Radical in John Addington Symonds's *Memoirs*: Poetry, Intertextuality, and Queer Self-Construction', *Romance, Revolution, and Reform*, 5 (2023), 10–30 (pp. 14–15).

[48] See Pearson, pp. 3–9, and examples Beatrice Gibson, Azuliah Palmer and Elizabeth Lunnan in the Appendices.

Case Studies: Inscriptions

Where, then, is the evidence of heterosexual romantic connection so central to the themes of the language of flowers texts? It is tempting to read this impetus into two particular books within my own collection, which were gifted to women anonymously by 'a sincere friend' (see Appendix A4: Sincere Friends). Why the need for secrecy, unless these books were presented in the same vein as the anonymous valentine? Yet overall, my personal encounters with these anthologies reveal more instances of friendship or familial gifting between women (Appendix A2: Mothers and Daughters, A3: Female Friends). Sometimes they cross over: the inscription suggesting friendship from Mrs Hartley to Agnes May Drummond clearly becomes a sign of family inheritance, as the book was passed to a daughter, Vera May Stones (Appendix A3: Female Friends). There is also evidence of male ownership of these books, perhaps surprisingly, given the contexts already discussed (A1: Names, Mr E. A. Wait, Thomas Edward Morris and Michael Batten). Despite the impetus to write their names in the books, few dates or motivations are provided from these male inscribers. The conclusions drawn from my personal collection are often echoed in similar findings through two dedicated language of flowers collections that are publicly available to view online or in person: the digitised archive of The Biodiversity Heritage Library, and the collection housed at the Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Library.[49] There can be seen in these collections also, gifting between female friends, female relatives and traces of male ownership in the nineteenth century. There is repeated evidence that language of flowers books were given as Christmas or New Year gifts, and occasionally detailed addresses as well as dates are provided. One publication in my own collection by John Henry Ingram, *Flora Symbolica* (1869) contains an inscription that flags up important developments in the gifting and ownership of these books (Figs. 5 & 6).

Case Study 1: John McConnachy and Annie Shoppee

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[49] An online resource from the Royal Horticultural Society Lindley Library, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-language-of-flowers-royal-horticultural-society/DQXBY7DfLX9RIg?hl=en> [accessed 20 September 2023]; Biodiversity Heritage Library Language of Flowers collection <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/browse/collection/LanguageofFlowers> [accessed 10 September 2023].
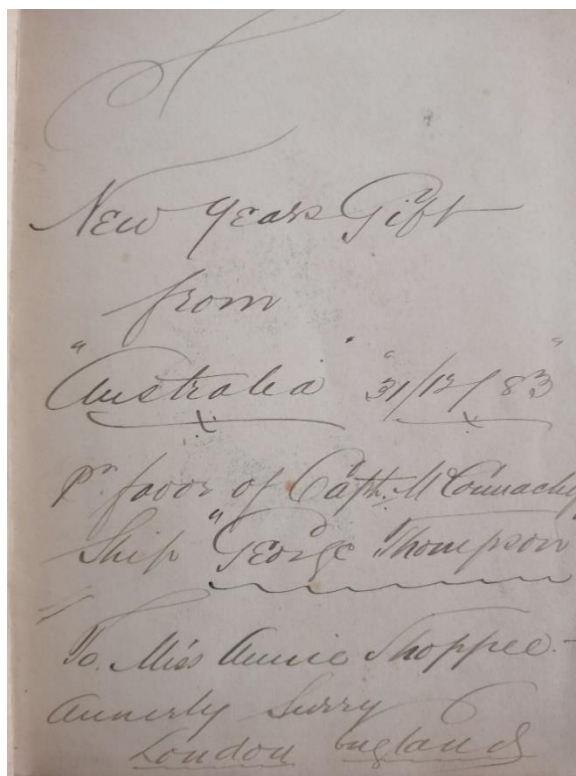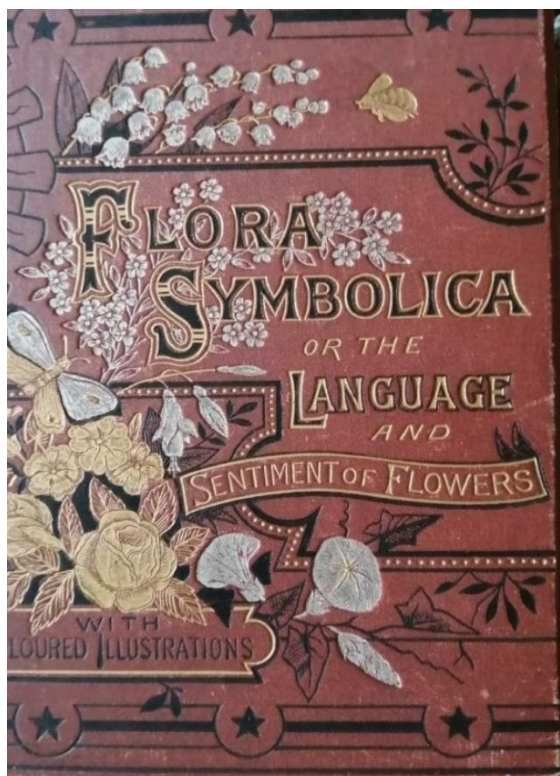
Figs. 5 & 6, Cover and inscription in John Ingram, *Flora Symbolica; or, The Language and Sentiment of Flowers* (London: Warne, c. 1870s), 1st ed. 1869. Author's own collection. The inscription reads: 'New Year's Gift from Australia 31/12/83. Pr favor of Captain McConnachy, Ship George Thompson. To Miss Annie Shoppee, Annerly, Surrey, London, England'.

Upon noticing a gift inscription from 'Captain McConnachy' to 'Annie Shoppee' in a well-preserved copy of John Ingram's *Flora Symbolica* (Figs. 5 & 6), I anticipated finally discovering the use of the language of flowers genre in the conduct of a romance. After a friend aided in the identification of the George Thompson ship mentioned in the description, a librarian at the State Library of South Australia helped me to discover that this book was gifted by Captain John McConnachy, whom they described as 'a well-known sea-farer in Australian waters in the latter part of the 19th century'.[50] It transpires

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[50] Email correspondence between author and librarian Chris Read, 1 March 2022.
See 'The "George Thompson" in an unidentified port [PRG 1373/33/1], photographs
<https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG%201373/33/1> and
<https://www.catalog.slsa.sa.gov.au/record=b2204154~S1> [accessed 7 March 2023]. Anon., *Wallaroo Times and Mining Journal*, 11 September 1880, p. 2; Anon., *South Australian Register*, 12 June 1874, p. 5. November 1883, Passenger List, George Thompson, New South Wales, Australia, Unassisted Immigrant Passenger Lists, 1826–1922 Record. Certificate of Competency of Master, John McConnachy, 8 August 1883, Certificate number 85947, UK and Ireland, Masters and Mates Certificates, 1850–1927. Annie Shoppee, Occupation: Governess, Address: 1 Ventnor Vs, County: Surrey, 1881 England Census, Class:

that the forty-six-year-old John McConnachy and his family were in London in 1883. His family included his second wife, Ellen, and two young daughters, Alice and Mary. In August of that year, McConnachy earned his master's certificate, before returning to Sydney with his wife and daughters on the George Thompson ship in November. The recipient of the book, Annie Shoppee, meanwhile, was a twenty-four-year-old governess living in Anerley, Surrey. How might John McConnachy and Annie Shoppee have met, and why did he send her a language of flowers gift book for New Year in 1883? Could Annie have looked after John McConnachy's daughters while the family was in England? Was this book a gift from employer to employee? Or is it suggestive of a covert romance? It seems that McConnachy led a colourful life. His first wife, Susan, son John and daughter Mary tragically died in a shipwreck, his second wife, Ellen, eventually divorced him on grounds of desertion, and his death is mysterious, occurring after receiving £500 from a deceased estate.[51] Whatever the reason behind this gift — gratitude or romance — the reach of the language of flowers can be seen to extend to cross-continental exchanges, a means of conveying feeling between people from very different professions and walks of life. A marked shift in gifting and ownership patterns can be traced within this copy of Ingram's *Flora Symbolica*, and this particular publication is a good example of how the genre had been opened up or was in the process of reaching wider audiences beyond the genteel lady. While undoubtedly a beautiful and decorative book complete with printed colour illustrations, which cost 7s 6d in 1869, its contents as well as our knowledge of the profession of the recipient suggest expanding readerships.[52] Although Elliott highlights several misattributions and incorrect transcriptions of flower names and meanings in this work, Ingram's wide-ranging references may be read as purposefully more inclusive. For example, he dedicates his book to working-class poet Eliza Cook, and includes several verse

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RG11; Piece: 825; Folio: 27; p. 49; GSU roll: 1341195. I wish to thank Chris Read and David Gillott for help with identifying and researching McConnachy.

[51] Anon., 'Marriages: McCONNACHY — WELLS', *South Australian Register*, 29 June 1872, p. 4. Anon., 'A Sad Incident', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 20 September 1876, p. 3. 'M'CONNACHY V M'CONNACHY', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1896, p. 4. My library contact suggested that 'I could not find a death notice for him, either in South Australia, New South Wales or Western Australia. He may have left Australia after receiving 500 pounds from a deceased estate'. Anon., 'Deceased Persons' Estates', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1 March 1912, p. 5.

[52] 'Advertisements and Notices', *Examiner and London Review*, 11 December 1869, p. 798.

quotations from her poetry throughout the text, while aspiring to a holistic compilation that brings together 'the productions of my many predecessors'.[53] Moreover, as the language of flowers spoke to human life experience, to 'everybody' as Ingram would have it, in appreciation of the beauty of nature, of the phases of growth and maturity, it inevitably also spoke to transience and death.[54]

Case Study 2: Ethel Mary Cunnington
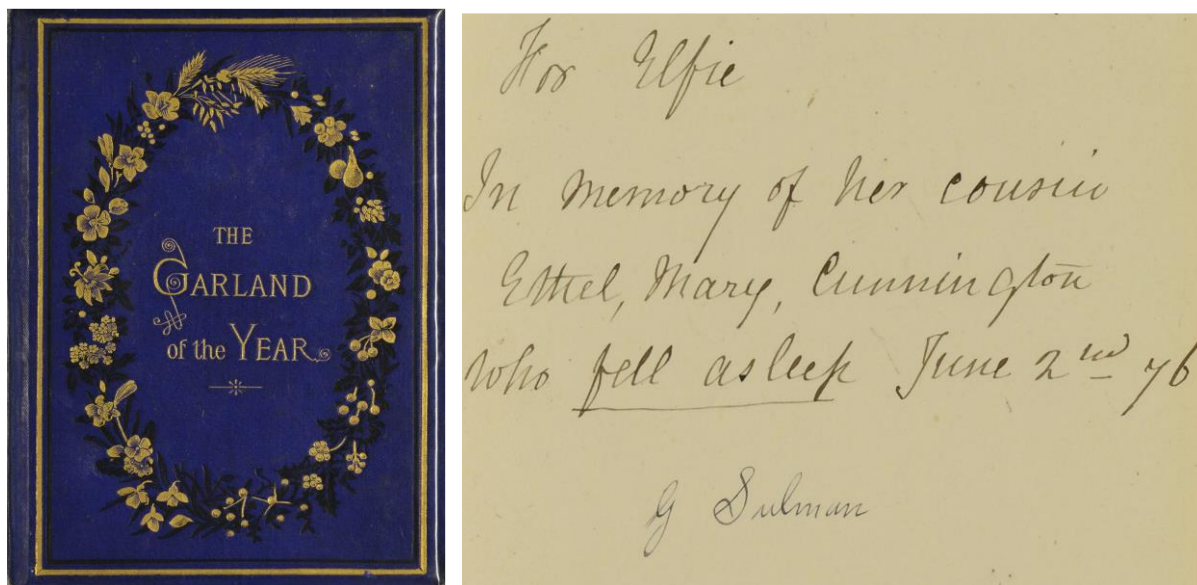
Figs. 7 & 8, Book cover and dedication in Robert Chambers and Frederick Edward Hulme, *The Garland of the Year, or, The Months: Their Poetry and Flowers: with twelve chromographs of flowers, one for each month* (London: Ward, 1873). Image from the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Contributed by Cornell University Library.

One inscription within a language of flowers book reveals that the publications may not only have been gifted as demonstrations of romantic affection but also as tokens of memorial for the departed (Fig. 8). The language of flowers could be employed to serve

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[53] Elliott, pp. 40–41. See Ingram's dedication, Preface p. v, and on Cook's verse p. 10, 12, 39, 57, 86, 105, 106, 124, 190, 229, 232, 241, 312, 324, 329, 343. I am indebted to Shani Cadwallender for alerting me to Eliza Cook's work and history, see BAVS 2022 programme, '"In debt to the forest trees": The Humble Anthropocentrism of Eliza Cook's Arboreal Poetry' <https://bavs2022.com/bavs-programme/> [accessed 14 July 2023].

[54] Ingram, p. 5.

memory and memorial, another aspect of life where profound feeling would be expected, and people frequently turned to rituals of grief to manage their emotions.[55] The dedication in the book reads, 'For Elsie, In memory of her cousin Ethel Mary Cunnington who fell asleep, June 2nd 76 — G. Sulman'. The deceased referred to could well be eighteen-year-old Ethel Mary Cunnington who died 2 June 1876 and is buried in Braintree Cemetery, Essex. Ethel's monument epitaph reads, 'In the 18th year of her age. Fast in Thy paradise where no flower can wither'.[56] The final sentence is a quotation from George Herbert's seventeenth-century devotional poem, 'The Flower' (1633), and epitomises the ways that the language of flowers, with its emphasis on anthologising and intertextuality, could inspire the expression of private feeling through public modes. As I have argued elsewhere, this inscription suggests that floriography helped

> the bereaved to find a mode of expression that was derived from strong emotion yet was not overwhelmed by it. As a sentimental genre, the language of flowers perhaps contributed to a vocabulary for mourning that would negate much of the horror of death.[57]

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[55] Janine Marriott, 'Secrets and symbols — the grave language of the Victorian cemetery', *Arnos Vale* blog <https://arnosvale.org.uk/secrets-and-symbols-the-grave-language-of-the-victorian-cemetery/> [accessed 22/01/2022]. See also the repeated use of symbolic flowers on nineteenth-century memorial cards in the Laura Seddon collection, including lilies, snowdrops, passionflowers, ivy, bindweed, lily of the valley and forget-me-not <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/special-collections-museum/collections/laura-seddon-collection> [accessed 14 July 2023].

[56] England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915, vol 4a, p. 239. Anon., 'Deaths', in *Essex Standard*, 9 June 1876, p. 8. The entry reads, 'Cunnington, June 2nd at Braintree, Ethel Mary, aged 18, eldest child of Augustus and Mary Cunnington'. Gravestone inscription, Cross on triple plinth. // Top plinth, east side: AUGUSTUS CUNNINGTON / born / August 20th 1824 / Middle plinth: died July 5th 1902 / Ps. 20.7 / ETHEL MARY CUNNINGTON / daughter of the above / died June 2nd 1876 / Bottom plinth: in the 18th year of her age / 'Fast in Thy paradise where no flower can wither' <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228028327/augustus-cunnington> [accessed 20 September 2023].

[57] Jemma Stewart, 'Life is a Flower: Memory and Memorial in the Language of Flowers', *Grave Matters* blog, ed. by Claire Cock-Starkey, 31 January 2022 <https://gravemattersgroup.co.uk/2022/01/31/life-is-a-flower-memory-and-memorial-in-the-language-of-flowers/> [accessed 10 February 2023].

This complements David McAllister's notion of an 'aesthetic of death' that relied on sentiment to erase horror and promote positive feelings of comfort.[58] The consolatory inscription found in this language of flowers book is therefore not out of place: a dialogue to engage with notions of transience and mortality is established within language of flowers anthologies from the early iterations onwards. A typical example of this idea may be seen in an anthology from James Glass Bertram:

> "He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down," is the expressive and universally intelligent language of Scripture; and no less does it early prefigure hope than frailty. We strew them over the shroud of departed love, and plant them to bloom brightly above the grave, that they may speak in Spring of a brighter season of hope, and in Summer of that heavenly clime that knows only of an eternal summer and a cloudless sky, and in all seasons, of love, and purity, and peace.[59]

As a means of coping and coming to terms with intense feelings of loss, the language of flowers therefore spoke to this very significant theme of grief. Another example, *Flower Emblems, or, The Seasons of Life* (1871), contains sections of prose and verse concerning mourning and consolation upon the death of a child.[60] And it is through family feelings that the final case study functions.

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[58] David McAllister, *Imagining the Dead in British Literature and Culture, 1790–1848* (London: Palgrave, 2018), pp. 154–55, 166, 181.

[59] James Glass Bertram, *The Language of Flowers: An Alphabet of Floral Emblems,* p. v.

[60] 'March. The Almond Blossom — Fading Childhood', in Anon., *Flower Emblems, or, The Seasons of Life* (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1871), pp. 16–21 <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.169414>.

Case Study 3: Nancy Knoops-Hoogewerff
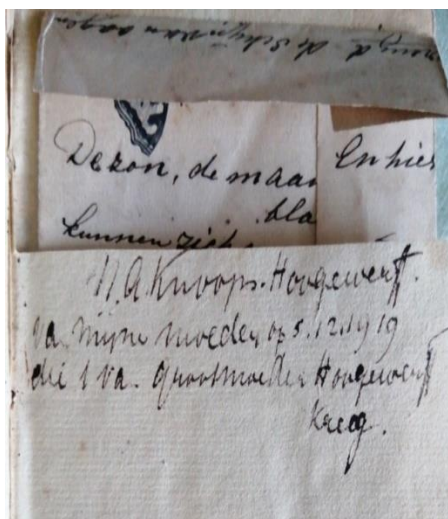
Figs. 9 & 10, Charlotte de Latour, *Le Langage des Fleurs*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Audot, 1834). 1st ed. 1819. Author's own collection.

For Christmas 2020, at the end of the first Covid year, my mother bought me a second edition of Charlotte de Latour's *Le Langage des Fleurs* (Figs. 9 & 10). This was particularly meaningful to me, as earlier that year I had anticipated resigning from my PhD programme and selling off the language of flowers books that I had started to gather, due in large part to the financial and emotional stresses that many people suffered during the pandemic. The gift of this book was reinvigorating in so many ways. I began collecting language of flowers books in 2019, just prior to the start of a part-time PhD. The books I had accrued were for actual use, for reference rather than display: they formed a personal archive. The idea was to establish a mini library of my own that went beyond the digital, or the institutional collection, to really get a sense of these books as material objects, to try to see and feel through them as they may have originally been perceived. They are not in consistently pristine, or even good, condition: faded, torn, water damaged, scribbled upon, they show traces of past handling and ownership, occasionally bookmarked or containing newspaper cuttings of floriography titbits. The encouraging gift from my mother not only salvaged this collection but suggested female solidarity, resilience and optimism for the future. Frequently credited as the book that began the language of flowers craze, upon noticing the inscriptions in this copy, tracing the ownership of this publication felt significant. It appears that this book had also previously been a gift. A poem from 'St Nic' or Sinterklass and gift note pasted into

the book tell a story. The note and the poem are in Dutch (Fig. 9).[61] The inscription reads: 'N. A. Knoops-Hoogewerff, from my mother on 5.12.1919 who got it from grandmother Hoogewerff''. Evidently, the book had originally belonged to Nancy's paternal grandmother, 'grandmother Hoogewerff', it passed to Anna and finally to her daughter Nancy.[62] The poem, presumably composed by Anna for Nancy, emphasises that the flower album is a means of accessing the beauty of nature despite the winter season. It considers the importance of inheritance with the promise of renewal and re-use, both through the passage of the book from person to person and the seasonal transitions of nature. As such, it acts as a symbol of hope to 'triumph over pain and sorrow' and fill the 'heart with joy and with peace'. The flower book demonstrates a longstanding female prerogative, an inherited form suggesting a love of nature, rejuvenation and connection. It considers the lifecycle of plants and flowers in tandem with a human reaction to the seasons: it promotes a level of attention to flowers and a kind of mutual feeling advocated by critics like Catriona Sandilands.[63] While it does not undo or erase what Sandilands has reviewed as a historical biopolitics of plants subject to anthropocentrism and instrumental utility, this attention acknowledges a range of perception in plant/person kinship that has occurred historically. The traditional sphere of romance in the language of flowers is here displaced to represent a transgenerational female appreciation of nature and literature, with a message of light in the darkness at its core. My own recent experience of the gifting process then seemed to echo the historic provenance of this book, with the overarching aim of encouraging feelings of hope and interconnection, facilitated through feminine bonds. In other ways too, sharing these books has promoted personal thinking through the language of

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[61] Many thanks to Mara Arts for completing the translation and to Jeanne Stroucken for investigating the family history in this case. See Appendix B.

[62] Family listed in Delft population register 1876–1892 and Delft Civil Registry of 21 June 1906, <https://zoeken.stadsarchiefdelft.nl/detail.php?nav_id=13-2&id=32242396&index=9> and < https://zoeken.stadsarchiefdelft.nl/detail.php?nav_id=10-2&id=36103181&index=12 > [accessed 20 September 2023].

[63] Catriona Sandilands, 'Plants', in *The Cambridge Companion to Environmental Humanities*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Stephanie Foote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 156–69 (p. 157). See also Sandilands, 'Botanical Colonialism and Biocultural Histories', *Green Dreamer*, episode 362 <https://greendreamer.com/podcast/catriona-sandilands-queer-ecologies> [accessed 17 July 2023].

flowers genre as a hopeful experience that can inspire environmental awareness today, including an interest in gardening, caring for and identifying plants; but also through revisiting forms of representation within the genre's artistic inclusions.[64] As such, the genre becomes something more than a decorative status symbol and tool to conduct a love affair. It also gestures towards the value that the language of flowers might still hold for us in current times.

Conclusion: refiguring floriography and feeling

To conclude, it becomes necessary to ask, how does the language of flowers make us react now: what are our prevailing feelings towards the genre? The genre has been considered rife with contradictions, a timebound fad with many readily critiqued ideas that justified, to an extent, its rejection as incoherent and obsolete. Do we laugh at it? Romanticise it? Roll our eyes and discard it? Does it disgust or enchant? Did the genre potentially inspire protective or benevolent feelings towards the environment, or was it merely a means of making nature bend to human will and whim? The language of flowers was in many respects adaptable and applicable to various aspects of human life and experience. However, it remains questionable whether the opposite can also be said; that the language of flowers encouraged its readers to establish closer relationships with the natural world, or even authentic connections with other humans. Revisiting the genre today may make us question whether it is non-recoverable in its anthropocentric, confusing and instrumental representations of nature and women, and its potential to simplify or override personal feeling for sheer marketability. But as this study has suggested, there are different ways of engaging with the language of flowers that might acknowledge its failings alongside its potential to promote alternative forms of feeling.

If there was a community of feeling established through the language of flowers, it was cultivated through human representation of sentimentalised flowers, with human feeling as the primary emphasis. The genre's circulation and popularity was enabled by a commodity culture that has been perceived as marketising feeling and emotion, and the didactic male editorial impetus, particularly in Britain, suggests a level of control or

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[64] Jemma Stewart and Jess Saxby, with Abdessamad El Montassir, Guy Ronen, Noara Quintana, Samir Laghouati Rashwan and Vasundhara Mathur, 'Second Flowerings', *CHASE Climate Justice Zine* <https://chaseclimatejustice.network/portfolio/second-flowerings/> [accessed 10 February 2023].

prescriptive imposition upon feelings. However, feelings and emotions were exhibited and shared through the gifting of works in this genre, and through leaving personal markings in the books, as we have seen throughout the case studies of inscriptions. People clearly used the language of flowers to strengthen or establish connections, to negotiate or communicate feelings. It is possible that these connections regularly fell outside of the sphere of romance, occurring most often between women and hinging on feelings of friendship, familial love, even grief and mourning. This adaptability of a romantic genre to speak to a range of feeling was possible because the language of flowers was compiled through an intertextual palimpsest of previous language of flowers instructions from editors across countries, from art to the addition of poetry, botanical information, vocabulary modifications and format alterations. Rather than necessarily signalling a collapse of integrity, the genre's opening up to wider audiences across the nineteenth century also arguably enabled further forms of feeling to find expression. In turn, the books themselves became important intertexts within the nineteenth century and beyond. As such, the language of flowers remains an aspect of material culture worthy of study, generative of new perspectives on feeling with flowers.

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BIOGRAPHY: Jemma is a CHASE-funded PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London, supervised by Dr Ana Parejo Vadillo. She is working on a thesis that explores the language of flowers, or floriography, and nineteenth century Gothic fictions by women writers. She has articles featured in the journals *Gothic Studies* and *Gothic Nature*, and has recently been awarded Birkbeck's 'Margaret Elise Harkness Fellowship Prize' for her doctoral work on women writers in the nineteenth century.

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Appendix A: Inscriptions from the author's personal collection.

A1: Names

'J (or L) Mault from (illegible)' — *The Language of Flowers* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1834).

'Theodora E McCausland, 1843' — Robert Tyas, *The Sentiment of Flowers, or, Language of Flora* (London: Tyas, 1841). 1st edn 1836.

'Emma Julia Welsh, April 1854' — Arthur Freeling, *Flowers; Their Use and Beauty in Language and Sentiment* (London: Darton, 1851).

'Joanne James, Age 15' — Anon., *The Language of Flowers; containing the name of every flower to which a sentiment has been assigned* (London: Webb, Millington, 1858).

'W. H. Marston, 1890' — Thomas Miller, *The Poetical Language of Flowers, or, The Pilgrimage of Love* (London: Griffin, c. 1872). 1st edn 1847.

'Phyllis Bailey [struck through], D Bailey, Weston, Norwich' — Laura Valentine, *The Language and Sentiment of Flowers* (London: Warne, undated). 1st edn 1867.

'Emily Cartwright, April 20th 1873' — Anon., *Flower Emblems, or, The Seasons of Life* (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1871).

'Mr E. A. Wait' — Mrs L. Burke, *The Coloured Language of Flowers* (London: Routledge, 1886).

'Thomas Edward Morris, Vennington, Westbury, Salop' — Anon., *The Language and Sentiment of Flowers and the Classical Floral Legends* (London: Warne, undated). This text is close to Laura Valentine's, mentioned in this article.

'Michael Batten' — Flora Klickmann, *The Language of Flowers: A Journal and Record for Birthdays* (London: Ward, Lock, c. 1899).

A2: Mothers and Daughters

'Beatrice Gibson, from Mother, May 1892' — Anon., *The Artistic Language of Flowers* (London: Routledge, 1890). This book has been defaced, traces of hand-written floriography notes can be discerned on the torn inner leaves and marginalia in other sections.

Left inner leaf: 'E. O. Nowell from dear Mother'.
On opposite page: 'Miss Elizabeth Lunnan. 1846.
"We analyse a flower, and what find we?
A fairy workshop and its implements.
But where the worker? What and who is he?"
Illegible.
E. O. N. from mama.'

The inscription from Lunnan suffers from water damage. The quotation she uses is taken from Mrs Harriet Oliver Downing, *Remembrances of a Monthly Nurse* (London: Clarke, 1863), p. 83. As the advertisement to the publication mentions, the tales originally appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in the year 1836 and concluded in the old monthly. The scene of the quotation is one of a wedding in the story 'Sir George Knatchbull'. Found in Robert Tyas, *The Hand-Book of the Language and Sentiment of Flowers; Containing the Name of Every Flower to Which a Sentiment has been Assigned* (London: Tyas, 1843).

I believe that the inscribers of this book were Elizabeth Lunnan (1831–1886) and her daughter Edith Ormondy Nowell (1865–1947). Born in Wales and eventually based in Yorkshire, Elizabeth Lunnan married a physician and surgeon, James Nowell (1829–1893) in 1859, and they had seven children — Helen (1860–), Jane (1861–), Tom (1863–), Edith, Henry (Harry) (1866–), Ethel (1869–), and Hugh (1871–1940). Nowell certified Elizabeth's death from locomotor ataxia, at the age of fifty-six.

Sources include the 1871 census (Woodlesford, Hunslet, Whitkirk, Household schedule number 194, Piece 4516, Folio 115, p. 33), and the 1881 census (Cloverfield Villa, Hunslet, Piece 4493, Folio 105, p.31) for England. Certified copy of Lunnan's death certificate 'FE 296171', 27 December 1886, certified by James Nowell M. R. C. S, widower of deceased, Arthur Batty registrar.

A3: Female Friends

'With Mrs Davison's kind love to her young friend Elizabeth Pace, June 11th 1847' — Anon., *Emblems and Poetry of Flowers* (London: Nelson, 1845).

'From Mrs Hartley, to Agnes M Drummond, with all best wishes, Xmas 1901' and a follow-up inscription 'From Mrs Hartley to Agnes May Drummond with best wishes, year 1899. Given to Vera May Stones who is her little girl, year 1922' — Mrs. L. Burke, *The Miniature Language of Flowers* (London: Routledge, 1865). This book is scribbled upon in crayon and text struck out at points.

A4: Sincere Friends

'Azuliah Palmer, presented by a sincear frend, [illegible code] June 1867' — Anon., *The Language & Poetry of Flowers* (London: Nelson, 1864).

'Miss Elizabeth Michaels, From A Sincere Friend, June 5th 1855' — Anon., *The Language and Poetry of Flowers* (London: Smith, undated).

Appendix B: Gift Inscription and Poem. Translations by Mara Arts.

Dedication: 'N.A. Knoops-Hoogewerff from my mother on 5.12.1919 who got it from grandmother Hoogewerff'

The sun, the moon, especially the flowers

Can celebrate your friendship

And in addition all that is clear

That is beautiful and clean in this life

This was given to you, o Nancy

That which will be your share on earth

The joy of all these beauties

Always [about] the world's possibilities

Will throw out lovely appearance

This is the secret of your beaming essence

The joy of the shine of eyes and the warm heart

And there you will be able to read in the book of life

And here there [is] triumph over pain and sorrow

Now flowers are sleeping outside

I send you this small book

Already [I] delighted many a sun with it

Take it with you at night in your warm small corner

And it fills your heart with joy and with peace

St Nic

Power, Agency and Emotion in the Folklore of the English Rural Deathbed

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ABSTRACT: The deathbed is an emotionally fraught site where friends and family gather to say farewell to their loved one for the final time. In the English rural working-class home in the nineteenth century folkloric ritual provided culturally-constructed behaviours with which to emotionally navigate this moment. At the urban deathbed paid professionals took the roles formerly held by friends and family to nurse and prepare a loved one for death and burial, while the rural deathbed remained a more traditional space. Building on Monique Scheer's theory of emotions as practice, I argue that in the rural working-class home folkloric ritual became bodily-expressed emotions. These rituals, which can be viewed as a method of social communication, offered a framework for emotional responses to death which allowed those gathered at the deathbed to feel some power and agency over the moment and manner of their loved one's passing.

KEYWORDS: Folklore; Death; Rural History; Ritual; Emotion

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THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES the folklore of the English rural deathbed in the nineteenth century to consider how the rituals of the deathbed aided the expression and sharing of emotion and prompted feelings of power and agency among practitioners. The English deathbed underwent a transformation over the course of the nineteenth century causing a divergence between deathbed practices in urban and rural locations. In cities, the professionalisation of doctors, the increasing medicalisation of death, the impact of public health reforms on attitudes toward the dead body, and the boom in undertakers all served to disrupt traditional family behaviours around death as the roles formerly held by friends and family in nursing the sick and preparing the dead body for burial were taken by paid professionals. Meanwhile in rural locations, where the pace of technological, societal, and cultural change was significantly slower and the pressures of crowded, urban living were not felt, the deathbed remained a more traditional space. Families and friends continued to play the roles that their parents had before them,

enacting traditional folkloric rituals at the deathbed that were understood by the gathered family as acts of care, forming a framework of familiar customs and expected behaviours with which to navigate an emotionally difficult period. Using evidence from nineteenth-century folklore collections, published in both book and article form towards the end of the nineteenth century, I examine the folkloric rituals of the English rural working-class deathbed. I consider the emotional role of folklore in these contexts and argue that inherited traditions encouraged feelings of power and agency in those who performed them. Through this analysis of rural working-class death customs I show that social changes around the deathbed in nineteenth-century England, especially in respect to the involvement of the family of the deceased, reveal a diversity of behaviours and beliefs that challenge the totalising stereotypes of dying and grieving largely gleaned from urban settings. Furthermore, this analysis indicates that the cultural persistence of deathbed traditions remained meaningful for much longer than we might suppose or understand from the emphasis placed on the study of the urban record of this period.

The influence of religion on determining deathbed conduct has long been held as fundamental. However, evidence from folklore collections suggests that folkloric rituals played a greater and more persistent role for rural working-class families in shaping how they behaved at the deathbed and what rituals were deemed necessary during this period of liminality. The deathbed has often been portrayed as a universalising location in which every family experiences the same set of emotions, and yet during the nineteenth century paid professionals at the urban deathbed increasingly intruded into what had previously been a family gathering, in a move which Allan Kellehear has termed the 'well-managed' death.[1] This effectively transformed the urban family into onlookers rather than active participants in the rituals of the deathbed. Historians have tended to foreground the family's feelings of powerlessness in these settings, but I argue that these experiences were largely confined to urban areas. In

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[1] Allan Kellehear, *A Social History of Dying* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 7. See also Pat Jalland, 'Victorian Death and Its Decline 1850–1918', in *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Peter Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 230-256 (p. 234); Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals', *Representations*, 1 (1983), 109-131 (p. 115); Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870–1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 72.

rural locations, the persistence of folkloric custom offered practitioners a greater sense of control during the dying and grieving process.

The emotions experienced by the family at the deathbed are not explicit in the folkloric record which was curated by middle- and upper-class folklorists who tended to record superstitions and beliefs while neglecting to question the practitioners about the meaning or purpose of their rituals. Furthermore, an individual's feelings of grief are difficult to separate from a culturally-mandated response. But, as Monique Scheer argues, 'emotional practices are habits, rituals, and everyday pastimes that aid us in achieving a certain emotional state. This includes the striving for a desired feeling as well as the modifying of one that is not desirable'.[2] Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the habitus, in which the body is a 'mindful entity' that can store previous experiences as 'habituated, practical processes', Scheer contends that outward, bodily-expressed emotions can be seen as a method of social communication.[3] In a group context the practice of emotion is regulated by the group itself: 'The emotional style of a group is engrained in an individual through both tacit socialization and explicit instruction'.[4] Giulia Morosini has contextualised this idea of the group regulation of emotion and how it can be 'mobilised' for a wider purpose in her work on the Italian renaissance military. She uses the example of the injured bodies of military captains, which were often displayed to their troops as a way to invoke feelings of love and loyalty, and to create strong social bonds.[5] A deathbed could be viewed as a similar opportunity to practice emotion through folkloric ritual —the embodied actions evoke emotion in those practising the ritual and in those observing — with the emotional practice serving to regularise feeling and to inspire a tighter bond in that moment. These emotions, 'simultaneously spontaneous and conventional', are often performed as a learned habit and as such can be viewed as cultural practices which are passed down through the generations.[6] Deathbed folklore falls into this category, providing

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[2] Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory*, 51 (2012), 193–220 (p. 209).

[3] Scheer, p. 195.

[4] Giulia Morosini, 'Mobilizing emotions in the Italian Renaissance military', in Kate Davison et al., 'Emotions as a kind of practice: Six case studies utilizing Monique Scheer's practice-based approach to emotions in history', *Cultural History*, 7.2 (2018), 226–238 (p. 227).

[5] Morosini, p. 230.

[6] Scheer, p. 206.

traditional actions which allow the ordered expression of feeling, enabling the family to easily decode meaning and take comfort from experiencing an emotion collectively. As Pat Jalland has explored in the context of nineteenth-century upper-class rituals of mourning, these rituals can help to manage emotions: 'Nineteenth-century mourning rituals met the psychological needs of the bereaved by reducing the terrifying aspects of death, and structuring the grieving process within a coherent set of customs'.[7] In this way, folklore offered a framework for emotional responses to death; by providing a ritual to perform for each step of the dying process, from last breath to final farewell, the expression of complex feelings could be ordered and embodied in socially acceptable rituals.

It can be difficult to access the voices of the rural working classes, not least their emotional responses, as very few recorded their feelings in print. However, folklore represents a source of alternative knowledge outside the establishment, reflecting popular beliefs and providing insight into the diverse and often distinctly regional customs that were practised by the rural working classes. Viewing folkloric ritual as a form of emotional practice allows for important if partial insight into the emotions of the rural deathbed. The sources in this study were collected by folklorists from rural working-class people and published in book and article form from the late 1860s. The practice of folklore was not confined solely to rural communities; folklore flowed between urban and rural locations as people migrated from the countryside to the cities, often adapting their customs to new circumstances. Despite this fluidity, folklorists in the mid- to late nineteenth century held a rigid and narrow definition of folklore and the people who practised it, informed by a Romantic nationalist agenda that saw folklore as a 'survival' of primitive thought.[8] This definition held that folklore originated with, and continued to be practised by, the rural working classes who were deemed to be more attuned to nature, providing a counterpoint to the degenerate, uncultured, urban working classes.[9] In reality, many of the deathbed traditions I will go on to

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[7] Pat Jalland, 'Death, Grief, and Mourning in the Upper-Class Family 1860–1914' in *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*, ed. by Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 171–187 (p. 180).

[8] On Romantic nationalism and folklore see: Roger D. Abrahams, 'Phantoms of Romantic Nationalism in Folkloristics', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 106.419 (1993), 3-37; Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, eds., *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[9] Gillian Bennett, 'Folklore Studies and the English Rural Myth', *Rural History*, 4.1 (1993), 77–91 (p. 82).

describe would have also been practised in urban settings by the working classes who had recently moved to the city, but for the purposes of this study I retain the folklorist's definition of 'the folk' as rural. Furthermore, the folklore collections published at the end of the nineteenth century were made up of a mixture of sources reprinted from earlier antiquarian collections, with reminiscences of early nineteenth-century customs placed alongside contemporary reports of current folkloric practices. This builds up a picture of folklore as not only an important set of inherited cultural beliefs but also demonstrates how folklore was adapted and evolved to suit the changing circumstances of those who practised it. Although great social, cultural, and demographic changes occurred over the period of the nineteenth century, the folklore record implies that such was the cultural importance of folkloric tradition that it persisted, forming a foundational aspect of deathbed behaviour that transcended religious and societal transformations.

A Reconceptualisation of the Relationship with the Newly-dead

The ideal, traditional English deathbed, which was first conceptualised in the Middle Ages, offered a chance for the dying to prepare themselves for the next life, to say farewell to their loved ones and, all being well, fade into 'sleep'. Friends and family traditionally congregated at the deathbed and a final visit to a loved one before their demise became a cultural obligation. In pre-Reformation England this gathering had a strongly religious focus as the dying needed to be absolved of their sins and the family had to pray for their departing soul. Once the concept of purgatory had been expunged from English life this moment lost its ritual significance: in this section of the essay, I ask what filled the lacuna.

The Reformation stripped the deathbed of a variety of religious rituals that had previously formed the focal point of a deathbed gathering, leading to a reconceptualisation of the relationship to the newly-dead. Paul Binski describes the significance of the religious rituals of the pre-Reformation deathbed and explains that medieval Christians feared a sudden death because it would not allow them time to settle their affairs, preventing them from being fully absolved from sin and entering the desired state of grace: 'The happy man died in bed in a domesticated and regulated

fashion'.[10] Peter Marshall notes that it was believed the dead did not immediately pass to the afterlife but instead had to move through a 'painful purgation of the debt due for their sins' in purgatory. This, he argues, led to a second key belief that the living could intercede on behalf of the dead to assist them in their journey.[11] The dead continued to exist for the pre-Reformation family; they must be prayed for and commemorated to ensure that they successfully passed through purgatory. This was a process that started at the deathbed but persisted after burial, ensuring the dead continued to have a presence long after their body had been committed to the ground. After the Reformation death rituals became less religious in focus, and increasingly centred on the living.[12] Vanessa Harding contends that this shift caused a dramatic reordering of our relationship with the dead:

> Protestant doctrine condemned the idea of intercession for the dead and brought to an end the elaborate structure of chantries, obits, and commemorative practices. The departed soul could neither benefit from nor confer benefits on the living; the dead ceased to exist as a meaningful human category.[13]

This was certainly the Church's official line and great efforts were made to stamp out any lingering Popish rituals associated with death. However, tradition and belief are not easily surrendered, especially when they relate to the ultimate destination of the soul; safe delivery to heaven, everlasting rest, or potential resurrection had long been the ideal. Many historians argue for a 'long' or 'slow' Reformation and, as Marshall explains, it is around our relationship to the dead that the slow pace of cultural change can be seen most distinctly, with few willing to risk any changes to traditional deathbed rituals

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[10] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 36.

[11] Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 7.

[12] See R. C. Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the Later Middle Ages' in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. by Joachim Whaley (London: Europa Publications Ltd, 1981), pp. 40–60 (p. 40).

[13] Vanessa Harding, 'Research Priorities: a historian's perspective' in *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England 1700–1850*, ed. by Margaret Cox (York: Council for British Archaeology, 1998), pp. 205-212 (p. 209).

lest they impact the future repose of the deceased's soul.[14] As I will go on to show, the 'official' Church position that the living no longer had to intercede on behalf of the dead was not necessarily reflected in the practice of folkloric rituals of the deathbed. These rituals, still an active and evolving part of nineteenth-century rural working-class death culture, provided plenty of scope for the living to feel some power and agency over the fate of their loved one's spirit and offered a way to practice emotion through embodied actions.

The Folklore of the Deathbed

Rural working-class deathbeds did not go through the same transformations as urban deathbeds in the nineteenth century. A doctor was unlikely to attend at the moment of death, hospitals were too costly and distant for remote rural people, and the sanitary concerns of crowded cities did not translate to their rural neighbours. This meant that the rural working-class deathbed was less troubled by modernity; the same traditions and rituals performed by previous generations could continue to be enacted. I am not arguing that there was a single rural culture of death or that it was immune to outside influences. Through the huge variety of regional folklore collected, I want to show rather that nineteenth-century rural death culture was vibrant, diverse, and infused with meaning – folkloric ritual provided a series of familiar embodied actions which helped the family to navigate a personal, emotionally-fraught moment.

The urban deathbed in the nineteenth century exemplifies Harding's statement that in the aftermath of the Reformation, which saw the removal of the concept of purgatory, the dead were no longer a 'meaningful human category': they no longer existed past the point of death. At the urban deathbed, farewells were made until the moment of death, but once the loved one had passed the emphasis moved back onto the family whose rituals then revolved around mourning.[15] However, for the rural working classes the question of the destination of a loved one's spirit and the family's ability to intercede to ensure its onward journey remained pertinent. The folklorist Rev. T. F. Thiselton writes in *Domestic Folk-Lore* (1881):

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[14] Marshall, p. 310.

[15] Strange, p. 16.

> The superstitions associated with the last stage of human life are most numerous; and that this should be so is not surprising when it is considered how, from the earliest time, a certain dread has been attached to death, not only on account of its awful mysteriousness, but owing to its being the crisis of an entirely new phase of the soul's existence.[16]

Thiselton acknowledges the importance of deathbed rituals and their relationship to the soul's liminal status during this period. However, in keeping with the paternalistic attitude of the folklorists towards the rural working classes, he seems more preoccupied with larger philosophical concerns about the 'awful mysteriousness' of death than the emotional experiences of those who performed these final rituals. Dread of death may have been common to all classes, but folkloric ritual also provided the rural working classes with an opportunity to feel powerful at the deathbed. Their behaviours could seem to impact the time of death and the ease with which their loved one moved on to the afterlife, reflecting their ongoing belief in a lingering spirit and the need to actively assist in its onward journey.

The folklore of the deathbed begins before death has taken place with the deep emotional ties held between family members, thought to 'hold back' an individual from death. Folklorist Richard Blakeborough describes the belief in 1898:

> Few country people doubt the existence of a power by which the living can (as they put it) hold back the dying. It is not an uncommon thing to hear some one say, "Sha wad 'a'e deed last neet, nobbut Mary wadn't let her gan," or "Mary wadn't gi'e her up," or "Mary ho'ds on tiv her seea."

> It is, as it were, the last link of the chain connecting life with the earthly side of eternity, the snapping of which would for ever free the soul, but which the dying person is unable to break, because some one refuses to be reconciled; they cannot bear to part with them, and in this way hold them back.[17]

This concept was known variously as 'holding back', 'longing' or 'wishing' and it was believed that the living had the power to prevent their loved one from dying, simply by

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[16] Rev T. F. Thiselton, *Domestic Folk-Lore*, (London: Cassell, 1881), p. 48.

[17] Richard Blakeborough, *Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (London: Henry Frowde, 1898), p. 120.

'wishing' them to stay too much.[18] Other circumstances were said to account for difficulty in dying, the most widespread was a belief that the presence of pigeon or game feathers in the deathbed could prevent an easy death. This is one of the more prevalent folkloric beliefs connected with the deathbed and is cited in folklore from all across England: Cornwall, Dorset, Oxfordshire, Sussex, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Cheshire.[19] Again this folklore provides an active solution for the family in the face of the terrible power wielded by mortality: they can remove the feather pillow (or the dying person from their bed) and in this way feel like they are easing a difficult death. Feathers were not the only objects thought to prevent an easy death: crossbeams were also believed to 'hinder' passing.[20] It was recommended that anyone who was lingering on the point of death be moved in case their bed lay underneath crossbeams. These large wooden beams were important structural aspects of the home, supporting the walls and roof. The belief that lying underneath one could somehow cause a blockage to the departing spirit is an example of the house itself forming a barrier between the dying person and the afterlife.

The belief that the onward flight of a person's spirit might be distracted or prevented by a loud noise, a closed window or a locked door, echoes the concept of the material house as a barricade.[21] Blakeborough conjures up a powerful vision of this

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[18] Charlotte Latham, 'Some West Sussex Superstitions Still Lingering in 1868', *The Folklore Record,* vol. 1 (1878), p. 60; Rev M. C. F. Morris, *Yorkshire Folk-Talk* (London: Henry Frowde, 1892), p. 238; Rev T. F Thiselton, *English Folklore* (London: Hardwicke & Bogue, 1878), p. 229.

[19] Latham, p. 59; M. A. Courtney, 'Cornish Folk-lore', The Folklore Society, *The Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. 5 (1887), p. 217; *Folk-Lore*, vol. 23 (1912), p. 356; *Folk-Lore*, vol. 24 (1913), p. 88; Sidney Oldall Addy, *Household Tales with other Traditional Remains Collected in the Counties of York, Lincoln, Derby, and Nottingham* (London: D. Nutt, 1895), p. 123; Blakeborough, p. 120; Morris, p. 238; Thiselton, *Domestic Folk-Lore*, pp. 58–59; Mrs Gutch and Mabel Peacock, *County Folklore: Examples of Printed Folklore Concerning Lincolnshire* (London: The Folklore Society, 1908), p. 240; *Choice Notes from Notes & Queries: Folklore* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1859), p. 43; William Henderson, *Notes of the Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England* (London: The Folklore Society, 1879), p. 60; Robert Hunt, *Popular romances of the west of England* (London: J.C. Hotten, 1865), p. 379.

[20] The Folklore Society, *The Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. 1 (1883), p. 196; *Choice Notes from Notes & Queries*, pp. 175–76.

[21] See for example: Latham, p. 229; D. H. Moutray Read, 'Funeral customs of Hampshire', *Folk-Lore*, vol. 22 (1911), p. 319; John Nicholson, *The Folk Lore of East Yorkshire* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, & Co., 1890), p. 5.

moment at the deathbed when the gathered friends and family stand silent as the last breath is taken:

> When the signs of death are observed the windows and door are thrown wide open, and a silence as still as death itself is maintained, so that nothing shall either hinder the dark angel from setting his seal on their loved one, or impede the soul's flight over the borderland into that of the great unknown.[22]

The house, then, forms an earthly prison for the spirit which must be breached – a soul cannot pass through walls but must have windows and doors opened for it – and the family must assist the spirit in order for it to find its rightful place in an ethereal afterlife. Another common practice of this type was the covering of mirrors lest the spirit become trapped inside their shiny, reflective surfaces.[23] The final folkloric rituals of the deathbed signal the ending of one period of time and the beginning of another. Family members represented this transition by stopping all the clocks, closing the blinds or curtains, and extinguishing the fire in the room where death took place. The domestic folklore of the deathbed established a form of social communication amongst the close family and friends who had congregated to witness the last moments of their loved one, each belief converted into a bodily-enacted ritual. But what sense can we make of these physical actions and what function or emotional significance do they hold?

Actively Letting Go

For some rural Victorians death was not a smooth transition; not everyone peacefully slipped away from their deathbed after making their final farewells. Some 'died hard', taking days or weeks to die, teetering on the edge, often in pain, and for family and friends in these circumstances sadness and grief could be compounded by feelings of helplessness. Nineteenth-century folkloric rituals offered the family a way to feel helpful and made use of the belief that their deep emotional ties could explain their loved one's apparent inability to die. The widespread belief that a person could be 'held back' from dying by someone loving them too much or wishing them to stay gave families agency.

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[22] Blakeborough, p. 120.

[23] Charlotte Sophia Burne, ed., *Shropshire Folk-Lore: A Sheaf of Gleanings from the collection of Georgina F. Jackson*, (London: Trubner and Co., 1883), p. 299; Henderson, p. 57; Gutch and Peacock, p. 240.

It also reflected an Evangelical view of Heaven as somewhere that the soul belongs and where the family will one day be reunited.[24] This version of Heaven provides a reason for the family to 'let go' as by doing so they end earthly suffering and allow the spirit to move on to be at peace in the afterlife. The concept of 'holding back' cannot be properly understood without recognising the perceived emotional power of love; it acknowledges a strong connection between family members which created an invisible but potent bond, difficult to sever. Folklore preserves an older tradition of familiar investment in, and involvement with, the dead, indicating that before the person had even died the family were mindful of how the bond between them could or would continue after death had taken place. It echoes earlier purgatorial thinking and demonstrates that the gathered family had a role to play in easing death and guiding the spirit on to the afterlife.

The helplessness experienced by the family at a deathbed could be mitigated by the belief that they could hasten or ease a hard death by emotionally letting their loved one go. However, this perceived power could also be misused and sometimes, as shown by this anecdote in *Notes & Queries*, to withhold it was seen as a selfish act:

> I said to Mrs. B., "Poor little H. lingered a long time; I thought when I saw him, that he must have died the same day, but he lingered on!" "Yes," said Mrs. B., "it was a great shame of his mother. He wanted to die, and she would not let him die; she couldn't part with him. There she stood, fretting over him, and couldn't give him up; and so we said to her, 'He'll never die till you give him up!' And then she gave him up; and he died quite peaceably."[25]

With a peaceful death achieved, a parent could feel they had enacted one last great act of love by giving 'permission' for their child to pass on. In this context death is portrayed as a blessed relief and those keeping their loved one from dying were thought to be acting with cruelty. The Victorian attitude to expressing emotion was dichotomous, as evidenced by Thomas Dixon's wide-ranging analysis of British tears.[26]

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[24] See Julie Rugg, 'From Reason to Regulation: 1760–1850', in Jupp and Gittings, pp. 202-230 (p. 213).

[25] A letter written to *Notes & Queries* regarding deathbed folklore in which the correspondent shares their experience of visiting a family who believed in 'holding back', as quoted in Thiselton, *English Folklore*, p. 229.

[26] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

On the one hand there was an upturn in sentimental writing, as typified by the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which, as Nicola Bown has pointed out, allowed people to cry and express their emotions in the privacy of their sitting room.[27] This coincided with the Romantic idea that true grief was silent, internal, and beyond tears. For men especially it became unseemly to cry: instead, a stoical restraint was admired and encouraged.[28] Jalland too reflects on the fact that in the early part of the nineteenth century the Evangelical tradition encouraged emotion at the deathbed but by the late nineteenth century emotional inhibition increased.[29] This pressure to contain emotion at the deathbed is corroborated by folklorist Eleanor Hull in her collection of British folklore: 'Tears should not be allowed to fall heavily upon the dead, for the dropping of the tears of mourners are felt like heavy weights, hindering the deceased from the rest he needs'.[30]

The requirement for stoicism emerged from a long tradition. Susan Broomhall discusses how in the early modern period, pregnant women were urged not to allow any strong emotion to be enacted bodily, lest it have a negative effect on the unborn child, placing a 'moral duty' on the soon-to-be mother.[31] This idea of a moral duty extended to the deathbed, with the concept of 'holding back' placing a responsibility on the gathered family to control their visible grief and emotionally let go of the dying to ensure a swift and painless passing. The longevity of this belief suggests that stoicism in the face of death, rather than the Evangelical loosening of emotional restraint, was the standard model of emotional expression. The 'moral duty' to contain emotion reflected in 'holding back' foreshadows more modern notions of the power of letting go explored by Sigmund Freud, who suggested that the 'work of mourning' was to

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[27] Nicola Bown, 'Introduction: Crying Over Little Nell', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.453> [accessed 07/10/2023].

[28] Dixon, p. 145, 195.

[29] Pat Jalland, Death in the Victorian Family, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 54.

[30] Eleanor Hull, *Folklore of the British Isles* (London: Methuen, 1928), p. 210.

[31] Susan Broomhall, 'Beholding Suffering and Providing Care: Emotional Performances on the Death of Poor Children in Sixteenth-Century French Institutions', in *Death, Emotion and Childhood in Premodern Europe*, ed. by K. Barclay et al. (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 65–86 (p. 69).

Issue 6: January 2024   www.rrrjournal.com

begin to sever emotional ties with the dead.[32] Among his wealthy, urban clients in Vienna, Freud identified a condition he called 'melancholia'.[33] Those suffering from melancholia had failed to complete the 'work of mourning', indicating that modern, urban deathways did not allow for the same emotional processing that traditional rural deathways did. Urban mourners were disconnected from their dead, paid professionals were now responsible for nursing and preparing the dead for burial, leaving the family as observers at the deathbed who played no active role in their loved one's death. In contrast, the practices surrounding the rural deathbed, at which ritualised farewells appropriately routed emotion, ensured that the mourner was not left alienated from the dead body and enabled them to begin processing their grief.

'Holding back' was a gendered tradition; it was always women who were identified as those with the power to 'hold' a loved one back, for good or for ill. One folklore collection from 1895 includes an anecdote which demonstrates the continuing belief that excessive grief prevented the dead from being at rest:

> An old woman still living (1854) in Piersebridge [sic], who mourned with inordinate grief for a length of time the loss of a favourite daughter, asserts that she was visited by the spirit of her departed child, and earnestly exhorted not to disturb her peaceful repose by unnecessary lamentations and repinings at the will of God; and from that time she never grieved more.[34]

The vision is not of a restless spirit, but one who returns simply to ask that their 'peaceful repose' not be disrupted by her mother's continued grief. This imagined request seems to have provided reassurance to the mother that their daughter was safe on the other side and a realisation that her own misery was providing a barrier to them both moving forward. Anecdotes such as this detail the belief that it is necessary to reconfigure the relationship to the newly-dead by mentally releasing one version of their loved one and accepting that their place is now in the afterlife.

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[32] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, vol. XIV (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-74), p. 255.

[33] Freud, p. 244.

[34] Dr James Hardy ed., *The Denham Tracts* (London: The Folklore Society, 1895), p. 58.

Agency and the Safe Onward Journey of the Spirit

The agency of the family in assuring an easy death by not 'holding them back' is enacted through an invisible, interior emotional response. However, most of the other folkloric rituals of the deathbed had very real and active bodily enactments and this is typified by the belief that removing pigeon or game feathers from the bed of a dying person could precipitate their death. The Rev. Morris provides an account from rural North Yorkshire from 1892:

> I was told not long since of one Jane H, from the neighbourhood of Westerdale, that she was lying upon a bed of that description; that she was in extremis for a week, and when it was thought she could not die in consequence of being upon a bed of wild birds' feathers they took her off it and laid her upon a squab, where, as I was informed, she died at once![35]

The folklore collections contain numerous versions of this tale, in which a person is removed from their bed and laid on the floor, moved to a chair, or in one case hoisted off the bed with a winch fashioned from bedsheets, all ending with the same result that the loved one, at last, could die peacefully. Blakeborough implies that this belief could work both ways — not only could death be hastened by removing pigeon feathers but it could also be intentionally delayed by placing them under the head of a person near death:

> Instances are on record of pigeon feathers having been placed in a small bag, and thrust under dying persons to hold them back, until the arrival of some loved one; but the meeting having taken place, the feathers were withdrawn, and death allowed to enter.[36]

Blakeborough's language imbues the pigeon feathers with great power, their removal allowing death 'to enter'. The enactment of this ritual emphasises the cultural importance of gathering to say farewell to the dying, the positioning of the pigeon feathers making time for this emotional moment to take place, fortifying family bonds. Some agency over the moment of death could thus be regained by using feathers as

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[35] Morris, p. 238.

[36] Blakeborough, p. 120.

magical objects to hasten or delay the final moment, removal of the feathers representing an embodiment of the internally realised action of letting go.

Another distinctive cluster of folkloric deathbed customs emerges around the moments after death, placing responsibility for the soul's safe passage to the afterlife on the shoulders of the living in ways that clearly echo pre-Reformation religious beliefs. Although they might be partly motivated by love, these actions, intended to ensure the spirit moves on and does not become trapped on earth, also foreground another emotion: fear. Christine Quigley describes the period directly after death as 'latent life' when the dead are still believed to linger around their body for an undefined period of time after the heart has ceased to beat.[37] Quigley and Gillian Bennett both argue that some confusion continued to be felt well into the twentieth century about the nature of this spirit, with some believing it could attract evil while others report its reassuring presence.[38] This fear is reflected in the practice of keeping silent directly after a death has taken place which evokes the ancient idea that uttering a person's name is a summoning act.[39] By remaining quiet the family can hope that their loved one will move seamlessly to the next world, and will not be tempted to linger.

A spirit that does not pass on to the afterlife and remains in the home becomes malign because it is not in its correct place and therefore must be positively encouraged to move on by the ritual throwing open of windows and doors.[40] The accepted reasoning behind this custom linked the opening of doors and windows to a Roman Catholic concept of the soul and the perils of purgatory.[41] Certainly before the Reformation rituals for the dead were played out as a form of reciprocal behaviour: the living would pray for the dead to move quickly through purgatory and then the dead, when safely in Heaven, would pray for their living relatives.[42] Ruth Richardson argues that this theme of reciprocity in folk customs continued into the nineteenth century with

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[37] Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland, 1996), p. 51.

[38] Gillian Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women and the Supernatural* (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 50; Quigley, p. 16.

[39] See entry on 'incantation' in *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

[40] Nicholson, p. 5; Addy, p. 123.

[41] Marshall, p. 7.

[42] Marshall, p. 11.

friends and family enacting rituals of care as a good deed redeemed against their own soul, their attentions also ensuring their loved one's soul would attain rest. I would argue that in the nineteenth century this had less to do with continuing concepts of purgatory and more to do with a fear of haunting, the impetus not coming so much from reciprocity as from a desire to exert some agency over the safe onward journey of the spirit. A fear of haunting is often given as a primary reason for many of these traditions, with folklorist Charlotte Sophia Burne commenting that: 'Many of the old-fashioned customs at a death-bed are due to the dread of ghosts'.[43] The preoccupation with the safe onward flight of the spirit thus reflected not only a loving wish that the soul reach the afterlife but also an anxiety about ghosts, death, and the dead body, revealing that these rituals could manifest many emotional states and hold multiple meanings for those enacting them.

Folklorists and folklore enthusiasts discussed the meaning of the practice of opening windows and doors in the pages of *Notes & Queries,* the *Athenaeum* and via the journal of the Folklore Society: 'it originates from the belief which formerly prevailed that the soul flew out of the mouth of the dying in the likeness of a bird'.[44] Another folklorist suggests that 'the folk' believed that during the last breath the soul departs the body in the form of vapour.[45] And yet another that: 'the soul resembles a flame, and hovers round the hearth for a certain period after death'.[46] These accounts all point to the belief that the soul has some sort of physical presence, even a tangible 'vapour' that might be glimpsed as it departs. The concept of a soul has existed for thousands of years and yet, unlike other popular visual concepts such as 'blindfolded Justice', Moshe Barasch argues, no single imagery has become dominant, leaving the soul imagined in numerous forms.[47] It is not depicted in art, as one might imagine, as a smaller ghostly version of the person who has died but rather it is often an anonymous figure, its age, gender, and characteristics unclear. This insinuates that popular belief in

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[43] Burne, p. 299.

[44] Letter to the *Athenaeum* (No. 990), 17 Oct. 1846, as quoted in *Choice Notes from Notes & Queries*, p. 117.

[45] *Choice Notes from Notes & Queries*, p. 119.

[46] Henderson, p. 53.

[47] Moshe Barasch, 'The Departing Soul. The Long Life of a Medieval Creation', *Artibus et Historiae*, 26.52 (2005), 13–28 (p. 14).

the soul conceives it as beyond human, the physical body acting as a mere shell for the soul.

The nature of the departing soul is again brought into question when considering that the folkloric depiction of the spirit implies that in this moment it can be blocked by a closed window. Traditionally ghosts or spectres are portrayed as able to pass through physical objects, moving with ease through the house, and yet the departing soul cannot move so freely, indicating that it was seen as materially different to a haunting spirit. When it first exits the body the spirit still holds the essence of the loved one and therefore must be carefully ushered on to the afterlife as an act of care, whereas a ghost or haunting spirit has undergone a transformation; they are no longer a reassuring presence but have become threatening and troublesome. The fear of haunting then encodes some anxiety about death occurring in the domestic sphere, as if the very materiality of the home and its furnishing can somehow absorb and trap a spirit, turning a peaceful soul into a tormented captive. Becoming trapped on earth was akin to purgatory and, much like physical act of removing pigeon feathers, these traditional rituals literally make the path clear for the spirit. When bodily enacted, the traditional rituals around death become accepted ways to express grief and loss, show care and compassion, and invoke in those witnessing the rituals the same socially conditioned emotional response. These unspoken social codes allow emotions to be experienced and managed collectively, working to strengthen familial bonds.

Marking a Distinct Emotional Phase

The final folkloric rituals of the deathbed, such as covering mirrors, extinguishing the fire and stopping the clocks, served to signal the end of the period of sickness and dying. An account from 1898 asserts that: 'So soon as the vital spark has left its earthly house, the fire, if such be burning in the room, is immediately extinguished'.[48] By putting the fire out the family were communicating that the room held no more comfort for the dead; it was no longer a warm and welcoming space. It signalled to all those in the room (and perhaps to the spirit too) that a transition had occurred, a light had gone out. The physical act of putting out the fire implies an ending, it draws a line under the period of dying and signals a moment of pause until the fire is made anew. The stopping of clocks was another way this end period was expressed – one account has

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[48] Blakeborough, p. 122.

the clock stopped and then covered with a veil as if to freeze that moment in time.[49] Helen Frisby convincingly argues that 'This suggests a literal stopping of time and the household's entry into a liminal state of existence in which normal time did not apply'.[50] It echoes Quigley's idea of 'latent life' and the belief in the rural home that the period between death and burial represents a distinct emotional phase during which the family can make their farewells and begin to process their loss.

The folkloric rituals associated with clocks and mirrors are notable not only because of the meaning inscribed in the act but also because these were relatively modern technologies for the Victorians. As Frisby points out:

> Since silver-glass mirrors, which were capable of mass production and therefore affordable to ordinary people, were only invented in 1835, such belief in the magical power of mirrors exemplifies the projection of magic onto the products of modern mass manufacture and market capitalism.[51]

Clocks were also not often found in the homes of working-class people until nearer the end of the nineteenth-century when technology and manufacturing techniques made them smaller and more affordable. By imbuing mirrors and clocks with magic and co-opting them into older existing traditions of the deathbed, 'the folk' reveal that folklore in the nineteenth-century was not static but evolving. As new technologies entered the home they were absorbed into extant beliefs, melding old with new, assisting their integration into existing customs and encouraging the continued development and practice of folkloric ways to manage grief and mark time.

Conclusion

The traditions at the deathbed may each have slightly different meaning or intention, yet placed together as a collection, they provided a framework for the expected behaviour of the gathered family, allowing the collective practice of emotion and the expression of care. The following account from Yorkshire from 1890 reveals how folkloric rituals were generally performed as part of a sequence:

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[49] Gutch and Peacock, p. 240.

[50] Helen Frisby, '"Them Owls Know": Portending Death in Later Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century England', *Folklore*, 126.2 (2015), 196–214 (p. 207).

[51] Frisby, p. 207.

> When, by holding a hand glass to the mouth, it has been ascertained that death has taken place, the door or window of the room is opened to allow the spirit to pass out easily, and if, owing to the presence of pigeon's feathers in the bed, the death has been so hard that the poor creature has been lifted in the sheet off the bed on to the floor, the body is returned to the bedstead and laid out. All the looking glasses in the house are either turned to the wall or covered up, and the clocks stopped.[52]

This narrative gives a clearer picture that these individual rituals are forming part of a whole sequence of customs that guided the family's behaviour during this period of transition and helped them to begin to process their loss before the finality of burial. These bodily-expressed emotions at the deathbed thus become cultural practices which are passed down through the generations as a form of social communication.[53] Prior to the Reformation religion had offered a series of duties and ceremonies for the family to carry out at the deathbed, providing purpose and reassurance that their actions had safely ushered their loved one to Heaven.[54] By the nineteenth century, long after the loss of purgatorial deathbed rituals, folklore filled this gap, bringing its own set of customs and practices which acted as a uniting force for the rural working-class family.

By analysing the folkloric rituals of the deathbed which were still being performed by the rural working classes at the close of the nineteenth century we can see that the transformation of the deathbed in urban centres—in which professionals such as nurses, doctors, and undertakers began to take on the roles previously held by family—was not echoed in rural locations. This intervention enriches our understanding of Victorian death culture by reinserting rural traditions into the discourse and encouraging a more heterogeneous approach to the wide range of beliefs and practices it encompassed. After the Reformation, when the concept of purgatory was rejected, the requirement to pray for the soul became obsolete, but belief in the need to guide the soul safely to the afterlife still lingered in popular folkloric ritual. Not only did folklore provide a framework of behaviours that gave families some structure with which to guide their emotional responses to death but it also offered them a way to

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[52] Nicholson, p. 5.

[53] Scheer, p. 195.

[54] See Bronislaw Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion' in *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. by Antonius C. G. M. Robben (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 19–22 (p. 22).

feel agency and enact care for the deceased by performing embodied rituals to ease a hard death and usher their loved one to the afterlife. For the rural working classes, enacting inherited traditions provided a familiar framework for navigating the emotional turmoil of the deathbed, uniting the family in their grief, and providing an active way to show care and compassion to the deceased.

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'Gloriously Widowed': Public Mourning and Private Grief in the Aftermath of Scott's *Terra Nova* Expedition, 1910-1913

DEBORAH WOOD

ABSTRACT: This article explores the emotional experiences of two families who were bereaved by the *Terra Nova* expedition. The very public nature of these deaths, and the intensive press coverage of the losses and aftermath of the expedition saw an outpouring of public mourning within Britain; yet for the Scott and Evans families, these deaths were also hugely personal losses. The article argues that press intrusion into the families' grief profoundly altered their emotional experiences of loss, not only in the immediate aftermath of the deaths, but also in the years that followed. The two families came from profoundly different backgrounds in terms of class, social influence, and the resources available to them after their loss; however, this paper shows how the actions of the press and the persistence of the public gaze briefly united them in this unique experience of loss under the spotlight of Edwardian Britain.

KEYWORDS: Grief; Antarctic History; Women's History; Public Memory; Legacy; Polar Exploration

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THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC Expedition 1910-1913 (also known as the *Terra Nova* expedition) holds a specific niche within the British cultural imagination of historic polar exploration. The expedition's goal was to reach the South Pole for the first time – an aim that was shared by a separate, Norwegian expedition, and led to the depiction of the mythologised 'Race for the Pole' by the British press. While both parties reached the Pole within five weeks of one another, only the Norwegian team returned safely. The British team of five had man-hauled themselves and their belongings to the Pole; but as their return journey progressed, their journal entries traced their diminishing hopes of reaching safety, punctuated by the decline and deaths of Petty Officer Edgar Evans (1876-1912), and Captain Lawrence Oates (1880-1912). The remaining three men –

Captain Robert Falcon Scott (1868-1912), Dr Edward Wilson (1872-1912), and Lieutenant Henry Bowers (1883-1912) became stranded in a blizzard eleven miles from safety; and as their food and fuel supplies dwindled, they knew there was little they could do but wait for death to arrive. In the time they had left, all three men wrote as much as they could, ensuring that they would leave behind a clear narrative of how their deaths had come to pass, and letters for those who would grieve them.

The remaining expedition members found the journals, letters, and bodies six months later. Despite the rapid developments in communications technologies during this period, the surviving men had no way to transmit the news of the party's deaths from the Antarctic to the outside world until they arrived back in New Zealand, almost a year after the men had died. The deaths had occurred slowly and silently; however, once the story reached Britain, it was met with an explosion in the press that lamented and glorified the sacrificial deaths of these tragic heroes. The heavy news coverage not only amplified the national mourning for the dead, but also focused a spotlight on those who had been 'gloriously widowed' by the expedition.[1] Scott, Wilson, and Evans were married; and Scott and Evans both had young children. Their families had already endured three years of anxiety, being unable to communicate with their absent loved ones except via the annual supply ship's visit to exchange news and letters. However, this anxiety was not relieved by the return of their loved ones, but instead transformed into grief by the news of their personal loss.

Two families in particular – those of Captain Scott and Petty Officer Evans – became the focus of intense press attention. This paper will explore the families' emotional experiences of and responses to their bereavement through the lens of the explorers' widows, alongside the influence of the public gaze and press intrusion on their grief. It is crucial to acknowledge the profound differences in class, agency, and influence between these families as shaping forces on their experiences during this challenging period. While they were united by this brief and almost unique experience of grief under the public spotlight, their lives were otherwise fundamentally different. Kathleen Scott (1878-1947) held powerful connections in social, political, and artistic spheres that she developed both through her career as a sculptor, and through her position as a celebrated explorer's wife. Upon her husband's death, she inherited a role in the framing of the expedition's public narrative and memory. Lois Evans (1879-1952)

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[1] 'Casket for Lady Scott', *Daily Mirror*, 27th May 1913. Hosted by the Mirror Historical Archive.

was a working-class woman who balanced her grief with the necessity of providing for her three children – Norman, aged 7; Muriel, aged 5; and Ralph, aged 4 – without her husband's emotional or financial support. The intense press intrusion, combined with her lack of agency over her husband's legacy, exacerbated the pressures that Lois and her family faced.

This article builds upon recent work undertaken by Anne Fletcher, Kari Herbert, and Katherine MacInnes to recover the life histories of polar explorers' wives.[2] With this valuable biographical work as a foundation, I explore the experiences of these two families both through the lens of polar exploration, and within the sociocultural contexts that they lived and worked in. Historians including Geoffrey Cubitt, Max Jones, and Stephanie Barczewski have explored the cultural impacts and understandings of this expedition within Britain, whilst Beau Riffenburgh has highlighted the power of the press in shaping these public understandings of polar exploration.[3] I examine the pressures, mindsets and expectations that shaped these families' experiences of private grief in the context of national mourning by uniting this sociocultural backdrop with contemporary understandings of masculinity, death, and bereavement within this period.

My work centres the surviving primary sources which inform the experiences of these families – however, it is vital to acknowledge the disparity in the extant first-hand accounts available from each family. Kathleen Scott was well-connected, and her letters have been preserved in collections across Britain – including the Scott Polar Research Institute, the University Library, Cambridge, and the National Maritime Museum. Her partial autobiography and diaries were edited and published posthumously in 1949 by

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[2] Anne Fletcher, *Widows of the Ice: The Women That Scott's Antarctic Expedition Left Behind* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2022); Kari Herbert, *Polar Wives: The Remarkable Women behind the World's Most Daring Explorers* (Vancouver: Greystone, 2012); Katherine MacInnes, *Snow Widows: Scott's Fatal Antarctic Expedition Through the Eyes of the Women They Left Behind* (London: William Collins, 2022) and *Woman with the Iceberg Eyes: Oriana F. Wilson* (Cheltenham: The History Press, 2019).

[3] Geoffrey Cubitt, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, ed. by Allen Warren and Geoffrey Cubitt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton, and the Changing Face of Heroism* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery*, Polar Research Series (London: Belhaven, 1993).

her second husband, Edward Hilton-Young, and offer a clear insight into her experiences of this expedition, and her life in the following decades. This volume has been vital to this article, and is cited throughout under the name Young, which Kathleen adopted after her second marriage. Unfortunately, Lois's archival presence is extremely limited in comparison to many of her contemporaries, and particularly in comparison to that of Kathleen. None of her personal correspondence has been preserved, and the only surviving instances of her in her own words are found within archived newspaper articles. In order to recover as much of her lived experience as possible, this article draws from newspaper clippings books held by the Scott Polar Research Institute, and from several online newspaper archives.

The fundamental inequalities between the two families shaped their lives, their archival footprints, and their experiences of bereavement in the public view. These disparities must be acknowledged, and also recognised as a shaping force on this article and its methodology. By piecing together the fragments that each family left behind, I have traced something of their individual lived experiences from this challenging period in their lives. Where their stories have previously been buried beneath press prioritisation and celebration of the sacrifices made by the tragic heroes for King, country, and knowledge, I bring them to the forefront. I examine the families' experiences of private grief under the public gaze, and the power of class and influence in shaping how grief was expressed and experienced by the immediately bereaved.

Taking the Strain

The disparities between the social circumstances of the Scott and Evans families are brought into sharp relief by their experiences during the expedition's absence, which went on to determine the resources and influence available to them following their loss. Prior to her marriage, Kathleen's career had generated a set of influential connections. Her position as the wife of a renowned polar explorer and expedition leader saw her network and status continue to grow into high societal and political spheres. Lois's husband also had previous Antarctic experience, having been part of Scott's first expedition, but his rank of Petty Officer set him apart from the influence of the expedition's officers and scientists, and placed him alongside the other seamen.

Kathleen had entered her marriage in 1907 in the knowledge that her husband planned to lead another Antarctic expedition within the next few years. Despite having

given birth the day after the expedition was publicly announced in September 1909, Kathleen threw herself whole-heartedly into the preparations and fundraising efforts for the expedition from this point until the ship's final departure from New Zealand in November 1910.[4] After returning to London, she led a busy life – attending scientific lectures, fulfilling her first sculpture commissions, and receiving regular visits from influential figures including Prime Minister Asquith and Sir Lewis Beaumont.[5] She recorded this all in her diaries, which were written for her husband to read upon his return and often addressed him directly as 'you' or by his nickname 'my dear Con'.

To her frustration, Kathleen's public status placed her among the first to be contacted by the press whenever new expedition rumours or updates arose. When the news broke that the Norwegian party had reached the South Pole, unfounded rumours emerged that Scott had also reached the Pole. In her diary, Kathleen recalled how the press descended upon her home by phone, telegram, and in person, all claiming to have exclusive news of her husband's success.[6] Despite her refusal to engage with the reporters, one paper published an interview they claimed to have conducted with her. In response, she spoke out:

> I put a short note in the 'The Times' and 'The Morning Post' that I had no reason to believe the reports, and that I was too occupied to see any reporters whatsoever. But I tasted of hell all the same.[7]

Her frustration at this intrusion is palpable, as her name was used without permission to give credibility to the false reports; however, her connections enabled her to publicly challenge these reports in the press by making her stance clear in her own words. This incident illustrates both the power and influence connected to Kathleen's word as the wife of the expedition's leader, as well as the beginnings of the press interactions and intrusions into the lives of those with ties to the expedition – a theme that would continue to grow over the following years.

Lois's experience of her husband's absence was drastically different. Unlike the other wives, Lois had not been able to travel with the expedition to New Zealand to be

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[4] Fletcher, p. 82.

[5] Kathleen Bruce Young, *Self-Portrait of an Artist, from the Diaries and Memoirs of Lady Kennet, Kathleen, Lady Scott.*, ed. by Edith Young (London: Murray, 1949), p. 101, 93.

[6] Young, pp. 107-108.

[7] Young, p. 108.

present for its final departure – instead, she traced Evans's journey through his letters after the ship left Cardiff in June 1910. In his absence, she navigated a difficult balance to provide for her young children, maintain her home, and support her parents on the expedition salary. This situation was intensified when the first letters from the expedition arrived in Britain in late 1911, bringing a double blow to Lois. The first was that her husband's absence would last for at least another year; the second that the expedition members had opted to forfeit a year's wage in order to relieve some of the expedition's debts.[8] Not only was Lois alone in managing this emotionally and practically delicate situation for another year, but she would have to do so on a severely reduced income. Before long, she was forced to sell her husband's Polar Medal from his previous Antarctic work; and within the year, the family had no choice but to leave their home in Portsmouth, and move to live with Lois' parents in Wales, where she could take on a variety of work to support herself until Evans' return.[9] By this point, she knew that Evans had been chosen to be part of the Polar party – what she did not know was that he had been dead for over six months.

The circumstances that the two families experienced during these intervening years could not have been much more different. However, they were united by the anxieties and absences that the expedition's extended silences caused, as well as by the sharp reminders of these concerns that expedition news often provoked. For Kathleen, this was in the emotional labour of managing the Press's responses to new information; for Lois, this emotional labour revolved around managing her increasingly difficult situation.[10]

In his study of the Arctic as a spectral space, Shane McCorristine highlights the power of hope in maintaining connections with absent explorers. In this case, the men were in a dangerous polar environment that was beyond the reach of contemporary communication technologies and imagined by those at home through a lens of

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[8] Fletcher, pp. 109-110.

[9] Fletcher, p. 133.

[10] The term emotional labour comes from Arlie Russell Hochschild's *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), in which she looks at unpaid emotional labour within the context of paid work. However, both Kathleen and Lois were expected to carry out this emotionally taxing work without any recompense due to their intimate connections to the expedition and its members.

anxieties, promises, and hopes for a future reunion with their loved ones.[11] The power of hope for a simpler future following their husbands' return sustained both families during the difficult years of the expedition's absence, only to be abruptly shattered in February 1913. Following this long silence, the families' hopes and anxieties were compounded by grief, and the emotional labour of coping with temporary absence replaced with that of processing the permanence of their loss. It was an experience further complicated by the public nature of their loss, and the press involvement in shaping the national narrative of their personal bereavement.

Breaking Point

The decline and deaths of the polar party were carefully recorded by its members within their journals. Scott was among the three who were found dead in their tent after being stranded by a blizzard in late March 1912. Evans, however, had died weeks earlier after sustaining a cerebral haemorrhage during a fall into a crevasse, which added confusion, dizziness, and a severe loss of strength to the symptoms of scurvy that troubled the whole party.[12] Scott carefully recorded the rapid decline and deaths of Evans and Oates, in hopes that the documents would be found and taken home to their loved ones. These vital records allowed for the events that led to the party's deaths to be pieced together, granting a limited sense of closure to those they left behind.

The expedition had been expected to return to New Zealand in March 1913, allowing for further scientific work to be conducted during the Antarctic summer season. However, in light of the Polar party's deaths, the expedition departed from the Antarctic a month early, arriving in New Zealand late on 10th February 1913. At this time, Kathleen had left her toddler son with her mother-in-law, and was travelling to New Zealand ahead of the expedition's anticipated arrival date. Thus, when the news of the deaths broke on 11th February, she was unreachable, as her ship was out of range of any existing telegram systems. The press seized upon this fact, publishing conflicting information from Reuters and Central News as they attempted to establish whether the

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[11] Shane McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic: A History of Dreams and Ghosts in Polar Exploration* (London: UCL Press, 2018), p. 101.

[12] Fletcher, p. 196.

news had reached the ship and its passengers.[13] Her absence was frequently remarked upon as the nation plunged into public mourning, particularly in regards to a memorial service for the Polar party that was held at St Paul's Cathedral on 14th February, and attended by the King, while schoolchildren across Britain were read an account of the deaths.[14]

Eight days after the news broke, a brief message finally reached the ship's captain, who quietly informed Kathleen of the deaths; yet beyond the fact of Scott's death, no further information was available. Kathleen's diary speaks to the distress, anxiety, and frustration that this caused her, as the lack of information gave rise to further fears of what her late husband might have suffered. On 21st February, she wrote:

> Anything to get the awful, haunting picture out of my head. [...] All these long weary days with no more news. Always only his pain, his mental agony, burning into my brain... all the different aspects of it come to me one by one.[15]

When the telegram system came back into range late on 23rd February, Kathleen sat in the Wireless Room, waiting for news. Her hopes soon shifted into further frustration, as condolence messages flooded the system for two consecutive nights, preventing any further information from getting through. The ship's name had been regularly published in several newspapers since the news had broken, enabling those beyond Kathleen's social circle to send her messages. Referring to these 'long nights of anxiety', Kathleen wrote that 'without knowing it, my kind friends [...] are baulking my news and keeping me absolutely in ignorance except of the main fact'.[16] And the following night, she regrets that 'none of them [the messages] were what I wanted, none of them news, just condolences'.[17] Her frustration here is palpable; after the hopes of reuniting with her husband had been devastated by the news of his death, she faced the fact alone,

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[13] *The Morning Post*, 11th February 1913; *The Daily Mail*, 11th February 1913; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12th February 1913. Held in Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, press clippings book SPRI MS 1453/40. I would like to thank Naomi Boneham, archivist at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, and Gwilym Games from Swansea Council Library for their invaluable help and patience in tracing surviving copies of the newspapers that bring this article to life.

[14] Daily Mail, 14th February 1913, SPRI MS 1453/40.

[15] Young, p. 122.

[16] Young, p. 122.

[17] Young, p. 123.

without any details that could ease her mind from imagining what might have happened to him, and what he may have suffered.

On 27th February, Kathleen was met in Wellington, New Zealand, by her brother Wilfrid, fellow expedition widow Oriana Wilson, and acting expedition leader Dr Atkinson, who bore a telegram from Sir Joseph Kinsey, the expedition's agent in New Zealand, offering condolences, reassurances, and hospitality during her stay in New Zealand.[18] As acting commander, Atkinson had read the relevant parts of the recovered journals in order to reconstruct the events of the polar journey into a narrative for the expedition members, their families, and the press. Upon Kathleen's arrival, he gave her Scott's journals and the letters that he had written to her throughout the expedition, and the following day, he made himself available to answer any questions that she had and felt able to ask.[19] Once she had the answers, Kathleen spent the afternoon with Oriana, the widow of Dr Edward Adrian Wilson who had been the expedition's Chief Scientific Officer and one of Scott's closest friends. In her diary that day, she wrote that 'he [Atkinson] told me details of how he found you, but it was not enough [...] I am so, so grateful it was Atkinson who found you, he is so quiet and tactful and reverent'.[20] A fortnight after receiving the news, Kathleen was still directly addressing her late husband, even as she finally began to process the reality of her loss.

This reception, and the support that Kathleen received in the following days, is indicative of the sociality that the expedition had generated, built from its surviving members, their families and friends, and those whose line of work had involved them with the expedition and its tragic outcome. This sociality provided a form of emotional community, founded in the shared experience of the expedition, which recognised and anticipated Kathleen's needs and was prepared to meet them upon her arrival. This community, and their actions in sharing their memories of the deceased, creates what Pat Jalland has termed a 'social memory' between those who knew the dead individual best, making space for them to grieve their individual losses.[21] With her brother to accompany her on her journey home, Atkinson to help her understand her husband's

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[18] Sir Joseph Kinsey to Kathleen Scott, 25th February 1913. Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, SPRI MS/1453/126/3.

[19] Young, p. 123.

[20] Young. p. 124.

[21] Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 360.

death, Oriana to share her sorrow with, and Kinsey working behind the scenes to communicate with the press and committees on Scott's behalf, the expedition community gave Kathleen the time, information, and emotional support that she needed to privately process her grief. Kathleen's distance from Britain also enabled her to avoid direct engagement with the press while the story of the tragedy was as its peak. Within a week of her arrival in New Zealand, Kathleen began her journey home, arriving in Dover on 11th April. Ten days later, she put out a statement, which was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

> Sir, -- Would you be kind enough to convey to the public my very grateful thanks for the remarkable sympathy and generosity shown to me? [...] May I also take this opportunity of tendering my real thanks to the Press for their consideration on my return to England that they have refrained from asking for information or interviews with a courtesy that has not lacked appreciation. – Sincerely yours, Kathleen Scott.[22]

Kathleen's experience of grief was shaped by her varying degrees of agency, communication, and control throughout this difficult time. After a frustrating period of silence and isolation from the information and community that could help her cope with her grief, she was greeted and supported by the expedition sociality. This allowed her to come to terms with what had happened, and the enormity of the public response to her personal loss, without needing to engage with the press or public until she was ready to do so.

When the news reached Britain on 11th February 1913, it was received with a national outpouring of grief, which was simultaneously generated by and the cause of intensive press coverage. Lois was at work, collecting cockles on a local beach, when a telegram from the *Terra Nova* crew reached her, which read 'Members wish to express deepest sympathy in your sad loss'.[23] No further information was given – again, all Lois knew was that her husband was dead. She quickly returned home where reporters soon found her; with Kathleen at sea and Oriana in New Zealand, Lois was the only polar

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[22] 'Lady Scott's Thanks', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21st April 1913. Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, University of Cambridge, press clippings book SPRI MS 1453/39/2.

[23] 'Lady Scott's Thanks', p. 153.

widow accessible to the British press. This coincidence led reporters to her doorstep, and placed her and her family under the intensity of the public gaze.

A local newspaper, *The Cambria Daily Leader,* used their proximity to the family home to demonstrate their journalistic prowess, highlighting that they had been the first to interview the family after the news broke, and had printed the first photographs of Lois and her children by 5:30pm that evening.[24] In the following days, more photographs of the family, taken during this vulnerable time, appeared in national papers such as *The Daily Sketch*, *The Daily Graphic*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Daily Mirror,* including two of the eldest children being brought home from school before they knew of their father's death.[25] The latter two newspapers also published the family's address within their correspondents' interviews with Lois. The *Mirror's* correspondent took interviews both on the day the news broke, and a more extensive one the following day, which filled a column and included the children's responses to being told of their loss. Norman supposedly replied that 'I shall see him in heaven. I must work hard for you now mummy', and Muriel asked her mother what should replace her daily prayer of 'Please God, take care of Daddy and bring him safely home'.[26] The reporter appears to have stayed for most of the day, as he also narrated a visit from the expedition secretary that afternoon and spoke to Lois's father, who highlighted the dire financial situation that the family now found themselves in.

Before they knew the circumstances of their loved one's death, Evans's family were put under a press spotlight which used their words and image to illustrate and intensify the grief that gripped the nation. This decision simultaneously fed into and was shaped by the powerful cultural ideal of heroic sacrifice of lives in the name of national progress. This ideal developed continuously throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras, peaking in the early 1910s.[27] It was shattered by the violence and volume of deaths resulting from the Great War, which could not be rationalised or

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[24] 'Grief in Gower', *The Cambria Daily Leader*, 11th February 1913; 'Our Pictures', *The Cambria Daily Leader,* 13th February 1913, hosted by the National Library of Wales.

[25] 'Dead Heroes', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1913, hosted by The Telegraph Historical Archive; also *The Daily Sketch*, 13th February 1913, *The Daily Mirror* 13th February 1913, and *The Daily Graphic*, 14th February 1913, SPRI MS 1453/40.

[26] 'Mother's Tears In A Cottage', *The Daily Mirror,* 13th February 1913. Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, press clippings book SPRI MS 1958/1.

[27] Barczewski, p. 140.

justified through the idealised lens of heroic sacrifice.[28] In order to reach the Pole for King and country, Evans had given up his home, his wife, and his children; and now the press showed the nation precisely what – and who – he had left behind in their name.

The situation is not only reminiscent of a modern paparazzi encounter, but also illuminates Joanne Begiato's work on concepts of masculinity, and their variations between classes, occupations, and public or private spheres. Evans had not only been an explorer, but also a 'Jack Tar' – a British naval seaman, whose popular image had a strong cultural pull within late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Begiato argues that the Jack Tar, as a military figure who simultaneously worked to protect his nation, his home, and his family, was a key part of this period's ideals of working-class manliness.[29] Begiato frames farewells on the doorstep as a key moment for the middle-class public to assess the manliness and character of working-class men through their interactions with those they worked to protect and provide for.[30] In this case, however, the man in question was not present at the doorstep, and would never return to it – therefore he could only be accessed and assessed through the responses of those he had left behind. As Lois's words were made public, they were used to assess her character as well as her husband's.

Lois's words reflect the same characteristics that Begiato highlights as those used to evaluate manliness both within and beyond the home.[31] Speaking to the *Daily Telegraph*, she described him as 'such a brave, strong man [...] and he was kind, and such a devoted father!'.[32] Her words frame Evans both in terms of the strength and bravery ascribed to men serving in the Navy, and as a caring provider for his family. Despite her unfamiliarity with the power and workings of the press, Lois said all the 'right' things to the reporters to ensure that her husband was presented to the public in a favourable light.

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[28] This conflict is referred to as 'the Great War' throughout this article in order to remove the juxtaposition between the First and Second World War, and avoid post-war contexts being applied to pre-war events and cultural understandings.

[29] Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 10-11.

[30] Begiato, p. 161.

[31] Begiato, p. 12.

[32] *The Daily Telegraph,* 14th February 1913.

With the reporters returning multiple times in the days after the news broke, Lois's family had little time to process their loss and emotions privately within their domestic space. Their words, images, and grief were commodified by the press as articles of interest to feed the national mood of mourning, which was prioritised over the family's loss, feelings, and the privacy of their home. These intensely invasive encounters shaped the family's emotional experience and memory of their grief; however, it had resulted almost entirely from chance. Had Kathleen or Oriana also been in Britain, it is unlikely that the Evans family would have been the sole focus of so much attention in this crucial moment.

The press clearly perceived the family to be valuable at this point. Unlike Kathleen, Lois was not a key character in the unfolding expedition narrative – she had no influence over the expedition, or in the development of its public legacy. However, with no official expedition spokesperson available at this point, the press shifted its focus to match the national emotional response to the deaths by highlighting the intensity of the loss for those left behind. Lois's family, home, and grief were used by the reporters as an emotional tool to illustrate and focus the public's mourning; yet this focus was not on the family members as individuals, but framed through the familiar archetypes of a grieving widow with a hero's children to raise in the story of lives sacrificed for the nation.

Once the expedition's officers were within reach, and Kathleen was back on British soil, Lois and her family fell from the public's focus and sympathy as quickly as they had come into it. Their value for the press lay in their vulnerability and accessibility rather than their personal experiences. In most cases, this would have been the end of the press intervention within their lives, leaving the Evans family alongside the thousands of families bereaved in the course of British maritime and colonial services. Yet in this case, the family's experience with the press, and its power to shape formerly unknown lives to fit a selected narrative, was far from over.

A Lasting Legacy

The public interest in the tragic outcome of the expedition quickly embedded its story within the national consciousness, cementing its place as a heroic narrative to be remembered, celebrated, and used to inspire the next generation. Max Jones has traced the expedition's shifting moral and social currency across the rapidly changing cultural

landscape of 1913-1939, and demonstrates how its narrative was repeatedly reworked to suit specific historic moments.[33] The creation of this heroic legacy for the polar party relied on the rewriting of the individual members' lives to hold a specific meaning and place within the collective memory of the expedition, as Geoffrey Cubitt has demonstrated.[34] However, Julie-Marie Strange argues that, in cases where a corpse was absent, the bereaved family's ability to take ownership over the individual's death and memory became vital in enabling them to process their loss.[35] Thus while the actions of the press created a strong public legacy, it also complicated the grieving process for those facing a personal loss.

The collision of these forms of memory-making aggravated the emotional challenges that both families were experiencing; yet it was particularly catastrophic for Lois. Despite her best efforts, she had no influence over the legacy that was assigned to her husband, nor the connections requisite to make her voice heard. Kathleen, meanwhile, became overwhelmed and frustrated by the weight of her late husband's legacy, as his memory fell to her to protect, maintain, and frame for the public. Nonetheless, she used her influence to ensure that Scott would be remembered in a positive light, and in a way that represented him best.

From the outside, it appears that Kathleen quickly took to her new position in the aftermath of the expedition. She was involved in the shaping of the expedition reports, the editing of Scott's journals for publication, and the practical logistics of wrapping up the final strands of the expedition as a part of the London Committee.[36] Fletcher highlights how the death of explorers often gave their female relatives the power and influence to shape their loved ones' legacies and life stories; and Kathleen, with her own set of skills and connections, used this power to the full.[37] Her influence remains visible in the published versions of her husband's expedition journals, with modern versions often including her deliberate alterations and exclusions as an appendix, and in many of the sculptures erected in memory of the Polar party. Beau

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[33] Jones, p. 5.

[34] Cubitt, p. 3.

[35] Julie-Marie Strange, *Death, Grief, and Poverty in Britain, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 273.

[36] Sir Joseph Kinsey to Kathleen Scott, 25th February 1913. Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute Archives, SPRI MS/1453/126/3.

[37] Fletcher, p. 179.

Riffenburgh, in his valuable study of the role of the press in creating the idealised cultural concept of the explorer, identifies Kathleen as one of the 'mediators' of the growing mythology surrounding Scott's life, death, and legacy.[38] During Scott's life, and immediately after his death, many individuals were involved in this work, including the press, institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society, and Sir Clements Markham, who had personally selected Scott to lead his first expedition, and had supported and guarded his reputation and career in the following years. However, in taking on the work of editing Scott's journals into a publishable format, Kathleen was able to shape and present his career, words, and character to match the glorified, mythologised version of his life; and for these to be published and sold as Scott's final writings under his name, rather than under hers.

Kathleen's role, therefore, gave her significant power over her husband's legacy in ensuring that the published version and public memory of her late husband would meet her wishes. Despite this, her diaries show that this power did not ease her adjustment into her new life as a hero's widow, and as the mother of a hero's son. The editor of the published version refers to several failed attempts to resume her life in London; twice in the summer of 1913, and again at the start of 1914.[39] The latter is accompanied by a diary entry from 12th January 1914, which consisted of a single sentence. 'I am worn out by the Antarctic work of publicity, so I am off to the Sahara alone'.[40] The brevity of this entry is unusual within the broader context of the diary, and is followed by a silence, briefly broken by a single entry, which lasted until July 1914. A similar silence followed her departure from New Zealand after learning of her husband's death, which speaks to the strain that these events had put on her. These absences are explained by the editor as resulting from 'the glare of publicity which fell upon her and her child which drove her from home, first to the Pyrenees and then to the Sahara'.[41] She also opted not to attend the unveilings of her own work to avoid being visible to the press and public, including the ceremony revealing her statue of her late husband in London in November 1915.[42]

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[38] Riffenburgh, p. 7.

[39] Young, pp. 124-125.

[40] Young, p. 127.

[41] Young, p. 117.

[42] Young, p. 130.

Kathleen had managed to create, shape and preserve a positive legacy for Scott, but it had clearly taken a toll on her, as the press intrusion that she had found frustrating during his absence became overwhelming after his death. Despite the power she held over the official published narratives, this continued public intrusion into her domestic life complicated her attempts to find her feet in the aftermath of her loss, to the extent that she opted to leave the country behind in order to escape it. Her diaries may not clearly acknowledge her feelings at this point in the way that they did in the immediate aftermath of her loss, but her actions speak to the frustration and exhaustion that this continuous public interaction and influence had caused for her.

Kathleen's emotional experience of this period was clearly an uncomfortable and challenging one – however, she had the option and resources to temporarily escape the commotion and find the privacy she craved. For Lois, there was no escape; nor did she have any influence over the public opinion and memory-making surrounding her husband's life and achievements. The press quickly discarded Scott's explanation of the unusually severe weather conditions as the cause of the party's deaths, and began the search for a scapegoat. Louise Watling's careful analysis of Evans's public legacy frames this transitional period in terms of Evans being simultaneously a member of the heroic party, and an un-heroic individual who could shoulder the blame for their deaths.[43] As the first to have died, the only working-class member of the party, and the only man mentioned by name in Scott's 'Message to the Public', Evans became a target. Scott attributed Evans's death to 'a concussion of the brain'.[44] However, his prior reference to 'the astonishing failure of the man [Evans] whom we had least expected to fail' was framed by the press as evidence of Evans having been the weak link within the party.[45] This mention of 'failure' was used to establish Evans's decline as a cause of the deaths of the remaining party members, as the loss of manpower and reduction in the distances travelled each day that resulted from his illness hampered their progression towards their destination and safety.

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[43] Louise Watling, '"There was a contest in heroism between Captain Oates and his comrades, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson, and Lieutenant Bowers.": An analysis of the presentation and portrayal of Petty Officer Edgar Evans, the first man to perish in Captain Scott's Pole party of 1912' (unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2009).

[44] Robert Falcon Scott, 'Message to the Public', *Journals: Captain Scott's Last Expedition*, ed. by Max Jones, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 421.

[45] Scott p. 421.

The day after the news broke, the *Daily Express* published an article discussing why Evans had 'failed' the expedition, with input from an 'eminent mental specialist'.[46] This article shifted Evans's cause of death from a haemorrhage to his educational status, alleging that 'the uneducated man' was more vulnerable to the 'the mental strain and dreary, monotonous life amid eternal snows', whereas the 'educated man […] would be able to stimulate his brain from his store of learning', and thereby avoid being driven to 'mania' by 'the absence of stimulus'.[47] Despite challenges from several expedition members, this idea spread quickly, alongside rumours that Evans had become insane.[48]

As these rumours continued to gain ground, one reporter took them a step further, and interviewed Evans's elderly mother in her home. Sarah Evans was clearly distraught by her loss and the allegations made regarding her late son; and with no further answers available, nor a body that could be mourned and buried, her distress at the uncertainty and lack of closure was palpable. Her response echoes many of the conflicting feelings discussed in modern studies of grief, including anxiety, blame, and confusion.[49] The reporter published Sarah's fears, expressed in the safety of her home, into the press context of blame and guilt:

> [I am] troubled because it was through Edgar that the other members of the party lost their lives. I am worried because I feel if he hadn't broken down they – Captain Scott and the rest of them – would have been alive today. I can't help thinking about it all the time ever since I read about them being forced to wait for him, and carry him along with them, when it was all they could do to get along themselves. Perhaps it would have been better if they had left him behind.[50]

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[46] 'The Problem of Seaman Evans. Why He "Failed" The Expedition. Was He Handicapped by His Strength?', *The Daily Express*, 12th February 1913, SPRI MS 1453/39/2.

[47] 'The Problem of Seaman Evans', *The Daily Express*.

[48] *Westminster Gazette*, 15th February 1913, SPRI MS 1453/40.

[49] See Strange, p. 65; also P. C. Rosenblatt, 'Grief: The Social Context of Private Feelings', *Journal of Social Issues*, 44 (3), (1988), 1-25; and Elizabeth Hallam and Jennifer Hockey, *Death, Memory, and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

[50] 'Hero's Mother: Her Pathetic Grief', *The Cambrian,* 21st February 1913. Held in Swansea, Swansea Council Library Service.

A few pages later, a section titled 'Family's Record: Three Consumptives' used the fact that nine of Sarah's twelve children were dead, including three deaths from consumption, to establish a history of supposed family weakness, arguing that while Edgar may have been strong, 'his family by no means shared that characteristic'.[51] Having been asked to face the complicated issue of Evans' death, Sarah was then forced to relive her grief for her other children. She had been able to care for these children during their illness, prepare and bury their bodies; a process that Strange argues allowed the bereaved to confirm the reality of death, and to find reassurance in seeing that their loved one was at peace.[52] Yet none of this had been possible in Edgar's case, setting his death apart from those of his siblings and leaving Sarah grieving without closure.

When read together, the articles framed the alleged family weakness as having not only led to Evans's death, but also those of his four heroic companions, thereby negating his claim to a positive legacy as a tragic hero. In publishing Sarah's fears, provoked by the public nature of these accusations, the reports simultaneously added weight to the allegations, and brought further distress to his grieving family, who were now also implicated in causing the deaths of the rest of the party. Evans's reputation has never fully recovered from these allegations to regain equal footing with his counterparts, despite the continued efforts of his family, the surviving expedition members, and the expedition's committees to reiterate that the extreme weather was the sole cause of the party's deaths.

Once again, the intrusion of the press and public opinion into the lives of the grieving family had caused harm; however, Lois had no influence or connections to draw on to stop it. This assault on his legacy and memory infiltrated every part of the family's life; intruding into their home, twisting their words to fit this narrative, and even reaching the schoolground, where his children were bullied for his supposed failure and culpability in the deaths of the polar party.[53] They did not have the chance to construct a personal memory, nor to take any control or ownership over his legacy as public opinion loudly turned against him. His continued presence in their lives did not come from a reassuring memory of happier times that they had shared, but as one which

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[51] 'How Scott Died', *The Cambrian,* 21st February 1913.

[52] Strange, p. 268.

[53] Fletcher, p. 204.

needed continuous defence against the distressing public accusations that came from all angles.

As time passed, both families did what they could to commemorate the lives of their lost loved ones. Kathleen's work has stood the test of time; her sculptures of her husband stand in Cambridge, London, and Christchurch, New Zealand, and her handiwork is still visible within modern editions of her husband's journals. The published volume of her diaries and partial autobiography offers a memorial to her life, relationships, and social influence. Lois also worked hard to create a positive legacy for Evans, despite her financial difficulties and the hostility towards her husband's memory. She paid for a memorial plaque in their home church in Rhossili, which remained the only memorial erected for Evans during her lifetime. Her legacy lies in her continuous fight for her family throughout huge emotional upheavals and challenges; however, her limited archival presence is rooted in the press interviews that caused so much distress to her family. Her responses and experiences are key to the press history of this moment, as her emotional response to her bereavement was deemed to be a valuable evocative and illustrative tool that the press used to enhance the tragic nature of the polar party's deaths.

Once this moment had passed, Lois was not deemed to be significant enough to local or exploration history for her documents to be preserved – likewise, her exclusion from the memory-making process for her husband meant that she was not a priority for those collating a material history of the expedition. The need for her emotional experiences, which had profoundly shaped not only her own life, but also the immediate public response to the tragedy, had passed, and her work in attempting to preserve her husband's legacy quickly fell into silence.

Conclusion

The events explored within this article occurred within a historical moment marked out by distinctive pre-war cultural norms – the celebration and public mourning for tragic heroes who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation; the social expectations placed on the bereaved families; and the cultural backdrop to the scapegoat narrative that surrounded Evans and his family. To fully comprehend these emotional experiences, we must take into account the extraordinary nature of this situation within

its cultural contexts, alongside the shaping powers of class, gender expectations, and agency on each family's individual experiences.

As the intrusion of the public gaze and memory-making pushed further into private space, both families were forced to come to terms with the archetypal legacies that their loved ones had been ascribed: Scott as the tragic, heroic leader, and Evans as the fatal flaw within the party. Kathleen was able to shape her husband's life and career to fit her preferred version of this archetype, allowing her to protect his legacy for the moment and for the future. Lois, on the other hand, was left to cope with the continued harm caused by the public criticism levelled at Evans, and her inability to publicly contest the allegations that stained his legacy.

This created two distinctive forms of emotional labour for the two women. Kathleen's influence allowed her to undertake the work of editing her late husband's journals to ensure that they matched the positive public narratives surrounding the expedition without any contradictions or unintended accusations. Lois's work is less clear-cut, but no less vital – in coping with the harm caused by repeated press intrusion and criticism, contesting the accusations as and when she could, and erecting a memorial to testify to her husband's life and achievements, she did all that she could to protect Evans's memory. Her lack of agency speaks to the lack of opportunities available to her and her family to remember Evans as the man they loved without the interference of the public opinion, and not to a lack of emotional labour. These acts of emotional work are unquantifiable and incomparable to one another due to the radically different circumstances that these families found themselves in; however, they speak to the labours of love and loss that each woman quietly undertook within devastating emotional and social conditions.

The unique circumstances experienced by these families occurred within a brief, yet distinctive, set of historic conditions that would soon be swept away by the end of the so-called Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, and more critically by the colossal impact of the Great War on families across the globe. These huge cultural shifts removed the various ideals, expectations, and structures that had shaped, exacerbated, and extended the families' period of grief, and added further feelings of frustration, anxiety, and vulnerability to their experiences of loss. The inescapable nature of the press coverage and public interest in their personal bereavements united these families in an experience of loss and grief that came second to the public's mourning for their

loved ones. Although their lives and experiences quickly diverged once again, both families saw their emotional futures altered by their lack of privacy to grieve their losses and build a personal memory of their loved ones. While the conditions that shaped these events vanished almost as soon as they had emerged, the impacts on the two families were lifelong, and shaped their emotional experiences not only of this fleeting historic moment, but of their futures without the presence of the men they had loved.

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BIOGRAPHY: Deborah is a second-year PhD student based at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. Her research explores the emotional experiences of the bereaved families of British men who died in the pursuit of Antarctic exploration in the early twentieth century. Her research explores both their emotional responses to their bereavement, and their influence on their loved ones' public and material legacies following their deaths.

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Review: Amy Matthewson, *Cartooning China: Punch, Power, & Politics in the Victorian Era* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022) 188pp. ISBN 9780367460990, £38.99.

SAMUEL CHENEY

AMY MATTHEWSON'S 2022 publication *Cartooning China: Punch, Power, & Politics in the Victorian Era* is an excellent incursion into the study of both Victorian popular culture and the history of China in the Western social imaginary. It examines China's fluctuating image in nineteenth-century Britain, offering a detailed analysis of the China-themed satirical images and texts published in *Punch* magazine between 1841 and 1901. This was a turbulent era in which China was increasingly subjected to British imperial influence and political disagreements between the two empires frequently boiled over into direct military conflict (such as the two Opium Wars, 1839 – 1842 and 1856 – 1860, and the Boxer Rebellion, 1899 – 1901). While centring on this particular period, the work draws upon a wider scholarly tradition charting the history of Sino-Western relations, stretching at least to Raymond Dawson's foundational 1967 work *The Chinese Chameleon*, a study examining the many 'contradictory qualities' attributed to a perpetually-shapeshifting China by Europeans over the past half-millennium.[1] Matthewson specifically calls upon recent histories that emphasise the influence of China's visual image on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British selfhoods, particularly work by Elizabeth Hope Chang, Catherine Pagani, and Sarah Cheang.[2] By focusing on *Punch*'s predominantly middle-class London readership, however, Matthewson offers her own solution to Dawson's longstanding conundrum of the 'Chinese chameleon', showing how the tangibly and discursively 'broad church' of Victorian visual culture could accommodate such a wide range of socio-cultural perspectives on China.

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[1] Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 2.

[2] Elizabeth Hope Chang, *Britain's Chinese Eye: Literature, Empire, and Aesthetics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Catherine Pagani, 'Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 28 – 40; Sarah Cheang, 'Selling China: Class, Gender and Orientalism at the Department Store', *Journal of Design History*, 20.1 (2007), 1 – 16.

Matthewson's central focus upon China's unstable image in nineteenth-century Britain is shaped by her methodological approach, particularly her theoretically-grounded use of cartoons as historical evidence. Matthewson reacts against a tendency among historians to deploy cartoons in a selective manner, as she argues, cherry-picking images to bolster points developed from other source bases, such as newspaper reportage and literature.[3] This approach, she claims, exploits the often-ambiguous messages of cartoons, which can only be understood in their precise historical and cultural context. By placing *Punch*'s consistently-racialised cartoons of China in their original publication contexts, Matthewson shows that these images fluctuated in meaning across the nineteenth century, despite their seemingly unchanging visual appearance:

> Visual representations of the Chinese from 1841 to 1901 remained relatively static with *Punch* employing an age-old lexicon of stereotypes; however, the textual accompaniment and message in the cartoon shifted according to developments in British politics in relation to China.[4]

Although racially-stereotyped tropes of 'Chineseness' may appear unchanging as they were codified through repeated use, Matthewson argues that these visual signifiers were in fact semantically malleable, capable of communicating a diverse range of contrasting messages about China that shifted alongside Britain's increasingly interventionist interactions with the country.[5] Furthermore, Matthewson suggests that cartoon stereotypes epitomise the mechanics of British imperial culture, showing how the anxiety-inducing complexities of empire were rendered visually comprehensible for a middle-class reading public.[6] Cartoons were particularly useful here, she argues, as they reduced the often confusing and contradictory parameters of Britain's imperial

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[3] Amy Matthewson, *Cartooning China: Punch, Power, & Politics in the Victorian Era* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), p. 17.

[4] Matthewson, p. 18.

[5] Matthewson, p. 156.

[6] For the anxieties generated by British imperialism in China, see: James Louis Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2003); Sascha Auerbach, *Race, Law, and 'The Chinese Puzzle'* in Imperial Britain (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

expansion into simpler visualisations of normative power disparities between 'ruler' and 'ruled'.[7] As Matthewson explains, *Punch*

> did not create new visions of the Chinese [but instead] used familiar tropes to provide its readers with a sense of reassurance and stability in an ever-changing and uncertain world of imperialism, global capitalism, and immigration. These caricatures signified a way to classify and understand thereby rendering people, places, and objects less frightening and threatening.[8]

Cartoonists, in 'three or four strokes', could transform complex colonial realities into easily digestible cultural stereotypes.[9] Matthewson therefore emphasises *Punch*'s fundamental role in the visual domestication of imperialism in nineteenth-century Britain.

Matthewson implicitly divides *Cartooning China* into two complementary sections. After outlining her methodology in the introductory first chapter, chapters two and three examine *Punch*'s institutional and creative history, while chapters four and five specifically focus on China's changing representation across the period. In chapter two, 'The Men Behind the Magazine', Matthewson examines the shifting creative impulses and political prerogatives of *Punch*'s network of writers, editors, and artists. By showing how these often-oppositional stances (from conservative to radical, tolerant to prejudicial) were negotiated and balanced in the magazine's weekly publication, Matthewson illuminates the multi-layered professional working environment in which contrasting representations of China were generated.[10] Chapter three builds upon this examination of the magazine's institutional foundations by charting broad shifts in *Punch*'s salient political outlook across its first sixty years. By focusing on the magazine's

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[7] For the role of cartoons (and other stereotypes) in perpetuating imperial discourse, see: Richard Scully and Andrekos Varnava, eds., *Comic Empires: Imperialism in Cartoons, Caricature, and Satirical Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Homi Bhabha's chapter on 'The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 66 – 84.

[8] Matthewson, p. 3.

[9] Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 14.

[10] Matthewson, p. 38.

visual centrepiece, the Large Cut cartoon – a full- or double-page cartoon on political themes – Matthewson shows how *Punch* gradually shifted from its initially liberal stance in the 1840s towards an imperial nationalism that catered to its predominantly conservative middle-class readership.[11] While noting the ambiguity often latent within the Large Cut cartoon, whose 'razor-sharp humour often cut both ways', this chapter shows how cartoons were the perfect tool for crystallising complex ideas of the British Empire into easily digestible forms.[12]

In chapters four and five, Matthewson explores the gradual deterioration of China's image in the collective British mind at three separate points of geopolitical instability: the two Opium Wars (1839 – 1842 and 1856 – 1860), the First Sino-Japanese War of 1895, and the Boxer Rebellion (1899 – 1901). Chapter four argues that between 1840 and 1860, *Punch*'s 'tone and outlook' towards China shifted, 'beginning with playful condescension before slipping into scornful condemnation'.[13] By examining China's presence in mid-century exhibitions alongside cartoons relating to the Opium Wars, Matthewson shows how an orientalised China (constructed as arrogantly resistant to the supposedly superior lessons of European 'civilization') became a cultural 'other' against which unified 'British' identities could be erected atop nineteenth-century society's deep class stratifications.[14] The chapter concludes by considering *Punch*'s overwhelming support for Lord Palmerston's anti-China campaign of the late-1850s, with Matthewson arguing that 'negative representations of China [from this period] were therefore important in the production of both a British identity as well as a superior national identity'.[15]

In the work's final chapter, Matthewson argues that China's tumultuous 1890s heightened British imperial anxieties about East Asia. As the First Sino-Japanese War and the Boxer Rebellion exposed the weakening authority of the Qing state, Britain and its international rivals 'scrambled' for territorial advantage in China – a free-for-all that many Britons feared would upset the balance of power in the region.[16] In particular,

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[11] Matthewson, p. 51.

[12] Matthewson, p. 53; 68.

[13] Matthewson, pp. 72 – 73.

[14] Matthewson, p. 88; 73.

[15] Matthewson, p. 108.

[16] Matthewson, p. 128.

Matthewson demonstrates the ways in which 1890s' *Punch* cartoonists reduced China to a status of civilizational 'backwardness' as they simultaneously celebrated Japan as a 'plucky nation' analogous to Britain.[17] The chapter ends by claiming that although the Boxer Rebellion did precipitate a rise in 'yellow peril' representations of the Chinese as 'a menacing and threatening people with intense hatred towards foreigners', overall, China had been denigrated to such an extent by 1900 that this 'sick man of Asia' was rarely represented as threatening.[18] Rather, the country was constructed as 'an important space upon which [Britain's] imperial rivalries were played out'.[19]

The structure of *Cartooning China* successfully reflects Matthewson's central argument, even if the connections between chapters are usually left implicit: China's chameleonic image in the nineteenth century was due as much to the tangible creative politics of *Punch* magazine's employees as it was to developments in imperial discourse. However, the author might have expanded upon China's representation in other areas of British popular culture in order to highlight the particularities of *Punch*'s perspective on China. One of the central arguments of Matthewson's work is that 'the downward trajectory of *Punch*'s narrative of China and the Chinese people [...] was directly linked to fluctuations in Britain's relationship with China'.[20] This link between the Victorian disenchantment with China and moments of geopolitical tension is supposedly confirmed by the fact that nearly no references to China appear in *Punch* between the mid-1860s and the mid-1890s (times of relative political stability).[21] While it is perhaps obvious that a self-avowedly political publication such as *Punch* would comment on China only at times of particular public relevance, it should not be assumed that British interest in China was always linked to geopolitical turbulence. In many other Victorian contexts (from the literary and visual, to the musical and theatrical), international political events were not necessarily decisive in shaping China's ever-shifting representation – rather more important were the needs and desires of respective audience groups. Matthewson's excellent case study could therefore benefit from contextualisation within secondary scholarship that considers representations of China

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[17] Matthewson, p. 114; 116.

[18] Matthewson, p. 145.

[19] Matthewson, p. 148.

[20] Matthewson, p. 19.

[21] Matthewson, p. 19.

in other creative spheres.[22] This is certainly not a criticism of Matthewson's project – she never claims that her arguments can be extrapolated to cultural contexts beyond satirical political publications such as *Punch*. Nonetheless, readers of *Cartooning China* should not themselves assume that all Victorian representations of China were automatically tethered to imperial politics.

This last point notwithstanding, Matthewson's *Cartooning China* makes a significant contribution to scholarship on nineteenth-century visual culture and the shaping of China in Western minds. The work offers a nuanced handling of cartoons as historical evidence and emphasises the importance of visual images in maintaining Britain's imperial culture. It not only encourages further research into comparable geographic and temporal contexts, but also demands our renewed examination of the complex connections between international politics and the domestic representation of these events. Finally, the work should be commended for the rich repository of printed primary images that it contains. With its wealth of expertly-analysed primary material, this is an excellent resource for researchers, students, and educators alike. *Cartooning China* will be a worthy addition to any course of study on the visual cultures of empire, or China's relationship with the modern West.

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[22] Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); William A. Everett, 'Imagining China in London Musical Theatre During the 1890s: *The Geisha* and *San Toy*', *Studia Musicologia*, 57.3 (2016), 417 – 426; Chang Dongshin, *Representing China on the Historical London Stage: From Orientalism to Intercultural Performance* (New York; London: Routledge, 2015); Zheng Yangwen, ed., *The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: From the Jesuits to Zhang Yimou* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013); Shih-Wen Chen, *Representations of China in British Children's Fiction*, 1851 – 1911 (Boca Raton, Florida: Routledge, 2016).

Issue 6: January 2024   www.rrrjournal.com

Review: Albert D. Pionke, *Victorian Fictions of Middle-Class Status: Forms of Absence in the Age of Reform* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022) 248pp. ISBN 978-1-3995-0770-7, £85.00.

HENDRIKJE KAUBE

SOCIO-LITERARY STUDIES OF the nineteenth century, such as Jina Politi's '*Jane Eyre* Class-ified' (1982) or R. J. Morris's *Class, Sect and Party* (1990), often work from the premise that members of the emerging middle class asserted their social identity through consanguineous, economic, and cultural standards, demonstrating respectability and refinement to enable their differentiation from those on the lower end of the social scale.[1] Yet, as Albert Pionke suggests in *Victorian Fictions of Middle-Class Status*, this approach neglects the diverse set of strategies employed by various occupational and economic groups within a growing segment of the population to achieve professional and public recognition in the mid-nineteenth century. His book contributes to an ongoing critical dialogue about the ways in which the emerging middle class developed and defended its position in nineteenth-century society. While critics such as Aeron Hunt and Simon Gunn have explored the significance of business and culture as constitutive elements of bourgeois identity, Pionke examines the topic through a series of detailed analyses of popular contemporary fiction from Charles Dickens to Charlotte Yonge.[2] Offering a novel perspective on the formation of Victorian middle-class culture, he proposes a new set of criteria for evaluating class construction in the mid-nineteenth-century novel. Rather than dissecting the assumed lifestyle and habits, pretensions and positions of the middle class, Pionke examines the strategies through which the middle class attempted to legitimise its own status by repudiating the factors traditionally considered mandatory for this segment of society, such as pedigree and

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[1] Jina Politi, '*Jane Eyre* Class-ified', *Literature and History*, 8 (1982), 56-66; R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class: Leeds, 1820-50* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[2] Aeron Hunt, *Personal Business: Character and Commerce in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014); Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

possessions. It is through the professed rejection of these conventions, he argues, that the Victorian middle class created its own raison d'être.

In this work, Pionke examines nineteenth-century writers' efforts to define and broaden traditional class boundaries. By presenting its internal workings and external public perception as closely-linked, dynamic processes, he offers an examination of the middle class as an active organism rather than a socio-economic abstraction. Pionke specifies five factors, summarised as 'negative assertions of value', eschewed (rather than adopted) in pursuit of class affiliation.[3] He then illustrates how both canonical and non-canonical nineteenth-century novels dismiss the validity of family relations and private capital, authority, and the significance of statistics – in short, they negate the four features of 'birth, wealth, force, and fact' as indispensable determinants.[4] Instead, Pionke demonstrates how the novels showcase claims to status grounded 'not in presence but in absence, not in displays of legitimating possession, but in repudiations of alternative rationales for social authority'.[5] As his fifth feature, Pionke identifies the ways in which female characters reject the exertion of power as a means to assert social position, exploring the contradictions between conformation to ideological conventions and the pursuit of individual agency. Within the novels, he traces different ways in which the self-perception, -presentation, and -assertion of a population group that strives to define itself are portrayed via the actions of its individual characters. Although less attention is given to the works' broader public reception as well as authors' relations with both readers and other literary figures – critics, publishers, libraries – Pionke applies a fine-toothed comb to textual content, delivering a detailed and well-written study of the characters and their successful, or failed, attempts to maintain or regain middle-class status.

Each chapter concentrates on one of the above-mentioned negations, situating these within the demands and constraints of a lively literary market. Placing the sympathetic depiction of orphans into the context of authors' attempts to sever the ties between birth and class, the first chapter provides a detailed reading of familiar orphan narratives by Dickens (*Oliver Twist,* 1838*)*, Charlotte Brontë (*Jane Eyre,* 1847), Anthony

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[3] Albert D. Pionke, *Victorian Fictions of Middle-Class Status: Forms of Absence in the Age of Reform* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), p. 4.

[4] Pionke, p. 19.

[5] Pionke, p. 14.

Trollope (*Doctor Thorne*, 1858), and Wilkie Collins (*The Woman in White,* 1860; *No Name,* 1862), that interweave contemporary concerns over illegitimacy with the creation of a distinct identity for 'a class lacking antecedents'.[6]

Chapter Two focuses on the vulnerability of middle-class affiliation and prosperity attained by means of mental labour as opposed to inherited wealth. By analysing how their narratives expose the frailty of capital amidst an unregulated and unpredictable financial market, Pionke reveals how authors strove to legitimise their own claims to middle-class status through the rejection of pure economic hegemony, adducing poetic genius as a valid alternative credential. Drawing again on Dickens and Trollope (*Dombey and Son*, 1848; *The Way We Live Now*, 1875), he also includes the financial novels of Thackeray and Charles Reade (*The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond,* 1841; *Hard Cash,* 1863) as well as the lesser-known *The City of Jugglers* (1850) by William North.

The third chapter considers the middle-class rejection of civil commotion. Literary depictions of the numerical superiority of the working class and the threat of public disorder caused by collective action are contrasted with the repudiation of force as a way of social differentiation. Pionke reads the rejection of mass violence in the period's industrial novels by Dickens (*Barnaby Rudge*, 1841), Brontë (*Shirley*, 1849), Charles Kingsley (*Alton Locke*, 1850), George Eliot (*Felix Holt*, 1866), and Elizabeth Gaskell (*North and South*, 1855) as a means to further underscore the differing convictions of the working and middle classes.

Pionke's fourth chapter investigates rejections of claims to authority legitimised by contemporary statistical and empirical data. Pionke criticises the excessive reliance on data provided by social investigations, from census reports to medical mapping, for their tendency to label individuals 'by class and pathology; for members of the status-anxious social middle, such an allegation was unacceptable'.[7] He focuses once again on Dickens (*Hard Times*, 1854), Brontë (*Villette*, 1853) and Trollope (*The Three Clerks*, 1857), but his analysis of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's epic poem *Aurora Leigh* (1856) offers a welcome change from his reliance upon the novel form throughout.

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[6] Pionke, p. 26.

[7] Pionke, p. 139.

The fifth and final chapter broadens the scope of his investigation by looking more closely at the strategies employed by female characters to assert social rank through self-abnegation. After re-considering some of the works previously examined, Pionke's reading of Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865) convincingly attributes the heroine's claim to middle-class status to the author's upholding of conservative expectations surrounding matrimony and motherhood. Since recent work by Tamara S. Wagner, Clare Walker Gore, Clemence Schultze and Julia Courtney has re-ignited debates regarding Yonge's views on and depictions of female agency, especially interesting is Pionke's interpretation of the heroine's quest for 'usefulness' contextualised within the framework of women's contributions to the formation of Victorian middle-class identity.[8] Concluding with a brief outline of the socio-economic developments of the later decades, Pionke closes his book with a demonstration of the applicability of his thesis to other contemporary works, such as John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1867-8) or the New Woman novels of the 1880s and 1890s.

Embedded in its historical context, Pionke's rich study provides helpful information regarding the sociological, political, and economic circumstances of the 1830s to the 1880s. This approach both covers the essential factors involved in the emergence and formation of middle-class identity, and contextualises the contemporary events and figures alluded to in the novels. Detailing a range of tactics employed by the middle strata in various European societies to attain social and cultural authority over the last two centuries, Pionke draws on the sociological theories of Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu outlined in the introduction. While these provide a helpful contrast to reinforce his own argument, the lengthy digressions do not connect seamlessly with the greater design of his study owing to differences in the respective time periods considered.

Reading the formation of middle-class identity through the prism of Victorian novels enables Pionke to link characters' motivations and narrative trajectory to writers' personal situation and beliefs, revealing the difficulties faced by nineteenth-century

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[8] See Tamara S. Wagner's edited issue on Charlotte Yonge in *Women's Writing*, 17.2 (2010) and Clare Walker Gore, Clemence Schultze and Julia Courtney's edited volume *Charlotte Mary Yonge: Writing the Victorian Age* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

authors in reconciling ideas with reality. Unfortunately, Pionke makes no further remark on the selection of novels or the omission of non-canonical works, and indeed his selection of material covers titles and authors amply examined in the context of middle-class identity and nineteenth-century fiction by critics like Marjorie Garson and Richard Salmon.[9] Like Salmon, Pionke reflects on the economic status of professional authorship, extending this to issues beyond the monetary such as concerns over the recognition of creative capital as a means of affirming status and Victorian writers' simultaneous reliance on, and rejection of, sufficient wealth necessary to claim middle-class affiliation. In this regard, the inclusion of one or more lesser-known authors would have expanded the current research. It is also regrettable that Pionke neglects to mention Elsie B. Michie's more recent work on middle- and upper-class Victorians' uneasy relationship with money in *The Vulgar Question of Money* (2011), which focuses on women and the liberties and restrictions of marriage.[10] Given the centrality of the marriage plot in nineteenth-century fiction, reflections on the legal and personal implications of matrimony in the 'Age of Reform' are a surprising absence in an otherwise comprehensive study.

Pionke's approach to examining the connective tissue between life and literature ultimately sets this work apart from previous investigations. As his study traverses between the authors' economic ambitions, their fictional creations, and the public space of their audience, he reveals the permeable boundaries that enabled the novels to serve as a form of conduct manual for middle-class readers. Using Pionke's work as a guide, scholars might apply his approach to a more diverse range of primary materials such as non-fiction, drama, and poetry, to further understand how literary form participates in both historical and fictionalised iterations of class construction in the nineteenth century. The study ultimately deserves praise for offering a new set of categorisations that shaped the Victorian middle-class as represented in, and influenced by, nineteenth-century fiction: more work employing this multidisciplinary route will be welcome and insightful.

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[9] Marjorie Garson, *Moral Taste: Aesthetics, Subjectivity, and Social Power in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Professional* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[10] Elsie B. Michie, *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

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![RRR logo](Romance, Revolution & Reform)

Review: Tyson Stolte, *Dickens and Victorian Psychology: Introspection, First-Person Narration and the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022) 288pp. ISBN 978-0-19-285842-9, £70.00.

ARTHUR CHARLESWORTH

IN *DICKENS AND* Victorian Psychology, Tyson Stolte attempts to rectify the suggestion first proposed by George Henry Lewes in 'Dickens in Relation to Criticism' (1872), and later cemented by Henry James and Walter Bagehot, that, as a writer, Dickens was 'no thinker'.[1] Lewes's essay contrasts Dickens 'the man', who frequently discussed psychological matters and included psychology-related essays in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, with Dickens 'the author', whose novels were, according to Lewes, populated with 'unreal', shallow caricatures.[2] However, as Stolte reminds us in his introduction, not all nineteenth-century critics shared this view. For Edwin P. Whipple and John Forster, Dickens's characters' apparent shallowness belies a depth; they were, as Whipple put it, 'grotesque in form [...] [but] true and natural in heart'.[3] Building on this juxtaposition, Stolte argues that Dickens's novels reveal his position as a Christian dualist, reaffirming his belief in a separation of body and mind, and stressing the latter's unknowability, except through introspection. This, according to Stolte, derived from the author's 'personal belief, a Christianity founded primarily on the New Testament [...] emphasizing the importance of the work each individual is called to do'.[4] For Stolte, this represented Dickens's deliberate counter-response to nineteenth-century developments in psychology, which saw the field move from its religious origins as 'the study of the soul' to become more closely aligned with science and materialism.[5]

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[1] Tyson Stolte, *Dickens and Victorian Psychology: Introspection, First-Person Narration, and the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 3.

[2] George Henry Lewes, 'Dickens in Relation to Criticism', *Fortnightly Review*, 11.62 (1872), 141–54 (p. 146).

[3] Edwin P. Whipple, 'Novels and Novelists: Charles Dickens', *North American Review,* 69 (1849), 383-407, in *Dickens: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Philip Collins (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971), pp. 238-241 (p. 239), cited in Stolte, p. 6.

[4] Stolte, p. 33.

[5] Stolte, p. 24.

This exploration of Dickens's affirmation of dualism in the face of developments in psychology marks the volume's original contribution to scholarship. As Stolte makes clear, 'no critic has thoroughly examined Dickens's response to the religious stakes of [...] mental philosophy'.[6] Certainly, the combination of religion and science proves particularly fruitful for stressing psychology's religious ancestry and prevents Stolte from anachronistically discussing psychology via its modern status as a scientific, and not theological, endeavour. Throughout his introduction, Stolte carefully avoids simplistic readings regarding the rise of science and loss of religion, noting that 'the history of psychology cannot be adequately explained as the triumph of secularisation'.[7] Stolte argues that Christian dualists such as Dickens felt that their beliefs were threatened by the encroachment of developments such as physiognomy and phrenology and, to use Stolte's phrase, the growing 'spectre of materialism'.[8] For Stolte, Dickens responded to this threat through an increasing reliance on introspection as a narrative technique, claiming a discursive space in which the mind's unknowability could be explored and problematised.

We can position Stolte's text within the burgeoning field of medical humanities and, more specifically, current scholarship on Dickens and nineteenth-century science. Like Stolte, Adelene Buckland has countered Lewes's essay in 'Charles Dickens, Man of Science' (2021) by suggesting that Dickens played a major role in Victorian scientific culture.[9] Andrew Mangham has also contextualised the character of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* (1861) through the lens of contemporary attitudes to menopause.[10] Elsewhere, Greta Perletti, David McAllister, and Jill Matus have all written on Dickens and memory, mortality, and trauma respectively.[11] *Dickens and Victorian Psychology,*

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[6] Stolte, p. 40.

[7] Stolte, p. 29.

[8] Stolte, p. 24.

[9] See: Adelene Buckland, 'Charles Dickens, Man of Science', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 49.3 (2021), 423–55.

[10] See: Andrew Mangham, *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[11] Stolte, p. 40. See also: Greta Perletti, 'Dickens, Victorian Mental Sciences and Mnemonic Errancy', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 10 (2010); David McAllister, '"Subject to the Spectre of Imagination": Sleep, Dreams, and Unconsciousness in *Oliver Twist*', *Dickens Studies Annual,*

however, expands on these 'local interventions' by focusing on narrative technique as a core element of its methodology.[12] In using this approach, Stolte notes his debt to Sally Shuttleworth's identification of the 'shared textual economy' of nineteenth-century novelists and psychologists.[13] Stolte concludes his introduction with a justification of his work's chronological approach as a means of demonstrating how the various narrative techniques employed by Dickens evolved in response to contemporaneous developments in psychology.

Stolte's first chapter focuses on *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844). Through the earlier novel, Stolte explores Dickens's preoccupation with physiognomy and the science of reading the mind through the body, which appears inconsistent with Dickens's dualism and belief in the mind's unknowability. However, Stolte argues that Dickens only reflects contemporary psychological debates that position the mind as having a physical basis or 'anchor', rather than personally refuting dualism. For Stolte, Dickens's belief in dualism is re-affirmed through the depiction of Ralph Nickleby's suicide, which shows 'Dickens moving more definitively away from the outward depiction of consciousness and towards [...] an introspective perspective'.[14] In the second half of the chapter, Stolte draws our attention to this movement through Dickens's exploration of Jonas Chuzzlewit's interiority. In both cases, the pay-off feels a little lacking: a more thorough contextualisation of Ralph and Jonas within Dickens's other works would have been beneficial for assessing their significance to Dickens's narrative development. The chapter concludes with a fascinating section on Dickens's comparisons between humans and animals in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His frequent allusions to Jonas's 'beastliness', and explicit reference to 'the Monboddo Doctrine', which claimed 'orangutans were members of the human species', in the novel's first chapter appear (like physiognomy and phrenology) inconsistent with Dickens's Christian dualism.[15] Yet the chapter ends without sufficiently exploring these inconsistencies. Stolte's claim that these passing references to naturalism and early evolutionary theory

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38 (2007), 1–17; Jill Matus, *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[12] Stolte, p. 40.

[13] Stolte, p. 11.

[14] Stolte, p. 41.

[15] Stolte, p. 90.

'underscored what was at stake in Dickens's efforts to insist on the fundamental privacy of the mind', issues an open invitation to other scholars to further explicate Dickens's relationship with these burgeoning scientific fields.[16]

In chapter two, Stolte's attention moves to *David Copperfield* (1849). Contradicting Nicholas Dames and Michael S. Kearns, Stolte suggests that Dickens opposed strict associationism in the novel, while stressing that he did not completely dispute the model of associative thoughts. Taking a nuanced approach, Stolte reads *David Copperfield* alongside Scottish faculty psychology, which supported the association of ideas, but (unlike a strict adherence to associationism) showed the mental faculties to be '(at least to some degree) innate'.[17] Stolte argues that the novel represents Dickens's theorising upon the association of ideas and the irrefutability of innate mental gifts, which in turn leads him to re-assess Uriah Heep as 'a nightmare vision of the associative self' existing in opposition to David's innate goodness (and Dickens's belief in such things).[18] In mentioning the comparisons of Heep to various animals, Stolte misses an opportunity to link back to his previous chapter; however, the clear juxtaposition of David and Heep offers a refreshing take on two of Dickens's most famous characters.

Chapter three's discussion of *Bleak House* (1852) addresses Esther's first-person narration, which mirrors the narrative perspective of *David Copperfield*. Yet, unlike David, Esther 'desires to talk about anything other than herself'.[19] Stolte argues that this reluctance to embrace introspection means that, as in *Nicholas Nickleby,* Dickens leans heavily on physiognomy as a way of reading the mind through the body in these novels. Stolte emphasises that this should not necessarily be considered a step backward for Dickens, as the chapter explores a wide spectrum of physiognomic theories. Some of these were 'perfectly compatible with […] dualism', while others, such as those proposed in Alexander Walker's *Physiognomy Founded on Physiology* (1834), 'laid bare the material foundations of consciousness'.[20] Stolte's engagement with the legal texts of

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[16] Stolte, p. 95.

[17] Stolte, p. 102.

[18] Stolte, p. 118.

[19] Stolte, p. 127.

[20] Stolte, p. 147, 135.

Bleak House also proves fruitful. He draws interesting parallels between the law's fascination with the physicality of letters, wills, bills, etc., rather than their content, and contemporary psychology's apparent prioritising of the material body over the immaterial mind contained within it.

In the fourth chapter, Stolte revisits associationism, presenting it as an alternative to the 'anachronistic' psychoanalytical readings of *Great Expectations* famously proposed by Peter Brooks.[21] More specifically, Stolte analyses Pip's narrative through nineteenth-century theories on latent thought, as proposed by William Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859). Stolte's use of latent thought to explain *Great Expectations'* preoccupation with flashes of realisation, reflex actions, and 'the *spirituality* of latent mental modifications' is compelling.[22] However, as with his earlier discussions on *Martin Chuzzlewit*, developments in the burgeoning field of evolutionary biology (Darwin's *Origin of the Species* appeared a year before Dickens's novel), complicate matters. As these attempts to square evolution with Christian dualism 'end in confusion', Stolte is prevented from drawing solid conclusions, which proves frustrating for author and reader alike.[23]

Given the unfinished state of the novel, solid conclusions are made doubly challenging when Stolte turns his attention to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) in his final chapter. Rather than following the novel's murder plot, Stolte focuses on John Jasper's psychic state, which he explains through the nineteenth-century theory of 'double consciousness': 'a rigid split in a subject's knowledge and awareness'.[24] Beginning with Dickens's speech to the Birmingham and Midland Institute in 1869, in which he 'scoffed at the suggestion that this was a material – and thus irreligious – age', Stolte centralises the author's unwavering commitment to the Christian dualist cause.[25] However, as with Dickens's use of physiognomy, phrenology, and evolution in his earlier works, the apparently materialistic splitting of Jasper's mind puts pressure on such a strongly held theological position. Stolte identifies various tactics used by Dickens to

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[21] Stolte, p. 168.

[22] Stolte, p. 177, emphasis in the original.

[23] Stolte, p. 206.

[24] Stolte, p. 211.

[25] Stolte, p. 208.

nullify the threat posed by double consciousness: his domesticating of it, for example, and the suggestion that Jasper's divided self parallels the Christian 'division between this life and the next'.[26] The identification of these various tactics opens up space for more focused individual studies, especially on double consciousness, in the future.

Although not without critical precedent, *Dickens and Victorian Psychology* offers an important addition to the nineteenth-century medical humanities. Stolte's focus on Dickens's narrative technique enables him to broaden his scope beyond isolated references to mesmerism, physiology, and phrenology to explore Dickens's underlying understanding of the mind (informed by his theological positioning) and its impact on his authorial practice. Stolte carefully avoids the anachronism of reading present-day psychology into a nineteenth-century context, in which defining psychology remains a 'notoriously daunting task'.[27] The complexities of this task, most notably the interplay between, and shared discourses of, religion and science, prevent straightforward conclusions and Stolte should be applauded for resisting the urge to simplify his subject matter. There are, however, instances in which primary materials could benefit from a little extra critical space, particularly given Stolte's chosen methodology of literary analysis. There are also missed opportunities to draw comparisons between the novels – comparisons that would have drawn the reader's attention more closely to developments in Dickens's narrative technique.

However, these criticisms are outweighed by Stolte's serious attempt to wrestle with an extremely complex topic, which warrants further investigation. His methodology might, for example, be applied to other authors and literary forms, especially given the shared textual economies of nineteenth-century literature and psychology. For his part, Stolte is keen to steer his reader's attention towards discussions surrounding the theories of the soul, a subject 'that has been largely absent from literary critical studies of the period'.[28] Rather than dismissing the soul from the vantage of our own secular age, Stolte urges future critics in the field to revisit the topic with the sincerity with which those in the nineteenth century treated the subject.

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[26] Stolte, p. 232.

[27] Stolte, p. 16.

[28] Stolte, p. 244.

Romance, Revolution & Reform

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Review: Katherine Judith Anderson, *Twisted Words: Torture and Liberalism in Imperial Britain* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2022) 234pp. ISBN 978-0-8142-1512-8, $69.95.

ALEXI DECKER

KATHERINE JUDITH ANDERSON'S 2022 monograph *Twisted Words: Torture and Liberalism in Imperial Britain* begins on a grim note: a scene from Rudyard Kipling's 1890 story 'The Mark of the Beast', wherein a British police officer tortures an Indian priest. Anderson posits that, although Kipling's characters feel a sense of disgrace at their actions, they are adhering to a tradition of torture that 'was central to the history, literature, and culture of nineteenth-century Britain and its Empire, despite the corresponding evolution of liberalism'.[1] As philosophical liberalism swept Britain, Anderson claims, so too did anti-imperial revolution sweep its colonies, prompting swift and brutal imperial retaliation. In this work, Anderson focuses on the seeming disparity between this liberal ideology and the continuing deployment of torture both in reality and in nineteenth-century fiction. The after-effects of Britain's responses to the Morant Bay Uprising, the 1857 Indian Rebellion, and slave rebellions prior to abolition were, Anderson argues, significant factors that contributed towards the continuing interest in torture in nineteenth-century British fiction—and, subsequently, to the period's discourses surrounding violence, human rights, and the governmental sanctioning of torture as a valid response to states of national emergency.

This historical grounding allows Anderson to examine an array of sources in a variety of contexts, including martyrological novels and non-fiction sources such as periodicals and court documents, particularly those from the 1865 Morant Bay Uprising. Expanding on the post-colonial work of torture scholars such as Stephen Morton and Nasser Hussain, and diverging from Edward Peters's 1996 *Torture,* which concluded that nineteenth-century definitions of torture became 'largely sentimental', Anderson argues for serious engagement with the period's changing definitions of human rights and citizenship and the exceptional state violence that prompted them.[2] Anderson's

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[1] Katherine Judith Anderson, *Twisted Words: Torture and Liberalism in Imperial Britain* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2022), p. 3.

[2] Anderson, p. 5.

work is the first monograph to examine torture's relationship with liberalism over the course of the nineteenth century. In doing so, she posits that her work serves, in the vein of Andrew Sartori and Priyamvada Gopal's approach to liberalism, as a work of 'anticolonial reclamation'.[3] Anderson undertakes this work by using both fictional and nonfictional accounts to argue for their representation of Britain's torture victims as potential British subjects, recognising their humanity even in the wake of overwhelming violence.

Anderson's first chapter centres on Catholic and Protestant martyrological novels of the nineteenth century, whose scenes of torture she reads as a liturgical conflation of state and religious power. Anderson presents readings of seven martyrological novels: Nicholas Wiseman's *Fabiola, or the Church of the Catacombs* (1854), John Henry Newman's *Callista: A Sketch of the Third Century* (1855), Frances Taylor's *Tyborne; And Who Went Thither in the Days of Queen Elizabeth* (1859), J. M. Neale's *The Farm of Aptonga: A Story of the Times of S. Cyprian* (1856), Anne Manning's *The Lincolnshire Tragedy: Passages in the Life of the Faire Gospeller, Mistress Anne Askew* (1866), W. H. G. Kingston's *The Last Look: A Tale of the Spanish Inquisition* (1869), and finally George Eliot's 1863 novel *Romola*. While Anderson lends most of her focus to Eliot's *Romola* and John Henry Newman's *Callista,* the range of works she examines breaks new scholarly ground in its noncanonical breadth. Departing from scholars such as Maureen Moran, who have explored the imagery of martyrdom in nineteenth-century works, Anderson focuses instead on the somatic experience of torture.[4] In so doing, Anderson presents an argument for what she calls 'sensory liberalism' in these texts, arguing that they offer an 'alternative form of liberalism […] rooted in bodily experience more than intellect and reason'.[5]

Chapter Two argues that incidents of torture committed by south Indian tax collectors in 1855, who were working in service of the British, shifted definitions of torture for British Victorians and 'authorized a modern understanding of it as a systemic

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[3] Andrew Sartori, *Liberalism in Empire: An Alternative History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014); Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (New York: Verso, 2019).

[4] Anderson, p. 21.

[5] Anderson, p. 21.

and everyday interaction between citizen-subjects and their government'.[6] Anderson uses the 1855 *Report of the Commissioners for the Investigation of Alleged Cases of Torture in the Madras Presidency,* commissioned by the British Madras (south Indian) government. Britain required money to continue its operations in India: torturing it out of Indian peasants meant that torture 'served as a troubling new marker of modernity as it evolved into a tool of global commerce'.[7] Yet Anderson posits that the victims' statements in defence of their own human rights changed discourse around colonial subjects' political status, with 'torture open[ing] up the *possibility* for a more inclusive British citizenship'.[8]

Chapter Three focuses on the Jamaican Morant Bay rebellion, Governor Edward John Eyre's installation of martial law, and the torture that happened under it. In meticulous textual analysis of primary sources such as the 1866 *Report of the Jamaica Royal Commission,* not to mention private letters between military men and their civilian families on English shores, Anderson highlights how the British public drew binaries between their own peaceful existence and the violence inherent in the expansion of the broader Empire. This chapter provides useful socio-historical context, foregrounding a shift back towards literary concerns in her fourth chapter, which examines domestic torture in George Meredith's *The Egoist* (1879), George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), and Anthony Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* (1869). Anderson argues that, through the rhetoric of torture in their depiction of marital relationships, these novelists advocated for an acceptance of Britain's changing marriage laws and a shift towards stronger legal rights for women: for example, new laws such as the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878 granted assaulted women the option to separate from their husbands and retain custody of their children. Anderson sees Meredith, Eliot and Trollope 'disrupt rather than normalize gender discrimination, breaking the linear trajectory of the courtship plot through an insertion of torture at various points along the way'.[9] Equating patriarchy with sovereignty, Anderson draws our attention to the cross-pollination of torture discourses between domestic and imperial spaces.

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[6] Anderson, p. 14.

[7] Anderson, p. 55.

[8] Anderson, p. 21, emphasis in the original.

[9] Anderson, p. 110.

In her final chapter, Anderson turns to late Victorian settler colonialism, and 'adventure romance' or 'colonial Gothic' texts—specifically, George Lewis Becke's short stories 'The Revenge of Macy O'Shea', 'The Methodical Mr. Burr of Majuru' (1894), and 'The Trader's Wife' (1898), as well as Bertram Mitford's novels *The Weird of Deadly Hollow: A Tale of the Cape Colony* (1891) and *The Gun-Runner: A Tale of Zululand* (1893), and William Charles Scully's *Daniel Vananda: The Life Story of a Human Being* (1923). She argues that these noncanonical texts offer a complex view of colonialism, as they refuse to gloss over imperialism's artificial binaries between colonial force and slavery, settlement and capitalism, and even between realism and genre fiction in literature. Although these texts centre on separate colonial locations and span nearly twenty-five years, Anderson's emphasis on fin-de-siècle texts written by men who 'lived in the settler colonies about which they wrote' highlights these novels' visions of torture as a tool of white settler colonialism, and speaks to the prevalence of this view at the end of the nineteenth century.[10]

After this survey of the colonial Gothic, Anderson moves to her coda, which draws parallels between imperial violence against marginalized bodies in the nineteenth century and current police brutality in the United States, which she describes as the British Empire's 'twenty-first-century American heir'.[11] As a whole, her monograph argues that nineteenth-century imperialism created our modern understanding of torture, positioning state-sanctioned torture as a fundamental building block of Western modernity. Indeed, Anderson goes to great lengths to establish the academic study of torture as fundamental to understanding current practices of marginalisation, offering an impassioned argument for the value of nineteenth-century scholarship in modern-day contexts. She further advocates for a '"new" New Liberalism', 'a version capable of severing itself from capitalist imperialism and championing instead the definitions of justice and human freedom' as a defence of the Humanities in our present day.[12] As nineteenth-century scholarship continues to branch away from its historically white, British, and largely male roots, we would perhaps do well to emulate Anderson's enlightening work both within and without the canon. Scholars interested in this field might also build on the intersectionality of Anderson's work, using it as a springboard

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[10] Anderson, p. 138.

[11] Anderson, p. 176.

[12] Anderson, p. 179.

to examine the relations between torture, sexuality and gender, as Anderson examines heterosexual marital abuse towards women, but otherwise opens up a discursive space in which further work surrounding homosocial and homoerotic relationships could be undertaken. Overall, however, Anderson's meticulous analysis and judicious use of interdisciplinary material make *Twisted Words* a particularly effective monograph in dealing with the nineteenth century's faults and failures in a way that seeks empathy for and understandings of both its oppressors and victims.

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Review: Madeleine Callaghan, *Eternity in British Romantic Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022) 336pp. ISBN 978-180-085-6066, £87.60.

CATHERINE ROSE MAW

IN HER AMBITIOUS monograph, *Eternity in British Romantic Poetry* (2022), Madeleine Callaghan sets out to explore conceptualisations of eternity and its relationship to the mortal world in Romantic poetry, which she establishes as one of the most significant intellectual concerns of the period. Her work considers whether poetry can successfully apprehend the intangible concept of eternity: how might poetry be a means to 'access, express, and understand eternity, if eternity exists'?[1] In response to this question, Callaghan demonstrates the diverse ideas and forms of eternity in Romantic poetry, in both their positively hopeful, and negatively uncertain, iterations. Like the monographs of Andrew Bennett (1999), Martin Priestman (2000), and Mark Sandy (2013) which examine ideas of eternity in Romantic poetry through broader theological, philosophical, secular, or aesthetic frameworks, Callaghan's study also takes the 'big six' canonical Romantic poets—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats—as her starting point, but also includes the Romantic poet Felicia Hemans (1793-1835).[2] Where Bennett, Priestman and Sandy consider eternity to be only one ideological factor within a wider set of literary and socio-historical contexts such as theological beliefs and practices, philosophical influences, the practice of literary creation, or literary posterity, Callaghan departs from this practice by addressing eternity directly as the central focus of the monograph, refreshingly seeking to read Romantic poetry through a 'conceptual rather than contextual' methodology.[3]

Until now, Callaghan attests, 'no studies have focused on the mixture of sources that contribute to the Romantic fascination with eternity'.[4] Callaghan's work draws upon

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[1] Madeleine Callaghan, *Eternity in British Romantic Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022), p. 1.

[2] Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Martin Priestman, *Romantic Atheism: Poetry and Freethought, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Mark Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory and Mourning* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[3] Callaghan, p. 11.

[4] Callaghan, p. 13.

writers such as Milton, Plato, Boethius, and Aquinas, forming an intersecting (and sometimes seemingly contradictory) range of literary, philosophical, and theological frameworks. This interdisciplinary methodology challenges the separation of theoretical lenses, and brings those lenses together to work as a symbiotic whole. This allows Callaghan to consider how each poet diverges in their approach to eternity as a thematic and conceptual concern, arguing that while the 'thrilling tension between the temporal and the transcendent is the principle that unites their work', each individual poet 'imagines their own version of eternity'.[5] As a result, Callaghan demonstrates that eternity in British Romantic poetry is a multifaceted concept constructed via a range of spiritual, intellectual, and authorial considerations.

The first chapter explores William Blake's poetic and artistic approaches to the experience of eternity. Callaghan claims that 'Blake's chosen position is that of an artist suspended between the historically-situated world and the eternity accessible via prophetic vision'.[6] For Blake, she argues, an unstable apprehension of eternity is built upon our understanding of the temporal condition of our own world. However, for Callaghan, Blake refuses to consider the sensations of the physical world as the only mode of perception. Instead, Blake 'rehabilitates the imaginary', enabling the poet 'to make his reader see as he sees' by engaging the reader in both visual and poetic imagery.[7] As such, Blake's poetry aims to equip the reader with a new way of seeing eternity whilst living in the material world.[8]

Chapter Two considers William Wordsworth's tentative approach to notions of eternity. Callaghan highlights Wordsworth's various philosophical and theological influences, which include Plato, John Locke, Emmanuel Kant, Saint Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, and differentiates between Wordsworth's perception of the tangible world and what *could* exist beyond empirical observation. Callaghan categorises these as 'mortal sight of what is here and his visionary perception of what is eternal'—or, in short, his mortal sight and eternal vision in poems such as *The Excursion* (1814) and *The*

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[5] Callaghan, p. 15.

[6] Callaghan, p. 25.

[7] Callaghan, p. 25.

[8] Callaghan, p. 58.

Prelude (1805), among other canonical works.[9] However, Callaghan argues that, for Wordsworth, the poet cannot fully apprehend, 'only intuit the presence of visionary eternity in his mortal sight'.[10] With a nod to Wordsworth's empiricism, Callaghan suggests that, for Wordsworth, possibilities of eternity can be imagined but are ultimately unknowable within the limitations of mortal life.

In Chapter Three, Callaghan considers Coleridge's theological exploration of a Christian afterlife through the art of writing poetry, arguing that his use of sensory imagery serves to create a somatic, rather than solely conceptual, experience of eternity. For Callaghan, Coleridge as a poet-philosopher 'must range through our fallen language in an attempt to discover words adequate to transcend the finite and access the eternal':[11] Callaghan examines Coleridge's poem *Religious Musings* (1796) as one example of how Coleridge uses this kind of imagery to contemplate the imagined sensory experience of biblical apocalypse and Christian eternity. Coleridge vividly illustrates, Callaghan argues, a promised paradise beyond mortal life: an eternal heaven, which paradoxically, as an abstract and unknowable concept, can only be imagined and expressed through rich sensory imagery as an earthly lens through which we might successfully perceive this otherwise-intangible concept.

In Chapter Four, Callaghan focuses on Byron's work, arguing that his enquiry into the intellectual potential of eternity shapes Byron's most experimental poetry. Through close readings of some of Byron's most famous works, such as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18), *Manfred* (1817), *Don Juan* (1819) and *Beppo* (1818), Callaghan underscores Byron's struggle with the nature of humanity to envisage itself as '[h]alf dust, half deity'.[12] Tied to mortality whilst seeking an aspect of the eternal or immortal, 'Byron's protean and shifting approach to eternity sees him experiment with finding a means to *articulate* what eternity *can* signify to a mortal poet' (my emphasis).[13]

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[9] Callaghan, p. 60.

[10] Callaghan, p. 95.

[11] Callaghan, p. 101.

[12] Lord Byron, 'Manfred', in *Lord Byron: The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 274-314.

[13] Callaghan, p. 138.

In Chapter Five, Callaghan argues for the status of Platonic-Christian philosophy as intrinsic to Shelley's conceptualisation of eternity, with Callaghan noting that Shelley was fascinated by the 'gulf' between mortal and eternal.[14] Through a close reading of Shelley's construction of poetic personae in major works such as *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), *The Witch of Atlas* (1820), *Epipsychidion* (1821), *Adonais* (1821), and his later lyrics, Callaghan argues that the 'problem of how to imagine, reach, and express eternity becomes the question that haunts Shelley's poetry'.[15] Shelley's poetry thus passionately manifests his desire and yearning for a world beyond the human.

Chapter Six focuses on 'Defying Eternity in Keats's Poetry'. For Callaghan, the pursuit of eternity is 'antithetical to how Keats configured his poetics'.[16] She suggests that, for Keats, eternity is beyond mortal comprehension, and points to an apprehensive resistance on Keats's part to define eternity itself. Callaghan's subsequent revisiting of 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819) and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1819) illustrates to us that the '[d]efiance of eternity is the ultimate Keatsian gesture' and that, for Keats, '[b]eing human is all we know, and, finally, all we have'.[17]

Finally, Chapter Seven turns to Hemans's 'Eternity of Female Suffering', with Hemans being the only female poet discussed at length beside the canonical 'big six' Romantic poets. Taking *Records of Women* (1828) as its focus, Callaghan suggests that Hemans's female protagonists are 'fated to suffer' a sempiternal pattern of anguish that cannot be outlived.[18] Through exploring poems such as 'Indian Woman's Death Song' and 'Madeline. A Domestic Tale', Callaghan argues that Hemans's women only have two options: to end their own lives to cease suffering, or to endure life with the mutual support of other women. By including this chapter, Callaghan implicitly recognises the expansion of the perceived Romantic canon. Nevertheless, to only include one in-depth study on a woman poet suggests a possible limitation of the work: the absence of other female poets, such as Letitia Landon, Anna Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, and Mary Robinson is marked. The positioning of the Hemans chapter in the study also makes the inclusion feel like something of a belated afterthought. Callaghan's methodology

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[14] Callaghan, p. 178.

[15] Callaghan, p. 199.

[16] Callaghan, p. 217.

[17] Callaghan, p. 250.

[18] Callaghan, p. 251.

of centring chapters around individual poets is, at first glance, logical for exploring differing perspectives and beliefs around eternity. However, an alternative approach might have been taken in integrating the works of women more consistently throughout the monograph, allowing their work to participate more fully in conversation with that of more established male poets. Nonetheless, Callaghan's chapter on Hemans provides a fruitful starting point for future scholarship: further discussions of eternity in the works of women, and those of other non-canonical Romantic writers. Such an approach poses a prime opportunity to diversify the perspectives on the concept of eternity in this monograph, demonstrating the impact of differing lived experiences on individual understandings of eternity.

Callaghan's answer to the question raised in her introduction—how might poetry provide a means of knowing eternity—is that, on its own, '[p]hilosophy can only do so much' but that '[p]oetry might be the nearest possibility of apprehending eternity'.[19] Through her text-first approach, Callaghan demonstrates that the poetic expression of eternity reflects 'a spur to the imagination', and subsequently positions the imaginative and creative impulse as central to the expression, and function, of eternity in poetry.[20] She concludes that '[p]oetry, more so than philosophy, allows for the imagination to take hold and remove us from the reason-bound systems of philosophical thinking'.[21] The fact that eternity remains fundamentally unknowable to these poets means that, for Callaghan, imaginative and diverse conceptualisations of eternity are allowed to proliferate: her work skilfully illustrates poetry's status as a mutable medium that enables these poets to theorise, posit, and explore such vast and intangible concepts.

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[19] Callaghan, p. 294.

[20] Callaghan, p. 292.

[21] Callaghan, p. 293.

longing for immortality as a condition of human mortality. Her research interests more broadly include nature, feeling, and emotional experience in Romantic poetry.

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Review: Natalie Abrahami and Ann Yee (dirs.), *Rusalka* (Royal Opera House, London), 21 February – 7 March 2023.

DYLAN PRICE AND EMMA KAVANAGH

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK'S *RUSALKA* (1901), a captivating tale of water sprites and witches, is a mainstay of the operatic repertory. Much about the opera's idyllic subject matter supported a Czech nationalist project at the time—not least its landscape imagery, a common feature of nationalisms in many contexts—and the opera has since grown to be popular in Dvořák's native Bohemia (now Czechia) as a result. 'At the National Theatre in Prague *Rusalka* became an instant and permanent "hit"', David R. Beveridge notes, 'retained in the repertoire almost continually to the present day'.[1] But the opera's folkloric emphasis has also lent it a wider popular appeal beyond Czechia. Dvořák's music has long been received positively in Britain, not least because he made several visits between 1884 and 1886, 1890 and 1891, and in 1896. Though *Rusalka* was not premiered in the UK until 1950, it has since become similarly popular due to its delicate orchestration, pictorial character, and luscious musical themes.

The opera's more recent history at the Royal Opera House has been somewhat chequered: in their 2012 production, for example, Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito provocatively chose to set the opera in a brothel, a choice that prompted raucous booing from the audience on opening night. Fortunately, *Rusalka*'s most recent outing at Covent Garden in early 2023—directed by Natalie Abrahami and Ann Yee—was considerably more successful. This new production offered a no less politicised reading, but did so by bringing Dvořák's opera into dialogue with the theme of climate change rather than sex trafficking. Though the new production's efforts in this direction were not entirely sustained, it nonetheless had much to recommend it, and its reception has been a considerable improvement upon that of its predecessor. It prompts many questions about how scholars of nineteenth-century culture might respond to ecocritical issues, especially surrounding knowledge exchange with the creative and cultural industries. Ecocritically-minded productions such as *Rusalka* open a rich seam

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[1] David Beveridge, 'A Rare Meeting of Minds in Kvapil's and Dvořák's *Rusalka*: The Background, the Artistic Result, and Response by the World of Opera', in *Czech Music around 1900*, ed. by Lenka Krupková and Jirí Kopecky (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2017), pp. 61–80 (p. 76).

of possibilities for scholarly impact, a project of special importance in a period of growing public engagement with environmental issues.

Much about the plot's conflict between its 'human' and 'natural' worlds lends itself to an ecocritical reading. Based on a libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil, *Rusalka* draws upon the kinds of supernatural and folkloric themes that motivated much of Dvořák's later music—most notably *Vodník* (*The Water Goblin*, 1896). This folkloric basis was interpreted nationalistically by many Czech critics at the time, who praised (as Beveridge describes) 'the distinctively Czech qualities of both the libretto and the music', but it lends itself also to contemporary ecological priorities.[2] The plot bears much in common with Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* (1837). The water sprite Rusalka falls in love with a Prince from the human world and asks the witch Ježibaba to make her human. Ježibaba grants this wish, but only on the condition that Rusalka loses both her immortality and her voice. The second Act depicts the consequences of this transformation, as the mute Rusalka comes to the painful realisation that the Prince's eye has been caught by a visiting Duchess. She retreats back into her lake and becomes a spirit of death, lurking in the watery depths. In a dramatic denouement, Rusalka and the Prince meet again in the opera's third Act. Their kiss is fatal but, by sacrificing himself for the woman he had earlier forsaken, the Prince ultimately achieves redemption.

The production design contained elements that responded, with varying approaches, to these ecological priorities. The sets—designed by Chloe Lamford—surely benefited Abrahami and Yee's ecological reimagining, putting the murky underwater realm of the water sprites at odds with the glossy artifice of the human world. For example, the first Act, which takes place beneath the surface of the lake, was sparsely dressed with moss-covered boulders and dangling stems of slick seaweed; a hanging piece overhead allowed a tantalising view of the sky above. These choices largely corresponded to the set designs of previous productions, going back to the premiere (which, as archival evidence from Prague's National Theatre shows, depicted its underwater setting in similar ways). In contrast, Lamford's set for the second Act presented us with a white rectangular prism, the Prince's castle, in which the terrestrial action took place. This prism helped to support a particular kind of ecological reading: it starkly juxtaposed the lake (which remained visible behind), thereby drawing a clear

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[2] Beveridge, p. 74.

distinction between its 'human' and 'natural' worlds and highlighting the violence that inheres between them. Although the set succeeded in making this juxtaposition explicit, it also meant that the performances themselves were somewhat confined, limited as they were to a relatively small part of the ROH's stage. The production design improved in the third Act, which (following Rusalka's encounter with the Prince and the Duchess on land) presented the dirtied, polluted waters of the lake. Though the transformation of the set felt like a heavy-handed metaphor for the titular character's loss of innocence, it was visually striking nonetheless.

Even more striking was the production's very opening. Partially shielded from view by a translucent scrim, two dancers depicted the first meeting of Rusalka and the Prince in a spellbinding aerial ballet to the opera's overture. Yee's sinuous choreography perfectly captured the subtleties of underwater movement, and made for a breathtaking opening to the onstage action. Annemarie Woods's costumes continued the opposition of the plot's aquatic and human worlds. The three wood sprites were dressed in green costumes, bedecked with leaves and flowers. Vodník wore a long, billowing cape evoking the lake's rippling waters. Rusalka's cloak, also evoking her aquatic home, was stripped from her as she transformed into her human body; it was not long, however, until she was coerced into a tight-laced corset ahead of her doomed wedding to the Prince. The wedding guests' attire—all in black and splattered with oil slick—furthered the ecocritical angle of the production, making a marked contrast to the paler costumes of Rusalka and the Prince. These choices in costume and choreography suggestively intertwined dramatic bodies and their settings—precisely the kinds of entanglements of humans and their environments that have defined so much work in the environmental humanities.[3]

This ecological reading of *Rusalka* was in many ways successful, and the production offered a generous model for others to follow. Much repertoire from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contains themes that can be brought into contemporary discussions about climate change. For instance, both E.T.A. Hoffmann's opera *Undine* (1816) and Léo Delibes and Ludwig Minkus's ballet *La Source* (1866) lend themselves readily to ecological interpretation. Critical work in this line has already been

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[3] For example, these themes have motivated much work by Tim Ingold. See Tim Ingold, 'The Eye of the Storm: Visual Perception and the Weather', *Visual Studies*, 20.2 (2005), pp. 97–104.

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advanced by musicologists such as Daniel Grimley and Holly Watkins, as well as by cultural historians such as Felicia McCarren.[4] These scholars have compellingly shown the humanities' value for discussions about climate change, but there is more to be done to make these ideas accessible to a wider audience. That a high-profile venue such as the Royal Opera House has chosen to undertake this task is a welcome development, and it is our hope that other opera companies (both in the UK and further afield) might follow suit.

In this instance, however, some closer attention to the minutiae of the adaptation would have gone a long way. That the production did not furnish its ecological aspects with a dramatic reason to exist within the plot on its own terms meant that they ran the risk of feeling tokenistic. More could have been done to complicate the distinction between the plot's 'human' and 'natural' worlds, a common thread in the ecocritical literature raised above. This distinction felt somewhat overdrawn by the staging, which ignored the liminality—the murky transformations of the titular character as she dissolves between one realm and another—that characterises Dvořák's original. The reinterpretation of *Rusalka* through an ecological lens also somewhat diluted the moral and religious charge of the original text. Like Dvořák's *Vodník* (1896) or his *Svatební košile* (*The Spectre's Bride*, 1884), *Rusalka* features a young woman who does not 'know her place'. In other words, it offers a moralising, misogynistic lesson about so-called 'proper' behaviour.[5] But what are the ramifications of infusing contemporary environmental discussions with these kinds of meanings, however inadvertently? In neither the onstage action nor the programme were these problems properly explored, to the detriment of both the production and the environmental politics to which it sought to contribute. In this respect, the opera raised many questions for musicologists, not just about how opera might benefit from ecomusicological insights, but also about

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[4] Daniel M. Grimley, *Delius and the Sound of Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Holly Watkins, 'Musical Ecologies of Place and Placelessness', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 64.2 (2011), 404–8; Felicia McCarren, *One Dead at the Paris Opera Ballet: La Source, 1866-2014* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[5] For a discussion of the opera's gendered and queer meanings, see Christopher Campo-Bowen, 'Ježibaba's Ambiguities: Binaries, Power, and Queer Alterity in Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka*', in *Women in Nineteenth-Century Czech Musical Culture: Apostles of a Brighter Future*, ed. by Anja Bunzel and Christopher Campo-Bowen (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

how these productions might become objects of study (and critique) in themselves. Further research remains to be done on the assumptions that underpin contemporary opera productions, and these areas have, thus far, not received the full attention that they deserve.

The opera's ideological problems might have been lessened by reimagining the original libretto and score more substantially, and by integrating the climate change themes more fully within a revised plot. Yet, perhaps in response to the 2012 production, this new outing sought to have its cake and eat it: to reconceive the original, but without alienating traditionalists. This twin approach was less effective than it might have been, had it courted one audience more single-mindedly. This is not to say that the production was unsuccessful: it made some valuable political strides forward, laying some of the groundwork required for subsequent cultural engagement with themes of climate change and environmental destruction. Given the production's staging issues, and the ideological problems surrounding its reimagining of Dvořák's text, however, it is the opinion of these reviewers that this *Rusalka* ultimately amounted to less than the sum of its parts.

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BIOGRAPHIES: Dylan Price is Stipendiary Lecturer in Music at Merton College, Oxford, where he also serves as Director of Studies for many of the college's music students. His research is located at the intersection of mobility studies, phenomenology, and the environmental humanities. Dylan is currently completing a project on mobility in Antonín Dvořák's music, but he has a broader interest in musical mobilities from the nineteenth century to the present day.

Emma Kavanagh is the Lord Crewe Career Development Fellow in Music at Lincoln College, Oxford. She is a musicologist and cultural historian of opera in France between the Revolution and the First World War, with research interests including identity and representation, performance and stagecraft, and music and the press.

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Afterword

OLIVIA KRAUZE

(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

COMING TO THE end of my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, I am filled with a heady mixture of feelings: pride at the journal's achievements over the past year, inspiration from the constant intellectual stimulation provided by my colleagues throughout the process, and of course a tinge of sadness now it is all over. It has been a real pleasure to serve on the board of the journal since 2020 and to end my time at *RRR* with such a brilliant sixth issue on 'Feeling in the Long Nineteenth Century'.

In January 2023, for the first time since the Covid pandemic, the journal's annual conference took place in person at Trinity College, Cambridge, with many members of the board finally meeting one another. We felt especially fortunate to welcome such a wide range of scholars, from historians, literary critics and social scientists, to researchers who work with and across languages, medicine, nursing, and the creative arts. We heard speakers from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Czechia, Denmark and Ireland, at all stages of their academic careers, grapple with the definition and communication, operational boundaries and various socio-political inflections of feeling in the nineteenth century. In line with *RRR*'s commitment to active cross-disciplinary learning, there were no parallel sessions. Together, we looked to multiple disciplines in order to give full consideration to the context in which forms of feeling were and continue to be conceived.

Our subsequent Call for Papers received the largest amount of submissions to date, which is a testament to the lively interest generated by the discussions at the conference and beyond. Many congratulations are therefore due to the twelve authors featured in this issue, who have all worked tirelessly on several rounds of revisions to produce the polished pieces of scholarship you see before you: Leon Hughes, Eric Tyler Powell, Jemma Stewart, Claire Cock-Starkey, Deborah Wood, Arthur Charlesworth, Samuel Cheney, Alexi Decker, Hendrikje Kaube, Catherine Maw, Dylan Price and Emma Kavanagh. Thank you all for your contributions; they form part of a rich, astute issue of which we can all be proud.

No journal could survive long without a dedicated editorial board behind it, and ours have been hard at work behind the scenes on Issue 6. Thank you so much to all board members, old and new, who have been involved in this issue's publication: Natasha Bharucha, Daniel Breeze, David Brown, Aude Campmas, Trish Ferguson, Gemma Holgate, Pauline Hortolland, Will Kitchen, Beth Mills, Cleo O'Callaghan Yeoman, Stephanie O'Rourke, Michelle Reynolds, Fraser Riddell, Ellen Smith, Claudia Sterbini, Benedict Taylor, Sophie Thompson, Clare Walker Gore and Megan Williams. With the ever-increasing reputation of the journal comes more work, and I am deeply appreciative of all your help, from our initial submissions meeting to the final copy checks. Thank you also for acting as ambassadors for the journal and continuing our commitment to supporting students and early-career scholars, for whom this may be their first publication experience. It is thanks to you that we have been able to provide robust, constructive feedback to all those who submitted an article for consideration this year.

As some of you may know, the journal recently observed its fifth birthday since its launch by inaugural Editors-in-Chief Katie Holdway and Zack White in September 2018. We celebrated with a digital makeover, and remain very grateful to William Shere for his work on our sparkling new website. I am excited to see what the next five years bring, this time cheering on from the sidelines. *RRR*'s Lead Academic Editor, Chris Prior, has an even greater perspective on the extent of the journal's progress because he has been on the board since its inception and, alongside Aude and Will, is one of its longest-serving members. Chris has been a great source of support to me over my time as Editor-in-Chief and the journal is lucky to have him continue in his role for another year. Thank you, Chris, for your dependability, shrewd judgment and kindness.

Heading up the leadership team for Issue 7 will be Johanna Harrison-Oram, stepping up as Editor-in-Chief, and completing the triumvirate will be Sophie Thompson as incoming Deputy Editor. Sophie wrote one of the reviews for Issue 5, before going on to join the board in 2022; she has been a diligent editor and active member of the board ever since. Sophie, it has been a pleasure to work with you as both author and colleague, and your experience stands you in truly excellent stead to take over the reviews section of the journal. I cannot wait to follow the doings of this very formidable leadership team in 2024.

My final thank you goes to Johanna, who has been a remarkably conscientious and proactive Deputy Editor this past year, as well as a firm friend. She is also a superhuman who managed to organise an eminently successful international conference on labour while navigating being in labour herself. Johanna, I wish you (and your two new junior editors) the very best of luck with Issue 7!

22nd December 2023

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