

JAMIE GILHAM and RON GEAVES, eds. *Victorian Muslim: Abdullah Quilliam and Islam in the West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 222. \$39.95 (paper).  
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Abdullah Quilliam was an English solicitor from Liverpool who converted to Islam at the end of the nineteenth century and is remembered as a monumental figure in the history of Muslims in Britain. *Victorian Muslim: Abdullah Quilliam and Islam in the West* is the latest volume to dissect diverse facets of Quilliam's varied exploits, his accomplishments, and the controversies that surrounded him. It does this in an informative, detailed, and coherent manner, which results in an edited collection that will interest those who are keen to learn more about the historical nuances of Quilliam's life. The chapters are well written, well researched, and largely complementary, but there is a degree of repetition in some instances and some sections are overly descriptive. Nonetheless, this is an impressive piece of historical analysis of a figure that we are fortunate to be remembered due to the efforts of Jamie Gilham, Ron Geaves, and their co-contributors.

No immediately apparent threads link all of the chapters together, but one theme repeatedly touched upon is the relevance of Quilliam today. *Victorian Muslim* highlights at least four ways in which Quilliam still matters. Firstly, Quilliam offers an undeniable demonstration that Islam was well established in Britain since at least the nineteenth century. Such an observation is important considering that some might want to claim that Islam is a recent importation whose presence should be minimized for the imagined harm it might cause. Secondly, Quilliam may serve as a role model for Muslims in Britain today, given that he triumphantly reconciled his firm conviction in Islam with his desire to belong and contribute to British society. Others may feel as though Quilliam's elite status means that British Muslims today, who tend to be relatively disadvantaged and marginalized, will find Quilliam irrelevant in their own everyday struggles against poverty, racism, and sexism. Perhaps Quilliam may serve as an inspiration for those who convert to Islam in demonstrating how one can find a meaningful place within the Muslim community despite the widespread discomfort that one's conversion may cause. Thirdly, Quilliam may illuminate the historic nature of the struggle against Islamophobia and motivate resistance against it since he was also living in an era when the Prophet Muhammad and his teachings were misunderstood, Islam was seen as a "foreign religion," and Muslims were viewed with suspicion while struggling to effectively organize themselves. Fourthly, Quilliam could be said to embody contemporary Muslim communities given that he was a multifaceted character who cannot be neatly categorized, an observation that still needs to be emphasized about Muslims, who are still simplistically imagined as homogeneous. These four reasons highlight why it is still worth recalling Quilliam, yet one must not underestimate the extent to which Quilliam was living in a different era, with different circumstances and challenges. So, for example, while some may find the idea of having a "Shaykh-ul-Islam" that represents and leads all Muslims in Britain as a way to achieve unity and coherence, it would be futile to seek the revival of Quilliam's position given the immense diversity British Muslims now constitute today, which means that they are much less a community than a set of communities.

*Victorian Muslim* is comprehensive in assessing Quilliam's life, but there remain topics that future research about Quilliam may explore. There is little mentioned about how Quilliam's family responded to his conversion, and it is still unclear how he obtained his rich depth of Islamic knowledge considering that Muslims still find it difficult to access bona fide instruction on Islam today. It might also be worth exploring how his achievements were complemented by those of others in his community, to avoid the potentially misleading impression that his community was solely reliant upon him. One of the most intriguing areas that has not been sufficiently explored concerns the fate of Quilliam's community given that there are no obvious pockets that appear to have descended from him in Liverpool today. This is surprising given

that he is said to have converted hundreds of Liverpudlians, but also because he is known to have had at least nine children and many grandchildren. Another area that is, in my estimation, insufficiently explored in the book relates to the way in which class, race, and gender manifested in favorable ways for Quilliam. There are passing comments about his privileged status as a white man who was wealthy and educated, but these attributes need to be better considered in relation to the status he obtained during and after his life. Since Quilliam lived at the height of empire and colonialism, it is also reasonable to suspend a romanticizing of Quilliam and reflect on the extent to which he may have been engaged in an Orientalist cultural appropriation in which he embraced the leadership of Muslims as a white male redeemer. When considered alongside Quilliam's surprising devotion to Freemasonry, a cynical hypothesis might suggest that his conversion could have been about achieving an enhanced mystique in pursuit of his esoteric demagoguery. Such a conspiracy theory may be unfair, though, and indeed, *Victorian Muslim* gives quite the opposite impression of Quilliam as an inspirational, devout, and highly knowledgeable Muslim who was anti-racist and anti-Orientalist. Readers will also get the impression that Quilliam achieved respect from Muslims around the world, was passionate about defending and spreading Islam, and obsessed over contributing toward social justice issues for the benefit of all of society, particularly for the poor, orphans, and women. Quilliam was undoubtedly an eccentric and intriguing character onto whom many contemporary anxieties can be projected, and for this reason and others, *Victorian Muslim* is a valuable collection that is worthy of attention, not only by researchers of Muslims in Britain but also by those who desire a more holistic understanding of the complexity of British history and the role of Muslims within it.

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CHRISTINE GRANDY. *Heroes and Happy Endings: Class, Gender, and Nation in Popular Film and Fiction in Interwar Britain*. Studies in Popular Culture. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. Pp. 242. \$28.95 (paper).  
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Christine Grandy's study of interwar popular culture through the lens of film and fiction offers a fresh look at the way Britons reconstructed their world in the postwar moment. Grandy examines these two popular cultural forms as a means of understanding the anxieties and ideology that shaped post-World War I British society. Thoughtful and clearly argued, her *Heroes and Happy Endings* is more of a story of continuity than change. The popular films and novels she selects for consideration and assessment reinscribe the image of the male breadwinner through tropes of the hero, villain, and love interest that the war had threatened to upend.

Popular culture in films and novels of the 1920s and 1930s projected a return to normalcy rather than an easy escape from the realities of daily life (10–12). The return home of maimed and injured men from the battlefield and the uncertainties of the postwar economy put pressure on prewar heterosexual gender norms. The characterization of Britain as a war-weary nation after World War I stands up when you look at popular entertainment. Wartime audiences had little desire to be reminded of the brutal realities of the Great War. On stage, postwar theater consisted of relatively lighthearted fare. Expressionist nightmares that exposed the realities of modern war in plays like *The Silver Tassie* (1929), which had a recent London revival, did not appeal to audiences during this period. As Grandy shows, this assessment applied to popular film and novels as well. The preponderance of comedy, drama,