

Panama to elaborate the modern Western intervention in the region. Rightly moving beyond the typical Manichaean structure of power and the center-periphery model, Aguirre investigates the triangulated relation between the United States, Britain, and Panama to show how the Western involvement entailed a complex network of forces in which mobility interfaced with capitalism and informal colonialism with globalization. What distinguished Panama from other colonial peripheries, he insightfully observes, is the fact that it is considered neither a site of direct colonization nor a desired destination, but rather a *connection* in the broader network of imperial relations. This model of colonial relation valorizes speed, mobility, and global connections to advance capitalist accumulation.

Mobility and Modernity also deserves praise for its historicist approach that always accounts for the specific contexts and histories of works through archival research and provides a broad historical understanding of textual and visual materials. As well, the book carefully defines its theoretical terms, powerfully substantiates its critical claims, and often delights its readers with apt and insightful formulations, qualities that preempt the possibility of spuriously linking or utterly conflating aesthetic expressions and political realities, as it is sometimes the case in postcolonial scholarship.

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TALIA SCHAFFER, *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii + 334. \$73 cloth; \$35 paper.

If we read literature to know ourselves and the world around us, we read literary criticism to reconsider what it is we think we know. By this measure, Talia Schaffer's latest book, *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction*, is a must-read. Taking up the most basic and seemingly well-understood element of the Victorian novel—the plot of romantic marriage that magically aligns characters, families, fortunes, and ideologies as it closes out many if not most Victorian novels—Schaffer shows us a familiar world made strange, a world in which romantic marriage is neither the only nor the best game in town, and in which the future might have played out far differently. In other words, she allows us to recover an alternative history of the novel that the past has all but

obscured and to see with fresh eyes the affective relationships that shape plots and lives.

Shaffer's argument is that the alternative to romantic marriage has been staring us in the face all along: the plot of "familiar" marriage, in which people marry not for sexual passion but for other and sometimes better reasons, including the desires for family, community, meaningful work, and the giving and receiving of mutual care. Reading from a twentieth- or twenty-first-century perch, from a point at which the triumph of the romantic dyad has eclipsed the value of these other, more communal formations, we have trouble seeing familiar marriages as anything other than compensatory also-rans. After all, we have been taught that the very throb of plot drives toward individual fulfillment, not community well-being. But what if Fanny Price's marriage to her cousin Edmund were not something of a let-down after the thrill of Henry Crawford? What if Colonel Brandon's flannel waistcoats were not a disappointing alternative to Willoughby's rain-soaked attractions? What if St. John Rivers were not the most tone-deaf suitor in the history of the novel, but a real alternative to Rochester, one that promised autonomy and a valuable life of service to the wider world?

The astute reader will see both that Jane Austen enjoys pride of place in this study of the Victorian novel and that Schaffer configures the plot of familiar marriage as running parallel to the romantic plot, which structure generally produces two rival male suitors (one familiar and one romantic) who encode different marital models and between whom a heroine must choose. If Austen's heroines choose the familiar over the romantic more often and more successfully than their Victorian counterparts, it is because they sit on the other side of several historical shifts that Schaffer examines in the first two chapters of *Romance's Rival*. Readers will already be familiar with what Schaffer terms the "progressive individualist story" (p. 23), in which the emergence of the mobile, acquisitive, self-seeking modern individual is linked both to the development of the nuclear family with a romantic marriage at its core and the growing dominance of the realist novel. In rewinding that history to consider the persistence of residual structures within what would become the modern norm, Schaffer both complicates the story as we understand it and takes part in our own generational shift, which rejects models of the smooth rise in order to embrace the messiness of a history in which old ways were not so easily or happily throttled. Indeed, *Romance's Rival* feels most radical when it is affirming the value of things we might think of as inherently conservative: organic communities rooted to the land, porous familial

structures that predate the nuclear family, and fulfillment in social connection and duty rather than personal pleasure. For the Victorians, Schaffer shows, these options were still viable, although quickly disappearing after midcentury.

The first two chapters of *Romance's Rival* lay out the historical background and the critical intervention that Schaffer intends to make. If that sounds ho-hum, think again: readers will find these chapters invaluable for the deft ways that they condense and cut through decades of work on the novel and the history of marriage, and inspiring for how generously—indeed, communally—they handle the work of other critics. The remaining four chapters each focus on a variant of familiar marriage (neighbor, cousin, disability, and vocational), and each begins with an Austen case study before considering a series of Victorian novels from across the cultural spectrum, including both the obvious canonical suspects (the Brontës, Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot) and popular novelists who receive less attention (Charlotte Yonge in particular). All of these literary readings are framed within a pertinent historical context: the emergence of romantic marriage in chapter 3, which argues that neighbor marriage held out the promise of “social centrality and powerful agency” (p. 115) to female characters who had far less to gain than did men in the move from *Gemeinschaft* (traditional, familial community) to *Gesellschaft* (rootless, modern, urban society); the development of anthropology in chapter 4, which demonstrates how the endogamy of cousin marriage undercuts the exogamous theories that drove both Victorian anthropology and evolutionary science and that treated women as passive objects of male exchange rather than the rational agents of their own lives; the medicalization and pathologizing of the disabled body in chapter 5, which argues that disability marriage pulls characters into a social community of care that resists both the atomizing effects of modernity and the normalizing discourses of the body; and the history of women’s work in chapter 6, which considers how feminist discourse around the right to work paradoxically made the vocational marriage plot an impossibility after the 1860s, when work outside the home became the province of single women. If the warp of this structure is a series of finely crafted, particular arguments, its weft is a wide chronological swath that lays out a compelling alternative history of the novel that culminates in the novels of the 1860s and 1870s.

There is something undeniably if paradoxically sexy in Schaffer’s account of familiar marriage. (To be clear: the familiar marriages about which she writes do not preclude sex, per se, but are

undertaken for reasons other than romantic passion.) The book's main charge—beyond its deep research, strong argumentation, and crystalline prose—comes from its rebellion against Freudian and Foucauldian orthodoxies. In her insistence that sex is not the only desire that counts and that Victorian women (and men) made choices about marriage for a whole range of motivations, including but not limited to romantic passion, Schaffer helps to shift our thinking about the modern subject, the truth of which is more than the sum of its repressions and concealments. Her project collides with recent calls for “surface reading” or “just reading” insofar as Schaffer refuses to assume that Victorian heroines cannot understand their own actions or choices. Instead, she allows them the agency to choose their own paths toward fulfillment, paths we must now relearn how to see.

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GRAHAM THOMPSON, *Herman Melville: Among the Magazines*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018. Pp. xvi + 249. \$90 cloth; \$32.95 paper.

Graham Thompson's *Herman Melville: Among the Magazines* provides a helpful account of Herman Melville's periodical career, a moment that comes after his major novel writings and prior to his work as a poet. Thompson's investigation of Melville ranges from canonical works like “Bartleby, the Scrivener” and “Benito Cereno,” while also bringing into view lesser-known stories such as “The 'Gees” and “The Encantadas.” In *Herman Melville*, Thompson strives to place Melville back into his context, which Thompson calls “embedding” (p. 8)—a method that “emphasizes that although an author's stories are subject to interpretation following publication, they are also material objects that witness the circumstances and processes by which they come to publication” (p. 11). Throughout his study, Thompson embeds Melville in a world populated by literary composition, paper production, reprinting, magazine paratexts, serialization, competing editorial demands, and a host of other material and cultural environments.

Thompson insists on a critical method that begins with Melville's texts and uses Melville's language as the jumping-off point for analysis: he pointedly avoids an ideological approach that takes