



Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals

Commodities in Context

Kathryn Ledbetter, Texas State University, USA

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This is the first book-length study of Tennyson's record of publication in Victorian periodicals. Despite Tennyson's supposed hostility to periodicals, Ledbetter shows that he made a career-long habit of contributing to them and in the process revealed not only his willingness to promote his career but also his status as a highly valued commodity. Tennyson published more than sixty poems in serial publications, from his debut as a Cambridge prize-winning poet with "Timbuctoo" in the Cambridge Chronicle and Journal to his last public composition as Poet Laureate with "The Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale" in *The Nineteenth Century*. In addition, poems such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade" were shaped by his reading of newspapers.

Ledbetter explores the ironies and tensions created by Tennyson's attitudes toward publishing in Victorian periodicals and the undeniable benefits to his career. She situates the poet in an interdependent commodity relationship with periodicals, viewing his individual poems as textual modules embedded in a page of meaning inscribed by the periodical's history, the poet's relationship with the periodical's readers, an image sharing the page whether or not related to the poem, and cultural contexts that create new meanings for Tennyson's work. Her book enriches not only our understanding of Tennyson's relationship to periodical culture but the textual implications of a poem's relationship with other texts on a periodical page and the meanings available to specific groups of readers targeted by individual periodicals.

Contents

Introduction; Those 'vapid' gift books; Resistance and commodification: 'indecent exposure' in the periodicals; War scares and patriot-soldiers: political poetry; 'God Save the Queen': laureatic responses; Transatlantic connections; Appendices; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

Kathryn Ledbetter is Associate Professor of English at Texas State University, San Marcos, USA. She and Terence Hoagwood are co-authors of "Colour'd Shadows": Contexts in Publishing, Printing, and Reading Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers (2005).

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