

Ambroise-François Parnaland, a second camera operator employed by Doyen to film the operation, distributed illicit copies. Although Doyen was eventually vindicated in court, the damage had been done; the proximity of this film to the world of sideshow exhibitions crystallized a pre-existing suspicion about cinema held by many members of the medical community.

This film's complex history demonstrates how the tendency of medical images to drift into spaces and contexts neither envisioned nor sanctioned by their creators would come to haunt Doyen (and others). Along this line, Lefebvre also discusses a number of parodies of Doyen that demonstrate how scientific images provoke a range of associations among viewers from outside the profession. An instance of this associative drift is a wonderful 1902 newspaper cartoon depicting a gigantic Doyen performing surgery to create the Panama Canal, separating the "conjoined twins" of North and South America.

The book's other major achievement is how it situates Doyen's work between the history of medicine and cinema and media studies, which enriches both fields. Lefebvre points out that the issue of authorship, which cinema historians tend to see originating with the *film d'art* movement of the late 1900s, actually is present almost a decade earlier with Doyen's copyright lawsuit. He also uncovers fascinating evidence that women were prominent consumers of surgical films, supplementing previous information about how boxing matches afforded female spectators a measure of visual pleasure during the cinema's first decades.

*La Chair et le celluloïd*, appropriately, contains a multitude of outstanding images, ranging from finely reproduced black-and-white photographs to images of ephemera such as caricatures of Doyen and advertisements for his patent medicine. Hopefully, the book's private publication will not affect its circulation, since it deserves a wide audience among historians of medicine and media alike.

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**Kirstie Blair**, *Victorian poetry and the culture of the heart*, Oxford English Monographs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2006, pp. ix, 273, £50.00 (hardback 978-0-19-927394-2).

The cultural history of the heart and its diseases is a subject of growing historiographical relevance and research. This book represents an important and scholarly contribution to that historiography by shedding new light on the cultural meanings and languages of heart disease in Victorian literature. It begins by acknowledging the richness of the heart as a "vital literary image" (p. 4) since the medieval period. Much of the Victorian rhetoric of the heart as the repository of truth, authenticity and desire, Blair demonstrates, originates from this earlier time. Yet, in this detailed study of literature c.1800–c.1860, she identifies a "renewed concentration of interest in heart-centred imagery and, crucially, a shift in focus towards the pathological" (p. 6).

Blair roots this perceived shift in broader historiographical debates over the "rapid rise of physiological and medical explanations of bodily processes" in nineteenth-century medical culture (p. 2). There are some problems with this emphasis, partly because it is couched within a relatively outmoded narrative of progress in which a series of "great discoveries" gave medicine "ever more accurate diagnoses" of bodily processes (p. 17). Nevertheless, there is a notable increase in nineteenth-century medical treatises on the heart as an organ subject to a variety of pathologies, and this is where Blair begins her analysis of nineteenth-century poetic forms. Tracing links between literary and medical languages of the heart, she shows that, as concepts of heart disease grew more complex, traditional and figurative uses of the heart acquired medical implications. Conversely, "actual heart disease" became "read as a metaphor for cultural and social problems" (p. 2). Moreover, this was not purely a literary agenda: "both poets and doctors were engaged in a mutual exchange of ideas about the heart which helped to shape a 'culture of the heart' specific to Victorian Britain" (p. 18).

## Book Reviews

This analysis lends further weight to a growing body of material concerned with the links between the medical and the literary realms. In the diagnosis of disease, and in the language used to describe it, literary scholars and doctors participated in a shared system of meanings. By approaching heart disease through perceived conjunctions of the meta-physical and the literal, Blair incidentally raises pertinent questions about the relationship between feeling and representation. Of “heartache”, she asks, does the loss of love manifest itself in the breast because the metaphor of heartbreak has taken on some materiality, or does the metaphor itself stem from the bodily location of such pain?

Such philosophical speculations aside, this is primarily a literary work, explicitly focused on how writings on the heart were shaped, “in form and metre”, by broader cultural assumptions about the role of the organ (p. 3). As such, it provides invaluable insights into the narrative treatment of the heart by selected writers—most notably by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, and Alfred Tennyson. Yet the sophistication with which Blair tackles her subject means that what could have been a narrowly literary analysis also becomes an important reference point for historians of medicine, gender, religion and literature.

There are some points where I might disagree with Blair on detail, including her analysis of the feminization of heart disease throughout the nineteenth century, and the lack of specificity with which she addresses concepts of “functional” as opposed to “structural” disorders. There are also some question marks over Blair’s analysis of medical developments more generally. But these criticisms are outweighed by the strengths of the book. This is a rich and detailed analysis of the language of the heart and its disorders at a particular moment in Victorian literary history. As such, it is a well-written and learned book, which makes an important contribution to many aspects of nineteenth-century studies.

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**Solomon Posen,** *The doctor in literature. Vol. 1: Satisfaction or resentment?*, Oxford and Seattle, Radcliffe Publishing, 2005, pp. xv, 298, £29.95, \$55.00 (paperback 1-85755-609-6).

**Solomon Posen,** *The doctor in literature. Vol. 2: Private life*, Oxford and Seattle, Radcliffe Publishing, 2006, pp. xv, 298, £35.00, \$59.95 (paperback 1-85755-779-3).

Most medical schools now provide undergraduate modules on the eclectic discipline known as “medical humanities”, and there is a definite gap in the market for an engaging, rigorous textbook on the subject of medicine in literature. Unfortunately for Solomon Posen, *The doctor in literature* is not it.

Posen—a retired professor of general medicine at Sydney University—studied English before taking his medical degree, and has maintained an interest in literature throughout his career. In *The doctor in literature* he aims to expand on his series of articles on ‘The portrayal of the physician in non-medical literature’, published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* in the early 1990s. These volumes are conceived as a reference work, one which brings together “some 1500 passages from approximately 600 works of literature describing physicians, their attitudes and their activities” (vol. 1, p. 1). Most of these works are British or American in origin, and the majority were written in the last two centuries. The first volume examines literary representations of medical practice, and the second addresses the private lives of fictional physicians. A third volume, ‘Career choices’, is scheduled for publication later this year. Posen seeks to identify broad themes in literary portrayals of physicians, and in doing so to provide both “source material for courses in medical ethics and sociology” and a browsable volume for the general reader (vol. 1, p. 3).

In this sense, *The doctor in literature* follows a familiar strand of antiquarianism in the history of western medicine, one which seeks to draw guidance for modern medical practice