

INTRODUCTION



Michael Field

Decadent Moderns

SARAH PARKER AND ANA PAREJO VADILLO

And so closes the Victorian epoch.—It is an epoch already yesterday: it is for us, England's living, & yet unspent poets to make all things new. We are for the morning—the nineteenth century thinks it has no poets—nothing to lose—verily it has nothing: for we are not of it—we shake the dust of our feet from it, & pass on into the 20th century.

—Michael Field, “Works and Days” (October 12, 1892)

I ~~still~~ do not yet realise where modernity is taking me; I am moving with it as if down a stream, not using it enough for ~~as a~~ motive force like a ~~mill-wheel~~ water fall turning a mill. But I do not get frightened—I maintain a resolute patience. I cannot ~~yet~~ define my position to Law & Anarchy—though I am certain that we are doing an unnatural & destructive thing if you allow the claims of others to mar the freedom of self-realisation as the central need of our lives—& the condition of happiness.

—Michael Field, “Works and Days” (December 31, 1893)

THE TWO ENTRIES THAT SERVE HERE AS EPIGRAPHS—the first by Katharine Bradley, the second by her beloved niece and life partner Edith Cooper, with whom she wrote and published under the pseudonym “Michael Field”—are taken from the poets’ unpublished joint diary “Works and Days” in 1892 and 1893, respectively. Bradley writes following the funeral of Alfred, Lord Tennyson—a symbolic death for Victorian poetry. But as her diary account suggests, Bradley did not identify as a “Victorian poet” herself. Neither did Cooper. For as we see in the second quotation, written after seeing Ibsen’s play *The Master Builder*, Cooper felt at one with modernity, embracing its possibilities and its perils. This is indeed the very definition of modernity in our own time, if we are to accept Marshall Berman’s influential discussion of modernity in industrial capitalist societies. And it is worth noting that his definition was deeply influenced by the decadent philosophy and writing of the European fin de siècle, from Charles Baudelaire and Walter Pater to Karl Marx and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.¹

But Cooper’s conundrum with regard to individualism pertains also to the question of modern selfhood. How, Cooper wonders, do self-realization and happiness happen when in a partnership? What is the limit of individuality in the context of the social and communal? In her insightful analysis of modern social relations at the turn of the century, Regenia Gagnier suggests that new models of society were stimulated at the fin de siècle by what she calls “individuals-in-relation,” a concept that recognizes “that people are both socially constituted and individually unique.”² Michael Field, like other social dissidents of this period (socialists, New Women, anarchists), found in their very “unnatural” partnership a form of social experimentation, whose limits in terms of “Law” and “Anarchy” Bradley and Cooper felt in their own skins because it was so often directed publicly toward their collaborative writings, which made them vulnerable at times to the point of social ostracism.

Perhaps for this reason the poets viewed themselves as outmoded, altogether out of time, and belonging to the future. Bradley and Cooper found models of partnership and inspiration in the past. Yet, even as they tried to create new literatures that combined historical themes and aesthetics with their own contemporaneity, they were aware that their readers were in the future. Bradley once noted, “It is we who bring the harmonies, not time.”³ This may seem paradoxical, but there are many paradoxes that characterize the modern life of Bradley and Cooper and that encapsulate their oeuvre as a whole. It also makes impossible a unified reading of Michael Field’s works, and this is the reason why their writings attract a stunning range of scholarly approaches. The poets were prolific—publishing more than thirty-three books of poetry and

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verse drama during their lifetime and under different names—yet their works were frequently critically disparaged and eventually neglected, even by their closest friends. They were poets, with markedly different personalities, composing separate poems and eventually almost entirely separate works—yet they were also one, operating defiantly under the aegis of “Michael Field” even when this identity was revealed to be a collaboration.

They were obviously female and feminine (at the cutting edge of dissident fashion, while favoring elegant hats and gowns)—yet their use of a male pseudonym and their circle of predominantly male friends and mentors marked their allegiance with masculinity. Their lives and works are suffused with homoerotic desire and their union was also incestuous—yet they were often viewed by their contemporaries (and posthumous biographers) as a pair of sexless spinsters. They themselves spoke of belonging to a group of celibates (Charles Ricketts, Charles Shannon, and Thomas Sturge Moore), but their sensual relationships to men and women are closer to what we would today call polyamory. They talked of their writing as “queer.”⁴ And if their friend Mary Costelloe disparaged them, she also described them as “poets like Dante and Ariosto and Tasso.”⁵ Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Renaissance, modernist: they were both too antique and too modern—yet the criticism of the early twentieth century viewed them as stuffy, hopelessly fin-de-siècle, a product of enervated decadence.

Rather than playing down these contradictions, paradoxes, and complexities, *Michael Field: Decadent Moderns* seeks to elucidate them and expand on them by exploring the qualities that make Michael Field such an experimental and unique writer both within their own time and our own—indeed what made them distinctly modern. The focus of this book is interdisciplinary, highlighting Michael Field’s energetic engagements with a range of fields: ecology, perfume, tourism, art history, sculpture, formalism, Classics, and book history, among others. For Michael Field’s partnership functioned as a workshop in which they sought to collaborate with different groups of artists and intellectuals; their aims in some fashion closer to the all-encompassing power of a Renaissance artist. This book examines the breadth of Michael Field’s writing, extending into the twentieth century. In doing so, *Michael Field: Decadent Moderns* aims to highlight the modernity, radicalism, and relevance of their work, for their modernity—with all its complexities—mirrors our own modernity.

“Biography” of “Michael Field”

We can reconfigure “Michael Field’s biography” through the various domestic environments the women lived in and the communal utopian life of letters they

created for themselves, which evolved from traditional notions of Victorian domesticity to the radical community of two that “Michael Field” represented. For once, Oscar Wilde perhaps was wrong in suggesting “be yourself, everyone else is taken,” for Bradley and Cooper excelled in the mythmaking of creating and recreating their very individualities and poetic personalities. Katharine Harris Bradley was born in 1846 in Digbeth, Birmingham. Her father, Charles Bradley, was a tobacco manufacturer who died when she was two years old. She had one older sister, Emma Harris Bradley, her senior by eleven years. Since her sister was frail and often in poor health, Bradley and her mother (also Emma Harris Bradley) moved to Kenilworth to live with Emma and her husband, James Robert Cooper. In 1862, Emma gave birth to a daughter, Edith Emma Cooper. As Emma Donoghue writes, “[T]aking her niece into her arms, Katherine [sic] burst into tears, but she could have had no idea that this tiny creature, christened Edith, would eventually become the love of her life.”⁶ Two years later, Emma gave birth to a second daughter, Amy. This difficult birth rendered her a permanent invalid, and Bradley became increasingly attached to Edith, taking over the role of mother, aunt, teacher, and educator.

In 1868, Bradley’s own mother died, and she embarked on a trip to Paris to study languages and literature at the Collège de France. During this pivotal trip, she fell in love with her friend’s brother, Alfred Gérente. Gérente died suddenly shortly after their meeting, a devastating loss that for Bradley seemed to confirm her destiny as a spinster. On returning to England, Bradley continued her education at Newnham College in 1874 and began to compose the poems that would be published as *The New Minnesinger and Other Poems* (1875). As she later reflected, “I came to Newnham empty-headed, with vague ambition, vague sentiment—the pulpy lyrics of the N.M. in my brain.”⁷ These poems were published under the pseudonym of “Arran Leigh,” which critics agree is a reference to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s earlier *Aurora Leigh* (1856). However, this pseudonym also contains an edge of gender ambiguity that foreshadows “Michael Field.” Like Barrett Browning’s poem, the poems of *The New Minnesinger* asserted women’s right to claim their place as poets and singers. Indeed, the “Minnesinger” is a term for a German singer or troubadour of courtly love lyrics, a role that Bradley defiantly claims for the woman poet.

As Marion Thain and Ana Parejo Vadillo note, “It is no accident that Bradley’s introductory poem to *The New Minnesinger* is ‘To E.C.’”⁸ As the 1870s progressed, and Edith Cooper entered her teenage years, she and her aunt Bradley grew ever closer, artistically and romantically. In 1879, the whole family moved to Bristol, and Bradley and Cooper attended classes at University College, Bristol, in subjects such as classics and philosophy that would ultimately inform their

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poetic works. They were becoming scholars and poets. As their early biographer Mary Sturgeon writes, during this period the poets were noticeably “aesthetic”; they “joined the debating society of the college and plunged into the questions of the moment,” including vivisection and women’s rights, and both women “wore wonderful flowing garments in ‘art’ colours, and dressed their hair in a loose knot at the nape of the neck.”⁹ During this time, they also developed an interest in pagan religion, eschewing the conventions of Christianity in favor of freedom and nature worship, expressed through their construction of Bacchic altars and pagan rituals, later described in their diaries. Foreshadowing their later striking religious transitions, Bradley had angered her early mentor John Ruskin in December 1877 by declaring that the acquisition of a terrier had converted her from Christianity to paganism. An enraged Ruskin responded, “[T]hat you should be such a fool as coolly to write to me that you had ceased to believe in God—and had found some comfort in a dog—this is deadly.”¹⁰ While Bradley’s original letter may have been partly flippant in tone, dogs did indeed play a pivotal role in their belief systems, with the later death of their beloved Whym Chow precipitating a Catholic conversion in 1907.

Living and studying together in Bristol, Bradley and Cooper began to develop their creative collaboration. Their first collaborative work was entitled *Bel-lerophôn* (1881). This work was a historical closet drama, inspired by an eponymous Greek hero. The volume concluded with poems, also on Greek subjects. As Ana Parejo Vadillo shows in the present volume, this initial experiment in collaboration was the product of studying sculpture at the British Museum. It was published under “Arran and Isla Leigh,” a gender-ambiguous pseudonym that, as Yopie Prins observes, suggests “various possible relationships . . . a pair of siblings, a parent and child, a married couple.”¹¹ These relationships, and a variety of others, structured the collaborative dynamic between Bradley and Cooper. As Bradley later explained to John Gray, “To me a relation is like this. / lover & loved / mother & child / server & served.”¹² In their relationship, Bradley and Cooper played a variety of roles, often shared between them. But their relationship was not without opposition. Letters from 1885 suggest that Cooper’s mother had reservations about their increasing closeness. For example, Bradley writes to Cooper, “Mother must have a heart of stone if after this she keeps you from me.”¹³ Cooper replies, reassuring but pleading for more time to placate her parents, “I will come & heaven favouring, we will indeed be happy. . . . But wait a little for dear little Pussie’s sake. She is getting better & parents want her to have a full week at Weston now the lovely weather is here. Let her have this.”¹⁴ Bradley’s tone in these letters becomes increasingly frustrated: “Tell Mother she is a real scamp. . . . Tell her to beware: her hand is on the lion’s mane.”¹⁵ The

tensions are articulated in the women's correspondence for the 1880s that was made available by Sharon Bickle in her groundbreaking edition of the letters in *The Fowl and the Pussycat* (2008). The women's relationship in this earlier period is explored by Kate Thomas's essay in the present volume, in which she shows how nature becomes a symbol for their intergenerational, incestuous love.

Bellerophôn was not well received. In a negative review in the *Academy*, the reviewer complained that the poets were too Greek and too clever.¹⁶ But the extraordinary *Bellerophôn* was the pillar on which they constructed their vision for the collaborative poetics that would become Michael Field. Critical success came in 1884 with another Greek book, their verse drama *Callirhoë*. This play occupies a unique place in the Field oeuvre as the first literary work published under the "Michael Field" pseudonym. It was well received by critics, many of whom compared this new "male" playwright to Shakespeare. For example, T. W. Higginson suggested that Michael Field be awarded the title of poet laureate on the strength of this play.¹⁷ Many readers assumed that Michael Field was a man, with writers such as A. Mary F. Robinson and Oscar Wilde writing admiring letters to "Michael Field Esqre." The sexologist Havelock Ellis tried to guess the gender of the author. The press was also onto the pseudonym: a review in the *Athenæum* (July 5, 1884) revealed that the author was a "she."¹⁸ The following month, in his review for *To-Day*, L. O. Streeter (pseudonym of George Bernard Shaw) noted that "Michael Field" was a "woman" and that some of the scenes in *Callirhoë* could only have been written by a woman.¹⁹ Robert Browning was involved in these speculations and eventually became an influential supporter of the women. As he wrote to Cooper in admiration after receiving a copy of *Callirhoë* and *Fair Rosamund*, bound together, "[I]t is long since I have been so thoroughly impressed by indubitable poetic genius,—a word I consider while I write, only to repeat it, 'genius.'"²⁰ The women finally confessed their joint and female authorship to him. Cooper explained their method of collaboration:

My Aunt & I work together after the fashion of Beaumont & Fletcher. She is my senior by but 15 yrs. She has lived with me, taught me, encouraged me & joined me to her poetic life. . . . Some of the scenes in our plays are like mosaic work—the mingled, various product of our two brains. . . . This happy union of two in work & aspiration is sheltered & expressed by "Michael Field." Please regard him as the author.²¹

But despite such instructions, Browning eventually gave the secret of Michael Field's joint and female authorship away. Bradley expressed her anxieties that this would affect the reception of their work:

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[I]t is said *The Athenaeum* was taught by you to use the feminine pronoun. . . . I write to you to beg you to set the critics on the wrong track . . . the report of lady-authorship will dwarf & enfeeble our work at every turn. . . . We have many things to say the world will not tolerate from a woman's lips. We must be free as dramatists to work out in the open air of nature—exposed to her vicissitudes, witnessing her terrors: we cannot be stifled in drawing-room conventionalities.²²

In hindsight, it is surprising that Bradley was more worried about the feminine pronoun than about the composite nature of their authorship. It is difficult to determine how far this revelation of female authorship affected the reception of their work. As Holly Laird and Jill R. Ehnenn have shown, Bradley and Cooper had as much to fear from prejudice against joint authorship—collaboration unseating the model of lone genius—as from that against female authorship. While joint authorship in drama was not too unusual, joint lyric female authorship was troubling, this genre being associated even more with lone male consciousness and the expression of inward feeling (partly due to the legacy of Romanticism). Michael Field's authorship thus combined a number of elements disturbing and difficult to explain to Victorian readers.

In April 1888, the Cooper family, along with Bradley, moved to Reigate, Surrey. This placed the women nearer to London, facilitating networking with publishers such as John Lane and providing better access to the British Library and National Gallery. At this same moment, Bradley and Cooper began their joint diary, later entitled "Works and Days." This diary eventually extended to twenty-eight volumes, covering the years 1888 to September 1914—the last entry was written four days before Bradley's death. The early volumes of the diary chart their poetic success.

In 1889, Bradley and Cooper published *Long Ago*, the first volume of lyric poems under the Michael Field pseudonym. This volume was inspired by Henry Thornton Wharton's 1885 translations of the fragments of the ancient Greek poet Sappho, along with "selected renderings" by other poets. Michael Field took Sappho's suggestive and oblique fragments and composed their own poems around them, combining their collaborative lyric voice with Sappho's to enter the poetic field.²³ How much this volume owes to their first collaboration, *Bellerophon*, we are only beginning to appreciate today. *Long Ago* attracted critical praise, being the first volume by Michael Field that sold out. In the *Academy*, John Miller Gray wrote:

From the first her [Michael Field's] work has been informed with intensity and passion, has evinced sufficient native force

and freshness to assure its reader that a new and original poetic personality has grasped the pen. . . . [T]he present book will take a permanent place in our English literature, as one of the most exquisite lyrical productions of the latter half of the nineteenth century.²⁴

Gray's words "intensity" and "passion" immediately located Michael Field within a very particular group of writers and intellectuals. Those words echo Walter Pater's controversial 1873 collection of essays, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Pater, who was sent the volume by the women, very much enjoyed the work and asked to meet the "author," whom he suspected to be a "woman."²⁵ Pater would prefer their lyrical poetry to their lyrical dramas, and in this subtle but key difference lies Michael Field's fracture with the most prominent decadent writers of the period. Drama was for Michael Field the writing of the future, but Pater and others thought poetic drama was, despite its Romantic origins, a dead genre, not the live thing that Michael Field believed it to be.²⁶

Michael Field's next work, their poetic drama *The Tragic Mary* (1890), attracted some enthusiastic contemporary reception, but it marked a new turn in the response to Michael Field's work, with some bad reviews. This retelling of the life of Mary, Queen of Scots, whose story fascinated many Victorian writers, poets, and dramatists, demonstrates Michael Field's distinctive approach to historiographical reinterpretation: depicting Mary as a feminist heroine. In addition to its content, *The Tragic Mary* was admired for its appearance. Sixty copies were commissioned of a fine edition, with a cover by the artist and designer Selwyn Image. This beautiful thistle design led the volume to become celebrated as an aesthetic object, with Wilde declaring it one of the "two beautiful books (in appearance) of the century," alongside Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poems.²⁷ Many of Michael Field's books were designed with painstaking care and detail—from the white vellum of *Long Ago*, embossed with a cameo of Sappho, to the russet suede of *Whym Chow, Flame of Love*. Michael Field's role as a "book sculptor" is discussed in Vadillo's essay in this volume.

A few months after the publication of *Long Ago*, Cooper's mother (and Bradley's sister) died of cancer. This left the women free to travel and pursue their aesthetic ambitions. In June 1890, they embarked on their first European trip, arriving first in Paris. In the Louvre, they met the art historian and critic Bernard Berenson. He quickly became an influential mentor (Browning had died in 1889 and, as Margaret D. Stetz explains in this volume, Bradley and Cooper were constantly on the hunt for male mentor figures to admire and worship). During this pivotal trip, they toured the galleries of Europe, gathering

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notes for the volume that became *Sight and Song* (1892). This volume exhibited the influence of Berenson and Pater in its emphasis on artistic impressions, although Michael Field sought to capture “what chosen pictures sing in themselves” through their ekphrastic translations of paint into song.²⁸ This volume received mixed reviews; W. B. Yeats compared it unfavorably to their earlier works, writing that it was an “unmitigated guide-book”: “‘Sight and Song,’ following as it does ‘The Tragic Mary,’ is enough to make us turn our eyes forever from the ‘false dawn’ we believed to be the coming day.”²⁹

These early European tours were significant for other reasons, too. While in Germany in August 1891, Cooper contracted scarlet fever. Recovering in a Dresden hospital, with her hair clipped short, Cooper was reborn as “Heinrich”: “She looks very pretty in her short boy’s hair & fresh cotton jacket.”³⁰ As Martha Vicinus has argued, the figure of the boy was one of identification and desire for Michael Field and other fin-de-siècle women writers: “his protean nature displayed a double desire—to love a boy and to be a boy.”³¹ During this period, these associations also became concentrated in the figure of the young Berenson. For Cooper, Berenson was a faun with whom she both identified and whom she desired. As Vicinus has argued, intimacy with Berenson brought complications and tensions to the Field partnership. As the 1890s progressed, Bradley and Cooper’s friendship with Berenson and his partner Mary Costelloe, also an art historian, became increasingly intimate. Indeed, as Sarah Parker has suggested, both Bradley and Cooper found rich poetic inspiration in this young art historian—and his lover Costelloe—a passion that is expressed in poems found in their volume *Underneath the Bough* (1893).³²

Underneath the Bough can be read alongside the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (translated by Edward FitzGerald in 1859) as well as Elizabethan-inflected sequences of love lyrics and the Biblical “Song of Songs.” This volume is suffused with various semiautobiographical narratives—the death of Cooper’s mother, the threat of Cooper’s illness, their unrequited passion for Berenson. The poet Augusta Webster, in her unsigned review for the *Athenæum*, noted that

The two great thoughts, Death and Love—with Sorrow for the inner name of both—are in fact almost the sole inspirations of the whole, but there is no monotony. . . . A peculiarity of these poems is that while they are of antique mould, ancestral not merely in form but in expression, they are in feeling distinctively modern.³³

This is the sense that several chapters in this volume emphasize. Critics have frequently observed that Michael Field’s work is often paradoxically both forward and backward looking. As Joseph Bristow remarks in the present volume,

nowhere is this more apparent than in their dramas, which, through their Elizabethan blank verse and strikingly modern subject matter, exhibit a “double temporality . . . at once antiquated and avant-garde.”³⁴ In 1893, the first and only performance of their plays during their lifetime took place. On October 27, 1893, *A Question of Memory* was performed at the Independent Theatre Society.³⁵ The next day, the poets awoke to critical derision:

It seems more natural to be dead than alive. We wake to the surprise of finding every morning paper against us. . . . Not a flower had any one sent us yesterday, not a flower was given to us. No word, no letter, no visit, only the execrations of the Press! . . . We are hated as Shelley was hated by our countrymen blindly, ravenously.³⁶

Nonetheless, they persisted with drama, and it was their drama that would attract modernist experimental dramatists in the twentieth century. As discussed by Bristow in this volume, Bradley and Cooper hoped that *Attila, My Attila!* (1895) would prove more of a success, though this was not to be.

The negative response they received from Costelloe and Berenson caused a break in their friendship. To an extent, though, Michael Field had simply replaced one collaborating couple with another. From early 1894, Bradley and Cooper had developed a close friendship with Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon—a pair of artists, designers, and aesthetes who were also, like themselves, a collaborating homosexual couple. This friendship fostered aesthetic collaborations between the couples, such as the Roman Trilogy—three plays by Michael Field (*World at Auction*, 1898, *The Race of Leaves*, 1901, and *Julia Domna*, 1903) with covers designed by Ricketts and jewelry designed by Ricketts for the women.³⁷

The year 1897 was particularly difficult, as Cooper’s father James died while mountaineering. Bradley and Cooper comforted themselves by acquiring a chow dog that they named Whym Chow after the explorer Edward Whymper, who had led the search for Cooper’s father. In 1899, at the encouragement of Ricketts, Bradley and Cooper moved to 1, The Paragon, in Richmond, London. This was the first time they had lived together alone, without the interference of family members. This home became a work of art in its own right, as their early biographer Mary Sturgeon records:

Their rooms were not less flawless than their poems. . . . The silvery clear lithographs of their friend, Mr C. H. Shannon, were hung all together in a cool northern room. . . . [I]n another room the golden grain of the walls, alike with the Persian plates that glowed on the table as if they were rich, large petals, seemed to find

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their reason for being there in the two deeply and subtly coloured pictures by Mr Charles Ricketts on the walls. But always there was the same feeling of inevitable choice and unity everywhere; in a jewelled pendant that lay on a satinwood table, in the opal bowl of pot-pourri nearby on which an opal shell lay lightly.³⁸

As the century drew to a close and the new century began, Bradley and Cooper concentrated on their verse drama, including the Cornwall-set masque *Noontide Branches* (1899), discussed by Alex Murray in this volume; the Roman Trilogy; and *Borgia* (1905), which was published anonymously. As Donoghue notes, this “simple trick worked on the critics brilliantly. *Borgia* . . . though one of their worst plays, was the first for many years to get reviews, and a few good ones at that.”³⁹

In 1906, disaster struck. Their beloved dog Whym Chow died of meningitis. The devastating and transformative effect of this on both Bradley and Cooper cannot be overstated. Cooper wrote, “Today I have had the worst loss of my life—yes, worse than that of beloved Mother or tragic father. . . . My Whym Chow, my little Chow-Chow, my Flame of Love is dead.”⁴⁰ For Whym Chow was metaphorically and poetically both their muse and their child. Their bereavement ultimately led to both women’s conversion to Catholicism in 1907. However, Bradley and Cooper were by no means unique in turning from Pagan decadence to Roman Catholicism during this period. As Ellis Hanson and other critics have shown, many aesthetes converted to Catholicism in the years following the Wilde trials of 1895, including Wilde himself, Marc-André Raffalovich, Ernest Dowson, and John Gray. The latter—an erstwhile decadent poet and rumored inspiration for Dorian Gray—even became Cooper’s priest. Indeed, as Ruth Vanita notes, with the conversion to Catholicism, the content of Michael Field’s work did not alter substantially.⁴¹ Instead, they had simply found a slightly different set of tropes through which to express their desire for one another. A key volume that captures this gradual transformation is *Wild Honey from Various Thyme* (1908), which crosses the Christian and Pagan divide with poems combining imagery of Christ and Dionysus. This volume expresses the complex dualities of Michael Field’s career—looking back to their Bacchic worship and forward to Catholic devotion.

One of the reasons behind Bradley and Cooper’s Catholic conversion is that they hoped, through doing so, to be together in the afterlife. Thus, their newfound religious beliefs provided some comfort when Cooper was diagnosed with bowel cancer in February 1911. Despite being in considerable pain, Cooper managed to write Catholic poems that were published as *Poems of Adoration* (1912). Bradley published her own volume of religious poems, *Mystic Trees* (1913). These works are discussed by Jill R. Ehnenn and Leire Barrera-Medrano in this

volume. On December 13, 1913, Cooper died. Bradley had secretly been suffering from cancer herself. She managed to prepare and publish a volume of poems devoted to their beloved dog, *Whym Chow: Flame of Love* (composed mostly by Cooper in 1906 but published in 1914) and a volume of Cooper's poems, *Dedicated: An Early Work of Michael Field* (mostly composed in 1900, published in 1914). Bradley died just under a year after her beloved partner, on September 26, 1914.

Critical Reception: Twentieth Century to the Present

During their lifetime, Michael Field's poetry and drama received an increasingly mixed reception. Bradley and Cooper began to feel that their works would never be critically appreciated. As Cooper wrote despairingly in 1893, "We are desperately alone in a world that shuns us. . . . We are boycotted in the papers, by the men, . . . & by even literary society."⁴² Some of Michael Field's contemporaries recognized that although their works might be derided in the present, they would be appreciated in the future. As George Meredith reassured them in 1899, "[Y]our noble stand for pure poetic literature will have its reward, but evidently you will have to wait."⁴³ During their lifetime, Michael Field's fame was often linked to the rise and fall of decadence. For example, "Michael Field," claimed the *Academy* in 1898, "are two clever ladies, but they will not do much until they get . . . out of this hothouse of decadent chronicle."⁴⁴ But this is ironic given that Bradley and Cooper had a markedly ambivalent relationship to decadence. For example, they refused to contribute to *The Yellow Book*, writing, "The best one can say of any tale or any illustration [in *The Yellow Book*] is that it is clever—the worst one can [say] is that it is damnable."⁴⁵ They requested that Henry Harland return the manuscript of their poem "Rhythm," concluding triumphantly, "This means a break forever with the hated Bodley Head—it is like a noisome dragon dropping from one dead."⁴⁶

But in spite of such ambivalence, their association with the 1890s did not help when this period of decadence fell out of favor in the early twentieth century, becoming reconfigured as an epoch of enervation and degeneration—Yeats's twilight generation—in comparison with the new energies of literary modernity. For one can only be modern in the rejection of the most recent past. For example, one twentieth-century reviewer wrote that within Michael Field's diaries, "The nineties pour forth their dead finery and dusky fragrance."⁴⁷ The 1916 *Cambridge History of English Literature* was even more dismissive, comparing their work to the "machine-made verse which usually comes late in great periods of poetry."⁴⁸ Though poets such as Margaret Sackville (1910) saw in Michael Field's poetry the foundational aesthetics of modernity—"Michael Field's is one of the strongest women's voices of the present day . . . it is of to-day in spirit and

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expression"—by the time of the women's death, modernism had buried deep Michael Field's experimental writing, both lyric and dramatic.⁴⁹

Even the gargantuan efforts of their friend, the poet Thomas Sturge Moore, until well into the 1930s failed to ignite interest in the poets. He brought to print a number of Michael Field's poems (*A Selection from the Poems of Michael Field*, 1923) and unpublished verse dramas, and perhaps more importantly, published his selections from the women's multivolume diary, *Works and Days: From the Journal of Michael Field* (1933).⁵⁰ He was part of a number of modernist circles (Yeats was a close friend), but these posthumous publications were received more as a reminder of a Victorian past than as indicative of the radical experimentation with which critics are finally beginning to connect Michael Field. Robert Lynd, for example, entitled his 1933 review of the women's diary "Eminent Victorians through the Eyes of Two Women"—managing in one phrase both to consign Bradley and Cooper to the dusty past *and* to suggest that their words are merely a conduit to more "eminent" (male) Victorians.⁵¹

For the bulk of the twentieth century, Michael Field remained mostly forgotten. Nonetheless, biographers and critics continued to work to recover Bradley and Cooper's texts and personal history, contributing studies that remain useful to Michael Field scholars today. In 1930, a new volume of verse, *The Wattlefold*, based on the unpublished later poetry of Michael Field, post Catholic conversion, was published (edited by Emily C. Fortey, with preface by Vincent McNabb, Bradley's priest). Mary Sturgeon published the first full-length biography of Michael Field in 1921. In the 1960s, Ursula Bridge also worked on a biography of Michael Field that has remained unpublished but proved useful to scholars in discovering this unusual writer.⁵² By the 1970s, a number of scholars were rediscovering Michael Field and discussing their work from different critical and methodological perspectives. For example, Henri Locard (1979) considered the significance of their life writing; Kenneth R. Ireland wrote one of the earliest journal articles on poetry and painting in *Sight and Song* (1977); and Jan McDonald considered the drama *A Question of Memory* (1975).⁵³ In 1981, Lillian Faderman included Michael Field in her path-forging study of female romantic friendship, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, opening up future studies that considered Bradley and Cooper's life and work in light of gender, sexuality, and queer theory.

As with the fin-de-siècle period in general, the 1990s saw an intensifying of interest in Michael Field. Motivated by an urgent need to revise the masculinist conceptions of Victorian poetics, critics such as Isobel Armstrong, Virginia Blain, Joseph Bristow, Holly Laird, Angela Leighton, Yopie Prins, Martha Vicinus, and Chris White recovered Michael Field's poetry for nineteenth-century

studies. In their different ways, each of these critics highlighted Bradley and Cooper's innovative experiments with lyric voice, interrogating their multivocality, their complex expressions of sexual and gendered identities, their entangled relationship to earlier poetic traditions (of the poetess, ekphrasis, the love lyric, the poetic drama), and their deft manipulations of form and meter.⁵⁴ *Long Ago* (1889) attracted particular interest during this period of criticism, both for its negotiations of sexuality (including Sappho's rumored lesbianism) and its use of polyvocal lyric voice. Holly Laird (1995, 2000), Virginia Blain (1996), and Yopie Prins (1999) took up different but equally influential positions on questions of unity and dissonance within the "Michael Field" pseudonym, as focused through their collaboration with Sappho. Meanwhile, in 1995, Ian Small and R. K. R. Thornton issued a reprint of *Sight and Song* and *Underneath the Bough*, making these volumes accessible for a new scholarly audience. In addition, Michael Field's poems were increasingly included in anthologies, such as Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds's *Victorian Women Poets* (1995) and Virginia Blain's *Victorian Women Poets: An Annotated Anthology* (2001).

Simultaneously, a fascination with the collaborative nature of Michael Field's authorship and their sexual relationship meant that biographical studies of the women began to appear, feeding into larger questions of nineteenth-century women's lives and the sexual politics of the period. One of the first key publications was Emma Donoghue's brief and informative biography, *We Are Michael Field* (1998), which was published in the same year as Ivor C. Treby's *Michael Field Catalogue: A Book of Lists*, the most comprehensive bibliography of Michael Field's writings to date. Critical essays on the women's poetry continued to grow, as a number of unpublished writings by Michael Field were brought to print by Treby.⁵⁵ As a result of this scholarship, Michael Field has emerged as one of the most fascinating writers of the fin de siècle.

Following the groundbreaking revisionist scholarship of the 1990s, the last twenty years have seen a major resurgence in work on Michael Field, which has coexisted with (and further ignited) the galvanized interest in fin-de-siècle studies today, fueled by our own twenty-first-century decadent moment. The first-ever conference on Michael Field—"Michael Field and Their World"—was organized by Margaret D. Stetz and Mark Samuels Lasner and was held at the University of Delaware in 2004. It confirmed that this resurgence during the first decade of the twenty-first century had opened up multiple avenues of scholarship for critics interested in Michael Field, including discussions of the pseudonym and constructions of authorship, considerations of ekphrasis in *Sight and Song*, and reassessment of the Catholic poetry and of Bradley and Cooper's various literary networks, among other varied topics. This diversity is captured

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in the conference proceedings published in 2007 by Riverdale Press (*Michael Field and Their World*, edited by Margaret D. Stetz and Cheryl Wilson). The proceedings were published the same year as the first modern scholarly monograph on Michael Field's poetry, Marion Thain's "*Michael Field*": *Poetry, Aestheticism, and the Fin de Siècle* (2007). These two significant publications were soon followed by Sharon Bickle's edition of the women's love letters, *The Fowl and the Pussycat: Love Letters of Michael Field, 1876–1909* (2008), and the first scholarly anthology of Michael Field, *Michael Field, The Poet: Published and Unpublished Manuscript Materials* (2009), coedited by Marion Thain and Ana Parejo Vadillo. The same year, the *Michaelian* journal was founded, which though short lived was helpful in providing a forum for new work on the poets.⁵⁶ These publications have effectively consolidated studies on Michael Field, confirming Bradley and Cooper's own belief that their work would not be appreciated until sometime in the distant future. Finally, with the rise of social media and new technologies, Michael Field's "outmodedness" has allowed a fluid, global engagement with the works, which is both playful and political. Thain has written about the digitization of their manuscript diaries, and Rob Gallagher and Ana Parejo Vadillo have explored the possibilities of creating experimental editions via GIFs and HIVE.⁵⁷ Digitally speaking, their time is now.

Michael Field: Decadent Moderns

Michael Field: Decadent Moderns brings about a major shift in the direction of Michael Field's research by focusing on Michael Field's decadent modernity seen through the eyes of a number of scholars who write expertly about the different parts of the women's history and their writing. One of the unique characteristics of their work is that their poetry and dramas were always thoroughly researched, exhibiting a phenomenal amount of knowledge of all kinds of literature and arts and of all periods, from Greek, Roman, and Renaissance writings to the most up-to-date critical study of the subjects that interested them. Equally, with the rise of modern interdisciplinary criticism alongside the new formalism, Michael Field's writings have begun to be opened up to reveal the complex world their poetics created, whose fabric (aesthetic, politic, formal) was the literatures, arts, and criticisms of the past.

Michael Field used the metaphor of the mosaic to speak about their collaboration. *Michael Field: Decadent Moderns* is also an exercise in mosaic composition and presents us with a complex poet whose writings were deeply embedded in a number of disciplines. The scholarly nature of their work and the range of their publications in different fields require the vision and the disciplinarity of different types of scholars and scholarship. This book offers analysis and

discussions on previously unexplored writings, encompassing interdisciplinary perspectives relating to poetry, verse drama, theatre studies, ecology, travel writing, disability, art history, women's and gender studies, queer studies, material culture, and cosmopolitanism. In doing so, this volume highlights the variety and significance of Michael Field's work, moving beyond a focus on the nineteenth century and poetry to encompass the full range of Bradley and Cooper's oeuvre and to place them in the context of twentieth-century modernity, as well as that of fin-de-siècle aestheticism and decadence.

Michael Field: Decadent Moderns elucidates and opens up Michael Field's radical decadent modernity for the first time by amplifying the concept of decadent poetics (key to the revisionist work carried out in the 1990s and 2000s) to include other genres (autobiographical writing, prose, and verse dramas) and artistic manifestations (art history, sculpture, book art). This book pays particular attention to Michael Field's writings before 1884 and after 1900, aligning them with modernist aesthetic transformations and reconfiguring Michael Field as an experimental writer. Our collection therefore also contributes to the current significant turn in modernist studies that emphasizes continuities rather than breaks with fin-de-siècle decadence, while also producing new lines of inquiry into what it means to be modern.⁵⁸

The chapters in this collection highlight Michael Field as an intellectual writer whose importance can be gauged by the diversity and productivity of their engagement with various literary forms and ideas, reconnecting Michael Field's modernity in their time with ours. The chapters are arranged to be roughly chronological, alighting on key moments in Michael Field's complex and varied oeuvre. However, in a manner appropriate to Michael Field's own experiments with time and chronology—what Kate Thomas refers to as their “ébullient deconstruction of chrononormativity”⁵⁹—one can trace multiple connections and continuities between and across the chapters in this volume.⁵⁹ Indeed, we encourage readers to seek out thematic and formal connections across the chapters (from ecology and animal activism to marble aesthetics, from art criticism to the language of sculpture, from Paganism to Catholic dissidence, from chrononormativity to disability, from formalism to feminist poetics, from Italian, French, and Spanish poetry to Elizabethan poetic theory), as this will enable them to discern the complex aesthetic philosophy that plays across the whole body of Michael Field's work, as Bradley and Cooper often returned to and reworked tropes and forms as their ideas evolved.

Our collection begins with Kate Thomas's provocative essay on queer ecology, “Vegetable Love.” Thomas's chapter looks at how Michael Field used imagery of fruit, flowers, weeds, and vegetables in their verse and life writing. This

fondness for nature may perhaps be surprising given other aesthetes' vocal declarations against nature. Thomas reads such vegetal imagery alongside theories of becoming and queer temporality, in order to argue that Michael Field did not "queer" nature but instead recognized "the already-queerness of the vegetal," emphasizing this in their work.⁶⁰ For example, Thomas discusses how Bradley and Cooper adopted the bramble-bough symbol for their union—combining the fruit and flower as a symbol of their intergenerational, incestual, and queer relationship, as well as their collaborative creativity. Fusing queer with ecological criticism, this chapter catalyzes one of the many salient new readings of Michael Field proposed by this volume: the green aesthetics of Michael Field.

Michael Field's multisensory conceptualization of desire weaves through a series of motifs and topics, including plants, perfume, and animals. Catherine Maxwell's chapter, "Michael Field's Fragrant Imagination," emphasizes the importance of perfume, both floral and vegetal, in Michael Field's work. Linking to Thomas's chapter, Maxwell confirms that Bradley and Cooper had specific knowledge of the significance and symbolism of their favorite flower scents, including myrtle (symbolic of Aphrodite), musk, and rose. As Maxwell argues, "Bradley and Cooper's use of the rose is no poetic commonplace but arises out of a deep love and knowledge of the flower."⁶¹ Maxwell's chapter concludes with a new reading of "The Grand Mogul" (published in the 1898 edition of *Underneath the Bough*). Maxwell notes that previous analyses of this poem have overlooked the particular rose that serves as Michael Field's inspiration. By paying attention to this, Maxwell asserts, what emerges is the suggestive image of a cross-dressed feminine flower, exuding hints of "tobacco, leather, brass"—the "essence of Michael Field."⁶²

Maxwell's chapter also draws attention to Bradley and Cooper's important relationship with their male mentor figures, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon. Margaret D. Stetz's chapter elucidates Michael Field's significant relationships with the men around them. Through her reading of an underanalyzed poem from *Long Ago* about the nymph "Dryope," who was raped by Apollo, Stetz explores Bradley and Cooper's conception of inspiration. Comparing their work to that of other late nineteenth-century women writers—such as Katharine Tynan and George Egerton, who tend to portray literary inspiration as arriving early in girlhood—Stetz contrasts this with Bradley and Cooper's vision of an adult Dryope who is set apart by her daring and autonomy. Stetz suggests that this vision of being overcome and transformed by masculine power is provoked by two male muse/mentor figures with whom Bradley and Cooper were entangled at the time of writing the poem—Robert Browning, who read and admired drafts of *Long Ago*, and Havelock Ellis, who had previously praised Michael

Field's work while writing of another poet, Thomas Ashe. Ashe had written his own "Dryope" poem, and Stetz suggests that Michael Field's poem is an attempt to rewrite Ashe's poem, to reconceptualize Dryope as an empowered, inspired figure, not a conventional Victorian maiden, wife, and fallen woman.

Michael Field's relationship with their male mentors also features in Sarah Parker's chapter. However, Parker seeks to highlight Bradley and Cooper's complex relationship with the female art critic Mary Costelloe. While critics have traced Michael Field's relationship with the art connoisseur Bernard Berenson, their equally significant relationship with Berenson's collaborator Costelloe had yet to be explored. Parker redresses the balance by tracing the women's evolving friendship with Costelloe. In doing so, she compares Michael Field's ekphrastic lyrics in *Sight and Song* with Costelloe's own art historical writings. As the relationship developed, Bradley and Cooper fantasized about stealing scopic authority from both Costelloe and Berenson. The desires and tensions of these relationships are expressed in lyrics in *Underneath the Bough*. In Parker's essay, Michael Field emerge as art critics too, as she demonstrates the ekphrastic lyric as intrinsically critical. In their emphases on Michael Field's influences, inspirations, and networks, all of these chapters reject the image of intellectual aridity and isolation Michael Field have often been associated with, showing that they were involved in collaborative aesthetic experimentation and exchange with their fin-de-siècle peers, whether male mentors or overlooked female influences.

Beyond Michael Field's work in lyric, *Michael Field: Decadent Moderns* contains three essays on Michael Field's verse drama. As Joseph Bristow has noted elsewhere, "the tendency in recent criticism to focus on Michael Field's poetry rather than their verse-plays has produced a skewed understanding of their considerable achievements."⁶³ Essays by Bristow, Alex Murray, and Ana Parejo Vadillo recuperate the importance of verse drama for understanding modernism and modernist theater. Vadillo's chapter examines Bradley and Cooper's first joint publication, *Bellerophôn*, to argue that this first verse drama is an exploration of collaboration based on the concept of the antique sculptural fragment. The vision offered in this first poetic drama is one of a decadent modernity built on fragments of the past. Vadillo's essay is also the first to take into account Michael Field's engagement with sculpture. She examines how antique sculpture formed their youth, enabling them to carve their authorship and to articulate their passion for each other. Focusing on what she calls the "marble period," a period marked by the production of white books, she presents Michael Field as a book artist and as a sculptural poet. This essay thus recovers the early work of Bradley and Cooper, while it also opens up two new fields of research in Michael Field studies: sculpture and book art.

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Bristow's chapter discusses Bradley and Cooper's attempts to negotiate and find success on the London stage. Through the disastrous production of *A Question of Memory* at the Independent Theatre Society in October 1893, Bradley and Cooper gained experience of the difficulty of translating their modern and ambitious play (dealing with the Hungarian Revolution of 1848) to the stage. However, as Bristow shows, they were undeterred by their experience and sought again to create a "modern" play with *Attila, My Attila!* (1895). Although this play is characteristically archaic in style, Bristow argues that it was strikingly modern in theme, representing the heroine Honoria as "the New Woman of the fifth century," and affirming the importance of desire for women.⁶⁴ But once again, critics attacked the women, sneering at the thought of spinsters writing about sexuality.

Alex Murray's chapter addresses Michael Field's verse drama and their little-discussed prose works in the context of late nineteenth-century tourism. As Murray recounts, Bradley and Cooper traveled in the 1890s in France, Italy, and Scotland, often on literary pilgrimages. Distaining the behavior of other tourists, however, Cooper's prose sketches of "For That Moment Only" (1893–95) and the diary writings capture the women's attempts to forge a vision of Bacchic travel, in opposition to the growing fin-de-siècle tourist industry. Murray's chapter concludes with an analysis of Michael Field's Cornwall-set masque *Noontide Branches* (1899), a play that signals the pull of Catholicism over paganism, attempting to "translate the quotidian experience of travel into a dynamic commingling of the Christian with the Pagan."⁶⁵

Michael Field's Catholic poetry provides the basis for the next two chapters in the volume. As Jill R. Ehnenn observes in her chapter, Michael Field's work post-Catholic conversion remains underanalyzed, despite the complexities of its engagements with theology, Catholic literary tradition, and the body and its complex eroticism. Indeed, Ehnenn argues that Michael Field's Catholic poems exhibit internal intricacies that have been overlooked by the few critics who *have* discussed this work. She identifies a shift in their poetics between Catholic poems written before Cooper's diagnosis with cancer in 1911 and those written after. In the first part of her chapter, Ehnenn recounts Bradley and Cooper's attempts to become Catholic poets, following the principles set out by influential Christian poets such as John Keble, who emphasized reverence, the use of natural analogy, and measured, regular use of meter to instill a sense of reserve. However, Ehnenn shows how the meter employed in poems like "A Crucifix" is actually more ambiguous than it first appears and, when carefully analyzed, reveals the submerged homoeroticism of Michael Field's depiction of Christ. Eventually, Cooper moves from worshipping to identifying with religious

martyrs as her illness takes hold, finding in Christ's suffering an eroticized and aestheticized embodiment of the pain she was herself experiencing.

Michael Field: Decadent Moderns moves away from a strictly "British" literary tradition in Michael Field's aesthetics to an engagement with cosmopolitan thinking and other European literary traditions. Leire Barrera-Medrano's chapter shows that the Michael Field partners were indebted to Spanish mystic poetry, represented by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. Barrera-Medrano suggests that Spanish mystic writers' imagery often connected sacred and profane love in ways that expressed an entwined sensuality and spirituality. This was inflected with a suggestive homoeroticism that was inspiring to both Bradley and Cooper and to their friend, the priest John Gray, who first introduced them to the writings of St. John of the Cross. Through readings of *Mystic Trees* (mostly authored by Bradley), Barrera-Medrano demonstrates that Bradley was influenced not only by the imagery but also by the forms of Spanish mystic poetry (such as the five-line stanza, *quintilla*). Michael Field found even greater inspiration in the figure of St. Teresa, whose pierced heart—or "female-male wound"—captured their own sense of sexual ambiguity and sensual response to religious ecstasy. Barrera-Medrano concludes by arguing that Michael Field's work entwines aestheticism, modernism, and Catholicism and suggests that their engagement should be read alongside the usage of the Spanish mystics by modernists like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein.⁶⁶

This links to our endeavor in this volume to expand the time frame for Michael Field's work, contextualizing their writings in the first two decades of the twentieth century rather than just the last decades of the nineteenth century. In her chapter, Kristin Mahoney highlights Michael Field's connections with the controversial artist Eric Gill, usually conceived as a "modernist" figure. Beginning with Michael Field's letter to Gill regarding a gift of his *Madonna and Child* statuette (1912–13), Mahoney explores the links between these figures, including their mutual friendships with William Rothenstein, Marc-André Raffalovich, John Gray, and Vincent McNabb, a priest who heard both Bradley's and Gill's confessions and wrote an introduction to Michael Field's posthumous collection of poetry *The Wattlefold* (1930). Mahoney speculates that Gill may have recognized within this volume a vision of queer Catholic kinship that mirrored his own sexually dissident practices. Mahoney meditates upon the connections between Michael Field and Gill to show the rich afterlife of aestheticism in the modernist period.

Finally, Sarah Kersh's chapter explores one of Michael Field's most unusual symbols for desire and faith: their dog *Whym Chow*, eulogized in the posthumous volume *Whym Chow, Flame of Love* (1914). Kersh discusses these complex poems

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as engaging with long-standing poetic traditions of the elegy and the amatory sonnet sequence, using Chow as a complex metonymic figure for both desire and grief, unity and separation. Comparing the Whym Chow poems with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), Kersh shows how Michael Field's poems radically break down the I/thy binary of the love sonnet, in the process exploding the sonnet form itself, predicated on the division between self/other. In the poems to Whym Chow, marriage or "two-ness," unity (as "Michael Field"), and the Holy Trinity are all invoked, and the poems ultimately encapsulate the radical slippiness of Michael Field's lyric positioning, seen throughout their oeuvre as a whole.

From the immateriality of perfume as decadent sensoria to the materiality of the book as an art object, Michael Field emerges in this book as a writer whose aesthetics radiate in our cultural moment, illuminating diverse areas of current scholarship. Bradley and Cooper's engagement with a wide variety of fields continues to resonate today, when divisions between "art" and "science" are increasingly broken down, and conversations between disciplines are encouraged. Michael Field had interesting things to say about a dizzying variety of subjects; their writings illuminate diverse areas of inquiry, from ecology to theology. In this sense, their work reflects our own contemporary aspirations to a broad perspective on the world. *Michael Field: Decadent Moderns* highlights the range and multidisciplinary of Michael Field's aesthetics. These essays effectively confirm a new phase in Michael Field's scholarship, a phase that is not only challenging traditional boundaries between fin-de-siècle and modernist studies but also firmly connecting Michael Field to other disciplines and to our own cultural moment.

Notes

Epigraphs: Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46780, fol. 228v (October 12, 1892) [K.B.]. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46781, fols. 104r-v (December 31, 1893) [E.C.].

1. Marshal Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983), 15.

2. Regenia Gagnier, *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization: On the Relationship of Part to Whole, 1859–1920* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4.

3. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46779, fol. 24r (March 6, 1891) [K.B.].

4. Katharine Bradley writes thus about *Sight and Song* (1892): "We have written the queerest little book in the world. Our teeth chatter with fear." See Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46780, fol. 89v (May 19, 1892) [K.B.].

5. Mary Berenson, *A Self-Portrait from Her Diaries and Letters* (New York: Norton, 1893), 53.

6. Emma Donoghue, *We Are Michael Field* (London: Bello, 2014), 8.
7. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46779, fol. 15r (February 13, 1891) [K.B.].
8. "Introduction," in *Michael Field, the Poet: Published and Manuscript Materials*, ed. Marion Thain and Ana Parejo Vadillo (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2009), 34.
9. Mary Sturgeon, *Michael Field* (London: Harrap, 1922), 20, 21.
10. John Ruskin to Bradley, December 30, 1877, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 308.
11. Yopie Prins, "Greek Maenads, Victorian Spinsters," in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. Richard Dellamora (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 55.
12. Bradley to John Gray (1907), qtd. in Marion Thain, *Michael Field: Poetry, Aestheticism and the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 58.
13. K.B. to E.C., April 13, 1885, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 300.
14. E.C. to K.B., April 1885, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 300. Pussie (or Persian Puss) is one of Edith Cooper's many nicknames. She refers to herself in third person here.
15. K.B. to E.C., April 1885, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 303.
16. "Review of *Bellerophôn*," *Academy* (September 10, 1881): 196.
17. T. W. Higginson, "Women and Men: Women Laureates," *Harper's Bazaar* (June 17, 1893); see Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 363–67.
18. "Review of *Callirrhôë: Fair Rosamund*," *Athenæum* (July 5, 1884): 24–26.
19. George Bernard Shaw, "Recent Poetry," in *Bernard Shaw's Book Reviews*, vol. 2: 1884–1950, ed. Brian Tyson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 22–28.
20. Robert Browning to E.C., May 28, 1884, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 309.
21. E.C. to R.B., May 30, 1884, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, The Poet*, 310.
22. K.B. to R.B., November 23, 1884, in Thain and Vadillo, *Michael Field, the Poet*, 311.
23. See Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 74–111.
24. John Miller Gray, *Academy* (June 8, 1889): 359–61.
25. Arthur Symons to K.B. See Ana Parejo Vadillo, "Walter Pater and Michael Field: The Correspondence, with Other Unpublished Manuscript Materials," *Pater Newsletter* 65 (2014): 35.
26. Vadillo, "Walter Pater and Michael Field," 35.
27. Wilde, quoted in Sharon Bickle, "Michael Field: Fifty Books from Fifty Years," *Monash University Library Exhibition*, <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/exhibitions/fifty-books-fifty-years/virtual-exhibition/photos/photo4.html>, accessed May 12, 2016.
28. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46780, fol. 47r (February 14, 1892) [E.C.]. For more on Pater's influence on Michael Field, see Ana Parejo Vadillo, "Sight and Song: Transparent Translations and a Manifesto for the Observer," *Victorian Poetry* 38, no. 1 (2000): 15–34.
29. Yeats, *The Bookman* (July 1892), in *Michael Field, the Poet*, 363.
30. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46779, fols. 98r–99r (August 30, 1891) [E.C.].

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31. Martha Vicinus, "The Adolescent Boy: Fin de Siècle Femme Fatale?" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 1 (1994): 91.
32. Sarah Parker, *The Lesbian Muse and Poetic Identity, 1889–1930* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 43–70, and Parker's chapter in this volume.
33. Augusta Webster, "Underneath the Bough: A Book of Verse. By Michael Field," *Athenæum* (September 9, 1893). Rpt. in *Michael Field, the Poet*, 367–69.
34. See Bristow's chapter in the present volume.
35. The play was performed by the New York Airmid Theatre group in 2008.
36. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46781, fols. 86v–87r (October 28, 1893) [E.C.].
37. Displayed at the exhibition *Queer British Art 1861–1967*, Tate Britain, 2017.
38. Quoted in Sturgeon, *Michael Field*, 52.
39. Donoghue, *We Are Michael Field*, 103.
40. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46795, fol. 14r (January 28, 1906) [E.C.].
41. See Ruth Vanita, *Sappho and the Virgin Mary: Same-Sex Love and the English Literary Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
42. Michael Field, "Works and Days," January 26, 1893 [E.C.], in *Michael Field, the Poet*, 258.
43. George Meredith, "To Michael Field, November 16, 1899" in *The Collected Letters*, 1341.
44. "Gibbon and Water," *Academy* (July 30, 1898), 103.
45. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46782, fol. 38r (April 17, 1894) [E.C.].
46. Michael Field, "Works and Days," BL Add MS 46782, fol. 95r (July 17, 1894) [E.C.].
47. Shane Leslie, "Works and Days," *Times Literary Supplement* (February 15, 1934): 105.
48. *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. 13: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 181.
49. Margaret Sackville, *A Book of Verse by Living Women* (London: Herbert & Daniel, 1910), xx.
50. See Michael Field, *Deirdre; A Question of Memory; Ras Byzance* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1918); Michael Field, *In the Name of Time* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1919); and Anon. [by Michael Field], *Above Mount Alverna, Iphigenia in Arsacia, The Assumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1930). Michael Field, *Works and Days: From the Journal of Michael Field*, ed. T. and D. C. Sturge Moore; introduced by William Rothenstein (London: John Murray, 1933).
51. Robert Lynd, "Eminent Victorians through the Eyes of Two Women," *News Chronicle* (1933).
52. Ursula Bridge, "The Diary of Michael Field: A Biographical Study of a Forgotten Poet" [six parts; incomplete] [1966], MS. Eng. misc. d. 983 and d. 984. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
53. Henri Locard, "Works and Days: The Journals of 'Michael Field,'" *Journal of the Eighteen Nineties Society* 10 (1979): 1–9; Kenneth R. Ireland, "Sight and Song: A Study of the Interrelations between Painting and Poetry," *Victorian Poetry* 15, no. 1 (1977): 9–20; Jan

MacDonald, "Disillusioned Bards and Despised Bohemians: Michael Field's *A Question of Memory* at the Independent Theatre Society," *Theatre Notebook: A Journal of the History and Technique of the British Theatre* 31, no. 2 (1975): 18–29.

54. See Selected Bibliography for references to these works.

55. These included *Shorter Shirazad: 101 Poems of Michael Field* (1999); *Uncertain Rain: Sundry Spells of Michael Field* (2003); and *Binary Star: Leaves from the Journal and Letters of Michael Field 1846–1914* (2006).

56. Now merged successfully with *Latchkey*.

57. Marion Thain, "Perspective: Digitizing the Diary—Experiments in Queer Encoding (A Retrospective and a Prospective)," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 21, no. 2 (2016): 226–41. The "Online Diaries of Michael Field" can be accessed at http://tundra.csd.sc.edu/vllc/field_diaries. See Rob Gallagher and Ana Parejo Vadillo, "Animating *Sight and Song*: A Meditation on Identity, Fair Use, and Collaboration," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 21 (2015), December 10, 2015, <https://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/articles/10.16995/ntn.754/>.

58. As seen in the recent conference, *Aestheticism and Decadence in the Age of Modernism: 1895 to 1945* (Senate House, London, April 2015), and recent publications such as Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) and Kristen Mahoney, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

59. See Kate Thomas's "Vegetable Love: Michael Field's Queer Ecology," chapter 1 in the present volume.

60. Thomas, "Vegetable Love."

61. Catherine Maxwell, "Michael Field's Fragrant Imagination," chapter 6 in the present volume.

62. Maxwell, "Fragrant Imagination."

63. Joseph Bristow, "Michael Field: In Their Time and Ours," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 29, no.1 (Spring 2010): 160.

64. Michael Field, *Attila, My Attila! A Play* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1896), vi.

65. Alex Murray, "Profane Travelers: Michael Field, Cornwall, and Modern Tourism," chapter 7 in the present volume.

66. Leire Barrera-Medrano, "St. Theresa, I Call on You to Help: Michael Field and Spanish Mysticism," chapter 9 in the present volume.