

NAVSA Religion and Spiritualities Caucus

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## **New Publications: Religion, Spirituality, and Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture**

Brorby, Joshua. “*Villette* and the Victorian Paul: Religious Nationalism, Identity, and Non-Conversion.” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, vol. 80, no. 2-3, 2025. pp. 111-138.

Abstract: This essay addresses two gaps in criticism of Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* (1853)—the lack of incisive analysis of its Hindu imagery, and inattention to the specifically Victorian commentaries on Paul the Apostle that the novel harnesses—to argue that they are crucially connected in the novel’s conception of religious identity. *Villette*’s anti-Catholic rhetoric has been explored extensively, particularly with regard to Lucy’s acceptance of M. Paul’s faith. What *Villette*’s strained, qualified toleration of Catholicism intimates, carried along to readers in its Pauline allusions, is a surprising extension of near-universal forbearance and a mobile view of religious identity, which together permit a richer critical vision of midcentury anxieties around nationalism and empire. With attention to missionary writing and liberal broad-church theology, this essay traces overlaps in midcentury discussions of Paul and imperial worries over the conversion of Hindus, which Brontë exploits with carefully placed references to Hinduism and other alternatives to orthodox Christianity. Additionally, the essay argues that Brontë deserves status as an imaginative Biblical hermeneut whose dramatic interpretation of Paul places her alongside Matthew Arnold as one of Victorian England’s principal literary readers of the Apostle.

Brorby, Joshua. “Feeling Religious: Cosmopolitanism, Translation, and the Mobility of Belief.” *Cusp: Late 19th- and Early 20th-Century Cultures*, special issue “Cosmopolitanism on the Cusp,” vol. 3, no. 2, 2025, pp. 182-191.

Abstract: This essay explores how comparative religious scholars and translators of the fin de siècle exercised a contingent, instrumental view of religious identity that permitted them to establish problematic claims of similitude between cultures. If cosmopolitanism necessitates a sense of detachment, I argue that the self-conscious work of figures like F. Max Müller shows how detachment functionally permitted thinkers to temporarily attach to other religious traditions. With attention to G. U. Pope, Gu Hongming, and others, I ultimately suggest that translators’ faith in affect represents a contradiction at the heart of fin-de-siècle cosmopolitanism.

Burstein, Miriam. “Victorian Dissent” with [Oxford Bibliographies](#).

Dickinson, Christian. *Sonnets From the Psalms, Volume II*. Orison Publishers, June 2025.

Dickinson, Christian. "Mistaken Identities and other Failures of Observation: Thematic Unity in *Sketches by Boz*." *Dickens Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2025, pp. ?. [Forthcoming]

Dyck, Denae. "Surprised by Hope: Possibilities of Spiritual Experience in Victorian Lyric Poetry." *Religions*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2025), article 255, 18 pp. doi: 10.3390/rel16020255.

Abstract: This article reconsiders literature's capacity to express and evoke spiritual experiences by turning to William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, especially his discussion of mysticism and his suggestion that poetry can bring about such states. James's ideas are especially promising given recent developments in postsecular and postcritical scholarship that problematize a religious/secular divide and call into question a hermeneutics of suspicion. Bringing James into conversation with Paul Ricoeur, I aim to show how receptivity to spiritual experiences in literature might generate expansive models of both poetics and hermeneutics. To pursue these possibilities, my study analyzes three examples of Victorian lyric poems that probe the edges of wonder: Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush", Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Nondum" and Dollie Radford's "A Dream of 'Dreams'". These case studies strategically select work by writers of various belief or unbelief positions, highlighting the dynamism of the late nineteenth-century moment from which James's writings emerged. I argue that this poetry facilitates a re-imagination of hope, beyond a faith/doubt dichotomy, as well as a re-framing of revelation, from proclamation to invitation. Building on insights from both James and Ricoeur, my discussion concludes by making the case for cultivating an interpretive disposition that does not guard against but opens toward poetry's latent potential to take readers by surprise.

Dyck, Denae. "The Flood Narrative in Feminist and Queer Perspectives." *The Hebrew Bible in Contemporary Fiction and Poetry*, edited by Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer. Routledge, 2025, pp. 11–25, doi: 10.4324/9781003280347-2.

Abstract: This chapter analyses four postmodern retellings of the flood narrative that foreground characters who are marginalised in or excluded from the biblical account, including Noah's wife and other women: Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984), Madeleine L'Engle's *Many Waters* (1986), Anne Provoost's *Die Arkvaarders (In the Shadow of the Ark)* (2001), and Sarah Blake's *Naamah* (2019). Focusing on the ethical implications and literary effects of this narrative decentering, this discussion considers how these novels both subvert and transform their biblical sources. As they take up the concerns of today's feminist and queer reading communities, these texts unsettle western culture's dualistic, hierarchical, and heteronormative constructions. More radically still, they invite readers to consider how biblical

traditions might be simultaneously critiqued for their patriarchal logic and reclaimed for their imaginative potentials.

King, Joshua, Chris Adamson and Dino Franco Felluga. "Introduction: Conferencing, Crisis, and the Profession," special issue of *Victoriographies* 15.2 (July 2025), pp. 101-117 (6,619 words). [Free access online](#).

King, Joshua, Chris Adamson and Dino Franco Felluga. Special issue on "Conferencing, Crisis, and the Profession" in *Victoriographies* 15.2 (July 2025). [Free access online](#).

King, Joshua. "Ecology." *Gerard Manley Hopkins in Context*, ed. Marton Dubois, Cambridge series on Literature in Context (Cambridge University Press 2025), pp. 149-156 (3,000 words).

King, Joshua, Chris Adamson, Emily Allen, Dino Franco Felluga, and Monica Wolfe. "Event 2024: Embodied and Virtual Events across Nations and Time," *Victorian Review* 50.1 (pub. 2025 [issue for Spring 2024]), contribution to special "Forum: Thinking Relationally: Victorian Studies and the Climate Crisis" guest edited by Barbara Leckie, pp. 31-35.

LaPorte, Charles. "Victorian Poetry in an Age of Cultural Secularization," *Victorian Poetry* 61.4 (Winter 2024): 561-568.

LaPorte, Charles. "Questioning the Bible in Victorian Poetry," in *The Bible and Western Christian Literature: Books and The Book*, Volume 4: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Elisabeth Jay. T&T Clark, 2024: 297-321.

Wiebracht, Ben and Amir Tevel, "Tennyson and the Troubled Manliness of Victorian Doubt," *Religion and Literature* 56.1 (Spring 2024, but really published Winter 2025).

16th Modern Language Association Prize for a Scholarly Edition: Ben Wiebrecht, Stanford Online High School, and students Madeline Ayer, Aidan Bekendam, Jacob Bryant, Ferris Haukom, Mayuko Karakawa, Edithe Lam, Sabine Mazzeo, Rathan Muruganantham, Isabella Romagnoli, Annika Ross, April Y. Wen, Silas Wesner, Noelle Wu, Ethan Yun, Nicolás A. Zepeda,

and Jiayun Zhang, for *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*, by William Combe (Pixelia Publishing, 2024).

Holly Wiegand, “Antebellum Black Women Preachers’ Feminist Typology.” *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture*, vol. 71, no. 1, 2025, pp. 31-80. <https://doi.org/10.1353/esq.2025.a967870>

Abstract: Holly Wiegand argues that antebellum African American preachers Zilpha Elaw (c. 1793–1873) and Jarena Lee (1783–1864) develop a Black feminist typology in their memoirs. Black feminist typology is an interpretive mode and praxis that claims authority for women by reviving, reinterpreting, and revising Scripture to center women’s roles. Black feminist typology specifically resists linear and future-focused timescales, instead emphasizing iteration and cyclicity. Wiegand assembles all of Elaw and Lee’s female typological allusions to underscore the power of recursive citation and/as trans-temporal communal legacy building.