

the genesis, evolution, structure, and activities of the revolutionaries, which helped to create a vision of a unified revolutionary movement posing a potent threat to the colonial state and was used to justify the implementation of antiterrorist legislation. (As Ghosh notes in her conclusion, for decades after independence, many of these police intelligence reports continued to be considered confidential documents.) Former revolutionaries constructed their own histories of revolutionary terrorism from a radically different perspective. Written by both male and female revolutionaries, these cluster in two main periods: the 1920s and the period shortly after Indian independence in 1947. The first generation of autobiographies gave Bengali revolutionary terrorism “a storied past,” and challenged narratives of both liberal political reform and non-violence as a dominant form of nationalism (24, 90). Memoirs composed after 1947 updated the lineages of revolutionary terrorists constructed by earlier authors and proposed “an alternative history that represented a more radical set of politics” for postcolonial India (219–220).

In spite of the impressive depth of analysis in Ghosh’s book, the volume of material available to historians on the Bengali revolutionary movement means that *Gentlemanly Terrorists*, in her words, “offers a partial and selective account” (26). Her focus generally remains closely on the province of Bengal, and there remains scope to write a more global history of the Bengali revolutionaries and of Indian revolutionary activity more generally. While Ghosh’s discussion of the often conflicting perspectives of British officials in London, New Delhi, and Kolkata helps to illuminate the assumptions that lay behind colonial antiterrorism legislation, the title and affiliations of some officials are listed incorrectly. Wedgwood (not “Wedgewood”) Benn was a Labour rather than a Liberal MP when he served as secretary of state for India, for example, while at least one India Office official is identified as a member of the government of Bengal (165).

Overall, however, Ghosh succeeds admirably in producing a history of the engagement between the Bengali revolutionaries and the colonial state of value not only to historians of South Asia, but to historians of modern Britain seeking to better understand the relationship between ideals of liberal democracy and emergency legislation.

Michael Silvestri  
Clemson University  
[msilves@clemson.edu](mailto:msilves@clemson.edu)

IAN HESKETH. *Victorian Jesus: J. R. Seeley, Religion, and the Cultural Significance of Anonymity*. Studies in Book and Print Culture. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. Pp. 272. \$41.25 (cloth).  
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.155

Despite the recent wave of revisionary work on secularization—both the historical process and the historiographic narrative—the past decades have not seen many reassessments of Victorian historical scholarship on Jesus and the Bible. (Notable exceptions include Jennifer Stevens’s *The Historical Jesus and the Literary Imagination, 1860–1920* [2010] and Jefferson J. A. Gatrall’s *The Real and the Sacred: Picturing Jesus in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* [2014].) This omission makes a certain sense, given that the story of how Victorian intellectuals had their religious faith undermined by the Higher Criticism lies at the heart of the old crisis-of-faith narrative that scholars like Alex Owen, Callum Brown, and Peter van der Veer have sought to complicate. Instead of deriving Victorian secularity from narrowly intellectual sources, such scholars have examined how broader processes of urbanization, imperialism, and technological change refigured how the Victorians understood the category of religion itself.

In this light, the appeal of Ian Hesketh's new book is his willingness to dive deeply into the origins, publication, and reception of a key Victorian Jesus text: John Robert Seeley's *Ecce Homo* (1865). Almost forgotten today, Seeley's volume (fated to remain the second-best work of nineteenth century philosophy by that title) represented a liberal-Anglican response to works like David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, translated by George Eliot in 1846, and Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus*, translated by Charles Wilbour in 1863. *Ecce Homo*, as Hesketh puts it, portrayed the historical Jesus "not as a worker of miracles, but rather as the founder of a society based on a universal moral code" (4) who sought to replace the idea of a theocratic monarchy with an "enthusiasm of humanity" (62). In using that last phrase, Hesketh argues, Seeley was linking a key evangelical affect to the project of August Comte's Religion of Humanity, which sought to infuse modern democratic societies with a collective effervescence. Seeley's book was initially published anonymously, provoking much speculation as to the identity of its author; guesses reportedly ranged from A. P. Stanley to John Henry Newman to Eliot herself. Lord Shaftesbury famously called it "the most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of hell" (96), but many liberals also found the book objectionable for its sheer modesty. Writing in *Fraser's*, James Fitzjames Stephen called *Ecce Homo* a sheep in wolf's clothing—an orthodox tract in rationalist guise—while Henry Sidgwick felt much the same way. Indeed, Hesketh makes much of the links between Seeley and his father, the evangelical publisher Robert Benton Seeley, who helped shape the landscape of religious publishing in the decades leading up to the 1860s controversies surrounding *Essays and Reviews* (1860) and J. W. Colenso's *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1862).

Although *Ecce Homo* lies at the center of the study, Hesketh also surveys Seeley's later career as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Viewed from over a century hence, his most enduring work turns out to have been *The Expansion of England* (1883), a treatise on imperial history that remains a key reference point in studies of British settler colonialism such as Duncan Bell's *The Idea of Greater Britain* (2007). Seeley's midcareer rebranding of himself as a professional historian, Hesketh argues, meant that it would be almost two decades before he published his frequently teased follow-up to *Ecce Homo*, *Natural Religion* (1882). Where the book had promised to present Jesus as "the creator of Modern Theology and Religion," it turned out to represent a more generic manifesto for a secularized religion (181). If many readers were disappointed, Hesketh argues, this was because religious controversy had moved on since the 1860s, and secularist conceptions of history offered by emerging disciplines like anthropology had now become mainstream fare. Writing in the wake of Seeley's 1895 death, many critics were hard pressed to explain why exactly the book had landed with such an impact barely thirty years earlier. Though "neither profound nor very original," judged the *National Observer*, the book nevertheless found "sympathy with the religious difficulties which at that time beset the persons he addressed" (197).

Hesketh's avowed model in *Victorian Jesus* is James Secord's *Victorian Sensation* (2000), which tracked the genesis and reception of Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844). But Hesketh also takes cues from Bernard Lightman's work on how "many long-ignored works of popular scene from the Victorian period were crucial in shaping public perceptions of science" both then and today (9). Indeed, Hesketh argues that one crucial context for Seeley's career is the decline of anonymous publishing in Great Britain. As Hesketh notes in his coda, *Ecce Homo* was one of the last major works to be published anonymously and thus stood at the crux of changing norms; a good deal of the interest in the volume focused on the identity of the author and why he or she would choose not to write *in propria persona*. The question is intriguing but proves to be a bit of a red herring. It would certainly make sense to discuss the decline of anonymous publishing in a study of Victorian religious culture, since it marked a shift in liberal conceptions of the public sphere and thus directly impinges on the question of political secularism. In fact, anonymous publishing remains just one of the many subthemes tracked in Hesketh's study, receiving

acknowledgement from time to time, often in earnest nods toward all the scholarship that remains to be done on the subject, but not clearly deserving its prominent placement in the volume's title.

Ultimately, the real strength of *Victorian Jesus* lies in the specificity of its subject rather than in its conceptual breadth. Instead of unpacking a single large problem or concept, Hesketh takes up a specific text that happens to tie together a range of different cultural questions: religious controversy, changes to the publishing market, the rise of academic specialization. In Hesketh's hands, texts that have since become scholarly bywords—*Ecce Homo* for religious modernism, *Expansion of England* for the new imperialism—instead appear as complicated arguments, interesting for their internal valences rather than their historical positions. Hesketh gives us Seeley as a theorist of his own moment, not just a data point of discourse to be theorized upon.

Sebastian Lecourt  
 University of Houston  
[sjlecour@central.uh.edu](mailto:sjlecour@central.uh.edu)

JAMES HINTON. *Seven Lives from Mass Observation: Britain in the Late Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 190. \$40.00 (cloth).  
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.156

The Mass Observation archive is a well-used source. Those who write for a wide public (even military historians such as Max Hastings) value the way in it seems to conjure up the lives of “ordinary people,” while those aiming at a more academic audience delve into it as a source for the history of emotions. One is struck, however, by the fact that most modern uses of this archive do not have much to do with either “mass,” because they use small numbers of case studies, or “observation,” because interest is increasingly focused on the way that subjects describe their interior lives rather than how they see other people.

James Hinton takes seven case studies: four women and three men, five born in the early 1930s and two in the early 1920s; all were white. Each story is told in a separate chapter. These accounts are based on what subjects wrote in response to various “directives” that enjoined them to talk about some aspect of their lives. This is the “second generation” of Mass Observation in the sense that the project, after an interruption, was revived in 1981, meaning that evidence about subjects' earlier lives is largely based on retrospective recollections—though Hinton also draws on diaries that some of them kept even before they became involved with Mass Observation; on interviews with the subjects; and, in one case, an interview with the widow of a subject. The accounts throw up striking details. One woman recalls her first orgasm as being “rather like a glorified sneeze” (32). A successful banker (ruthless in his business and complacently adulterous in his private life) survived an investigation by the Inland Revenue into the chauffeur-driven company Daimler that he used, among other things, for collecting his son from boarding school. After this ordeal, he wrote in his diary, “my religion helps a lot in these awful situations” (154).

The emphasis on individual lives makes for an enjoyable read and provides much material that other historians will mine for their own purposes. I wonder, however, whether Hinton might have provided more overall background. To take an obvious example, he says nothing about the proportion of men born in the early 1930s who were called up for compulsory military service, which makes his own sample (two of his three men joined the army as short-service regulars and one failed the medical) unusual. More cultural context might also have been useful. Do the stories recounted here tell us about things that really happened? Is