

discovered; and an acceptance of the expression of human passions." According to Johnson, Dixon inaugurates "a move away from the authoritative voice of the early Tractarians to a more subjective, more personal interaction with the tenets disseminated by the Movement" which she sees as developing further in Hopkins's poetics. Many critics have puzzled over Hopkins's admiration of Dixon's poetry but Johnson's examination of the common Tractarian ideas which were developed by both poets makes the attraction clear: "(Hopkins) saw in (Dixon's poetry) a religious outlook, a philosophical bent, and a sensuousness which accorded with his own; and which, more than the didactic and unsubtle poetic works of earlier Tractarians, seemed to embody the aesthetic ideals which the Movement had expounded."

Johnson persuasively argues that ideas which are present in Hopkins's earliest known complete poem *The Escorial* remained important for Hopkins until his last poem *To R.B.* These ideas, which she identifies as rooted in Tractarianism, are "a cluster of traditional Tractarian images centred on the idea of the revelation of God" and "the struggle to express the role of beauty within a religious context." Johnson places Hopkins squarely within the ideas and concerns of his contemporaries and, even if I had occasional difficulty in differentiating some Tractarian and Catholic ideas and practices, Johnson develops and expresses her argument admirably. Along the way she provides valuable information about and examination of influential though critically underrated contemporaries as well as a thoughtful and lucid criticism of Hopkins's poetry.

There is at least one dating slip-up ("Boughs being pruned" on page 37 is incorrectly dated as 1877 instead of 1865) and Johnson's assertion that "the majority of Hopkins's poetry was written prior to his conversion" (on page 19) deserves a footnote to enable me to follow her calculation. The bibliography is comprehensive and up-to-date and so provides helpful suggestions for further reading. All-in-all *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Tractarian Poetry* is a significant addition to Hopkins criticism and an enjoyable read.

**Carmel O'Brien**

---

**Imperial Objects: Victorian Women's Emigration and the Unauthorized Imperial Experience, edited by Rita S. Kranidis. New York: Twayne, 1998.**

This clever title plays ironically with the notion of emigrating women's subjectivity, both as subject to the various forms of paternalism inflicted on them, and as subjects for this study in their role as national commodity. The collection focuses for the most part on women of the Victorian period who either chose emigration or, confronted with Hobson's choice, emigrated in spite of their personal reluctance to do so. The decision to emigrate was more often than not a response to a particular social condition. Their experiences are as wide-ranging as the essays offered here.

Rita S. Kranidis provides an illuminating introduction which manages to assemble complex material into a cogent and compelling discussion. She points to

obvious gaps in the historical record, for instance, the fact that while women's established presence as privileged colonists is fully documented, there is far less critical analysis available on the actual particulars of removal to a colonial destination. More importantly, she addresses and clearly argues the vexed question of women's complicity in the colonisation process and deals comprehensively with current debate about the appropriateness of "post colonial" theories regarding white subjects, determining that the emigrant woman can be classed as "colonizer" and "colonized" because she is "both of and outside the nation, both a constituent and an exile in relation to empire."

One problem for the editor in assembling the essays was that so much of the original research on the subject of Victorian female emigration comes out of Australia, New Zealand and Britain. While not precisely saying so, this creates for her, and for the reader, a weighting to the Australian experience particularly which at various moments makes the collection appear to lack diversity. At the same time, of course, Australia's unique position as a penal colony complicates in very interesting ways the whole question of female emigration. The colony is perceived as tainted, and there is an ongoing anxiety that those who emigrate there will be tainted too, as the words of Agnes Strickland show in a preface to her sister Catharine Parr Traill's *Canadian Crusoes* (1852), claiming that Canada is "our soundest colony, unstained with the corruption of convict population; where families of gentle blood need fear no real disgrace in their alliance."<sup>1</sup> This attitude shifts the whole subject of female emigration to Australia beyond questions of gender, colonialism and imperialism, to address ideologies of class and culture as well.

The first three essays in the collection comprehensively establish the prevailing ideologies which affect the topic, particularly the question of redundant women. Unfortunately, they occasionally address identical texts too, and by the time a fourth contributor is using W.R. Greg's essay "Why are Women Redundant?" (1862) I was beginning to feel an overwhelming sense of a certain innate redundancy in Greg's essay itself. However, Shannon Russell, to instance just one contributor, manages her primary sources in a very lively way, producing informed discussion which questions that source material very effectively. For example, Eliza Meteyard's *Lucy Dean*, serialised in *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1850, is neatly summarised as "emigration propaganda masquerading as novella." The opening three essays also address that gap Kranidis noted regarding particulars of removal; they are outward bound if you like, establishing the prevailing cultures and ideologies in Britain but not addressing the post-arrival story.

Emma Floyd's essay takes up both the story after arrival, and the word "unauthorized" in the collection's title, by closely examining women's unpublished letters and diaries, and Michele Ren, in a provocative critique of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, takes an authorised (even canonised) text and produces a lively and unauthorised re-reading of Arabella, a woman caught, she suggests, whether in England or abroad, between coloniser and colonised. Marion Diamond re-assesses the work of Maria Rye, that well-meaning but misguided promoter of emigration for middle-class

---

<sup>1</sup> Strickland, Agnes. "Preface" *Canadian Crusoes* by Catharine Parr Traill. 1852. Toronto: McClelland, 1923, 12.

women (and others), by considering Rye's journey from the metropolitan centre to the colonial margins. Unfortunately the journey merely reinforces Rye's own ill-informed opinions and provides her with the authority of actual colonial experience to enforce those opinions. This chapter proves an interesting counter-balance to Nupur Chaudhuri's informative opening essay, also on Rye. A. James Hamerton too, using his own earlier work on the emigration of gentlewomen as a starting point, detects a gap, a group of women not previously considered: ambitious, lower middle-class women who use emigration as a means of empowerment. Hamerton argues convincingly that emigration rhetoric in the later nineteenth century "used a universally attractive language to appeal to a mixed social range of women."

Eva-Lynn Alicia Jagoe's essay on the experiences of Scotswoman Fanny Calderón de la Barca in Mexico comes as a timely change of locale and pace, and proves to be an outstanding discussion from a writer who understands her topic thoroughly, analysing Calderón's "uneasiness about her identity in a newly postcolonial society." Likewise, Mark Bevir's chapter considers a very different kind of emigration, the theosophist Annie Besant who chooses India because that land is the source of the spiritualism she embraces. Bevir precisely defines the operation of the Raj in India from both social and political perspectives and analyses Annie Besant's ambivalent role in early twentieth-century Indian politics.

What I particularly enjoyed in the essay collection as a whole was the use made by the contributors not just of historical records but of literary accounts as well, including novels and the periodical and newspaper press. In so doing, this work embraces the interdisciplinary nature of cultural practice and as Lyn Pykett puts it in another context, recognises the "intersection of the methodologies of historical and literary studies," providing a range of cultural forms from which to develop a comprehensive study of the cultural and social significance of Victorian women's emigration.<sup>2</sup>

With such a lot to offer in content, this publication is flawed by poor desk editing. Commentary appears in quotation format, footnote numbers are occasionally out of order, and referencing style varies from essay to essay. Even the font size of the page numbers varies. Minor in themselves, these discrepancies detract from the overall professional appearance of the text.

**Judith Johnston**

---



---

<sup>2</sup> Pykett, Lyn. "Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Context" *Victorian Periodicals Review* (1989):100-108, 100.