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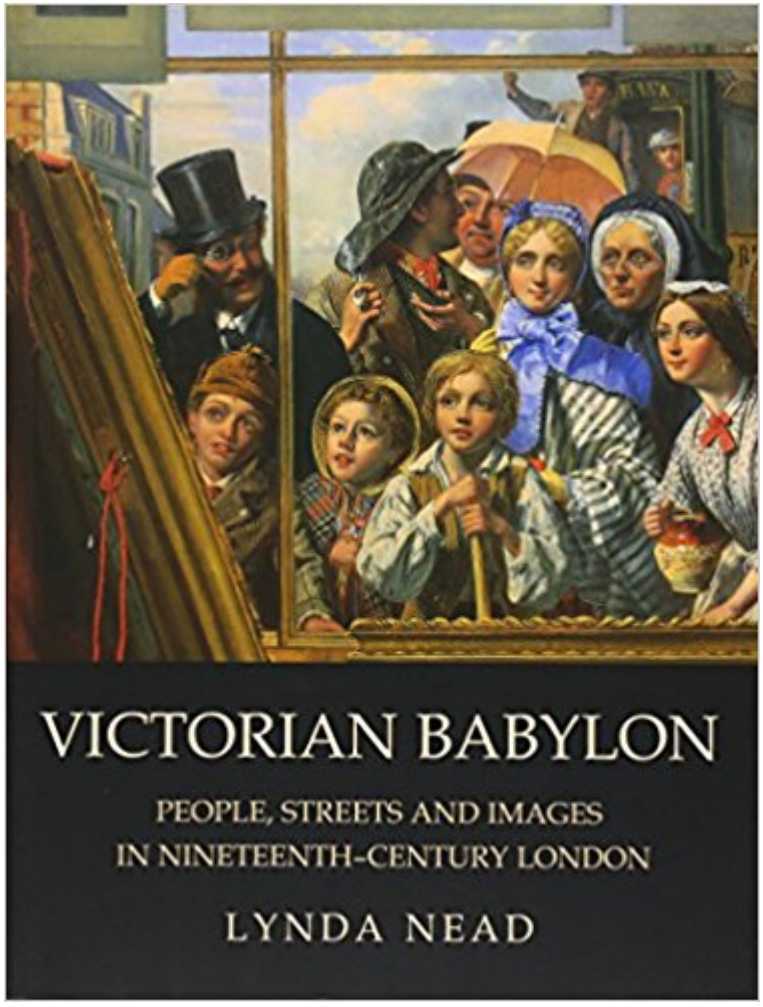
Victorian Babylon: People, Streets And Images In Nineteenth-Century London



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Synopsis

In this fascinating and innovative look at nineteenth-century London, Lynda Nead offers a new account of modernity and metropolitan life. She charts the relationship between LondonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s formation into a modern organized city in the 1860s and the emergence of new types of production and consumption of visual culture. She considers the role visual images played in the creation of a vibrant and diverse urban culture and how new kinds of publics were created for these representations. Shifting the focus of the history of modernity from Paris to London, Nead here argues for a different understanding of gender and public space in a society where women joined the everyday life of city streets and entered the debates concerning morality, spectacle, and adventure.The book draws on texts and images of many kinds—including acts of Parliament, literature, newspaper reports, private letters, maps, paintings, advertisements, posters, and banned obscene publications. Taking a highly interdisciplinary approach, Nead explores such intriguing topics as the efforts of urban improvers to move water, air, traffic, goods, and people in the Victorian metropolis; the impact of gas lighting and glass on urban leisure; and the obscenity legislation that emerged in response to new forms of visual mass culture that were perceived as dangerous and pervasive.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“[This] genuinely interdisciplinary study . . . makes a major contribution to our knowledge of the lived experience of the Victorian city.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Timothy Barringer, Journal of the Society of Architectural HistoriansÃ¢â ¬Å“Provocative and brilliant.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Susan P. Casteras,

Nineteenth Century StudiesÃ¢â ¬Å“Splendid. . . . [Nead] brings an art historianÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fine sense of visual detail; indeed, one of the most striking features of the book is the wonderful illustrative material.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •John Marriott, History Today

Lynda Nead teaches history of art at Birkbeck College, University of London.

I am a devoted Victorianist and found the info in this book to be a useful study of certain aspects of London. However it suffers a little from too much effort to be "academic" so that the writing style gets stiff and wordy at times. Nevertheless, the discussion of the pleasure gardens of early Victorian London and for me the discussion how how women looked at public versus private identities were very good. Worth a read if you want some more depth in your studies of London or Victorian perspectives.

Well worth the purchase. Lovers of Victoriana will enjoy this.Get into the nitty gritty of London as it truly was.

This is a truly one-of-a-kind writing on the subject of Victorian culture. Many of my other sources are exceedingly boring to read or seem stuck on the ethereal "you had to be there" sort of atmosphere of the time. I can really connect with Nead and her use of art and architecture.

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