

Selective Chronology 1865–1925

<i>Births and deaths</i>	<i>Principle publications</i>	<i>Cultural and scientific events</i>	<i>Historical and political events</i>
1865 W. B Yeats born; Arthur Symonds born; Rudyard Kipling born; Elizabeth Gaskell dies; Palmerston dies.	John Ruskin, <i>Sesame and Lilies</i> ; Matthew Arnold, <i>Essays in Criticism</i> ; Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i>	Mendel's <i>Law of Heredity</i> ; Elisabeth Garrett qualifies as a doctor (under licence from the Society of Apothecaries).	American Civil War ends; Lincoln assassinated. Liberal government under Russell in Britain.
1866 H. G. Wells born.	Algernon Charles Swinburne, <i>Poems and Ballads</i> ; George Eliot, <i>Felix Holt, the Radical</i> ; posthumous publication of Gaskell's <i>Wives and Daughters</i> .		The Second Reform Act; Second Contagious Diseases Act (first passed in 1864); petition for female suffrage presented ; to Parliament Derby becomes prime minister.
1867 Arnold Bennett born; John Galsworthy born.		Lister uses antiseptics in operating theatres; Queensberry rules for boxing.	
1868	Robert Browning <i>The Ring and the Book</i> (finishes publication in 1869); Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i> .	Typewriter patented; last public execution in Britain and transportation of criminals ended; Telegraph system nationalized in UK.	Disraeli prime minister followed rapidly by Gladstone.

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1869	John Stuart Mill, <i>On the Subjection of Women</i> .	Girton College (for the higher education of women) founded at Hitchin (moved to Cambridge, 1873); Josephine Butler founds Ladies National Association to campaign against the CD Acts.	Suez Canal opens; Third Contagious Diseases Act; Women ratepayers given the vote in local elections.
1870 Charles Dickens dies.	George Eliot's <i>Middlemarch</i> begins part publication (to 1871).		Forster Education Act; Franco-Prussian War begins.
1871	Lewis Carroll, <i>Through the Looking Glass</i> ; Thomas Hardy, <i>Desperate Remedies</i> .	Charles Darwin, <i>The Descent of Man</i> ; Football Association founded and the English FA cup competition begins.	Unification of Germany; Bank Holidays introduced; University 'tests' of religious conformity abolished; purchase of army commissions abolished.
1872	Hardy, <i>Under the Greenwood Tree</i> .	Edison's refined duplex telegraph invented.	
1873 John Stuart Mill dies.	Walter Pater, <i>Studies in the History of the Renaissance</i> ; J. S. Mill, <i>Autobiography</i> .		Irish Home League Association established.
1874	Thomas Hardy, <i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i> .		Disraeli prime minister.

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1875	Anthony Trollope, <i>The Way we Live Now</i> .	London Medical School for Women founded.	Cross Act – gives powers to local authorities for slum clearance.
1876	Eliot, <i>Daniel Deronda</i> ; Henry James, <i>Roderick Hudson</i> .	Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone; Sophia Jex Blake qualifies as a doctor.	Victoria takes title Empress of India.
1877		Thomas Edison's phonograph; tennis at Wimbledon; Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant tried for obscenity for publishing information about contraception.	
1878	Thomas Hardy, <i>The Return of the Native</i> .	London University admits women to degree conferments; Salvation Army founded; Ruskin-Whistler lawsuit.	
1879 E. M. Forster born.	Ibsen, <i>A Doll's House</i> .		
1880 George Eliot dies; Lytton Strachey born.	Eliot, <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> .	Electric light bulb independently invented by Edison in the US and Swan in Great Britain.	
1881 Thomas Carlyle dies; Benjamin Disraeli dies; Pablo Picasso born.	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i> ; Ibsen, <i>Ghosts</i> .	D'Oyly Carte builds the Savoy Theatre – first to be lit by electricity; <i>Tit-Bits</i> founded by George Newnes.	

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<p>1882 Charles Darwin dies; Anthony Trollope dies; Virginia Woolf born; James Joyce born.</p>	<p>Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>.</p>		<p>Married Woman's Property Act.</p>
<p>1883 Karl Marx dies.</p>	<p>Oliver Schreiner, <i>The Story of an African Farm</i>; Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>.</p>		
<p>1884</p>	<p>Anthony Trollope, <i>An Autobiography</i>.</p>	<p>Maxim machine gun invented; Oxford English Dictionary begins publication.</p>	<p>Berlin Conference on the division of African territories; Third Reform Act.</p>
<p>1885 D. H. Lawrence born; Ezra Pound born.</p>	<p>Walter Pater, <i>Marius the Epicurean</i>; H. Rider Haggard, <i>King Solomon's Mines</i></p>	<p>Internal combustion engine invented – Benz makes his first petrol engine; Leslie Stephen begins preparation of <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>; Pasteur's vaccine against rabies. 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' published in <i>Pall Mall Gazette</i>; Zola publishes <i>Germinal</i>.</p>	<p>Criminal Law Amendment Act (criminalizes homosexuality).</p>
<p>1886</p>	<p>George Gissing <i>Demos</i>; Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i>; first English translation of Marx's <i>Capital</i> published; Thomas Hardy,</p>		<p>Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; defeat of the Irish Home Rule Bill; Gladstone loses election;</p>

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	<i>Mayor of Casterbridge</i> ; James, <i>The Bostonians</i> .		Salisbury prime minister.
1887	H. Rider Haggard, <i>She</i> ; <i>Allan Quatermain</i> ; Arthur Conan Doyle, <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> ; Pater, <i>Imaginary Portraits</i> ; Hardy, <i>The Woodlanders</i> .	Goodwin invents celluloid film; the speed of light measured for the first time.	Victoria's Golden Jubilee; Bloody Sunday takes place in Trafalgar Square.
1888 Matthew Arnold dies; T. S. Eliot born; Katherine Mansfield born.	Rudyard Kipling, <i>Plain Tales from the Hills</i> .	Vizetelly tried and imprisoned for publishing translations of Zola; Kodak no. 1 camera and roll film invented and marketed; Forth Rail Bridge completed.	The Jack the Ripper Murders in London's East End.
1889 Robert Browning dies; Gerard Manley Hopkins dies; Constance Naden dies.	Yeats, <i>The Wanderings of Oisín</i> ; Charles Booth, <i>Life and Labour of the People in London</i> begins publication (ends 1903); Pater, <i>Appreciations</i> ; Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying' (<i>Fortnightly Review</i>).	First London performance of Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i> (1879); Eiffel Tower built.	London Dock Strike.
1890	Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> serialized; William Booth, <i>In Darkest England and the Way Out</i> ; J. G. Frazer, <i>The Golden Bough</i> begins publication (completed in 1914).	Discovery of tetanus and diphtheria viruses; William James, <i>Principles of Psychology</i> .	

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1891	Wilde, 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' (<i>Fortnightly</i>); Doyle, <i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> begins publication in <i>The Strand</i> ; Gissing, <i>New Grub Street</i> ; Hardy, <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> ; William Morris, <i>New from Nowhere</i> .		
1892 Walt Whitman dies; Alfred Tennyson dies.	Rudyard Kipling, <i>Barrack-Room Ballads</i> ; Wilde, <i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i> ; Doyle, <i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> (book version).	Diesel's internal combustion engine invented.	
1893 Wilfred Owen born.	Wilde, <i>A Woman of No Importance</i> and French version of <i>Salomé</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Celtic Twilight</i> ; Gissing, <i>The Odd Women</i> ; Sarah Grand, <i>The Heavenly Twins</i> ; George Egerton, <i>Keynotes</i> ; Arthur Wing Pinero, <i>The Second Mrs Tanqueray</i> .	Henry Ford's first cars manufactured; the flashbulb (for photography) invented.	Independent Labour Party founded.
1894 Walter Pater dies; Robert Louis Stevenson dies.	Wilde, <i>Salomé</i> translated; George Moore, <i>Esther Waters</i> ; Kipling, <i>The Jungle Book</i> ; Arthur Morrison, <i>Tales of Mean Streets</i> ;	<i>The Yellow Book</i> founded; Emile Berliner invents the gramophone disc.	

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	George Moore, <i>Esther Waters</i> ; Mona Caird, <i>The Daughters of Danaus</i> ; George Bernard Shaw, <i>Arms and the Man</i> .		
1895 T. H. Huxley dies.	Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> and <i>An Ideal Husband</i> ; Symons, <i>London Nights</i> ; Hardy, <i>Jude the Obscure</i> ; Conrad, <i>Almayer's Folly</i> ; Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i> ; Allen, <i>The Woman Who Did</i> .	English translation of Max Nordau's <i>Degeneration</i> ; London School of Economics founded; Röntgen discovers x-rays; Marconi invents wireless telegraph; Lumière brothers invent the cinematograph; Gillette safety razor.	Oscar Wilde tried and imprisoned. Jameson Raids in the Transvaal.
1896 William Morris dies.	A. E. Housman, <i>A Shropshire Lad</i> ; Morrison, <i>A Child of the Jago</i> .	<i>The Savoy</i> founded and <i>The Daily Mail</i> begins publication as the first modern 'tabloid'; Becquerel discovers radioactivity; London School of Economics opens to students; Ramsay discovers helium; Rutherford publishes on the detection of electrical waves.	
1897 Eleanor Marx-Aveling dies.	Yeats, <i>The Secret Rose</i> ; Bram Stoker, <i>Dracula</i> ; Wells, <i>The Invisible Man</i> and <i>The War of the Worlds</i> ; Gissing, <i>The Whirlpool</i> ;	Tate Gallery opens; Victoria's Diamond Jubilee; J. J. Thomson discovers the electron.	

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	Conrad, <i>The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'</i> ; Sarah Grand, <i>The Beth Book</i> ; Richard Marsh, <i>The Beetle</i> .		
1898 Aubrey Beardsley dies; Lewis Carroll dies; William Gladstone dies.	Wilde, <i>The Ballad of Reading Gaol</i> ; Arnold Bennett, <i>A Man from the North</i> ; Hardy, <i>Wessex Poems</i> ; James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> .	<i>Country Life</i> founded.	
1899 Grant Allen dies.	Kipling, <i>Stalky and Co</i> ; Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> serialized; Yeats, <i>The Wind Among the Reeds</i> ; Arthur Symons, <i>The Symbolist Movement in Literature</i> .		Boer War begins (till 1902).
1900 Ruskin dies; Nietzsche dies; Wilde dies.	Conrad, <i>Lord Jim</i> ; Symons, <i>The Symbolist Movement in Literature</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Shadowy Waters</i> .	Max Planck publishes his theories of quantum physics; Freud publishes <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> ; the Kodak Brownie camera introduced.	
1901 Queen Victoria dies.	Kipling, <i>Kim</i> .	Marconi transmits radio waves across the Atlantic.	Edward VII accedes.
1902 Cecil Rhodes dies; Samuel Butler dies; Zola dies.	Bennett, <i>Anna of the Five Towns</i> .	William James, <i>Varieties of Religious Experience</i> ; <i>Times Literary Supplement</i> founded.	Boer War ends.

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1903 Whistler dies; Gissing dies; W. E. Henley dies; George Orwell born.	Samuel Butler, <i>The Way of All Flesh</i> .	The Wright Brothers succeed in flying; Henry Ford starts Ford Motors.	Pankhurst founds the Women's Social and Political Union.
1904	Conrad, <i>Nostramo</i> .	Rutherford discovers radioactivity in radium; Freud, <i>The Psychopathology of Everyday Life</i> .	
1905	Wilde, <i>De Profundis</i> (expurgated version); Wells, <i>A Modern Utopia</i> and <i>Kipps</i> ; Forster, <i>Where Angels Fear to Tread</i> .	Einstein describes the special theory of relativity; Freud, <i>Three Essays on Sexuality</i> .	Liberal Administration takes over England on a platform of radical reform.
1906 Samuel Beckett born; Henrik Ibsen dies.	Galsworthy, <i>The Man of Property</i> .		Self-government granted to Transvaal and Orange colonies in South Africa.
1907 W. H. Auden born.	Conrad, <i>The Secret Agent</i> ; Synge, <i>The Playboy of the Western World</i> ; Forster, <i>The Longest Journey</i> .	Picasso exhibits <i>Les Femmes d'Alger</i> ; first Cubist exhibition in Paris; Baden Powell founds the Boy Scout movement.	
1908 'Ouida' dies.	Bennett, <i>The Old Wives' Tale</i> ; Wells, <i>Tono-Bungay</i> ; Forster, <i>A Room with a View</i> .		

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1909 Swinburne dies; George Meredith dies; John Davidson commits suicide; Synge dies.	Wells, <i>Ann Veronica</i> .	Blériot flies the Channel.	
1910 Edward VII dies; Leo Tolstoy dies.	Forster, <i>Howards End</i> ; Bennett, <i>Clayhanger</i> ; Wells, <i>The History of Mr Polly</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Green Helmet and Other Poems</i> .	Roger Fry mounts the post-Impressionist Exhibition in London.	George V accedes to the throne.
1911	D. H. Lawrence, <i>The White Peacock</i> ; Ezra Pound, <i>Cantos</i> ; Rupert Brooke, <i>Poems</i> ; Wells, <i>The New Machiavelli</i> ; Bennett, <i>Hilda Lessways</i> and <i>The Card</i> ; Katherine Mansfield, <i>In a German Pension</i> .	Amundsen reaches the South Pole; Rutherford publishes <i>Theory of Atomic Structure</i> .	House of Lords partially reformed by Liberal Government; National Insurance measures (for pensions provision and healthcare) announced.
1912		C. G. Jung, <i>The Theory of Psychoanalysis</i> .	The <i>Titanic</i> disaster.
1913	D. H. Lawrence, <i>Sons and Lovers</i> .	Vitamin A isolated for the first time by McCollum.	Panama Canal opens.
1914	James Joyce, <i>Dubliners</i> ; Yeats, <i>Responsibilities</i> .		Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assassinated, precipitating the beginning of the Great War.

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1915 Henry James dies.	D. H. Lawrence, <i>The Rainbow</i> (suppressed for obscenity later that year); Virginia Woolf, <i>The Voyage Out</i> .		Allies try to invade Turkey via Gallipoli and are defeated; zeppelins bomb London; sinking of the <i>Lusitania</i> begins process of bringing the US into the war. Coalition government of National Unity established in Britain.
1916 Henry James dies.	James Joyce, <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> ; Arnold Bennett, <i>These Twain</i> ; Wells, <i>Mr Britling Sees it Through</i> .		The Battle of the Somme – first use of the tank, and massive casualties; Easter Rising in Dublin.
1917	T. S. Eliot, <i>The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Wild Swans at Coole</i> .	Freud, <i>Introduction to Psychoanalysis</i> .	US enters the war. Russian Revolution overthrows the Tsars under the leadership of Lenin.
1918			End of the Great War; process of negotiating peace begun at Versailles; in Britain, the vote extended to all men over 21, and to women over 30 – first woman elected to British parliament is Constance Markiewicz, Sinn Fein.
1919			Treaty of Versailles formalizes the peace;

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			influenza epidemic spreads across Europe and the US; Prohibition era begins in US.
1920 Olive Schreiner dies.	Katherine Mansfield, <i>Bliss and Other Stories</i> ; John Galsworthy, <i>In Chancery</i>		National Socialist Party (Nazi) publishes its manifesto in Germany.
1921	John Galsworthy, <i>To Let</i> .	Einstein wins the Nobel Prize for Physics.	Red Army defeats the White Russians (Tsarists) in Russian Civil War.
1922	T. S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> ; Virginia Woolf, <i>Jacob's Room</i> ; Mansfield, <i>The Garden Party and Other Stories</i> ; Yeats, <i>Michael Robartes and the Dancer</i> .	The BBC makes its first transmissions.	Irish Free State established; Mussolini establishes fascist dictatorship in Italy.
1923 Katherine Mansfield dies.	Arnold Bennett, <i>Riceyman's Steps</i> .	W. B. Yeats awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.	Matrimonial Bill passed allowing wives to divorce husbands on more equal terms.
1924 E. Nesbit dies; Joseph Conrad dies.	E. M. Forster, <i>A Passage to India</i> .		Lenin dies; first British Labour government (a minority administration) under Ramsay MacDonald.
1925	Virginia Woolf, <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> .	John Logie Baird first practicable television set.	Hitler publishes <i>Mein Kampf</i> .

Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, Linda R. *Bennett, Wells and Conrad: Narrative in Transition*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

As well as providing the kind of sensitive and intelligent readings that Bennett and Wells are seldom accorded, Anderson's text also goes to considerable lengths to describe and define the traditions of realism in English fiction, thereby making the connection between an aesthetic vision which appears 'Victorian' and one – in Conrad – which is distinctively modern or even Modernist. A highly recommended read.

Beckson, Karl *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History*. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co. 1992.

A wide-ranging history of London culture in the 1890s. Beckson describes the whole gamut of cultural activity from Socialist clubs to the discourses of Empire, from the New Woman to homosexual subcultures, and from commerciality in publishing to the aesthetic isolationism of Celts and self-styled decadents. This is a really useful sourcebook for contextualizing the 1890s and beyond.

Carey, John *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.

This book caused major ripples in the literary pond when it was first published since it makes a very strong case for describing literary modernism as elitist and even proto-fascist in its origins and development. It is passionately argued, and is one of the few relatively recent books to put an alternative view of the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth-century period. It acts as a useful corrective to the uncritical perception of Modernism as a 'good thing' in the words of Sellar and Yeatman and makes a strong case for Arnold Bennett as an important novelist.

Childs, Peter *Modernism*. New Critical Idiom. London: Routledge, 2000.

Part of a series which aims to provide introductory texts on key literary and cultural concepts, Childs's *Modernism* does exactly what it promises: it

introduces the key concepts of Modernism. I've chosen it for inclusion here over other such guides that exist because of its contextualization of Modernism, and its careful location of Modernist origins in nineteenth-century thought. It is a very lucid introduction, but is also broadly informative – highly recommended as a place to begin.

Dijkstra, Bram *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

From the bizarre to the macabre to the faintly comic ('Brenn and his share of the plunder', by Paul Joseph Jamin, 1893, combines all three elements), this book documents the history of pictorial art in the late nineteenth century and beyond from the point of view of its representations of women. Some of Dijkstra's descriptions are a little odd on occasion, but this richly illustrated book is an important resource for visualizing one aspect of culture in the period.

Edel, Leon and Gordon N. Ray, eds. *Henry James and H. G. Wells: A Record of Their Friendship, their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and their Quarrel*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959.

On first sight, this is perhaps a slightly unusual choice for an annotated bibliography. However, in the correspondence between Wells and James that is documented here, one finds the basis of the quarrels between aesthetic and practical considerations of literary practice that solidified in the modernist characterization of realism as naïve. Edel and Ray's introductory matter and scholarly apparatus is very helpful for situating the arguments – but modern readers need to bear in mind their presumption that James was right and that Wells was wrong, a presumption that the documents themselves do not necessarily support. Along with the letters the two novelists wrote to each other, there are also critical essays they each wrote in the press, essays which also state the differences between sociological fictions and the 'aesthetic' or psychological novel. This is a necessary supplement to reading Woolf's essays on fiction, suggesting some of the genesis of her ideas as well as the grounds for her disapproval of Bennett–Wells–Galsworthy.

Ellmann, Richard *Oscar Wilde*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988.

Not only an excellent biography of Wilde, Ellmann's book is a tour de force in its evocation of the 'Wilde period', providing multiple and detailed perspectives on the 1880s and 1890s. There are problems with, not least its wholly inadequate index, and its misattribution of a photograph purporting to be of Wilde in drag, but actually of a German opera singer. But these are small details in an otherwise essential piece of period reading.

Greenslade, William *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

This book should be read alongside Daniel Pick's *Faces of Degeneration* (1989), which gives more detail about the historical development of degeneration theories in the earlier parts of the nineteenth century. What's particularly useful about Greenslade's book, however, is that it provides interesting readings of texts familiar and unfamiliar through the lens of such theories. In doing so, it demonstrates that this highly dubious pseudo-scientific Victorian discourse had an extremely long afterlife in post-Victorian culture. Greenslade argues, for example, that Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* is degenerationist text. As such, it makes the case that there are observable continuities between Victorian values and Modernist aesthetics.

Heilmann, Ann *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminist Fiction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

It is rather invidious to single out one of the recent plethora of books taking New Woman writing as its theme, and readers are also recommended to look at Ardis 1990, Pykett 1992, Ledger 1997, and Richardson and Willis 2001. I've chosen Heilmann's book here partly because it is a very lucid exposition of the feminist politics of the New Woman writing; and partly because it reproduces in glorious detail large numbers of the cartoon and other images of the New Woman that proliferated in the 1880–1910 period, thereby providing a rich visual context for understanding the complexity that adhered to this multifarious cultural figure.

Jackson, Holbrook *The Eighteen Nineties* [1913]. Intro. Malcolm Bradbury. London: The Cresset Library, 1987.

Written by a near-contemporary, Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties* gives useful period detail, and also describes how the immediately succeeding period saw the nineties. Jackson covers most of the major figures and most of what we would now see as the major cultural trends. The differences between his vision of the Beardsley–Wilde era and our own visions of it illuminate the changing preoccupations of literary and cultural criticism.

Keating, P. J. *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1989.

Less polemical and passionate than Carey's text, Keating's study of prose fiction in an 'age of transition', is indispensable reading, considering in detail the material conditions of literary production in the period. As well as offering readings of novels both obscure and canonical, it sets out to explain their provenance and aesthetics in terms of the economic and social conditions usually

relegated to the footnotes of other kinds of study. It contains a wealth of detail not available elsewhere, in a very readable form.

Kern, Stephen *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Kern's underlying argument is that nineteenth-century technological advances radically altered the ways in which it was possible to view the world, in particular in relation to concepts of time (which seemed to be moving faster) and space (modified by the new concept of speed). These advances had discernible effects on the literary aesthetics of high culture (Modernism) across Europe and the United States, as well as fundamentally changing modes of popular culture. It is a dense and sometimes difficult read because the concepts it deals with are complex. But it is very rewarding and important all the same and perseverance is recommended.

Leavis, Q. D. *Fiction and the Reading Public* [1932]. London: Bellew Publishing, 1990.

Many of the value judgements that underlie this study are precisely those called into question and excoriated by Carey, and reading it is an occasionally uncomfortable experience. Nonetheless, Leavis's description and production of a sociological method for understanding the book market is a very valuable period piece, filled with gems of information about the book market and the formation of public taste in the early years of the twentieth century. Read in conjunction with Keating, it tells a lot about materiality of literary culture, and a lot about changing perceptions of literary value between 1932 and 1989.

Ledger, Sally and Roger Luckhurst, eds. *A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880–1900*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

A very useful anthology of extracts from contemporary documents in the period. This text has sections dealing with degeneration theory, social conditions, the city, the New Woman, Socialism and Anarchism, science and anthropology amongst other relevant concepts, written by contemporaries, and charting the nature of such debates in the period. Most of these texts are either extracts from books long out of print, or are only to be found in their original journal publication – making them available to general readers is a very useful enterprise.

Leighton, Angela and Margaret Reynolds, eds. *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995.

The final third of this volume is the place to begin to get a flavour of women's poetry in the late nineteenth century. As I note in the text, the process of canon

formation for New Women poets is at an early and underdeveloped stage. Leighton and Reynolds cover all the important names, give excellent basic bibliographical and biographical contexts, and notes for further reading. This is a really helpful book.

Showalter, Elaine *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. London: Bloomsbury, 1991.

The parallels Showalter draws between the Victorian fin de siècle and the twentieth-century millenarianism are not all always completely satisfying, but this book does a very good job of describing the cultural and political anxieties about gender in both periods, and examining the ways in which those anxieties were reflected in the variety of literary and artistic production. The book also has a very readable style, making theoretically inflected readings available to all kinds of readers.

Showalter, Elaine, ed. *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siècle*. London: Virago, 1993.

This anthology of New Woman short fiction will perhaps soon be superseded by a forthcoming selection edited by Angelique Richardson. Its disadvantage is the uncritical use of the word decadence in relation to New Women writers who would certainly have disavowed the word in relation to their own project. Its advantage is that it has been constantly in print since its publication, making rare stories by Vernon Lee, George Egerton, Sarah Grand and Olive Schreiner available to student readers – and for that I am very grateful. It also provides biographical information about the writers, which is helpful context.

Stokes, John *In the Nineties*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.

Stokes's book gives a slightly different view of the late nineteenth century, based on the detailed consideration of cultural thematics as they were elucidated in the pages of the contemporary press – the New Journalism of the period. He considers the economics of journalism, its conventions, including the new form of the interview and the passing of journalistic anonymity, the letters pages of the popular press, and thence relationships between newspaper economics and the formation of literary aesthetics. It is a fascinating read.

Walkowitz, Judith *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. London: Virago, 1992.

This historical and cultural survey of London's seamier side provides an important contextual background for readers seeking to understand the literary representation of the city in the late Victorian and early modernist periods. The oxymoron of the title speaks of the ambivalence that many commentators felt

about the city – dreadful conditions, especially for the working classes of the East End memorialized in the sociological surveys and fictions of the period, existed side-by-side with a city in the process of being rebuilt as a consumerist paradise. The Ripper murders of 1888 which provoked horror and grisly fascination in equal measure are one of the elements of that oxymoron. This is both gripping and queasy reading, for Walkowitz also demonstrates that we cannot judge the Victorians honestly if we do not admit that we are more like them than we wish to think.

Williams, Raymond *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1984.

A recent critic has suggested quite rightly that Williams's book 'pivoted on loose assertions and bold general statements' that are not really substantiated (O'Gorman 2002, 159). All the same, Williams's responses to *fin-de-siècle* and proto-Modernist fictions in the last half of this book have been influential because they are intelligent responses to the materials. The book has a quasi-Marxist underpinning, and is, in parts, a simplified rewriting of some of the material from Williams's earlier book, *Culture and Society*. Key phrases about 'knowable communities' and about 'border countries' do help to make sense of the changes in English fiction from 'Victorian' to Modern, and they provide food for further thought and development.

Williams, Raymond *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [1976]. London: Fontana Press, 1988.

This book is a dictionary of important words. It reminds us that key concepts, which we have a habit of taking for granted, actually have a history, and that the history of words is formative of their most recent meanings. In mini essays, Williams describes the changing usages of words like 'class', 'culture', 'aesthetics', 'intellectual', 'labour', 'literature' and 'industry', to choose a few random – but not insignificant – examples. Since the period of this book is a period in which meanings shifted, *Keywords* is recommended as a reminder that our vocabulary comes from specific historical circumstances.

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Index

- Allen, Grant 126, 163
The Woman Who Did 163, 164,
191n
- Altick, Robert 47
- Anderson, Linda 50
- Arata, Stephen 150, 153
- Archer, William 106
- Ardis, Ann 189
- Armstrong, Isobel 13
- Arnold, Matthew 7, 9, 10, 27, 28n, 37,
81, 85, 100, 121, 123, 180, 187–8
- Avril, Jane 98–9, 104n
- Baldick, Chris 10
- Bartlett, Neil 107–8, 127
- Beardsley, Aubrey 179
- Bennett, Arnold 19, 23, 27, 31, 33, 34,
39, 62–73, 163, 193, 196
Anna of the Five Towns 65
Clayhanger 67, 71
Hilda Lessways 189, 191n
The Old Wives' Tale 66–71, 194
- Besant, Walter 130
- Binyon, Laurence 93
- Black, Clementina 173
- Booth, William 73n
- Bourdieu, Pierre 147
- Bowlby, Rachel 64
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth 125, 191n
- Bradfield, Thomas 179–80
- Bradley, Katharine *See Michael Field*
- Brake, Laurel 19, 13–14, 97
- Brantlinger, Patrick 131, 132, 158n
- Bristow, Joseph 107, 131
- Bronfen, Elisabeth 151
- Brontë, Emily 5, 28n
- Browning, Robert 65, 75, 82
- Burne-Jones, Edward Coley 1
- Butler, Josephine 175
- Butler, Samuel 105
- Caird, Mona 167
- Carey, John 66
- Carroll, Lewis 109, 116
- Chekhov, Anton 182
- Cobbe, Frances Power 162
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 81
- Conrad, Joseph 17, 18–19, 33, 52, 126,
128
Heart of Darkness 17–18, 129, 146,
155, 156
The Secret Agent 18–19, 155
- Contagious Diseases Acts 174–5, 176,
191n
- Cooper, Edith *See Michael Field*
- Corelli, Marie 126
- Corot, Jean-Baptiste 18
- Courthorpe, W. J. 12
- Coustillas, Pierre 40
- Cox, R. G. 19–20
- Craft, Christopher 134, 157
- cultural capital 147
- culture 81
- Cunningham, Gail 164
- D'Arch-Smith, Timothy 127n
- Darwin, Charles 138, 139
- Davidson, John 83, 93
- degeneration 138–45, 193–4, 197,
209n
- Dellamorra, Richard 15, 76
- Dickens, Charles 44, 51
David Copperfield 22, 63–4
- Dollimore, Jonathan 115, 122
- Douglas, Lord Alfred 105
- Dowie, Ménie Muriel 167
- Dowling, Linda 81
- Doyle, Arthur Conan 16, 129, 135,
144–5, 158n, 182
- Dunne, Mary Chavelita *See George
Egerton*

- Egerton, George [Mary Chavelita Dunne] 168, 179–87, 188, 190
Discords 180, 183, 185, 186–7, 188
Keynotes 179, 181–6
- Eliot, George 8–9, 10, 19, 21, 22, 24, 58
Adam Bede 8, 21
Middlemarch 8–9, 24, 194
- Eliot, T. S. 72, 75, 93, 102–3, 197, 198, 202, 208
- Ellmann, Richard 29n, 110, 119
- Emig, Rainer 77
- Felski, Rita 80
- Ferrar, F. W. 41
- Field, Michael 90–2
- Flanagan-Behrendt, Patricia 127n
- Flaubert, Gustave 68
- Ford, Ford Madox 128
The Good Soldier 128–9, 153, 155–7, 194
- Forster, E. M. 24–6, 27, 28, 32, 33, 83, 92, 128, 192, 202–9
A Passage to India 25, 129, 193, 194, 203–8
Aspects of the Novel 24–5
Howards End 25–6, 55, 163, 191n, 192, 193, 194, 195–6, 202, 203
The Longest Journey 26
A Room with a View 202, 203
- Freud, Sigmund 24, 59, 126, 135, 141, 146
- Galsworthy, John 19, 33, 34, 39, 55–62, 68, 71, 72, 202
The Forsyte Saga 55–6
The Man of Property 56–62
- Garnett, Constance 182
- Garnett, Edward 195
- Gilbert, Sandra M and Susan Gubar 173
- Gissing, George 39–47, 49, 55, 63–4
Demos 40
The Nether World 40–1
New Grub Street 36, 41–7, 50, 62, 63
The Odd Women 162–3, 191n
The Unclassed 40
- Goode, John 22, 84, 164
- Grand, Sarah 113, 159, 163, 164, 165, 167, 168, 181, 190
- The Beth Book* 176, 178
The Heavenly Twins 176–9, 188, 190n
- Haggard, H. Rider 129, 130, 132
King Solomon's Mines 132, 133–4, 136, 146, 148, 155, 158n
She 136–7, 146, 148–9
- Hamsun, Knut 181
- Hardy, Thomas 19–23, 81–2, 84, 92, 104n, 125
‘Candour in Fiction’ 20, 29n
Far from the Madding Crowd 19, 21–2
Jude the Obscure 22, 33, 50, 163, 164, 188, 191n
The Mayor of Casterbridge 22–3
The Return of the Native 20
Tess of the D'Urbervilles 20, 173–4, 175–6, 178–9, 191n
Under the Greenwood Tree 19
- Heath, Stephen 133
- Heilmann, Ann 160, 165, 185
- Henley, W. E. 79, 93–5, 100
- Hill, Donald, L. 9, 28–9n
- Hobsbawm, E. J. 147
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley 15, 75–8, 92, 103n
- Housman, A. E. 3, 84–6, 92, 97, 104n
- Hunt, William Holman
The Awakening Conscience 6
- Huysmans, Joris-Karl 79
- Hytner, Nicholas 108, 127n
- Ibsen, Henrik 89
‘Iota’ 167
- Jackson, Holbrook 192
- Jackson, Russell 114
- James, Henry 23, 25, 31, 32, 33, 53, 55, 128, 130, 131
- James, William 31, 35, 59
- Johnson, Lionel 86, 96
- Joyce, James 33, 39, 55, 63–4, 128, 182, 198, 208
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man 72, 200
- Jowett, Benjamin 16, 29n
- Keating, P. J. 41, 63, 166
- Keats, John 81, 82

- Kelvin, Lord [William Thomson] 18
 Kendall, May 89
 Kermode, Frank 69

 Lacan, Jacques 28n
 Lang, Andrew 130, 131
 Lankester, Edwin Ray 139
 Lawrence, D. H. 28, 33, 36, 83, 128,
 163, 192, 209
 The Rainbow 55–6, 73n, 163, 189,
 191n, 192, 193–4, 195–202, 208
 Sons and Lovers 189, 191n, 192, 195,
 196, 209n
 Women in Love 198
 Leavis, Q. D. 37, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50, 54
 Fiction and the Reading Public 37–8
 Ledger, Sally 168, 176, 179
 Leighton, Angela 88, 92
 Leonardo da Vinci
 La Gioconda (Mona Lisa) 11–13,
 136–7
 St. John 12
 Levy, Amy 93
 Linton, Eliza Lynn 160–2, 190n
 Lombroso, Cesare 126, 142, 144, 153
 Lucas, John 70, 96, 100
 Lumière Brothers 126

 MacDonald, George 126
 Maeterlinck, Maurice 79
 Mansfield, Katherine 33, 182
 Marsh, Richard 129
 The Beetle 137, 147–8
 masculine romance 27–8, 129–58, 167
 Mallarmé, Stéphane 79
 Maupassant, Guy de 68
 McFall, Frances *See Sarah Grand*
 Mearns, Andrew 73n
 Miller, Jane Eldridge 167
 Modernism 27, 78, 128, 168, 170, 192,
 204, 208–9
 Moore, George
 Literature at Nurse 19, 20, 47
 Morel, Bénédict-Auguste 142, 209n
 Morris, Mowbray 173–4
 Morrison, Arthur 16, 55
 A Child of the Jago 16–17, 34–6, 50

 Naden, Constance 89–90
 Nead, Lynda 2

 Nesbit, Edith 89
 Newman, Ernest 110
 New Woman 27, 28, 87, 159–90, 194
 Nichols, Beverley 127
 Nordau, Max 126, 143, 153

 Oliphant, Margaret 173–4, 178
 Orwell, George 86

 Pater, Walter 3–5, 9–16, 18, 23, 24, 25,
 27, 28n, 29n, 78, 79, 87, 98, 100,
 102, 121, 123, 128, 136–7
 ‘Conclusion’ to *The Renaissance*
 13–16, 18, 23
 Marius the Epicurean 23
 The Renaissance 3, 9–16, 23, 78, 110
 ‘The School of Giorgione’ 3–5, 107
 Patmore, Coventry 87
 Poe, Edgar Allan 182
 Proust, Marcel 25
 Pykett, Lyn 193

 Queensberry, Marquess of 105

 Realism 31–3
 Reynolds, Margaret 88
 Rhys, Ernest 93
 Rhys, Jean 182
 Röntgen X-ray machine 18, 126
 Rossetti, William Michael 2
 Ruskin, John 1–4, 6–7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16,
 38, 65, 87, 180
 Modern Painters 7, 65

 Sagar, Keith 196
 Said, Edward 209n
 Scott, Walter 46
 Schreiner, Olive 159, 162, 188, 190
 The Story of An African Farm
 165–73, 190–1n
 Senf, Carol, A. 190n
 separate spheres debate 115, 162
 Shaw, George Bernard 106
 Shelley, Mary
 Frankenstein 145
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe 81, 82
 Showalter, Elaine 118, 129, 131
 Sims, George 73n
 Sinfield, Alan 107, 112
 Stephen, Leslie 19–20, 29n

- Stevenson, Robert Louis 129, 130, 132, 153
 'A Gossip on Romance' 130–1
The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde 17, 80–1, 113, 118–20, 133, 135–6, 145–6
- Stoker, Bram 129
Dracula 133, 134, 138, 144, 146, 147, 149–55, 156, 158n, 188–9
- Stokes, John 28n, 56, 108, 127n
- Strachey, Lytton 20
- Stutfield, Hugh, E. M. 180
- sublimation 104n
- Sulier, Sara 209n
- Symons, Arthur 79, 93, 95–9, 100, 102, 103, 126
- Tennyson, Alfred 82, 139
- Thackeray, William Makepeace 63–4
- Thomson, James 92
- Thornton, R. K. R. 93, 103
- Trollope, Anthony 62, 63, 65
- Trotter, David 59
- Turner, J. M. W. 3, 16
- Uncanny, the 135–6, 140
- Verlaine, Paul 79
- Wainwright, Thomas Griffiths 123–4
- Wain, John 82
- Watt, Ian 19
- Waugh, Arthur 179
- Weeks, Robert, P. 48
- Wells, H. G. 19, 27, 30, 33, 34, 39, 48–55, 71, 72, 83, 126, 139, 163, 164, 189, 193, 196
An Experiment in Autobiography 49–50
- The History of Mr Polly* 48–53, 54, 55
- The Island of Dr Moreau* 139
- The Time Machine* 139–41, 146
- Kipps 34, 38–9, 48–51, 53, 55
- Whistler, James Abbott McNeill 1–5, 18, 95, 104n
Nocturne in Black and Gold 2, 14
- White, Hayden 69–70, 202
- Whitman, Walt 204, 207
- Wicke, Jennifer 153
- Wilde, Oscar 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28n, 29n, 95, 105–27
 'The Critic as Artist' 13, 121–2
 'The Decay of Lying' 119–21
The Importance of Being Earnest 6, 105–18, 120
 'Pen, Pencil and Poison' 123–5
 'The Truth of Masks' 121
- Williams, Raymond 33, 53, 80, 93
- Wilson, Edmund 93
- Woman Question 160–3
- Woolf, Virginia 19, 20, 23–4, 29n, 33, 34, 36, 39, 55, 58, 64–5, 66, 69, 71, 72, 128, 168, 195, 202
Between the Acts 73n
 'Modern Fiction' 23, 54, 170
 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' 31, 54, 66, 72, 170
Mrs Dalloway 30–31, 68, 197
A Room of One's Own 64, 71, 189–90
To the Lighthouse 34–5, 69, 129, 202, 208
- Wordsworth, William 74, 78, 81, 82–3, 121, 125
- Yeats, W. B. 13, 78, 79, 86, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100–2, 103, 107, 119
- Zola, Emile 44, 59, 178, 202