

offers a unique take on a form traditionally employed in the articulation of heterosexual romantic love. Students could compare this series of sonnets with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, although none of these are included in Blain's collection, which does seem a rather significant omission.

Whilst there are gaps or omissions such as this, inevitable in any anthology, Blain's selection is sufficient in its scope to make this an anthology well suited to prescription for students. Individual poets are represented by a "teachable" range of texts that offer a variety of concerns and experiments with form; the selection of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's verse, to take one example, ranges from the earlier poems, "A Thought for a Lonely Death-bed" and "Bertha in the Lane" (1844), to Barrett Browning's more polemical and stylistically effective "The Runaway Slave" (1850), "A Curse for a Nation" (1860) and "Mother and Poet" (1862). Poems often included in other recent collections, such as Augusta Webster's "A Castaway" (1870), sit alongside the more obscure texts, like Webster's "The Flood of Is in Brittany" (1893), which is a possible source for a poem by A. S. Byatt's fictional poet Christabel LaMotte in *Possession* (1990).

This selection provides ample opportunity for students to draw useful connections between texts, such as between the poems that draw on the language of evolution, or oriental tropes. Another point of comparison might focus on Victorian women poets' treatment (or even re-evaluation) of the figure, so often represented in Victorian cultural practices, of the "fallen woman." Augusta Webster's "A Castaway," for instance, can be read alongside Mathilde Blind's "The Message" (1891) or Amy Levy's "Magdalen" (1884). Such connections between the different poets' work promotes a contextual reading, which is further encouraged by the annotations, contributing to the anthology's success and demonstrating its suitability for teaching purposes.

Frances Kelly

***George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880-1920: Culture and Profit*, by Kate Jackson. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.**

George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880-1910 is a thought-provoking book that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of late Victorian and Edwardian culture. It has many strengths, but perhaps its greatest is the way Kate Jackson employs media studies and political and cultural history to articulate her biographical account of Newnes with an analysis of the institutional and ideological fractures and formations of the period. In doing this, Jackson deepens our understanding of both Newnes and the culture within which he moved.

Newnes (1851-1910) was the son of a Derbyshire Congregational minister. He began his working life in the wholesale business, where he was a successful

salesman. His abilities as a salesman, combined with his business acumen, enabled him to start a vegetarian restaurant in Manchester, and it was with money made from that venture that he financed his first weekly paper, *Tit-Bits*, in 1881. The rest, as they say, is history. The huge success of *Tit-Bits* enabled him to start a series of other dailies, weeklies and monthlies over the next twenty years, the most famous of which are the *Strand Magazine* (1891) and the *Westminster Gazette* (1893).

Accounts of the new journalism have typically noted Newnes (and *Tit-Bits*) as a progenitor, but have then gone on to emphasise the importance of W.T. Stead, Arthur Pearson and Alfred Harmsworth. It is true that Stead (a friend since school), Pearson (who began his journalistic career by winning a position on *Tit-Bits*) and Harmsworth (who began his career by having work accepted by *Tit-Bits*) were all indebted to Newnes, but in different respects moved away from him. However, what Jackson establishes in this book is that Newnes himself is a much more significant figure in the development of the new journalism than has often been realised.

Yet Newnes was not just an innovative newspaper proprietor and publisher. He became a Liberal M.P. in 1885 and, apart from a brief period from 1895 to 1900, remained one until his death in 1910. Politically, he was something of a democrat, a reformist and an imperialist, and while he never achieved high office in the Liberal Party, his influence was not insignificant. When we add these kinds of achievements to his entrepreneurship, his philanthropy and his sociability, we start to see how Newnes was such a significant figure in English public life at the time. Apart from an early biography by his friend Hulda Friederichs, he has largely gone unremarked until Kate Jackson's book, and we are in her debt for restoring his significance for us.

The book is organised into a longish introduction and three substantive parts. In addition to providing a brief biographical account of Newnes, the introduction usefully locates the book in the historiography of the new journalism and spells out its methodology. Jackson comes to the increasingly held view that the periodical press, like a literary work, is not simply a reflection of a culture, nor even an expression of authorship, but an active and interactive "relationship between authorial consciousness and social formation" (10). In this view, periodicals can be analysed for the ways they function as "social discourse rather than as direct 'social statement'" (16). Such an approach allows the book to focus on the "open, serial qualities of the form" (17), its heterogeneity and pluralism.

Jackson pays particular attention to three elements of this interactivity: the production of periodical publication (involving, amongst other things, proprietorial and editorial control, and technical and journalistic development); the periodical as a social object (involving issues of readership, circulation and reception); and the distinctive properties of the periodical text (13). Her analysis of each of the periodicals takes up all three aspects, although the weight is sometimes placed more on one or another of them.

What we find as we move through the years from 1880 to 1910 is a series of publications acting as sites of competing institutional, cultural and ideological demands: professional versus entrepreneurial ideals; high versus popular culture; community versus commercialism; political commitment versus financial success. These tensions – and others like them – form the intellectual “stuff” of the book. Jackson’s overarching argument is that in various and changing ways, Newnes’s “experiments in New Journalism were successfully poised” between these tensions, tensions that are neatly subsumed under the book’s subheading: “culture and profit.”

Each of the three substantive parts is devoted to a particular phase of Newnes’s life, and comprises chapters analysing the papers begun in those years. Each part has its own major interpretive theme. Thus Part I is “The New Journalism: A Liberal Profession or a Branch of Business,” and focuses on the period from *Tit-Bits* (1881) to the *Strand* (1891). Part II is “Liberalism and Imperialism: Developing Formats and Expanding Horizons,” and focuses on the period from the *Westminster* (1893) to the *Wide World Magazine* (1898). Part III is “Specialisation and Diversification: targeting Niche Audiences and Exploiting a Segmented Market,” and focuses on the *Ladies’ Field* (1898) and the *Captain* (1899).

Jackson’s analyses of the periodicals are generally deft and convincing. For example, the multiple techniques and functions of *Tit-Bits* – advice columns, humorous sketches, romantic fiction, information, reader correspondence, etc – are not only analysed in terms of their synthetic value (reducing “the complexities of modern life” 59) for educating what was primarily its upper working- and lower middle-class audience, but are usefully located as “a serial performance that invoked the atmosphere of the pub and the stage” (65). Similar articulations of textual and contextual analysis occur throughout. The format of the *Strand* (“a national institution” 87), for instance, is presented as “a synthesis of continuity and change” (90), offering a set of values and celebrating a range of achievements aimed at allaying the anxiety of its upper and middle class audience. And a thoughtful analysis of the ways in which Newnes’s public persona was represented in the *Westminster* raises in a quite striking manner the tensions between the political and commercial demands that the paper had to negotiate.

While the interdisciplinarity and breadth of this book are real virtues, they also lead to some minor problems. For example, Newnes’s political position is described as New Liberal and imperialist. While it’s true that Haldane and Herbert Samuel were imperialists, the whole thrust of the New Liberalism was anti-imperialist. In fact, Newnes was much more a Chamberlainite radical than he was a New Liberal, and his lukewarm reputation amongst the more advanced liberals probably reflects this. Similarly, the argument that the *Strand* consolidated the corporate identity of “the intellectual class” (100), simply misses the divisions and tensions within that class, many of whose members contributed to and read, not the *Strand*, but the *Speaker*, the *Nation* and the *Saturday Review*.

However, these are minor infelicities in a book which offers – and delivers – much more than a brief review can encompass. Both Ashgate and the general editors of The Nineteenth Century Series are to be congratulated for this fine addition to the series.

Jock Macleod

***“More precious than rubies”*: Mary Taylor: friend of Charlotte Brontë, strong-minded woman, by Joan Bellamy. Beverley, Yorks: Highgate, 2002.**

I presume that this is, if not fully then largely, a self-published book, and one must ask why. The name Mary Taylor is well known not only to nineteenth-century and particularly Brontë scholars, but also to general readers who might have read one of the host of Brontë biographies or made the pilgrimage to Haworth. More pertinently perhaps, Australasian Victorianists have had a proprietorial interest in Taylor because of her fifteen-year residence in New Zealand, where she became a successful businesswoman. She and her cousin Ellen Taylor built a general store into a successful enterprise which was to survive Ellen's early death from consumption and Mary's eventual return to England, and which also provided her with the funds to build a house in Yorkshire and, together with her inheritance from her father, to be financially independent for the rest of her life. That assumption of independence (she looked upon it as her right), her intelligence, and her later significant journalism advocating education, the vote and increased opportunities generally for women should have guaranteed that she was not always considered merely as a footnote to the Brontës. Sadly, however, that appears to have been the case, because this is the first full-length biography of Taylor. Bellamy concludes that this comparative neglect was not only because of her personal forthrightness and unwillingness to court publicity, but also because she “was born too early to take advantage of opportunities for the higher education and intellectual life for which she was so clearly fitted, and after her return from New Zealand she took the decision to return to her birthplace and family, to a cultural and political environment which was narrow, conservative, and losing the dynamism of its earlier stages of development.” The biography is therefore long overdue and is fully worthy of the publicity resources of a large academic publisher; alas, I fear that without such resources it will not receive as wide a readership as it so obviously deserves. It is another important example of those studies of nineteenth-century women which remind us that there were many and varied exceptions to the stereotype of the mid-Victorian woman and the aesthetic, economic and political generalisations which support that stereotype.