

such questions as the importance of non-animal foods, the relationship between man and animal, and controversies related to animal cruelty even amongst non-adherents. Crucially, it was a movement with much to say on the subject of women, not least because it appealed to female sensibilities. It was also self-consciously associated with teetotalism, utopianism and spiritualism. Ultimately, this allows us to perceive the movement as one which formed part of wide concerns rather than being solely a fringe issue. As Gregory successfully shows, this enables a far broader view of British Victorian society and the numerous social movements that emerged.

Gregory skilfully explores the phenomenon as a movement as well as a lived experience. Whilst the movement's organization is explored in substantial depth, his most interesting chapter analyses vegetarian practice. Within this, we hear of the socialist Samuel Bower living on grey peas alone whilst the large, public vegetarian banquet is explored as part of an attempt to counter popular opinion that condemned the diet as austere and unpleasant. Vegetarian restaurants are analysed, and it is with surprise that we learn of their growth in cities such as London. Gregory's analysis of cultural representations of the vegetarian is based upon a vast array of sources exploring the movement's connection to the literary world. He examines the treatment of the movement in newspapers and journals, outlines its presence in works by ethnologists, anthropologists and philosophers, and discusses the presentation of vegetarian characters in prose fiction and poetry. Overall, this is an important addition to the heavily neglected area of Victorian attitudes towards food, diet and digestion.

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Peter Cryle and Christopher E Forth,
(eds), *Sexuality at the fin de siècle: the making*

of a "central problem", Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2008, pp. 201, illus., £42.50, \$50.00 (hardback 9788-0-87413-037-9).

This volume takes as its agenda not the posited fundamental change in understanding sexuality during the later nineteenth century, but an attempt to understand the actual place of sexuality within culture and society at that time. The contributors shift the focus from the usual interest in the developing discourses around homosexuality and female hysteria, and the social anxieties around prostitution, reproduction, obscenity, and sexually transmitted diseases, to reveal a swirling penumbra of other concerns also related to the realm of the sexual which suggest the instability involved in endeavours to establish sexuality as the "central problem" and to define its terms, both at the period in question, and in more recent historiographical analyses.

A case is made for sexuality at the *fin de siècle* having been more manifest and visible, at least in the cases of certain kinds of bodies undergoing certain kinds of scrutiny, than the prevalent discourse of concealment/uncovering/definition would indicate. Several of these essays locate sexuality and its anomalies and problems within the arena of performance or spectacle, concurrent with and even overlapping the new medico-scientific view of "freakish" differences. Other essays usefully indicate the extent to which new modes of understanding anomaly and difference were being ventilated in non-elite forms such as the French middle-brow novel, as well as deployed in the popular culture venues of cabarets and sideshows.

In the first part—'Displaying and examining the sexual body'—Elizabeth Stephens examines nineteenth-century anatomical museums, a phenomenon widespread through Europe and North America exploiting curiosity about forbidden bodily knowledge and anomalous or freakish bodies, arguing for a porosity of influence between these increasingly stigmatized institutions and the investigations of the medical establishment. Stephens cites the

photographic record of Charcot's hysterics, who are also discussed by Jonathan Marshall using Butlerian notions of the performative. Gabrielle Houbre discusses changing perceptions of intersex conditions.

Part II discusses 'Symptoms and problems'. Peter Cryle considers 'The aesthetics of the spasm'. Heike Bauer examines the rather slippery usage of female sexuality in non-western societies within discourses of "civilisation" and "degeneration". Michael Wilson looks at the depiction of same-sex desire in popular (French) novels of the turn of the century, with some examination of the handling by popular medical texts of the same topic.

Part II takes as its theme 'Decentering sexuality', with essays by Alison Moore and Christopher E Forth on other bodily functions which influenced emotions about and attitudes towards sexuality: excretion and eating, and Carolyn Dean's exploration of the formulation of homosexuality as "an open secret" cognate with Jewishness, and the distinction between toleration and acceptance.

The 'Afterword' by Vernon Rosario, demonstrates from his clinical practice the extent to which what might be considered long superseded concepts of sexuality and gender identity "persist in deep ways in medicine" as well as in popular and governmental mindsets.

The majority of the essays, though not all, deal fairly specifically with the French context and the extent to which the arguments made might be extended to other areas of Europe or North America and how culturally specific some of them were is thus somewhat problematic. We might also ask how particular to the *fin de siècle* was the confusion and blurring of categories which this volume examines, or whether something similar might be found at any particular historical epoch, with competing paradigms always in play. Rosario, indeed, draws specific attention to the persistence of attempts to establish a biological basis for "sexual deviancy" and the deployment of whatever is the privileged science of the period to make essentially similar cases for "born that way". The volume,

therefore, raises a number of interesting questions for further exploration.

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Christopher E Forth, *Masculinity in the modern west: gender, civilization and the body*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. xi, 285, £17.99 (paperback 978-1-4039-1241-1).

Claims that masculinity is "in crisis" have been a favoured trope of modernity and, in post-modernity, the rhetoric of crisis might even be part of an attempt to incite a sense of emergency. Women have been chipping away at male privileges. They curse men with impotence; they threaten to feminize them. The fragility of the male body is manifested everywhere.

Christopher Forth, a brilliant young historian from the University of Kansas, sets out to tell us how men came to be in this position. His book is a cultural history of the male body in the west since 1700. Although Forth does not pay enough attention to differences between western nations, his passionately argued prose and meticulous presentation of evidence are compelling.

Forth's central argument is that modern civilization promotes the interests of men while simultaneously "eroding the corporeal foundations of male privilege". He makes this argument by focusing on a vast array of themes, including the meaning of civilization, class, diet, degeneration, consumption, disease and health, violence, work and leisure—all refracted through the body-corporeal.

Masculinity in the modern west is a carefully structured book. It moves from the self-controlled yet deeply anxious gentleman of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century to the commercialization of primitiveness in the late twentieth century, which has created a generation of men with "body image problems". Forth reminds us that, since the