

Response Page

The following responses were posted on the H-France discussion list in response to Beth Palmer's review of Alberto Gabriele, *Popular Culture in Victorian Print: Belgravia and Sensationalism*

H-France Review Vol. 10 (November 2010), No. 181.

The original review may be found on the H-France web page at:

<http://www.h-france.net/vol10reviews/vol10no181Palmer.pdf>

Beth Palmer's review of *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print: Belgravia and Sensationalism*, while insisting that the monograph dedicated to *Belgravia* does not cover its contents in detail -- which is a paradoxical claim-- does not mention what indeed is discussed in the book. The summary of the sections of the book that deal more specifically with *Belgravia* is relegated to three sentences in one single paragraph. The discussion of the distribution network of the magazine, for instance, does not refer to its global scope. The review does not mention the claims the book makes about the contents of the magazine, like the use of urban space as a branding strategy, the discourse of abstraction, and contemporary advertising from *Belgravia* in relation to gendered discourses of the medical disciplines and the pharmaceutical industry.

The review suggests that a discussion of the silent film adaptations of Braddon's novels would have "enriched" chapter 6, which charts sensationalism in pre-cinematic entertainment. The production of silent films from the Teens is notoriously perishable. Chapter 6 does point to the popularity of the sensational formula in some characters from silent film serials such as Feuillade's *Les Vampires* in order to underline the constant cultural exchange between England and France, which is also the topic of the following chapter on "Sensational Literature across the Chunnell." The term "Chunnell," refers to the methodological premise of comparative works such as Margaret Cohen's *The Literary Chunnell* and is not meant to cause any reader's eye to "snag" --in Palmer's words-- at a "mistaken use."

Besides foreclosing the actual content of the book, the review interestingly responds to aspects which are not part of its contents. It inaccurately refers, for instance, to an assumed discussion of the "variant runs" of the magazine. The run of the magazine held at the British Library in London is made of volumes coming from different colonial libraries, not of variant runs. As for the reference to the "[Vizetelly] publisher's strong penetration of the growing market for serialization in provincial papers," the provincial papers discussed in the book are included because they published advertisements of the book editions in the Vizetelly catalogue, not a serialization of its titles.