

The third chapter examines the cases of colonial violence in Kenya and Nyasaland and how the press complicated British-African relations through their depiction of the Mau Mau war in ways that contradicted the reality of the Kikuyu. While the left-wing newspapers sided ideologically with the Kikuyu fighters who took up arms against the dispossession of their indigenous lands by the white settlers in connivance with their traditional chiefs who benefitted from colonial rule, the conservative right-wing newspapers presented the Kikuyu fighters as rebels against colonial order. The contradiction of the press reportage was clear in the Hola massacre that claimed the lives of many Africans in Nyasaland but was underreported by the British press. On the strength of these analyses, Coffey argues that the limited coverage of colonial violence aligned with the official objectives of the Kenyan government to conceal the atrocities committed against the Kikuyus in the international system.

Chapters 4 and 5 are mutually linked as they examine the popular visit of the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, and his classic “Wind of Change” (117) speech in South Africa and its implications for racial relations between white settlers’ minority and the Black majority under apartheid rule. However, the Sharpeville massacre provides evidence of a strategic alliance between British correspondents, white liberals, and African activists. But, as Coffey notes, the alliance could not spur reforms because of the material strength and swiftness of the national government to repel possible threats from such an alliance. The sixth and last original chapter examines post-independence crisis in the Congo under the country’s first Prime Minister and how the British press glossed over the role of the British government. Like the Ghana case, the British press presented Congo under Patrice Lumumba as a weak post-colonial state without recourse to Western Allied interests and the United Nations’ complicity in the crisis.

Coffey concludes that British newspapers complicated decolonization and British policies in Africa as African groups who sought reforms and change saw the press as a veritable platform to challenge colonial order because of the sympathy of certain white-liberal correspondents to the cause of freedom and political reforms in Africa. Overall, Coffey’s textual interpretations of British newspapers and the adoption of the press as a tool of analysis for rethinking decolonization and the end of the empire in Africa challenges the dominant binary—Cold War politics and colonial development—with which many historians have examined this critical episode in the history of the British Empire in Africa.

Walid A. Ismaila
West Virginia University
wai0003@mix.wvu.edu

RENÉE FOX. *The Necromantics: Reanimation, the Historical Imagination, and Victorian British and Irish Literature*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2023. Pp. 267. \$69.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.225

The topic of this intriguing study is “necromantic literature;” that is, nineteenth-century English and Irish literature concerned with the reanimation of the dead. Fox’s thesis is that novelists and poets use resurrected bodies to (re)imagine the past and explore what she calls the “resuscitative” role of literature (6–12). Contrary to what readers might expect, *The Necromantics* does not focus exclusively on Gothic narratives about reanimated corpses, but also examines texts in which reanimation operates at a purely figurative level. Fox is principally interested in the relationship between history and literature and the extent to which writing (or “reanimating”) the past is necessarily an imaginative undertaking. Yet while some chapters concentrate on questions of history and historiography, others take up broader questions of literary representation and, in the second half of the book, issues of colonial politics. As Fox

acknowledges, the study brings together an “unlikely” group of prose works and poems that form “an awkwardly articulated body” (34). However, the eclectic nature of the study, far from being a shortcoming, is what makes it worth reading.

The first half of *The Necromantics* is devoted to English authors and texts. Chapter 1 deals, unsurprisingly, with Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), the work that first comes to mind when one thinks of nineteenth-century resurrection narratives. What readers often miss, according to Fox, is that *Frankenstein* is not actually about reanimating the dead, but rather it is about the creation of new life. Fox’s point is that the Creature is invested with no personal history. His consciousness begins when he is jolted into being, and therefore his identity is not shaped by memories of a past life (or lives). In this respect, Fox contends, *Frankenstein* differs from “Valerius, the Reanimated Roman” (1819) and “Roger Dodsworth, the Reanimated Englishman” (1826), lesser-known reanimation stories by Shelley in which individuals from the past are revived and exist anachronistically in the present. The stories reveal Shelley’s deep interest in Romantic approaches to history and the shortcomings of sentimental historiography, themes that are not, according to Fox, explored in *Frankenstein*. However, if the Creature in Shelley’s Gothic novel is not a historical being, that idea was introduced in subsequent stage and film adaptations. Importantly, *Frankenstein* is established as an anchor text for *The Necromantics* less because of how the novel treats the theme of reanimation per se than because of its own afterlife in the nineteenth century and beyond. Accordingly, the chapter ends with a discussion of how adaptations ranging from Peake’s 1823 play to Branagh’s 1994 film invest *Frankenstein* with historical meanings not found in Shelley’s novel.

In chapters 2 and 3, Fox analyzes texts by Charles Dickens and Robert Browning, respectively, arguing that the authors use the reanimation trope to engage self-consciously with issues of literary representation. In the Dickens chapter, *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) are understood as meta-commentaries about the limits of literary realism. Pip’s first-person retrospective narration is framed as his attempt to reanimate the past. Placing great importance on the early reference to Pip imaginatively conjuring up his family after reading their gravestones, Fox uses the term “epitaphic realism” (34 and elsewhere) to describe his narratorial attempts to bring the past to life and assume control over his identity. In *Our Mutual Friend*, similarly, reanimation is seen to operate figuratively: Fox argues that references to galvanic animation betray Dickens’s suspicions about the possibility of historical objectivity and authentic representation. Next, she reads Browning’s verse novel *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69) together with several short dramatic monologues to explore the author’s poetic reanimation of the dead. Particularly compelling are the sections on the murdered Pompilia’s posthumous narration and Fox’s various contextualizations of Browning’s “necro-poetics” in terms of Romantic theories of poetic creation, the historian Jules Michelet’s view of history as a “resurrection” of the past, and Victorian “projects of aesthetic resurrection” (113) including spirit photography.

The last chapters turn to writers of the Irish Literary Revival and to questions of colonialism. Continuing the previous chapter’s focus on poetry, chapter 4 examines Yeats’s “The Wanderings of Oisín” (1889) alongside his collections of Irish myths and folk stories. Fox understands Yeats’s imaginative recuperation of the Irish past (figured through Oisín’s own journeys to the land of the dead) as self-aware meditations on the period’s resurgence of interest in Celtic history. Fox also frames the collecting and reviving of Irish stories in terms of the rise of museums in the period. In particular, she reads Yeats’s texts as Irish nationalist responses to “museum poems” (143–53) by Keats, Rossetti, Hardy, and other British writers.

Chapter 5 is the only one besides the first chapter to examine a narrative that literally portrays the reanimation of the dead. Fox returns to the realm of Gothic horror with Bram Stoker’s *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), a novel about a disastrous attempt to revive the mummy of an ancient Egyptian queen. Drawing comparisons to Stoker’s famous vampire novel, Fox characterizes *The Jewel of Seven Stars* as an example of imperial Gothic. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, she demonstrates, a parallel exists between the British characters’

relationship to the Egyptian mummy and British colonial control of Ireland. Even more thought-provokingly, Fox delves back into the previous chapter's consideration of the Celtic revival movement to argue that Stoker offers a cautionary tale about the problems of building a modern Irish identity from ancient myths. Reading "against the grain" (177) of Stoker's story about the reanimation of Queen Tera, Fox interprets it as a critique of Irish revivalism.

The study concludes, entertainingly, with an epilogue that examines recent reimaginings of nineteenth-century novels. Monster mash-ups like *Mansfield Park and Mummies*, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, and *Jane Slayre* reanimate old works in surprising ways and exemplify for Fox "resuscitative reading run amok" (224). Overall, *The Necromantics* brings together an unexpected mix of texts with illuminating results. Particularly welcome is the sustained attention given to Irish literature, as well as the decision to understand reanimation as more than just a Gothic trope. Henceforth, Fox's study will be necessary reading for anyone wishing to engage with the topic of reanimation, and it will also be of interest to scholars working on the individual texts that Fox so interestingly analyzes.

Natalie Neill

York University
nneill@yorku.ca

MATTHEW GERTH. *Anti-Communism in Britain during the Early Cold War: A Very British Witch Hunt*. New Historical Perspectives. London: University of London Press, 2023. Pp. 276. £90.00 (cloth).
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The specter of McCarthyism still haunts the United States, a perverse reflection of the communist thought crime it pertained to oppose. In Britain, the "witch hunt" never quite reached the same pitch of absurdity, but fear of communism—and measures to quell such fears—permeated the halls of power. Labour, perhaps more than the Conservatives, feared communist influence and infiltration, sensitive to the *S* word that gave superficial similarity to the future visions envisaged in a social democratic west or a communist east. You could always find a red under the bed if you knew when and where to look.

Matthew Gerth leads us into the murky world of anti-communism. While the Soviet Union was a very real foe for the British government in the context of the Cold War (and decolonization), and while the Bolshevik mindset created in the travails of Russia exerted an influence in Britain (as elsewhere), the *politics* of anti-communism often revealed as much about the accuser as the accused. Strawmen and fantasy abounded; personal grudges were pursued; political expediency was never far from the fore. Gerth's thesis is that there was an overreaction to the communist threat in Britain; that anti-communism was not always the product of good faith; that encouragement came from the United States but that the application of—and response to—anti-communism in Britain was somewhat different to what was occurring across the Atlantic. Class and demographics provide reasons for this, ensuring anti-communism lacked any bottom-up (grassroots) momentum in Britain, while the state proved unwilling (or too slow) to pry into the Establishment circles where treachery was indeed manifest.

Though not revelatory, Gerth's argument is persuasive and built on a swathe of archival research. As well as a check list of key archives, copious newspapers have been consulted and personal papers mined. His research challenges the idea that Britain somehow retained a sense of moderation in comparison with the US, revealing choice examples of language, plans and imagined scenarios that demonstrate repressive contingencies and hyperbole were very much part of the story. Equally, the book seeks to do more than simply frame British