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*Healthy Boundaries: Property, Law, and Public Health in
England and Wales, 1815–1872* by James G. Hanley (review)

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Victorian Review, Volume 43, Number 1, Spring 2017, pp. 152-154 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2017.0018>



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of its destabilizing chaos. Chartist newspapers such as the *Northern Star*, which typically opposed emigration as a form of coerced removal that did little to ameliorate unequal conditions in England, looked to America rather than the British colonies to project an “uneasy utopianism” that had none of the sentimental domesticity of other settler narratives (143). Piesse makes the novel claim that American westerns—which depicted heroic men in conflict with wild animals, catastrophic weather, and violent natives—published in British periodicals were embedded within broader settler debates, and so may be viewed within the genre of emigration literature, a repositioning which displays this genre’s considerable mobility, particularly in destabilizing England as the imagined centre of this literary form.

Piesse deftly establishes a dominant model of emigrant periodical literature and then investigates important ways in which that model is resisted. As with any body of literature concerned with Britain’s colonial past, these texts often depict settler violence and racism, and Piesse is quick to declare such occurrences “now highly unpalatable” (139), even as the book maintains its focus on the emigrants and not the populations they encountered. *British Settler Emigration in Print* is a valuable contribution to the study of periodical print cultures, the history of feminist thought, emigration studies, and post-colonial studies more broadly. Piesse declares her hope that the book will be “part of a new wave of humanities scholarship” (14). She works to show how digital technologies can operate in conjunction with the traditional methodologies of literary studies. This book paves the way for future work to deploy similar methods and to build on the coherent theoretical model of containment and destabilization in emigrant literature established here.

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*Healthy Boundaries: Property, Law, and Public Health
in England and Wales, 1815–1872*

by James G. Hanley; pp. 270. Rochester:
U of Rochester P, 2016. \$148.46 cloth.

HHEALTHY BOUNDARIES brings to the fore the complexities of public health legislation and governance in nineteenth-century Britain. James Hanley rightly criticizes historians for paying little or no heed to the legal context of the delay of urban health improvements (e.g., sewers and drainage) in the nineteenth century (112). He therefore provides compelling

evidence to demonstrate the judicial challenges that both government and local boards of health faced when they sought legislative sanction to bring (or enforce) improvements in urban sanitary arrangements. Each chapter of the book builds a persuasive case that the idiomatic and distinct character of English health laws shaped nineteenth-century policy and practice in England and Wales. Collectively, the chapters provide a different view of long-held assumptions, such as the power of cholera (the oft-touted friend of reformers). As Hanley writes, “Miasmaticism may well have implied that everyone was liable to the disease, but it implied nothing about liability to taxation; fear of disease may have opened philanthropic purses, but it did not change the law of rating” (53). The history of finding a satisfactory legal manner by which to rate and define liability for sanitary works is thus at the heart of this book. Hanley traces the legal convulsions that Britain experienced before judicial guidance evolved from defending the personal “benefit” principle to guiding decisions to uphold public works that benefited the community (83–85). To get there, as Hanley explores in minute detail, the boundaries between public and private responsibility needed to be remoulded. *Healthy Boundaries* is therefore an extraordinary vessel through which to revisit and reconsider public health in nineteenth-century Britain.

As Hanley claims at the outset, *Healthy Boundaries* is “an analysis of legal conflict,” tracing case law, statutes, and local bylaws, “with a focus on the laws of making public health” (4–7). In his persuasive exposition of this sociolegal process, Hanley explains the radical development needed to move from self-interested “benefit” in sanitary (nuisance) laws to taking responsibility for the health of others in the community—be that parish, metropolis, or nation. The “climax” of this process, Hanley explains, was realized in the court’s decision in *Pew v. Metropolitan Board of Works*, whereby governance finally gained the legal sanction needed to compel citizens to take responsibility for the health of others—a monumental legal shift in the consideration of boundaries between, among other things, the public and private and local and central governance (108–09).

More space and material perhaps could have been provided for discussion of Hanley’s extraordinary legal revelations within the broad tides of medical and social history for this period. Chapter 5, “Healthy Domesticity, 1848–72,” lends itself to this approach and is particularly engaging with regard to common lodging houses: “The Home Office’s regulations and advice divided the poor, demarcating those subject to unrestrained domestic inspection, those not entitled to privacy rights. Common lodging house regulation was part of a cluster of state practices that analyzed, categorized, and marginalized” (130). Other historians will no doubt build on this, but further discussion would have been beneficial. Hanley is correct to observe that medicine was consistently overlooked in making laws or reaching judicial decisions (9). Instead, legal protection of individual and property rights reigned supreme: “The miasmatic theories [various local actors] deployed had a

family resemblance, to be sure, but they were not identical, and their differences were driven less by medical ideas than by the need to protect property” (63). Notwithstanding the historiographical discussion in chapter 1, the lack of linkage with apposite or overlapping sociomedical histories in the rest of the book may isolate an otherwise strong body of research. Throughout the middle to the later part of Hanley’s periodization (1815–72), health, poor law, and medicine were frequently different faces of the same die. Hanley claims that “health was a pivotal arena for resetting boundaries between central and local governments” (113), but this resetting was also reflected in the overlap between health, welfare (poor law), and state medicine.

That said, this is a compact book—five chapters—and Hanley has intentionally enmeshed his scholarship within the sociopolitical ramifications of legal precedent. There are clear dividends from focusing in this way. For example, framing the curious but “meaningless” distinction between sewers and drains was a part of the legal wrangles and legalese of public health legislation (115). Valuable space is thus given over to pulling apart the minutiae of legal debate and judicial decisions, such as *Masters v. Scroggs*, whereby Hanley demonstrates the centrality of “liability” and derived personal “benefit” to sanitary works in the nineteenth century (48).

Scholars of public health will need to engage with *Healthy Boundaries*. Its deliberations, though tightly focused, have repercussions beyond public health. Defining boundaries between the private and public spheres and overcoming the sociolegal challenges of redistributive taxation remain at the core of modern dilemmas across the political spectrum.

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Education in Nineteenth-Century British Literature: Exclusion as Innovation

by Sheila Cordner; pp. 160. New York:

Routledge, 2016. \$167.97 cloth.

SCHOLARS WHO study the history of Victorian education often note the importance of three key years: 1833, when the British government began funding church schools that provided basic education to the working classes; 1862, when the Committee of Council on Education passed the Revised Code, which ensured reading, writing, and arithmetic as the core components of mass education and set a new funding model based on student results; and 1870, when the passing of Forster’s Education Act reaffirmed the British government’s commitment to popular education by creating a greater opportunity for working-class children to attend state-funded schools. In many ways,