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# Popular fiction and the 'emotional turn': the case of women in late Victorian Britain

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### *Abstract*

Many within the history profession today consider that we are experiencing an 'emotional turn', a perception that has been spurred by a recent proliferation of research centres and outpouring of publications exploring the concept of emotion. Interest in this field looks likely to grow, although there are methodological challenges that have yet to be overcome, as, of course, there are with any newly emerging field of study. One main concern is source material. Attempting to access such an elusive and intensely subjective area of historical inquiry as emotions requires seeking out new sources, as well as returning to old ones with a fresh eye, with new questions in mind. In the specific realm of the emotional lives of women living in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, fiction proves a promising source – popular fiction especially. This is due to the fact that this was the era that ushered in the modern bestseller, novels that more often than not explored the everyday and the emotional, novels that were thought to have been 'devoured' by women in particular. This essay plots recent developments in the burgeoning area of emotions history, as well as those that have taken place in relation to the use of fiction as evidence in a history of women's interior lives. It argues that, at this point in the development of emotions history, when questions of methodology, interdisciplinarity and sources are being addressed more widely, consideration should be given to popular fiction as a readily available pathway, if not an uncomplicated one, into the emotions of the past.

### *Introduction*

Many within the history profession today consider that we are experiencing an 'emotional turn', a perception that has been spurred by a recent proliferation of research centres and outpouring of publications exploring the concept of emotion.<sup>1</sup> Within the last two years, for example, a number of important centres have been established with the aim of investigating a history of emotions. In January 2008, the Center for the History of Emotions was founded at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Germany. Later that year, in November, the Centre for the History of the Emotions was launched at Queen Mary, University of London, UK. Only earlier this year it was decided that a new Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, funded by the Australian Research Council, will be

established in Australia. Early next year, the American Historical Association is hosting a discussion panel on the future of the field of emotions history. Interest in this field looks likely to grow, although there are methodological challenges that have yet to be overcome, as, of course, there are with any newly emerging field of study. It is mainly on the issue of challenges and future direction on which the most recent publications in the field are centred.

One main concern is source material. Attempting to access such an elusive and intensely subjective area of historical inquiry as emotions requires seeking out new sources, as well as returning to old ones with a fresh eye, with new questions in mind. In the specific realm of the emotional lives of women living in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, fiction proves a promising source – popular fiction especially. There are a number of reasons for this. The first is that this is the era most readily accredited with the advent of the phenomenally popular modern bestseller – potentially wide windows into the collective emotions of that world. The second is the role that women were to assume in this new literary marketplace. Calling into play theories about the gendered nature of low-brow reading, women of this society were considered to be the main consumers of such fiction. The third is the nature of much of this type of fiction with everyday life and emotions considered to be their primary domain, a domain the historian of emotions has the opportunity of entering.

This brief essay plots recent developments in the burgeoning area of emotions history, as well as those that have taken place in relation to the use of fiction as historical evidence and a history of women's interior lives. It argues that, at this point in the development of emotions history, when questions of methodology, interdisciplinarity and sources are being addressed more widely, consideration should be given to popular fiction as a readily available pathway, if not an uncomplicated one, into the emotions of the past.

### *History of Emotions*

It is largely accepted that in 1941 *Annales* historian Lucien Febvre issued the first calling for a history of emotions with his essay 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past'. However, few American and British historians immediately followed his lead.<sup>2</sup> Historian, Joanna Burke, argues that this reluctance to analyse emotions on the part of mid-twentieth-century historians was in all likelihood due to uncertainty about what the 'actual focus' of such enquiries were and about how to access such 'invisible', subjective feelings.<sup>3</sup> This confusion was not helped by the fact that many at the time, inside

and outside of the history profession, considered emotions to be irrational and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to grasp in any objective manner.<sup>4</sup>

However, a number of shifts occurred in the second half of the century that fostered a history profession that was more receptive to the study of emotions. In the first place, there was the strong emergence of cultural history in the 1970s and 1980s, a sub-branch of social history that sought to ‘bring some life back into the exploration of the lives of ordinary people’.<sup>5</sup> In the face of cultural history’s increasing adoption of ‘post-modern’ perspectives, particularly as these concerned identity, reluctance to undertake such ‘subjective’ studies decreased. Cultural history, it was argued, allowed historians to ‘explore the past in newer ways – to try out new methods, read new sources (especially literature, which had been somehow tabooed as unrepresentative by some social historians), and to ask new, more subtle questions’.<sup>6</sup> This process that enabled analytical categories such as women’s history, and later gender history, to develop, also performed a similar function for interior and emotions history. Indeed, the growth of women’s history has been offered as a further reason for the increasing feasibility of emotions history as a distinct category of analysis as women’s history, from its inception, supported studies of personal or private lives, as well as emotions.<sup>7</sup>

In the second instance, contrary to promoting only theories about the universality of emotions, the social and life sciences took more interest in the social construction of emotions, an interest that spurred new research developments that spilled over into the historical profession. In the 1980s psychologists, Klaus R. Scherer and Paul Ekman, declared emotions to have become ‘a vital, almost fashionable topic in the social and behavioural sciences’.<sup>8</sup> By the 1990s, the prominence of neuroscience also brought the study of emotions to wider academic attention.<sup>9</sup> Such interdisciplinary interest added to what historian, Barbara Rosenwein, identified as a growing preoccupation among American and European historians with ‘how people feel’, or how people felt, stimulating the move made by a growing number of historians into the realm of emotions history.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1980s, then, in the wake of these shifting paradigms, a number of texts were published that directed historians’ attention towards understanding the feelings and emotions of ‘ordinary’ people. In 1982 Bernard Bailyn and Theodore Zeldin both published papers that explored the attempt to study ‘interior life’, personal history and a history of emotions.<sup>11</sup> Zeldin, in particular, argued that the investigation of issues such as the permanency and constancy or the mutability of human emotions was not a substitute for analysing the history of ‘collective behaviour, institutions and communities’ but rather a

counterpart to it.<sup>12</sup> However, despite these seminal explorations, the ‘history of emotions’ was only given formal focus a few years later with the publication in 1985 of Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns’s article ‘Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards’ in *The American Historical Review*.<sup>13</sup> This ‘Emotionology’ paper outlined the main concerns of this new history of emotions, drawing on the distinction between precept and experiences – between emotional standards (what Stearns refers to as ‘emotionology’ and which I understand to mean socially expected emotional actions and reactions) and individual emotional experiences.<sup>14</sup> Emotions, it was claimed at this point, are studied both because they matter and because they change over time.<sup>15</sup> Historians, then, were presented with the opportunity of recreating ‘the emotions and intellect of people living in conditions very different from our own’ so that, in John Tosh’s words, ‘their humanity can be more fully realized’.<sup>16</sup>

Over the next two decades, numerous discussions and histories of emotions, including Peter Stearns and Jan Lewis’s 1998 study, *An Emotional History of the United States* and William Reddy’s *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (2001), were published.<sup>17</sup> However, calls for more work on emotions history persisted. In 2002, Barbara Rosenwein, in her ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’ article, stated that since Febvre’s initial call for a study of emotion, ‘most historians have shied away from the topic’.<sup>18</sup> One year later Joanna Bourke supported this with the assertion that, despite ‘the centrality of emotional experience in the past, analysis of emotions such as fear has remained peripheral to the historical discipline’.<sup>19</sup> Within a few years, this call was increasingly answered with the publication of a number of histories focussing on general as well as specific emotions, histories that included Joanna Bourke’s cultural history of fear (2005), Peter Stearns’s *American Fear: The Causes and Consequences of High Anxiety* (2006) Barbara Rosenwein’s *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Age* (2006) and Martha Tomhave Blauvelt’s *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830* (2007).<sup>20</sup> Since then, as emotions history has become a more established area of historical inquiry, focus has shifted towards addressing the diverse challenges facing historians entering into the emotions world. Such debates about definitions of emotions and the boundaries of what constitutes a history of emotions have proved this realm to be more fluid than that initially outlined by the Stearnses.

So, what currently constitutes the area’s most pressing concerns or challenges? The general concern voiced by the main practitioners of emotions history, and of course building on a similar desire voiced by Zeldin in the 1980s, is that, rather than being viewed as a

separate category of inquiry, it becomes integrated into ‘mainstream’ or ‘regular’ history, informing all history.<sup>21</sup> The ongoing challenges of definition, interdisciplinarity and sources faced by emotions historians, however, threaten to prevent such a widespread integration, at least for the moment. But again, as with any new area of scholarly inquiry, such concerns are continually being addressed. And, although the question of how far to allow the research findings of other disciplines (for example, psychology and neuroscience) to influence histories of emotions occupies the minds of many in the profession, no consensus having yet been reached, the issue of definition seems to be the area’s most pressing challenge.<sup>22</sup> In 2003, for example, Joanna Bourke claimed that many who professed to be writing about emotions, or at least about ‘emotional culture’, seemed to be unsure about what they were actually writing about, as their work analysed a multitude of categories from discrete feelings to clusters of emotions to ‘descriptions of modes of living’.<sup>23</sup> By the end of the decade, although some historians, such as German historian, Ute Frevert, continue to call for rigidly defined emotions, others, like fellow scholar of German history, Alon Confino, argue that ‘a tight definition of “emotions” can actually be counter-productive.’<sup>24</sup> ‘With such a definition’, he continues, ‘we cannot capture the looseness and fluidity of emotions, which is precisely what characterized them...A broad definition of emotions is sufficient to get the historian going. Ultimately, what is important is how people in the past defined emotions; the historian’s best move is to start with their understandings.’<sup>25</sup>

The other significant challenge currently facing historians of emotions is that of sources – the challenge with which this paper is most concerned. Can we elicit the emotions of an ‘emotional community’, to use Rosenwein’s term, using only the works of one person? Rosenwein’s answer to this is yes, ‘if it is kept in mind that his or her writings were addressed to a public and therefore imply a wider group.’<sup>26</sup> Though, it is better, she continues, ‘to have several different voices from the group to see where the commonalities lie.’<sup>27</sup> Then issues of methodology follow: how, for example, do we understand the intended function of emotions in a given text?<sup>28</sup> Is linguistic analysis adequate or satisfying enough for those wishing to access the ‘felt’ reality of the past? Michael Roper answers this in the negative: ‘Too often, what goes missing from linguistic analyses is an adequate sense of the material: of the practices of everyday life; of human experience formed through emotional relationships with others; and of that experience as involving a perpetual process of managing emotional impulses, both conscious and unconscious, within the self and in relation to others.’<sup>29</sup>

Still, in the attempt to write a history of emotions, sources can be found and methodological issues continually refined. This paper argues that for those involved in such an endeavour, particularly as this endeavour concerns uncovering the emotions of women at the end of the nineteenth- and beginning of the twentieth century, popular fiction is a useful and readily available source.

*Popular fiction – a window into collective emotions? Women in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.*

History and fiction have a long, often tumultuous, but ultimately rewarding relationship, and critical and scholarly engagement with this relationship has proliferated recently. Scholars have met with increasing frequency in what has been termed the ‘borderland’ between history and fiction, an academic space where historians, theorists, literary critics and fictional authors meet.<sup>30</sup> Whereas some of these scholars are interested in continuing explorations of history as narrative, even as fiction, discussions that have been given eminence in the works of, among many others, Dominik LaCapra, Hayden White, Raphael Samuel, Lynn Hunt, Natalie Zemon Davis, Janet McCalman, and, more recently, Ann Curthoys, John Docker and Beverley Southgate, others prefer to analyse fictionalised accounts of the past, such as historical novels, as well as explore innovative ways of representing academic history in fictional form, and here I am referring to interdisciplinary scholars such as Georg Lukács, Brian Fay, Thomas Cohen, Madhumalati Adhikari, Ann Rigney and Amy Elias.<sup>31</sup>

Another aspect of recent history/fiction borderland discussions is that concerning fiction as historical evidence, particularly when attempting to access a history of emotions. Since the ‘linguistic turn’, when subjectivity became a more accepted concept within the field of historical inquiry, historians, more particularly those working within the field of cultural history, have increasingly used insights gleaned from fiction to support their assertions.<sup>32</sup> There are also a number of historians and literary scholars who have turned to fiction, increasingly to forms other than high-brow literature, in order to explore female interiority. American historian, Linda Rosenzweig, for example, uses insights from novels in her study of mother-daughter relationships in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras (part of the New York University Press ‘History of Emotions’ series); whereas in the area of British women’s interiority, literary scholars lead the way, scholars such as Alison Light and Nicola Beauman, both working on the inter-war years.<sup>33</sup>

So, what has prompted this growing reliance on middle- and low-brow fiction for their historical insights? One answer is the increasing prominence of histories of mentalities and interior histories and recent writing on the subject of popular culture has deemed popular fiction to be more bountiful than high-brow literature for the purpose of uncovering past feelings – for accessing collective emotions. As Jeffrey Richards argues: ‘For the historian concerned with the real spirit of an age, the collective *mentalité*, the popular culture is of the greatest value; the high culture often misleads.’<sup>34</sup> This is an assertion supported by James Smith Allen who adds that popular fiction is invaluable for those wishing to capture something of the private and interior world of a contemporary society – for the author of the text in question ‘shares in the mental world of ordinary people who read’ it – those who constitute his or her readership.<sup>35</sup>

This understanding of the shared world of author and reader and of current theories about the reading and reception process is highly important for explaining the potential worth of fiction as an insight into the collective emotions of the reading public.<sup>36</sup> For, as Allen again points out, interpreting the theories of literary theorist Georges Poulet, the historian can enter this shared world precisely because

the text serves as a mediator between two interiors, the reader’s and the author’s, that would otherwise be inaccessible to each other. Thus, the act of reading a novel permits an author to enter the consciousness of his audience (and vice versa). The extent to which this fundamental communication occurs in the reading of popular literature suggests its remarkable usefulness in capturing the mental world of its readers.<sup>37</sup>

And, it is exactly this interplay between the author’s and audience’s values, attitudes and emotions that is integral to the understanding, and therefore success, of a highly popular or bestselling work of fiction.<sup>38</sup> The relationship existing between the writer and his or her contemporary audience allows for a society’s ‘manners’ and ‘feelings’ to be understood – even when, or especially when, they are not obvious to readers distanced from the era or society in which the text was produced. ‘Silences’ in the text, then, need to be interpreted carefully, for it is here, in these unwritten but assumed understandings, that common, shared values and emotions lie. It is this interaction, even interdependence, between the minds of the author and of the readers that promotes the usefulness of novels (especially novels boasting a wide readership) to historians desiring to access the ‘feel’ and the emotions of the past.<sup>39</sup>

Of course, some eras lend themselves to a study of emotions and popular fiction more than others. Britain during the late Victorian years, for example, has been labelled ‘a nation



of avid novel readers' which firmly recommends the use of novels as a means of accessing the community's 'interior life' – the community in this case being the vast reading public.<sup>40</sup> The width and breadth of this 'community' is only extended by the fact that this was the era that witnessed the advent of the phenomenal 'Bestseller', low-brow reading material that appealed to an ever-growing proportion of the general public. That reading was considered to be a particularly gendered practice during this era, especially with regards to women readers and popular or lower-browed fiction, further endorses such novels as a means of accessing female emotions.<sup>41</sup> Of course, advocating the historical importance of bestselling fiction is not to claim that all of the reading public at the turn of the twentieth century had uniform thoughts, emotions and opinions. But the Bestseller lists of this time do shed light on thoughts and feelings that were common to large sections of the general contemporary audience.<sup>42</sup> The numerical strength of this audience supports journalist, Claud Cockburn's claim that 'bestsellers really are a mirror of 'the mind and face' of an age', an apt statement given recent interdisciplinary discussions about emotions as belonging to both mind and body.<sup>43</sup>

What remains to discuss now is the most appropriate method of analysing emotions in texts. What remains to discuss now is the most appropriate method of analysing emotions in texts. This is an area of emotions history that has been receiving attention lately. In a recent *History Compass* article, Barbara Rosenwein outlined her approach to 'thinking historically' about emotions, in her case emotions in medieval texts. This multi-faceted approach includes: considering the text in which the emotions are 'embedded'; understanding how the text represents emotions (for example, are the emotions felt by a person in the text or are they viewed by a 'bystander' or 'an interested party'?); and, given that emotions have 'multiple uses', interrogating how the emotions 'function' in the text (are they used to deliver social and political commentary, for example?).<sup>44</sup> With specific reference to examining emotions in those late Victorian novels that achieved a high level of popularity, then, this means understanding the complex interrelationship between the reader and writer, as well as the entertainment, often escapist function of such texts. And this last point ties in with another of Rosenwein's arguments: that thinking historically about emotions involves looking at 'different kinds' of emotions and at the different ways in which they are 'deployed' in different contexts; it involves continually being aware of the 'ever-changing shape of the category of 'emotions' and of the terms that belong within it'.<sup>45</sup>

However, this is not to say that Rosenwein, or indeed any other emotions historian, contends that a study of emotions within texts from different contexts will tell you exactly

which emotions were felt by whom or how “a certain individual feels in a certain situation”. Rather, as Rosenwein clarifies in another of her arguments, the study of emotional communities ‘will help us understand how people articulated, understood, and represented how they felt’. ‘This, in fact, is all we can know about anyone’s feelings apart from our own.’<sup>46</sup>

With this in mind, then, how far are the ‘emotional’ words used in popular novels representative of emotional ‘realities’ in the late nineteenth century? The emotions expressed and experienced by characters within these fictional texts perform a number of roles. In the first place, and particularly in many popular middle-brow forms of fictional writing where individual characters’ interiority are explored in depth, the repetition across text and genre of such expressions and experiences denote emotional expressions and experiences that strike the bulk of the audience as ‘likely’. Again, the use of the term ‘audience’ here is important, for it is the emotional understandings of the audience with whom the emotions expressed in these texts correspond with, reflect and doubtless influence.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, in relation to lower-browed, sometimes phenomenally popular fiction where emotional expressions are less applicable to individual characters, whose interiority is not the main attraction of the text, and addressed much more generally, such expressions offer historians a means of accessing the more general attitudes towards emotions and feelings of that time and place. That the repeated emotional utterances characteristic of so many of these type of late Victorian and Edwardian novels appealed, and continued to appeal throughout the era, to such a large, widespread and diverse readership is highly indicative of accepted or familiar emotional standards and expressions, if not of likely individual feelings. And, of course, it is also the opportunity for interpreting the ‘silences’ within these texts that offers the historian a pathway into the more common, shared feelings and emotions of the broad reading public of the time. Therefore, for example, whereas the middle-brow novels of late Victorian and Edwardian writer, Arnold Bennett, can be used for their descriptions of the guilt, shame and despair felt by young female characters undergoing a crisis of faith, those of his contemporary, the phenomenally popular bestseller, Marie Corelli, can be valued for their parallel insights into a nation struggling to cling to its belief in inherent female religiousness, especially in the face of declining religious adherence.<sup>48</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The whole issue of representativeness –the degree to which the sentiments popular novels contain are either typical or eccentric – remains an important challenge for historians of emotions. As Rosenzweig wrote, in her history of mother-daughter relationships:

Obviously, middle-class female behaviour patterns and values varied. The issue of representativeness poses a particularly difficult problem for the historians engaged in an effort to understand the private, emotional experiences of family life in the past.<sup>49</sup>

However, in spite of the many limitations, Rosenzweig concludes that when a range of sources are viewed together, all are revealing of women’s experiences and their attitudes, as well as being revealing of the general social and cultural expectations of the time in regard to women.<sup>50</sup> This is an important point. Fiction’s greatest contributions to the study of history are those significations that cannot be found elsewhere, or that are, at least, rarely found elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> To approach the use of fiction in too cautious a manner – to argue that its subjective elements render it too difficult for historians to access its valuable insights – is to waste and misuse the source. To approach fictional ‘documents’ in too tentative a manner, to simply ‘interrogate’ or ‘grill’ them – to hold them at arm’s length like the ‘critic’ (for fear of being found ‘complicit’) – is not the way to understand how past readers were both ‘reached and touched’.<sup>52</sup> Popular novels are an invaluable source to turn to for historians studying interior lives – an area of historical analysis into which relatively few other available documents present a pathway. And, as with any evidence used to help fill in the ‘gaps’ or ‘silences’ in existing historical narratives, the insights offered by fiction are often unverified by the more conventional historical sources.<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that such evidence should enter into historical narrative or discourse unchecked or unquestioned. On the contrary, even where few other comparable sources are to be found, fictional insights can still be tested to some extent. However, and again, it is the uniqueness and richness of historical understanding offered by fiction that recommends its exploration by historians willing to enter the world of emotions and that of the history/fiction borderlands. Doubtless, with increased usage as a source for histories of emotions, consensus concerning the methodological challenges faced by those interpreting emotions in popular fiction will grow; as it will for the methodological challenges faced by historians of emotions generally.

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<sup>1</sup> See introductory remarks in Frank Biess, Alon Confino, Ute Frevert, Uffa Jensen, Lyndal Roper and Daniela Saxer, Forum: ‘History of Emotions’, *German History*, 28, 1: 67-80. See also Jan Plamper, ‘The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns’, *History and Theory*, 49 (May 2010): 237-265, 237.

<sup>2</sup> See Lucien Febvre ‘Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past’, in *Lucien Febvre, A New Kind of History and Other Essays*, Peter Burke (ed.), transl. K. Folca, (New York: 1973).

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Emotions historian, Barbara Rosenwein, does not attribute the recent proliferation of interest in a history of emotions to this call by Febvre in the 1940s. Rather she sees them as two different interests. Febvre's call, she argues, was a call for a 'moral history' that could 'explain fascism and reveal the principles on which a more rational order could be constructed'. His call, she continues, was 'public policy masquerading as history'. Everyone from the 1940s to the 1960s, Rosenwein contends, saw emotions as irrational. This understanding does not underpin the relatively new history of emotions which, as one of its main objectives, seeks to understand emotional experiences, emotional expressions and emotional norms within a given historical context. See Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, (June 2002), 821-845, 823.

<sup>3</sup> Joanna Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History', *History Workshop Journal*, 55/1 (Spring 2003): 111-133, 114.

<sup>4</sup> See Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', 823.

<sup>5</sup> Paula S. Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History: Some reflections on a continuing dialogue', *Journal of Social History*, (Fall 2003): 39-46, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History', 41.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical', *The American Historical Review*, 91/5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

<sup>8</sup> Klaus R. Scherer and Paul Ekman, 'Preface', in *Approaches to Emotion*, Scherer and Ekman (ed.s) (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1984), xi, quoted by Rosenwein in Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', 259.

<sup>9</sup> As explained by Frevert in Biess, 'History of Emotions', 67-8.

<sup>10</sup> Prominent historian of emotions, Peter Stearns, also points to the role that the growing area of family history played in promoting important discussions about familial emotions. See Peter Stearns in Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', 262.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Bailyn, 'The Challenge of Modern Historiography', *American Historical Review*, 87/1 (1982): 1-24, 18-19; and, Theodore Zeldin, 'Personal History and the History of the Emotions', *Journal of Social History*, 15 (1982): 339- 347, 340.

<sup>12</sup> Zeldin, 'Personal History and the History of the Emotions', 340.

<sup>13</sup> Stearns and Lewis point out that this field of emotions history is both old and new. That is to say, social history, as evoked by historians such as Febvre and Bloch in the 1920s and 1930s, called for work on the nature and impact of emotional change. However, the formal study of this area of history dates back only about two decades. See Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,' *The American Historical Review*, 90/4 (1985): 813-836; and Peter Stearns and Jan Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 3, 7.

<sup>14</sup> The former are collective expectations, for which there is often prescribed and guiding literature, and the latter the reality of actual emotional experiences. For a full outline of the distinctions between these two sets of standards and experiences, see Stearns and Stearns, 'Emotionology', 813-836.

<sup>15</sup> Stearns and Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States*, 2; and Peter Stearns, Review of *Romantic Passion: A Universal Experience?*, William Jankowiak (ed.), *Journal of Social History*, 29/4 (1996): 971-972, 971.

<sup>16</sup> John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History. Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 231.

<sup>17</sup> Stearns and Lewis, *An Emotional History of the United States* and William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', 821.

<sup>19</sup> Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety', 112.

<sup>20</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Fear. A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2005); Peter Stearns, *American Fear: The Causes and Consequences of High Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Age* (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 2006) and Martha Tomhave Blauvelt's *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the responses to questions about the future direction of emotions history in Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', 237-265.

<sup>22</sup> Willemijn Ruberg points out that there is no consensus as yet to the hotly contested question: should historians look to other disciplines in order to incorporate their latest findings or 'does literary and cultural theory provide us with better models'? See Willemijn Ruberg, 'Interdisciplinarity and the History of Emotions', *Cultural and Social History*, 6/4: 507-516, 508.

<sup>23</sup> Bourke cites the example of John C. Spurlock and Cynthia A. Magistro, *New and Improved. The Transformation of American Women's Emotional Culture* (New York: 1998). See Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety', 130.

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<sup>24</sup> Frevert in Biess, 'History of Emotions', 79-80.

<sup>25</sup> Frevert in Biess, 'History of Emotions', 80. Another potential solution to the problem of definition, historian Willemijn Ruberg has recently pointed out, is that taken by American historian, Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, in her 2007 study, *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830*, which is not to settle on any one definition, all being borrowed from neighbouring disciplines. See Ruberg, 'Interdisciplinarity and the History of Emotions', 512.

<sup>26</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context I. International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions*, 1 (2010): 1-32, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', 12.

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, 'Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions', *History Compass*, 8/8 (2010): 828-842, 834.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Roper, 'Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005): 59-72, 62.

<sup>30</sup> John Demos, 'Afterword: Notes from, and about, the History/Fiction Borderland', *Rethinking History*, 9/2 (2005): 329-335, 329.

<sup>31</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History and Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985); Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, 1978) and 'The Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 41-62; Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 2 vols. (London and New York: Verso, 1994), vol. 1, *Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*; Lynn Hunt, 'Introduction: History, Culture, and Text', in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 1-22; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Janet McCalman, 'Histories and Fictions: Reclaiming the Narrative', *Australian Historical Association Bulletin*, 84 (1997): 31-37; Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006); Beverley Southgate, *History Meets Fiction* (Harlow: Pearson, 2009); Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, transl. by Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Middlesex: Peregrine, 1969); Brian Fay, 'Unconventional History', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002): 1-6; Thomas V. Cohen, 'Reflections on Retelling a Renaissance Murder', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 41 (December 2002): 7-16; Madhumalati Adhikari, 'History and Story: Unconventional History in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* and James A. Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002): 43-55; Ann Rigney, 'All This Happened, More or Less: What a Novelist Made of the Bombing of Dresden', *History and Theory*, 47 (2009): 5-24; and, Amy J. Elias, 'Metahistorical Romance, the Historical Sublime, and Dialogic History', *Rethinking History*, 9/2 (2005): 159-172.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of this 'linguistic turn', see James Vernon, 'Who's Afraid of the 'linguistic turn'? The politics of social history and its discontents', *Journal of Social History*, 19/1 (1994): 81-97.

<sup>33</sup> Linda W. Rosenzweig, *The Anchor of My Life. Middle-Class American Mothers and Daughters, 1880-1914* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993); Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 5; and, Nicola Beauman, *A Very Great Profession. The Women's Novel, 1914-1939* (London: Virago, 1983). Laurie Langbauer is another literary scholar who uses novels, this time series fiction from the nineteenth century, in order to explore what she claims is the most common and therefore overlooked aspect of life and fiction, the 'everyday'.<sup>33</sup> Langbauer looks at some of the fictional writing of Victorians, Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Yonge, Anthony Trollope and Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as at the writings of some of their successors, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and John Galsworthy, writing about the Victorians. Langbauer couples the various authors she studies with various theoretical approaches – those most suited to the material she is examining. 'Strains of poststructural feminism', however, largely informs her work. She examines themes such as gender, feminism, reactions to the everyday and the ordinary, emotional reactions such as, for example, boredom. She looks at prominent collective attitudes and values of the era as played out and debated in the era's fiction – and in fiction from the era to follow, the modern period. See Laurie Langbauer, *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Richards, 'What is the History of Popular Culture?' in Juliet Gardiner (ed.), *What is History Today?* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1989), 126-128, 126.

<sup>35</sup> James Smith Allen, 'History and the Novel: *Mentalité* in Modern Popular Fiction', *History and Theory*, 22 (1983): 233-252, 234.

<sup>36</sup> Theorists such as Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish and Georges Poulet wrote extensively on reading processes and reception theories, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. See David Lodge (ed), *Modern Criticism and Theory. A Reader* (London and New York: Longman, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> Allen, 'History and the Novel', 247.

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<sup>38</sup> In his attempt to understand the phenomena of the bestselling novel, Claud Cockburn, journalist and author of *Bestseller. The Books that Everyone Read 1900-1939*, maintains Cockburn recognises the relationship between author and audience as: ‘first, the existence of certain attitudes, prejudices, aspirations, etc., in the reader’s conscious or subconscious mind; secondly, the existence of a rapport, a ‘sympathy’ – in the exact sense of the word – between the conscious or subconscious mind of the reader and that of the author; thirdly, the craftsmanship of the author, engaged in translating these attitudes, aspirations, etc., into acceptable fictional form; [and] fourthly, reception by the reader of these fictional expressions’. See Claud Cockburn, *Bestseller. The Books that Everyone Read 1900-1939* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), 11.

<sup>39</sup> For a more detailed discussion of how to use popular novels for a history of interiority, see Crozier-De Rosa, *The Middle Class Novels of Arnold Bennett and Marie Corelli*, Chapter 2 ‘Using Novels as a Historical Source’.

<sup>40</sup> Richard D Altick, ‘Publishing’, in Herbert F. Tucker (ed.), *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* (Blackwell, Malden, Massachusetts: 1999): 189-304, 303.

<sup>41</sup> Certainly, many at the time, those witnessing the massive swell in the general reading public, perceived reading to be gendered. Charles Boon, when establishing the publishing house, Mills & Boon, for instance, recognised that, in order to be a commercial success, he would have to pay special attention to the tastes of a particular vast section of the general reading public – women – members of the reading public that he was convinced ‘devoured’ most novels before they even reached male readers. See Joseph McAleer, *Passion’s Fortune. The Story of Mills & Boon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29. Another contemporary commentator, Edmund Gosse, in an article entitled ‘The Tyranny of the Novel’, in April 1892, stated that it was his belief that the main readers of novels were young women, particularly young married women. This fact only made what he saw to be the negative influence of the proliferation of low quality novels even worse. (Peter D. McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.) Kate Flint’s 1995 book on ‘the woman reader’, while arguing that it is often extremely difficult to access the make-up of any audience with any sense of accuracy, certainly agrees that a large proportion of fiction from this period was published with a specifically female audience, principally a young female audience, in mind. See Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 49.

<sup>42</sup> Cockburn, *Bestseller*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Cockburn, *Bestseller*, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions’, 834, 836.

<sup>45</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions’, 836.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenwein, ‘Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions’, 11.

<sup>47</sup> For an inquiry into the issue of how far fiction influences the reader, a topic not dealt with here, see Robert Druce, *This Day Our Daily Fictions. An Enquiry into the Multi-Million Bestseller Status of Enid Blyton and Ian Fleming* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1992), 287-302.

<sup>48</sup> For a much more detailed discussion of the historical insights offered by Bennett and Corelli, see Crozier-De Rosa, *The Middle Class Novels of Arnold Bennett and Marie Corelli*. For more on Bennett in particular, see Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, ‘A ‘wet blanket of intolerable routine and deadly domesticity’: The feelings, freedoms and frustrations of Hilda Lessways, Arnold Bennett’s ‘ordinary’ new woman’, *The Latchkey: A Journal of New Woman Studies*, 2/1 (Summer 2010).

<sup>49</sup> Rosenzweig, *The Anchor of My Life*, xi. Also, Jeremy Black and Donald M. MacRaild believe that the nature of the sources used in this area of historical study – their ‘typical’ or ‘eccentric’ characteristics – represents real problems for cultural historians. (Jeremy Black and Donald M. MacRaild, *Studying History* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1997), 115.)

<sup>50</sup> Rosenzweig, *The Anchor of My Life*, xi.

<sup>51</sup> This idea is supported by LaCapra, *History and Criticism*, 126. Also see Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty. England in the Early Industrial Age* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), 403.

<sup>52</sup> Light, *Forever England*, x.

<sup>53</sup> Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 431.

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