

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). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.119

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

and its colonial reaches, for she covers the globe. What she presents is a transatlantic and trans-imperial history and a history of international diplomacy and conservation.

For example, in chapter 2, she presents the history of the fur seal, whose skin was used mainly for jackets, a fashion piece of the late nineteenth century. She shows that the depictions of the seal hunt that made Greenpeace famous seventy years later had predecessors. The image of animals being clubbed to death and skinned alive did not make for good press. Thanks in great part to expert witnesses and scientists, who Cowie introduces throughout the book as essential in reshaping the animal's image, population control became an important topic for governmental and nongovernmental actors. She also shows, however, the often difficult positions of humanitarians and conservationists, who were not always on the same page.

Because elephants, the featured species of chapter 3, have such a slow reproduction rate and because their killing was made easier through more powerful firearms, their demise was seen as even more acute than that of birds and seals. The demand for ivory, the basis of many consumer goods, led to large-scale culling sprees in Western and Central Africa. Here it was, as Cowie argues, not so much science itself but the quasi-scientific exhibition in zoos that made some consumers think twice before the invention of plastics offered valiant alternatives. Science found its sphere of activity in the newly found game reserves and parks controlled by colonial administrations and by trying to domesticate the pachyderms.

Other species subject to acclimatization efforts was the alpaca, the focus of chapter 4. Cowie outlines how alpacas were brought from South America to places as far away as the Scottish Highlands and the Australian Outback to breed. The supporters of these endeavors used colonialist arguments, claiming improvement for both the animals and those involved in the breeding business. However, these attempts more often than not ended badly both for the entrepreneurs and the animals. The enterprise highlights how the global animal commodity trade was built on a network of scientists, traders, diplomats, local experts, and seamen all eager to leave their mark on this trans-imperial project.

In chapter 5, Cowie steps away from individual animals to discuss the trade in animal products such as bear grease, musk, civet, and ambergris, including production, presentation, adulteration, and authentication. Used mainly for perfumes, these goods, Cowie concludes, lost their appeal toward the end of the century not because of concerns for animal welfare but because of a change in taste and the invention of synthetic perfumes.

In chapter 6, Cowie chronicles the development of the exotic pet trade, focusing on monkeys, parrots, and tortoises. Of all the chapters, this most closely fits the Victorian framework announced in the title. Cowie details not only the so-called best practices provided by many manuals for training and keeping animals and the legislative measures to curb harsh treatment but also details the changing attitudes of the period.

Cowie offers two important findings. The first is that because animal territories cross human-drawn boundaries, animals were often not subject to legislation that would protect them. The second is that the perception of cruelty and ethical treatment was tied to the notion of domestication and wildness. The acclimatization and domestication or taming projects of the time could therefore also be regarded as shifts in the moral animal economy.

Cowie has delivered a well-written account of the ambiguous nature of animal commodities in the long nineteenth century using a variety of source material, particularly daily newspapers. Not all the accounts she extracted are novel and some have been used by other scholars. Yet the way she places the stories in global networks of production and consumption, supply and demand, and desire and repulsion provides a much-needed reconsideration of the position of global Britain and the animal agency involved in its creation.

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