

George Eliot and the “Silly Novels”

Tamara S. Wagner

Mary Ann (Marian) Evans had been a renowned critic and translator before she began writing fiction, using the pseudonym George Eliot because she did not want to ruin her reputation (Beer 20-22; Karl 237-38). From 1851 to 1854 Evans was the assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, but it was after she resigned and instead became a regular contributor that she wrote her most influential, memorable, and controversial articles. Her critical reviews did more than attack specific fads or discuss the works of individual authors; they tended to use the works under discussion to elaborate both on aesthetic principles and on social and cultural responses to literature. Between 1855 and 1857, Evans published numerous essays and reviews, which appeared anonymously in the *Westminster Review* as well as in the weekly *Leader*. Most prominent among them was a provocatively titled, acerbic, yet probing piece of literary criticism, “Silly Novels by Lady-Novelists” (1856). The piece was to become one of the most often cited contemporary analyses of popular women’s fiction of the time. While Evans was to define her own works of fiction against the trends she identified and condemned, this article not only provided a good overview of current literary developments, but also contributed significantly to the critical discussion of popular culture at a time when the social role as well as the aesthetic functions of literature were under debate.

“Silly Novels by Lady-Novelists” was published anonymously in the *Westminster Review* in October 1856. It is generally read together, or in conjunction, with Evans’ preceding critical articles or as a point of contrast to or departure for her fiction. Thus, her emphasis on how we should read and respond to women’s writing, assessing it as critically as

we do works by men – a central point in “Silly Novels” – is already anticipated in her 1854 article, “Woman in France: Madame de Sablé” (Shattock 71), while both her review of Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* (*Westminster Review*, April 1856) and “The Natural History of German Life” (*Westminster Review*, July 1856) have been considered companion pieces to “Silly Novels” in articulating what was to become George Eliot’s own literary aesthetic (Harris 180). In these series of articles, Evans was developing her concept of realism as well as her aesthetic of sympathy, which she then articulated through her fiction (Hadjiafxendi). Ostensibly producing a review of Wilhelm H. Von Riehl’s *The Natural History of German Life* (1856), for example, Evans really engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of the social responsibility of artistic representation in order to make a case for realism in art and literature. Such a branching off into several related issues, often conflating real-life issues and the problems of their literary representation, was as much part and parcel of contemporary reviews as were extensive quotations from the texts under discussion, and Evans’ influential article on “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists” stood within this tradition.

Evans’ “Silly Novels” article, however, presents an important shift in the way in which critical analyses were being tackled. In contrast to standard reviewing practices at the time, the article provides more analysis than summary. While the discussion of individual works of fiction is framed by a larger argument about women’s writing, the article’s main focus firmly rests on the texts under discussion. Whereas Riehl’s work is not even mentioned in the first section of “The Natural History of German Life,” as Evans instead provides “reflections” on a possible “model for some future or actual student of our own people” (“Natural History” 147), in “Silly Novels” she concentrates on specific details in a handful of recently published novels by British women writers. The choice of these minutely dissected details is admittedly somewhat haphazard, structured around their usefulness for the critical polemic Evans sought to produce, but new critical attention is nonetheless being directed to the aesthetic representation, the style, and

the context of critical reception as well as to the content of the books under critique. Traditionally, this focus on aesthetics has been understood as an essential part of the development of Evans' own conception of realism, while more recently the detailed attention to little-known popular novels has informed studies of non-canonical Victorian women writers. The widening importance and continued influence of Evans' "Silly Novels" article may consequently also be seen in the critical reliance on her evaluation of her contemporaries in the discussion of nineteenth-century fashionable fiction of highlife, for example. As I discuss "Silly Novels" as an important landmark in Victorian criticism, I shall therefore first outline how Evans came to write the article and how she ordered her analyses of several new novels around her developing ideas of realism and the role of literary criticism. I shall then proceed briefly to discuss the article's changing interpretation and influence.



Eleven days after Evans had finished "Silly Novels," she started working on her first pieces of fiction, which were to become *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857), serialized in *Blackwood's Magazine*. As a result, it has become the standard approach to Evans' critical essays to see the last influential article she wrote before she turned to writing fiction herself as "a kind of manifesto" (Ashton 12). The piece is often said to articulate "George Eliot's personal credo of what female fiction ought to be" (Tush 4), although the straightforward alignment between her indisputably polemical commentary and her own fiction has recently been called into question (Dillane 14), as we shall see. How she came to compose this indisputably acerbic essay is less certain. On the one hand, it is often remarked that Evans had for some time thought about writing a critical piece on what she clearly saw as the most unfortunate developments in popular fiction, especially in the production and also the reception of women's writing. Thus, she is usually said to have gained a form of reverse or parodic inspiration from seeing the title of Lady Henrietta Chatterton's 1856 novel, *Compensation: A Story of Real Life Thirty*

Years Ago. In a letter to John Chapman, the editor of the *Westminster Review*, on 5 July that year, Evans eagerly declared that she had just spotted the book and wanted to review it as a “vehicle” to express some of her aesthetic and moral doctrines through force of contrast: “I wonder what the story called ‘Compensation’ is. I have long wanted to fire away at the doctrine of Compensation, which I detest” (*Letters* 2:258). Clearly, she had already formed her argument before reading this particular book: “an article on ‘Silly Women’s Novels’ might be made the vehicle of some wholesome truth as well as of some amusement” (*Letters* 2:258). On the other hand, there is evidence that she later felt ambiguous about writing up her ideas, that she asked Chapman at one point “to get a substitute,” and that she eventually had to write “this odious article [...] in a hurry” while suffering from the pain and removal of a wisdom tooth (*Letters* 2:261). As Graham Handley has pointedly put it, “The mood shows” as Evans produced the consequent indictment with a “cutting edge” (381).

Sarcastic commentary, however, was a common ingredient in book reviews – when they were not just a placid acknowledgment of the book’s literal reception on a reviewer’s desk and no more. Evans, in fact, vehemently criticized such meaningless, fatuous descriptions of equally fatuous works:

We are aware that our remarks are in a very different tone from that of the reviewers who, with perennial recurrence of precisely similar emotions, only paralleled, we imagine, in the experience of monthly nurses, tell one lady novelist after another that they “hail” her productions “with delight.” (“Silly Novels” 201)

Such “lady novelists” were generally dismissed with evaluations that did not really evaluate anything, while implicitly suggesting that such works were not worthy of any real criticism. That such false praise did not do the authors or the development of English literature any good, that women writers ought to be – and indeed deserved to be – treated as “cavalierly” as their male counterparts was really Evans’ main point:

Harriet Martineau, Currer Bell [Charlotte Brontë], and Mrs. Gaskell have been treated as cavalierly as if they had been men. And every critic who forms a high estimate of the share women may ultimately take in literature, will on principle abstain from any exceptional indulgence toward the productions of literary women. ("Silly Novels" 202)

The women writers Evans singled out among a "cluster of great names" ("Silly Novels" 203) have notably been treated "as cavalierly" as if they had been male authors so that the main fault does not so much rest with a gendered approach to literary criticism – although Evans certainly wants to avoid this – but with the actual quality of the works. Nevertheless, a proliferation of "silly novels" by affected lady novelists threatens to justify just such a gendered criticism.

The article's overarching argument about women's writing links the real function and value of literary criticism to the education of women at large. Male readers of such silly novels, Evans warns, might well assume that the education of women cannot lead to anything good if it produces works like these, so that "the most mischievous form of feminine silliness is the literary form, because it tends to confirm the popular prejudice against the more solid education of women" ("Silly Novels" 194). The publication of such works does a disservice not only to literature, but also to women more generally. This warning has stunningly been misread "as though George Eliot were calling all novels written by women 'silly'" (Tush 1). Shirley Foster, for example, has accused Evans of "identif[y]ing herself with male culture," suggesting that she thereby "sought to separate herself from the obvious limitations of her own sex" (189). Evoking both Foster and Ellin Ringler's "feminist perspective" on George Eliot's writing as typical examples of such misreadings, Susan Rowland Tush has perceptively dismantled how "Some feminist critics seem unusually offended even by the essay's title," and how the piece has been "inappropriately used as evidence against [George Eliot] as a woman writer" (1, 3). Such critics not only

“conveniently overlook her specific praise for Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell” (Tush 2); they also ignore that Evans very carefully avoids indicting needy women who write for money as their only means of support. On the contrary, Evans stresses that she feels

relieved from a serious scruple by discovering that silly novels by lady novelists rarely introduce us into any other than very lofty and fashionable society. We had imagined that destitute women turned novelists, as they turned governesses, because they had no other “ladylike” means of getting their bread. On this supposition, vacillating syntax, and improbable incident had a certain pathos for us. (“Silly Novels” 179-80)

The piece’s sarcasm, of course, yokes together two different accusations: that some of the silliest “lady novelists” are not writing out of necessity, but out of pretentiousness or boredom; more importantly, however, that they are not depicting life as it is. They are offending against the principles of realism by depicting a “very lofty and fashionable society” they are clearly not really familiar with. As has often been remarked on nineteenth-century fashionable fiction of highlife – the so-called “silver fork” genre – such novels tended to be framed as presumed insider reports of elite circles to which the writers had only limited access in reality.¹ As such, Evans is not really interested in the authors’ actual financial circumstances. Instead, possibly needy writers offend doubly against the principles of realist representation as Evans defines them since they are pretending to depict something they only copy from fashionable publications.

In the same vein, Evans rails against these would-be fashionable women spouting pseudo-intellectual thoughts. She caps this accusation with an important generalization about all (male and female) authors that has usually been ignored: “A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, is all the simpler and the less obtrusive for her knowledge” (“Silly Novels” 195-96). Men and women should equally steer clear of

pretentiousness. The stilted dialogue and lofty excursions into doctrine or pseudo-philosophy in mid-century fashionable writing, in fact, likewise chiefly offend Evans' principles of realism: "Great writers, [...] have modestly contented themselves with putting their experience into fiction, and have thought it quite a sufficient task to exhibit men and things as they are" ("Silly Novels" 188). Not only are the heroines of "silly novels" impossible paragons of erudition, but this supposed cleverness is often in embarrassing contrast to the authors' visible ignorance. Lofty language and unlikely classical or mythological allusions in ostensibly everyday dialogue create an atmosphere of pretended intellectualness that Evans finds especially odious. While she makes clear that she speaks of a widespread trend, she selects a handful of novels – all published within the same year – as exemplifying the worst developments. In these analyses, she dissects the authors' stylistic foibles as well as the limited imaginations that inform their stories.

A critical look at Evans' close readings reveals her strategies as well as the standard elements of popular fiction that she considers most objectionable. While *Compensation* features as one of the examples, Evans does more than collect and group together similar novels in order to show how they lacked originality. On the contrary, she aims to produce a much wider survey of the different kinds of popular women's fiction that were circulating in mid-Victorian Britain. Categorizing these different trends, she gives each fad an undoubtedly parodic term. Evans introduces "SILLY novels by Lady Novelists [as] a genus with many species" and then proceeds to divide them according to "the particular quality of silliness": "the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic," as well as novels of "the mind-and-millinery species," which is "a mixture of all these – a composite order of feminine fatuity" ("Silly Novels" 178). Citing from Chatterton's *Compensation* as well as from *Laura Gay* and *Rank and Beauty; Or the Young Baroness*, which were both published anonymously in 1856, Evans illustrates the lack of realism, the authors' pretended familiarity with high rank and fashionable society, and their inflated style, what Evans terms the dual

problems of “vacillating syntax, and improbable incident” (“Silly Novels” 180). All of these novels are more or less “frothy” and more or less inclined to evoke religious sentiment.

If there is a slight difference between such nodding at heroines’ religious virtue among their other perfections and making religion itself the (ostensible) subject of a novel, Evans suggests that this is chiefly a case of staggered “silliness.” What has, in fact, rarely received any attention is her discussion of popular religious novels of the time and how she subsumes them under fashionable fiction. Evans describes “the *oracular species*” – “novels intended to expound the writer’s religious, philosophical, or moral theories” – as the “most pitiable of all silly novels by lady novelists” (“Silly Novels” 188), taking *The Enigma: A Leaf from the Chronicles of the Wolchorley House* by an “Old Chronicler” as a case in point: the “‘enigma’ which this novel is to solve [...] certainly [...] demands powers no less gigantic than those of a lady novelist, being neither more nor less than the existence of evil” (“Silly Novels” 189). While such novels are generally “inspired by some form of High Church or transcendental Christianity,” they find their counterpart in novels of “the *white neck-cloth species*, which represent the tone of thought and feeling in the Evangelical party” (“Silly Novels” 196). Evans refers to Caroline Lucy Scott’s *The Old Grey Church* (1856) as a typical example, terming the entire genre – or “species,” as she puts it – as an “Evangelical travesty of the fashionable novel” (“Silly Novels” 198). It is the version of fashionable fiction that the daughters of evangelical households are allowed to consume, with the usual characters of such fiction dressed up in evangelical costumes: “a kind of genteel tract on a large scale, intended as a sort of medicinal sweetmeat for Low Church young ladies; an Evangelical substitute for the fashionable novel, as the May Meetings are a substitute for the Opera” (“Silly Novels” 196). Evans makes a provocative point here. Such ostensibly religious novels are simply fashionable fiction published under the pretence of presenting or supporting a particular doctrine. As the popular novelist Charlotte Riddell was to point out with

similar sarcasm when describing Mrs. Henry (Ellen) Wood's manipulation of evangelical rhetoric within her sensational best-sellers a few years later, "Mrs. Wood is simply a brute; she throws in bits of religion to slip her fodder down the public throat" (qtd Elwin 241). Evans similarly saw through the way both Tractarian (High Church) and Evangelical (Low Church) authors of popular fiction operated and marketed their novels.

Ironically, Evans' larger project of categorizing the different "species" of silly novels somewhat obscures the specific points she is making about the various literary fashions. Ultimately, everything seems to be the fault of not enough – or not the right kind of – realism. Thus, the piece does not tackle the possibilities of fiction that really presents religion or religious principles, although Evans briefly evokes Harriet Beecher Stowe, famous as the author of the influential anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), whose novel *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* had just appeared in 1856, as a powerful counterexample:

Why, then, cannot our Evangelical lady novelists show us the operation of their religious views among people (there really are many such in the world) who keep no carriage, "not so much as a brass-bound gig," who even manage to eat their dinner without a silver fork, and in whose mouths the authoress's questionable English would be strictly consistent? Why can we not have pictures of religious life among the industrial classes in England, as interesting as Mrs. Stowe's pictures of religious life among the negroes? ("Silly Novels" 198)

Instead, these novels are examples of "silver fork" fiction. Evans' main concern rests with the realist representation more than with the possible social implications. This can be seen even more clearly in her indictment of "the *modern-antique* species" as "perhaps the least readable of silly women's novels" ("Silly Novels" 199). Jane Margaret Strickland's *Adonijah: A Tale of the Jewish Dispersion* (1856) thereby serves as a

convenient example, although Evans' sarcastic stabs at fashionable representations of Egyptian princesses and Greek philosophers as well as Roman vestals might also suggest that she was "also obliquely referring to other examples of the genre," such as Mrs. Charles Tinsley's *The Priest of the Nile: A Tale of Ancient Egypt* (1841) (Tush 8). Yet Evans is not really weighing the pros and cons of different forms of historical fiction; she is diagnosing specific developments in popular culture and, in the process, attempting to arrest these developments.

There are, in fact, three separate elements informing the essay – elements that seem to pull the piece into different directions. First, Evans begins to evolve a theory of good novel writing that she might subsequently have endeavored to fulfil or express in her own fictional works. Her condemnation of "silly novels" might thereby well have worked as a kind of negative manifesto. At the end of the article, she goes further to point out what she considers "the right elements" of which any "species of art" ought to be comprised: "genuine observation, humour, and passion" ("Silly Novels" 203). Second, in the process of putting together her caveat against bad writing, Evans creates an insightful set of critical categories. In this, she participates in an important shift in approaches to reviewing practices at the time. The majority of book reviews continued to comprise lengthy synopses, vague contextualization, and personal value judgements. Evans' notorious sarcastic indictment of frothy novels is firmly entrenched in this critical tradition. As Joanne Shattock has pointedly put it, Evans "proved to be a canny manipulator of the conventions of anonymous reviewing" (82). Fionnuala Dillane has further pointed out that Evans' periodical essays "by their nature invoke generic features that require the writer to entertain as well as to offer instructive opinion" (80). The author is "obliged to adopt [these generic features] to hook an audience" (Dillane 81), although the contemporary response to Evans' article on "Silly Novels" suggests that the piece was indeed perceived as particularly "caustic criticism" ("Reviews" *John Bull* 667). As it was put in *John Bull and Britannia* in October 1856, the indictment was "rather unmercifully uttered perhaps," even though it contained "a great deal of sound truth" in exposing "the silken nonsense

which our critic so ruthlessly tears to pieces" (667). Simultaneously, however, the caustic value judgments were counterpoised by Evans' genuine critical effort at discussing divergent trends and categorizing what we would now term subgenres.² Third, through this categorization as well as the attention to a more detailed analysis, "Silly Novels" inadvertently provides insight into non-canonical works, creating a point of entry for new reassessments of these "silly novels," which has, in turn, led to a critical revaluation of Evans' article as well.



Critical discussions of "Silly Novels" may indeed be usefully divided according to the responses to one of these three main elements. In *The Essays of George Eliot*, Thomas Pinney influentially suggested that the piece "is a pivotal essay in a number of ways, not the least of which is the date of its completion: September 12, 1856. George Eliot began her own writing of fiction only a few days later on September 23" (Pinney 301). This is why it has become a well-established tradition in Victorian studies to take Evans' "thoughts about the writing of fiction made just at the time she began her first story" (Pinney 300) to shed a different light on her literary works. There are without doubt indirect references to "mind and millinery" novels in *Adam Bede* (1859), for example. These fashionable novels are evoked as negative counterexamples to Evans' conceptualization of realism so that

we can hardly think Dinah and Seth beneath our sympathy, accustomed as we may be to weep over the loftier sorrows of heroines in satin boots and crinoline, and of heroes riding fiery horses, themselves ridden by still more fiery passions. (44)

Several critics have carefully traced such references to novels or novel writing throughout George Eliot's oeuvre. Rosemary Ashton, for example, discusses how

on turning to fiction-writing [Evans] drew her own lesson, eschewing ideal heroines and heroes in favour of flawed, unhandsome protagonists [...] with the aim of winning over her readers' sympathy and understanding for less

attractive but more believable figures than those met with
in many novels (not only those by women). (12)

while Rachel Bowlby draws on “Silly Novels” in her analysis of verisimilitude and faithfulness in *Adam Bede* (18). Discussions of Evans’ contribution to literary criticism through her project of categorization are rarer (Wagner 15-27), while most attention has recently been paid to the insight that Evans thereby provides into the long forgotten subgenres of mid-century women’s writing.

Perhaps ironically, given Evans’ notorious vituperation of the novels she discusses, “Silly Novels” has directed new critical attention to these works. Her term “mind and millinery” species has been revived to refer to fashionable fiction of highlife that was extremely popular from the 1820s into the 1850s. Winifred Hughes borrows the term in a seminal article on late silver fork fiction, although she acknowledges that Evans particularly refers to novels of the mid-1850s, while silver fork writing was overall an earlier phenomenon. Evans’ piece thus provides evidence of a hitherto neglected continuity in fashionable fiction, even as she was discussing what might be termed a second wave of silver fork writing as a lineal descendent of the earlier phenomenon. Tush has painstakingly traced the novels mentioned in “Silly Novels” in order to read George Eliot’s own novels against them: *Adam Bede* as “a correction of these earlier evangelical novels” (16); *The Mill On The Floss* (1860) and *The Enigma* as “oracular novels;” *Middlemarch* (1871-72) against the “mind and millinery” novel such as *Rank and Beauty* or *Laura Gay*. Muireann O’Cinneide’s more recent discussion of aristocratic women writers, by contrast, engages critically with Evans’ evaluation as she reassesses the context of Chatterton’s and Caroline Lucy Scott’s writing, among others. Apparently, Scott’s *The Old Grey Church* sold well enough to result in the reissuing of her earlier novels, *A Marriage in High Life* (1828) in 1857 and *Trevelyan* (1833) in 1860 (O’Cinneide 78). Meanwhile, more attention to Evans’ work as a reviewer as well as an editor has begun to cast a different light on the complex relationship between the criticism and her fiction. Thus, Dillane cautions against “the dangers of

hyperbole," especially "when the author is celebrated for producing imaginative, layered, fictional worlds" (14). However tempting it may be to read "Silly Novels" as a straightforward manifesto, it needs to be considered as part of the "important and definitive rubric" (Dillane 14) of Victorian review writing.

Evans' indisputably caustic categorization of the silly novels that so many lady novelists of her time produced has become a landmark piece of contemporary nineteenth-century criticism. Perhaps it has received more attention than any of Evans' other journalistic pieces because it is about English literature and an aesthetic of realism that prefigures George Eliot's works; most likely, it would not be so widely known and regularly cited if Evans had not gone on to write literary works herself. What is certain is the impact the essay has had on studies of Victorian aesthetics, realism, and popular women's writing. Most importantly, simplistic accusations "that any woman who points out another's weakness joins forces with the patriarchy against all women" (Tush 2) have made way for critical assessments of what exactly Evans said and how this participated in Victorian criticism. Although Evans' "career as a money-earning reviewer" has been called "relatively short-lived" (Dillane 14), her article on "Silly Novels" has indisputably had a lasting as well as far-reaching influence on literary studies.

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Notes

¹ Singling out Theodore Hook's novels, William Hazlitt's 1827 article on "The Dandy School" in the *Examiner* coined the term "silver fork" fiction to describe a trend in early-nineteenth-century popular culture. Silver fork authors included several aristocratic women writers such as Chatterton, but also socially aspiring members of the middle and upper-middle classes who pretended to be familiar with the highlife they were depicting. Targeting similarly aspiring readers, they had an annoying tendency to inform their readers how, when, where, and what "the quality eat with silver forks" and similar mundane details (Hazlitt 20:146). Thackeray parodied several forms of such fashionable fiction in his

Punch's Prize Novelists (1847), such as *Lords and Liveries* “by the Authoress of *Dukes and Déjeuners*, *Hearts and Diamonds*, *Marchionesses and Milliners*, etc. etc.” Compare Mahawatte’s reassessment of the connection between the silver fork novel and the writing of George Eliot.

² Victorian critics increasingly attempted to establish categories or standards to stratify the literary market. David Masson’s *British Novelists and Their Styles: Being A Critical Sketch of the History of British Prose Fiction* (1859) reflected his large-scale project to divide the increasing proliferation of popular novels into subgenres that could be categorized and analyzed as a whole. Compare Wagner, *passim*.

Works Cited

- Ashton, Rosemary. “How George Eliot Came to Write Fiction.” *George Eliot Review*, Special Issue (2009): 7-13.
- Beer, Gillian. *George Eliot*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986.
- Bowlby, Rachel. “‘Hetty Had Never Read a Novel’: *Adam Bede* and Realism.” *George Eliot Review* 41 (2010): 16-29.
- Dillane, Fionnuala. *Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the Periodical Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013.
- Eliot, George [Mary Ann Evans]. “The Natural History of German Life.” *Westminster Review* 66 (July 1856), 51-79. Rpt. *The Essays of “George Eliot.”* Ed. Nathan Sheppard. Funk & Wagnalls, 1883. 141-177.
- . “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists.” *Westminster Review* 66 (October 1856), 442-61. Rpt. *The Essays of “George Eliot.”* Ed. Nathan Sheppard. Funk & Wagnalls, 1883. 178-204 [1857].
- . *Adam Bede*. Ed. Margaret Reynolds. London: Penguin, 2008.
- . *The George Eliot Letters*. Vol. 2. Ed. Gordon Haight. New Haven: Yale UP, 1954.
- Elwin, Malcolm. *Victorian Wallflowers*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1934.
- Foster, Shirley. *Victorian Women’s Fiction: Marriage, Freedom and the Individual*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1985.
- Handley, Graham [GHR]. “Silly Novels by Lady-Novelist.” *Oxford Reader’s Companion to George Eliot*. Ed. John Rignall. Oxford:

- Oxford UP, 2000. 381.
- Hadjiafxendi, Kyriaki. "'George Eliot,' The Literary Market-Place and Sympathy." *Authorship in Context: From the Theoretical to the Material*. Ed. Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Polina Mackay. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 33-56.
- Harris, Margaret [MAH]. "Journalist, George Eliot as." *Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot*. Ed. John Rignall. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 179-181.
- Hazlitt, William. *Complete Works*. Vol. 20. Ed. P.P. Howe. London: Dent, 1934.
- Hughes, Winifred. "Mindless Millinery: Catherine Gore and the Silver Fork Heroine." *Dickens Studies Annual* 25 (1996): 159-76.
- Karl, Frederick R. *George Eliot: Voice of a Century*. New York: Norton, 1995.
- Mahawatte, Royce. "'Life that is not clad in the same coat-tails and flounces': The Silver Fork Novel, George Eliot and the Fear of the Material." *Women's Writing*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2009), 323-44.
- O'Cinneide, Muireann. *Aristocratic Women and the Literary Nation, 1832-1867*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- "Reviews." *John Bull and Britannia*. 18 October 1856: 667. *New Readerships*.
- Ringler, Ellin. "Middlemarch: A Feminist Perspective." *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 15, No.1 (Spring 1983), 55-61.
- Shattock, Joanne. "The culture of criticism." *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830-1914*. Ed. Joanne Shattock. New York: Cambridge UP, 71-90.
- Thackeray, William Makepeace. *Miscellaneous Contributions to Punch, 1843-1854*. London: Oxford UP, n.d.
- Tush, Susan Rowland. *George Eliot and the Conventions of Popular Women's Fiction: A Serious Literary Response to the "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists"*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wagner, Tamara S. "'The velocity of the novel-producing apparatus' and 'large loose baggy monsters': The Changing Reputation of the

Nineteenth-Century Prose, Vol. 43, Nos. 1/2: Spring/Fall 2016

Victorian Novel.” *21st Century Perspectives on Victorian Literature*.
Ed. Laurence W. Mazzeno. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
15-27.

