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a professor and the blaze of legal action that ensued confines to a footnote the fact that the professor was Hines. To make matters worse, the only reference to him in the index directs the reader solely to Bourke's mention of an intervention he made in economic theory. This is perhaps a small matter. It does mean, however, that scholars will have to read carefully if they are to get the most out of the text.

But read it they will—and with enjoyment. Moreover, Bourke has a wider set of messages for contemporary academics and their paymasters. Among the conclusions she draws from her history is that "Knowledge flourishes in egalitarian, collaborative environments" (425). Another is that "There would be no university community without effective governance" (95). The tensions between those who would privilege what she calls "skilled management" (95) and those who foreground egalitarian collaboration run throughout Bourke's account. They are also being played out in contemporary Birkbeck. As I write, the college has announced plans to lay off 140 staff—including a quarter of the English Department. How this is will be resolved, only time will tell. Readers can only hope that future historians of Birkbeck will prove as creative and penetrating as Bourke as they seek to make sense of our present.

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S. Brooke Cameron. *Critical Alliances: Economics and Feminism in English Women's Writing, 1880–1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. Pp. 312. $74.00 (cloth).
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As announced by its title, S. Brooke Cameron's *Critical Alliances: Economics and Feminism in English Women's Writing, 1880–1914* covers the alliances in fiction by women at the turn of the century. The surprising aspect is that Cameron also presents critical alliances today, among living scholars, working on nineteenth-century women's writings. The latter aspect is evident as soon as one starts to read the acknowledgments. Also, throughout the book one is presented with a picture of the network of scholars who focus on historical gender research. Because of that, the book is a treasure trove for future researchers who are interested in this field and many of its experts in the Anglo-American world in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

Cameron's main focus is the women characters and their feminist travails in a selection of late nineteenth-century prose fiction in English. The networks she spotlights in the introductory paragraph reflect the "English" of the subtitle, and the book is strictly focused on a Western embodiment of feminism. Considering that Cameron's scope is already fairly wide, covering the long nineteenth century, it would be unfair to expect her to cover a wider area or different language cultures. In the introduction, Cameron attempts to give a succinct overview her aims: she wants to focus on "representations of feminist collaboration at the turn of the century" and she emphasizes her efforts to do so "within the context of the long nineteenth century" (8–9).

The book is organized by authors whose work Cameron examines and by some of the themes she concentrates on. I, for one, certainly welcome the chapter on Olive Schreiner and women's professional opportunities of her time. Schreiner is one of those authors (and a proto-feminist), who is often neglected in literary analyses, possibly because she falls between two fields of study, Victorian and the modern. Her *Woman and Labour* (1911) (I am admittedly confused by the American spelling of *labor* in the title of Schreiner's book whenever Cameron mentions it) is a daring attack on patriarchy's hold on employment

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opportunities and the restricted scope of employment options for women. These insights on women and the labor market lead Cameron to elaborate on the possibilities for women of the late Victorian women period to obtain a position as a paid employee. Cameron's analysis moves easily and seamlessly from text/fiction to historical fact.

This interesting fluidity between the world of fiction and that of historical fact is continued in the next chapters but not always in ways I had hoped to see opened. The second chapter spotlights the work of Amy Levy and the theme of sororities or "sisterly kinships" (29). Yet I could find no information on those strong and influential real sororities both as siblings and as women's societies or clubs that left their mark on the era's feminism. Two of the Garrett sisters are mentioned, but there were three of them, all three pioneering and fiercely feminist. These and other feminist cells were instrumental in starting feminist initiatives to empower women and secure societal empowerment. To what extent did feminist authors like Levy draw on those existing alliances? And why not mention any of the male feminists who functioned as the necessary cogs between the world of male professionals and female aspiring professionals?

That question might be even more to the point in the next chapters, where the focus is on women's entry into male-dominated working spaces. My own research on the *Athenaeum* has demonstrated the extent to which an editor's attitude (in this case, Norman MacColl's), toward women's expertise facilitated their entry into well-paid positions in journalism and the acceptance of their (often anonymous) views. As soon as those reviews revealed the authors' initials or even full names—or when they worked under another editor—their presence in the pages of the influential weekly was reduced. For example, after the First World War, under John Middleton Murry, the subjects women were assigned for the *Athenaeum* were definitely those considered to be minor. This is entirely in line with Cameron's remark when she writes, "it is in emergent fields such as journalism where independent-minded women fought hardest for entry into the professional borderlands" (129).

In the next chapter, Cameron engages with the work of that talented duo behind the poetry of Michael Field and their commitment to aestheticism. Here, too, Cameron throws her net wide to include other female aesthetes and some of their male inspirations. Thus she refers to Walter Pater and John Ruskin. But she but would, perhaps, have been able to draw a more fruitful (or certainly a very interesting comparison) if she had juxtaposed Field's poetry on art with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's ekphrastic poems on his trip in Northern Europe. In a very interesting paragraph toward the end of this chapter, Cameron summarizes the controversy over whether or not female critics made a significant contribution to aesthetic theory and uses Field's work to plead in favor of that feminist impact.

The chapter on Virginia Woolf's post-Victorian feminism stresses that novelist's feminism and defends her post-Victorian stance. Cameron offers very little to show the extent to which Woolf did indeed reject or rebuff the women authors who had preceded her and whose feminism in their own time was pioneering and daring. Like her French contemporary Simone de Beauvoir, whose feminist views are perhaps even better known, Woolf saw fault—the "man's sentence"—in the writings of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot and saw herself as the first woman writer with a man's genius (Molly Hite, "Making Room for the Woman of Genius: Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Robins and 'Modernism's Other' as Mother," in Marysa Demoor, ed., *Marketing the Author: Authorial Personae, Narrative Selves and Self-Fashioning, 1880–1930*, [2004], 207–33). Cameron sees this in a more positive light when she writes "Woolf's writings instead propose a form of post-Victorian kinship that maintains an aspiration to critical distance, while still in dialogue with her cultural predecessors" (185).

The most original aspect of Cameron's research, and certainly one that seems to be inherent in women's economic aspirations, is her description of the collaborative efforts that are necessary to equal men's achievement and that are the keystone of women's successful professional endeavors. Missing at times to this reader is the more global context of influences coming from the European continent and the presence of contemporary feminist male writers. Cameron

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refers to the work of George Moore, but she could have done more with George Gissing's female creations in *New Grub Street* or Hardy's new women in *Jude the Obscure* or *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

Cameron provides a solid study of the feminist efforts in fiction at the end of the nineteenth century, and the book will appeal to graduate students of the era. There is no doubt that this densely written monograph reflects an enormous amount of knowledge on the period covered. Cameron draws on a vast array of theoretical works and displays a deep knowledge of the primary sources she analyzes. This reader was surprised not to find Linda Hughes's work on Levy, and while Cameron refers to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979), she makes no reference to "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War" in *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (1989), the same authors' chapter on women's employment during the First World War. This is assuredly a book for readers of British studies. Even a bland remark such as "the British defeat of Napoleon" (141) sounds alien to someone who has visited Waterloo countless times and knows the British part in this defeat was relatively small, as Wellington's army consisted mostly of regiments from the other European nations and the eventual victory was owed to a very large extent to the timely attack of the Prussian army under Blucher. But that is a small detail in a book whose rich harvest one hopes will rekindle interest in the era and the writings of these pioneering women.

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HELEN LOUISE COWIE. *Victims of Fashion: Animal Commodities in Victorian Britain*. Science in History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 290. $35.00 (cloth).
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What did kangaroos have in common with black cats in the latter half of the nineteenth century? As animal commodities used for garments and nourishment—a source of meat, fur, and leather—both were subject to breeding attempts. Yet they fell into strikingly different categories with regard to their moral status. Whereas one was regarded as a pet and almost family, the other was exoticized in such a way that its exploitation seemed almost natural. There were, however, many gray areas when it came to taxonomizing animal commodities, as Helen Louise Cowie shows in *Victims of Fashion: Animal Commodities in Victorian Britain*. Combining animal and environmental history, science studies, and global history, Cowie follows the trails of six animal products, the animal life connected with them, and the growing ethical uncertainties and ecological impediments attached to their production.

In chapter 1, Cowie explores feathers and plumage used mainly for women's dresses and hats, and a hotly debated issue at the time. Taking a closer look at two species, ostriches and egrets, she focuses the narration and clearly excavates the economic and moral rationales that targeted women as consumers. She describes the production processes at the milliners that would use animals in the thousands, if not millions, leading some scientists to remark for the first time on species extinction. She also traces the trading routes that would span the globe. London became the center of this trade, but the birds, particularly those presented here, were imports from Africa, Asia, and South America.

In this respect, the title of the book is a little misleading. Neither is the time span limited to the Victorian age—Cowie traces the development of animal commodities over what could better be framed as the long nineteenth century—nor does she confine herself to Britain

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