

later account of the Famine as an instrument of British policy had a lasting impact on Famine historiography.

Mitchel's legacy is but one manifestation of the enduring impact of Young Ireland's historical writings. In the closing chapters of his book, Quinn traces their influence on members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who were critical of the deracinating agenda of state-sponsored schools in Ireland, and on the creation of a New Library of Ireland. Although writers such as W. E. H. Lecky brought a new professionalism to the writing of Irish history which challenged Young Ireland's nationalist narratives, Quinn shows that these writings continued to play a key ideological role before and after independence.

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JEFF ROSEN. *Julia Margaret Cameron's 'Fancy Subjects': Photographic Allegories of Victorian Identity and Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. Pp. 318. \$110.00 (cloth).

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Henry Peach Robinson's 1896 assertion that the art of photography lies in "poetry, sentiment, story ... the literary part of a picture" (*The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph* [1973], 13–14) had its enthusiastic proponents, but few Victorian photographers demonstrated a literary imagination as powerful as that of Julia Margaret Cameron. Beginning work with her camera some thirty years earlier, in 1864, Cameron immediately embraced photographic "allegory," scenes performed for the camera, in costume, posed in the manner of theatrical tableaux, portraying significant moments from literary, biblical, and historical texts. The overworked persona of Cameron—a cartoonish figure of Freshwater fame, eccentric, domineering, least-beautiful of the Pattle sisters, forever chasing down Tennyson and his guests with her camera, forcing her servants to participate in long sessions of posing so that the household had to live off eggs and bacon—is put firmly to the side in Jeff Rosen's painstaking, revelatory, and serious assessment of the allegorical photographs. What matters to Rosen, and, it turns out, to the photographs themselves, is history: the political exigencies of the ten-year span in which these images were made, and in which their maker intended them to make sense.

Julia Margaret Cameron's 'Fancy Subjects': Photographic Allegories of Victorian Identity and Empire is not a book for someone seeking an introduction to Cameron. For the life, there is Victoria Olsen's 2003 biography, and for an overview of the work there is the 2002 catalogue raisonné and its articles. Rosen, however, is interested in a thicker description of the cultural context of Cameron's work, and his goal is to make visible what is inevitably overlooked in twenty-first-century readings of it. It is debatable, of course, whether a truly historicized reading of anything is ever possible, but the breadth and depth of Rosen's scholarship makes at least some of the conditions of that reading available to us.

By the mid-1850s, Rosen writes, "the 'fancy picture' became a catchall term for paintings that framed isolated subjects in a momentary suspension of activity, capturing quiet contemplation, religious devotion, or sentimental feelings," and photographers like Cameron, Robinson, Oscar Rejlander, and Lewis Carroll "embraced" its aesthetic (2). Rosen's main argument is that Cameron's "fancy subjects," as she termed them, were painstakingly crafted "to represent the country's national heritage and cultural identity" (1), and throughout the book he explores the political self-consciousness of photographs that for much of the twentieth century were regarded as little more than whimsical personal expression. I say "twentieth century," since it is not clear when we stopped "speaking Victorian" (on or about December, 1910, perhaps?), but the post-Victorian afterlife of Cameron's photographs is not something

Rosen pursues in depth. Instead, he focuses on the period in which she made most of the allegorical work, and in providing political, personal, and literary lenses for fifty of those photographs, he gives a context not only for them but also, albeit incidentally, for other British literary and artistic productions of the 1860s and 1870s.

The thematic emphases of the photographs provide the book with its structure. There are seven essays that can stand alone, each demonstrating the degree to which Cameron's allegories were knit into British national identity. While many of her literary sources may be somewhat familiar to the modern reader, the specific historical pressures that gave rise to Cameron's nuanced interpretations of those works are probably less well known. The first chapter explores de Saint Pierre's island novel about two children, *Paul et Virginie* (1788), suggesting reasons for its later Victorian popularity, and for Cameron's choice of those children as her "very first 'fancy subject'" ("Paul and Virginia," 1864, 40). The book had personal resonance for the Camerons who were themselves self-conscious inhabitants of islands (the Isle of Wight, Ceylon, and Britain). The idea of the island home was, as Rosen notes, both powerful and transportable, intimately linked to nineteenth-century British identity. As for children, Rosen writes, they "acquired a new visibility and importance as a subject for the camera, because in the colonial context, white children were often inflected with layers of meaning that invoked questions of inclusion and exclusion, emigration and citizenship, identity and nationality" (47).

Each essay casts its net similarly wide. A study of Cameron's 1868 solo exhibition at London's German Gallery explores her efforts to include allegory referencing the Jamaican conflict and the Abyssinian War, both of which Rosen argues provide "interconnected narratives that bind together the diverse elements in Cameron's photographs of 1867 and 1868" (197). A chapter on the series titled "Fruits of the Spirit" argues that Cameron's engagement with theological issues was serious and well-informed, and considers various religious influences on her social life, including visits to Freshwater by Benjamin Jowett, regius professor of Greek at Oxford. Jowett was the author of "On the interpretation of scripture," an essay that had become, by 1862, a "lightning rod" for what Rosen calls the "theological and academic 'culture war'" of the next decade (68). Evidently Cameron was fully conversant with the issues and the personalities involved in that war, and her efforts to represent the sacred are arguably a contribution to it.

Cameron's Madonnas have received plenty of attention in the past three decades, and thanks to work by Carol Armstrong, Carol Mavor, and Mike Weaver, as Rosen notes, "we are able to connect these photographs to larger cultural and political forces that shaped the debate about the Anglican Church in relation to British national identity" (72). But the sheer breadth of Rosen's own contribution—the varieties of debate, the many personalities involved, the texts discussed, the letters exchanged—takes his work of contextualization to another level. Cameron's allegorical photographs emerge as fully symptomatic of their age, intimately embedded in its religious and political preoccupations, subject to its ambivalences, aesthetic objects almost despite themselves.

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Caroline Shaw's excellent new book, *Britannia's Embrace*, takes the all too topical story of refugee crises and care and gives it a compelling new genealogy. Charting the history of British aid to persecuted foreigners from the late seventeenth century to the turn of the