Welcome to Reaktion’s Autumn and Winter season of books for 2020. Here are a few of our highlights.

*Crime Dot Com* shows how hacking went global – it’s as pacy and engaging as the best of thrillers. And in *Assassins’ Deeds* John Withington gives us the blood-soaked history of the murder of prominent people from the age of the pharaohs to the present day.

Luigi Amara’s brilliant, quirky and supremely entertaining *The Wig: A Hairbrained History* illuminates a paradoxical world of concealment and display.

Ken McNamara’s *Dragons’ Teeth and Thunderstones* is an original, fascinating perspective on fossils, in the context of folklore and archaeological discovery. *Merpeople* by Vaughn Scribner describes and illustrates an enduring fascination with mermaids and mermen.

Mitchel P. Roth’s *Power on the Inside* is a lively global history of prison gangs and their continuing story of violence. And in *Wanderers: A History of Women Walking*, Kerri Andrews traces the pathways of ten remarkable women, from Elizabeth Carter to Virginia Woolf, who walked their words into being.

Ged Pope’s *A Literary Guide to Suburban London* is a unique journey to reading the lesser-celebrated neighbourhoods of one of the world’s great cities, while Lisa Morton explores the history of our conversations with the dead in *Calling the Spirits: A History of Seances*.

We hope you will enjoy these books, and many more, in our varied and stimulating new programme.

Michael R. Leaman, Publisher
David Hayden, Managing Director

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Crime Dot Com

*From Viruses to Vote Rigging, How Hacking Went Global*

Geoff White

On 4 May 2000, an email that read ‘kindly check the attached loveletter’ was sent from the Philippines. Attached was a virus, the Love Bug, and within days it had paralysed banks, broadcasters and businesses across the globe. The age of Crime Dot Com had begun.

Geoff White charts the astonishing development of hacking, from its birth among the ruins of the Eastern Bloc to its coming of age as the most pervasive threat to our connected world. He takes us inside the workings of real-life cybercrimes, revealing how the tactics of high-tech crooks are now being harnessed by nation states.

From Ashley Madison to election rigging, *Crime Dot Com* is a thrilling account of hacking, past and present, and of what the future might hold.

Geoff White is an investigative journalist who has covered technology for numerous outlets, including the BBC and Channel 4 News.
Whether in a courtroom or a dressing room, wigs come in many forms, and represent many things: from power, to sexuality, to parody, to health, to self-identity, to disguise. Wigs are present at parties and in chemotherapy rooms, in pop music and contemporary art. In this witty and eloquent book, Luigi Amara reflects on the curious history of the wig, and along the way takes a sideways look at Western civilization.

Amara illuminates how the wig has starred throughout history, from ancient Egypt to the court of Louis XIV, and from British courtrooms to drag shows today. Containing many striking and unusual images, the book will appeal to a wide audience, from those interested in the history of fashion to readers of philosophy, art, culture and aesthetics.

Luigi Amara is the author of many poetry collections, essays and children’s books, including Nuñoca (winner of the International Poetry Prize in Spanish) and The School of Boredom. He lives in Mexico City.
Assassins’ Deeds
A History of Assassination from Ancient Egypt to the Present Day
John Withington

Assassins have been killing the powerful and famous for at least 3,000 years. Personal ambition, revenge and anger have encouraged many to violent deeds, like the Turkish sultan who had nineteen of his brothers strangled or the bodyguards who murdered a dozen Roman emperors. More recently have come new motives like religious and political fanaticism, revolution and liberation, with government also getting in on the act, while many victims seem to have been surprisingly careless – Abraham Lincoln was killed after letting his bodyguard go for a drink.

So do assassinations work? Drawing on anecdote, evidence and statistical analysis, Assassins’ Deeds delves into some of history’s most notorious acts, unveiling an intriguing cast of characters, ingenious methods of killing and many unintended consequences.

John Withington is an award-winning television journalist, based in London, whose previous books include Secrets of the Centenarians (Reaktion, 2017).
Power on the Inside
A Global History of Prison Gangs
Mitchel P. Roth

*Power on the Inside* is the first book to examine the historical development of prison gangs worldwide, from those that emerged inside the mid-nineteenth-century Neapolitan prisons to the new generation of younger inmates challenging the status quo within gang subcultures today. Historian-criminologist Mitchel P. Roth examines prison gangs throughout the world, from the Americas, Oceania and South Africa to Southeast Asia, Europe and beyond. The book examines the many variables that influence the evolution of prison subcultures, from colonialism and population demographics to prison architecture and staff–prisoner relations. *Power on the Inside* features many historical and contemporary images, and will inform professionals in the field as well as general readers who want to know more about the realities of prison gangs today.

Mitchel P. Roth is Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Sam Houston State University, Texas. His many books include *An Eye for an Eye: A Global History of Crime and Punishment* (Reaktion, 2014).
Merpeople
A Human History
Vaughn Scribner

‘A valuable contribution to the interface between folklore and culture.’ – Dr Philip Hayward, Adjunct Professor, University of Technology Sydney and editor of Scaled for Success: The Internationalisation of the Mermaid (2018)

People have been fascinated by merpeople since ancient times. From the sirens of Homer’s Odyssey to Hans Christian Andersen’s The Little Mermaid and the film Splash (1984), myths, stories and legends of half-human, half-fish creatures abound. In modern times ‘mermaiding’ has gained popularity among cosplayers throughout the world.

In Merpeople: A Human History, Vaughn Scribner traces the long history of mermaids and mermen, taking in a wide variety of sources and using 117 striking images. From film to philosophy, church halls to coffee houses, ancient myth to modern science, Scribner shows that merpeople are – and always have been – everywhere.

Vaughn Scribner is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Central Arkansas. He is the author of Inn Civility: Urban Taverns and Early American Civil Society (2019).
Dragons’ Teeth and Thunderstones

*The Quest for the Meaning of Fossils*

Ken McNamara

‘Opens window after window on the use and interpretation of fossils by different cultures from Ireland to Australia over the millennia and up to the present.’ – Douglas Palmer, author of *A History of Earth in 100 Groundbreaking Discoveries* (2011)

For at least half a million years, people have been doing some very strange things with fossils. Long before a few seventeenth-century minds started to decipher their true, organic nature, fossils had been eaten, dropped in goblets of wine, buried with the dead and used to adorn bodies. What triggered such curious behaviour was the belief that some fossils could cure illness, protect against poison, ease the passage into the afterlife, ward off evil spirits and even kill those who were just plain annoying. But above all, to our early prehistoric ancestors, fossils were the very stuff of artistic inspiration. Drawing on archaeology, mythology and folklore, Ken McNamara takes you on a journey through prehistory with these curious stones, and explores humankind’s unending quest for the meaning of fossils.

Ken McNamara is a palaeontologist and former Director of the Sedgwick Museum at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Shapes of Time* (1997) and *The Star-crossed Stone* (2010). He lives in Western Australia.

Explores humankind’s age-old quest for the meaning of fossils

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Twenty Worlds
*The Extraordinary Story of Planets Around Other Stars*
Niall Deacon

Thirty years ago the only planets we knew were the ones orbiting our own Sun; we now know of thousands of other worlds orbiting distant stars. In this book astronomer Niall Deacon journeys to twenty of these globes: from giant, blisteringly hot planets orbiting close to their parent stars to planets that float through the cold wilderness of space alone, and from dead stars shredding asteroids to worlds made of diamond and even planets that may be similar to the Earth. Deacon also takes in the latest exoplanet discoveries, and explains how astronomers have come to learn so much about these strange and distant worlds.

*Twenty Worlds* tells a sweeping story of real planets around other stars, and appeals to the wide audience for popular science and astronomy.

Niall Deacon is an astronomy researcher and writer, and lives in Heidelberg, Germany. His research focuses on failed stars called brown dwarfs and giant planets orbiting other stars.
The London suburbs have, for more than 250 years, fired the creative literary imagination, whether this is Samuel Johnson hiding away in bucolic pre-industrial Streatham, Italo Svevo cheering on Charlton Athletic FC down at The Valley, or Angela Carter hymning the joyful ‘wrongness’ of living south-of-the-river in Brixton. From Richmond to Rainham, Cockfosters to Croydon, this sweeping literary tour of the 32 London Boroughs describes how writers, from the seventeenth century on, have responded to and fictionally reimagined London’s suburbs. It introduces us to the great suburban novels, such as Hanif Kureishi’s Bromley-set *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Lawrence Durrell’s *The Black Book* and Zadie Smith’s *NW*. It also reveals the lesser-known short stories, diaries, poems, local guides, travelogues, memoirs and biographies that together show how these communities have long been closely observed, keenly remembered and brilliantly imagined.

Ged Pope writes on London, history and culture.
Wanderers
*A History of Women Walking*
Kerri Andrews

This is a book about ten women who, over the past three hundred years, have found walking essential to their sense of themselves, as people and as writers. *Wanderers* traces their footsteps, from eighteenth-century parson’s daughter Elizabeth Carter – who desired nothing more than to be taken for a vagabond in the wilds of southern England – to modern walker-writers such as Nan Shepherd and Cheryl Strayed. For each, walking was integral, whether it wasrambling for miles across the Highlands, like Sarah Stoddart Hazlitt, or pacing novels into being, as Virginia Woolf did around Bloomsbury.

Offering a beguiling view of the history of walking, *Wanderers* guides us through the different ways of seeing – of being – articulated by these ten pathfinding women.

Kerri Andrews is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Edge Hill University. She has published widely on women’s writing, especially Romantic-era authors, and is a keen hill-walker and member of Mountaineering Scotland.
Calling the Spirits
A History of Seances
Lisa Morton

Calling the Spirits investigates the eerie history of our conversations with the dead, from necromancy in Homer’s Odyssey to the emergence of Spiritualism – when Victorians were entranced by mediums and the seance was born.

Among our cast are the Fox sisters, teenagers surrounded by ‘spirit rappings’; Daniel Dunglas Home, the ‘greatest medium of all time’; Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose unlikely friendship was forged, then riven, by the afterlife; and Helen Duncan, the medium whose trial in 1944 for witchcraft proved more popular than news about the war. The book also considers Ouija boards, modern psychics and paranormal investigations, and is illustrated with engravings, fine art (from beyond) and photographs. Hugely entertaining, it begs the question: Is anybody there . . . ?

Lisa Morton is an award-winning author and widely acknowledged as one of the world’s leading authorities on the supernatural. Her previous books include Ghosts: A Haunted History (Reaktion, 2015).
Fabulosa!
The Story of Polari, Britain’s Secret Gay Language
Paul Baker

A Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year 2019
‘Richly evocative and entertaining.’ – The Guardian
‘An essential book for anyone who wants to Polari bona!’
– Attitude
‘Paul Baker’s exuberant, richly detailed history of Polari, a “secret” language used chiefly by gay men in the 1940s and 1950s, is a delightful read.’ – Tatler

In Fabulosa! Paul Baker describes Polari’s origins, its linguistic nuts and bolts, and the ways and environments in which it was spoken. He traces the reasons for its decline and tells of its unlikely re-emergence in the twenty-first century. From sailors to drag queens, Round the Horne’s Julian and Sandy to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Fabulosa! offers a fascinating and tender account of this funny, filthy and ingenious language.

Paul Baker is Professor of English Language at Lancaster University. His books include American and British English (2018) and, with Jo Stanley, Hello Sailor! (2003).
The Idiot
A History from 1700 to the Present Day
Simon Jarrett

‘Simon Jarrett is a mesmerising historian . . . [his] story is a tribute to the struggles and desires of those labelled “idiots”.’
– Joanna Bourke, Professor of History, Birkbeck, University of London

‘Elegant and provocative . . . this humane history teaches us how society can adapt to accommodate all its members.’
– David Turner, author of Disability in Eighteenth-century England

The Idiot traces the little-known lives of people with learning disabilities from the communities of eighteenth-century England to the nineteenth-century asylum and care in today’s society. Using evidence from civil and criminal courtrooms, joke books, slang dictionaries, novels, art and caricature, it explores the explosive intermingling of ideas about intelligence and race, while bringing into sharp focus the lives of people often seen as the most marginalized in society.

Simon Jarrett is a research fellow at Birkbeck, University of London. He is the editor of Community Living Magazine.

Traces the little-known lives of people with learning disabilities over 300 years
‘A great resource for all guitar players, tinkerers and enthusiasts . . . provides essential and fascinating facts of this unique instrument’s development over the course of more than a century.’ – Paul Brett, rock guitarist, journalist and guitar designer

‘Required reading for anyone interested in the development of one of the most popular and revolutionary instruments ever created.’ – Tony Bacon, guitar historian and author

An in-depth look at the invention and development of the electric guitar, demonstrating how its design has changed and what its design over the years has meant for its sound. Amplified celebrates this beloved instrument and reveals how it developed through the experiments of amateur makers and part-time tinkerers. It digs deep into archives and features new interviews with makers and players.

Paul Atkinson is Professor of Design and Design History at Sheffield Hallam University. He is the writer of the BBC guitar documentary Cigar Box Blues: The Makers of a Revolution (2019).
‘Ours is music with built-in hatred.’ – Pete Townshend

A Band with Built-In Hate pictures The Who through the prism of Pop art and the levelling of high and low culture it brought about.

Peter Stanfield guides us through the British pop revolution as it was embodied by the band: first, under the mentorship of arch-mod Peter Meaden; and then with Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, two aspiring film-makers, at the very centre of things in Soho. Guided by contemporary commentators – most conspicuously, Nik Cohn – Stanfield tells of a band driven by fury, and of what happened when they moved from explosive 45s to expansive concept albums. Ultimately, he describes how The Who confronted their lost youth as it was echoed in punk.

Peter Stanfield’s books include Maximum Movies: Pulp Fictions and Hoodlum Movies. Music is integral to his work, be it the blue yodel of a singing cowboy or the chug ‘n’ churn of a biker soundtrack. He lives in Ramsgate, Kent.
Loving Animals
On Bestiality, Zoophilia and Post-human Love
Joanna Bourke

‘A bold and imaginative book . . . Bourke undertakes a tour de force of historical and cultural attitudes towards human–animal relations.’ – Julie-Marie Strange, Professor of Modern British History, Durham University

Sexual contact with animals is one of the last taboos but, for a practice that is generally regarded as abhorrent, it is remarkable how many books, films, plays, paintings and photographs depict the subject. So what does loving animals mean? In this book the renowned historian Joanna Bourke explores the modern history of sex between humans and animals.

Bourke looks at the changing meanings of ‘bestiality’ and ‘zoophilia’, assesses the psychiatric and sexual aspects, and concludes by delineating an ethics of animal loving.

Joanna Bourke is Professor of History at Birkbeck, University of London, the Gresham Professor of Rhetoric and a Global Innovation Chair at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her many books include What it Means to Be Human (2011).
Humphry Repton
*Landscape Design in an Age of Revolution*
Tom Williamson

‘An important book on Repton, and a tour de force in the social and economic analysis of garden design.’
– Professor Stephen Bending, Director of the Southampton Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies

Humphry Repton is one of England’s most interesting and prolific garden and landscape designers. Renowned for his innovative design proposals and distinctive ‘before and after’ images, captured in his famous ‘Red Books’, Repton’s astonishing career represents the link between the simple parklands of his predecessor Capability Brown and the more elaborate, structured and formal landscapes of the Victorian age. This lavishly illustrated book, based on a wealth of new research, reinterprets Repton’s life, working methods and designs, and why they proved so popular in a rapidly changing world.

Tom Williamson is Professor of Landscape History at the University of East Anglia, and, with David Brown, author of *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: Landscape Revolution in Eighteenth-century England* (Reaktion, 2016).

A lavishly illustrated reinterpretation of Humphry Repton’s life, methods and designs

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Divine Images
The Life and Work of William Blake
Jason Whittaker

Although relatively obscure during his lifetime, William Blake has become one of the most popular English artists and writers, through poems such as ‘The Tyger’ and ‘Jerusalem’, and images including The Ancient of Days. Less well-known is Blake’s radical religious and political temperament, and that his visionary art was created to express a personal mythology that sought to re-create an entirely new approach to philosophy and art. This biographical and critical work examines both Blake’s visual and poetic oeuvre over his long career, from early engravings and poems to his final illustrations to Dante and the Book of Job. Divine Images further explores Blake’s immense popular appeal and influence after his death. It is an inspirational look at a pioneering figure.

Jason Whittaker is Head of the School of English and Journalism at the University of Lincoln. His books include William Blake and the Myths of Britain (1999) and Blake 2.0 (2012).
A Memorable Fancy

I was in a printing house in Hell & saw the nature, in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a DragonMan, clearing away the rubbish from a cages mouth, within a number of Dragons, were hollowing the cage.

In the second chamber was a Viper covering round the rock & the case, and others' measuring it with gold, silver and precious stones.

In the third chamber were an Eagle with wings & feathers of air, he caused the inside of the nine to be lighted, around were numbers of Eagles the men, who built palaces in the immense cliff.

In the fourth chamber were Lions at flaming fire, rolling around & melting the metals into living fishes.

In the fifth chamber were Lionoid forms, which cast the metals into the parties.

Where they were received by Men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries.
Painting with Demons
*The Art of Gerolamo Savoldo*
Michael Fried

‘A groundbreaking book on an extraordinary artist.’
– Stephen J. Campbell, Henry and Elizabeth Wiesenfeld Professor, Johns Hopkins University

The achievements of Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo were, even during a period of unprecedented artistry, out of the ordinary. Born in Brescia around 1480, he radically reimagined Christian subjects. His surviving oeuvre of roughly fifty paintings – from the intensely poetic *Tobias and the Angel* to sober self-portraits – represent some of the most profound work of the period.

In *Painting with Demons*, a beautifully illustrated book and the first in English devoted to the painter, Michael Fried brings his celebrated skills of looking and thinking to bear on Savoldo’s art, providing a stunning contribution to our understanding both of the early modern European imagination and of the achievement of this underappreciated artist.

Michael Fried is J. R. Herbert Boone Emeritus Professor of the Humanities and the History of Art at Johns Hopkins University. A renowned critic and historian, his previous books include *The Moment of Caravaggio* (2010).
English art critic John Ruskin was one of the great visionaries of his time, and his influential books and letters on the power of art challenged the foundations of Victorian life. He loved looking. Sometimes it informed the things he wrote, but often it provided access to the many topographical and cultural topics he explored – rocks, plants, birds, Turner, Venice, the Alps.

In *The Art of Ruskin and the Spirit of Place* John Dixon Hunt explores for the first time what Ruskin drew, rather than wrote, offering a new perspective on Ruskin’s visual imagination. Through analysis of more than 150 drawings and sketches, he shows how Ruskin’s art shaped his writings, his thoughts and his sense of place.

John Dixon Hunt is Emeritus Professor of the History and Theory of Landscape at the University of Pennsylvania. His previous books include *The Wider Sea: A Life of John Ruskin* (1992) and *The Making of Place* (Reaktion, 2015).
Landscape as Weapon

Cultures of Exhaustion and Refusal

John Beck

Once the playgrounds and raw material for the avant-garde, abandoned places and things – decommissioned military sites, post-industrial spaces, contested and forgotten edgelands – are now just as likely to be seen as assets for entrepreneurs or connoisseurs of the authentically worn-out. This is the age of patina, where the material remains of times past – the fields and factories, test sites, back alleys, machines and statues – are coveted, adored, mourned and commemorated, as well as sometimes despised. Through the exploration of a wide range of recent film, photography, art and writing about place, Landscape as Weapon argues that these abandoned sites are a critical arena for debate about the meaning of space and time under late capitalism.

John Beck is Professor of Modern Literature and Director of the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture at the University of Westminster. His many books include Dirty Wars: Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature (2009).
Essential Desires

Contemporary Art in Thailand

Brian Curtin

‘A fine overview of contemporary Thai art by a knowledgeable and sensitive critic.’
– Thanavi Chotpradit, Silpakorn University, Thailand

‘A valuable handbook to contemporary Thai art.’
– Pamela Corey, SOAS, University of London

Essential Desires: Contemporary Art in Thailand is the first major, fully illustrated survey of Thai art in thirty years. Brian Curtin shows how Thai artists negotiated their emergence on the global art stage while dealing with pan-Asian regionalism and nationalism at home.

This book traces the influences on contemporary Thai artists, from the impact of consumerism in Bangkok in the 1990s to the legacies of tradition, and their relationship to the nation’s often-volatile political stage. Curtin, in his exploration of Thailand’s fascinating art scene, shows how Thai artists are generating new ideas about their country.

Brian Curtin is an art critic based in Bangkok. He lectures in art history and visual culture at the Department of Communication Design, Chulalongkorn University.

A richly illustrated survey of contemporary Thai art
Many of us, proponents and critics alike, commonly make assumptions about religion. We may presume that religion is mainly about having beliefs or being good, or that it is concerned with spiritual rather than material issues, or even that religious ideas and practices are meant to be somehow timeless. Such views, Peter Moore argues, work only to obscure the truth that religion is essentially humanity’s quest to become fully human.

This enlightening exposition questions our very understanding of faith and contends that religions should remain open to reinventing themselves both practically and intellectually, rediscovering neglected traditions and finding new ways forward. Written with subtlety and passion, this book gets to the heart of ongoing debates about the validity and purpose of religion.

Peter Moore taught religious studies at the University of Kent for many years. His most recent book is *Earthly Immortalities: How the Dead Live On in the Lives of Others* (Reaktion, 2019).
The Midlife Mind

*Literature and the Art of Ageing*

Ben Hutchinson

The meaning of life is a common concern, but what is the meaning of midlife? With the help of illustrious writers such as Dante, Montaigne, Beauvoir, Goethe and Beckett, *The Midlife Mind* sets out to answer this question. Erudite but engaging, it takes a personal approach to that most impersonal of processes, ageing. From the ancients to the moderns, from poets to playwrights, writers have long meditated on how we can remain creative as we move through our middle years. There are no better guides, then, to how we have regarded middle age in the past, how we understand it in the present, and how we might make it as rewarding as possible in the future.

Ben Hutchinson is Academic Director of the Paris School of Arts and Culture and Professor of European Literature at the University of Kent. His many books include *Comparative Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2018).
Qatar is a country of spectacular contrasts: from pearl fishing, its main industry until the 1930s, to gas and oil, which generate immense wealth today; it has famously been at the centre of both triumph and controversy in recent years for hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Almost a lifetime since he grew up in Qatar, Michael Quentin Morton writes about the country’s colourful past and its astonishing present. The book is filled with stories about the people of this land: the tribes and the travellers, the seafarers and slaves – as much a part of Qatar’s history as its rulers and their wealth.

The opaque Arabian world guards its secrets well, but *Masters of the Pearl* penetrates the veil to shed light on a country that until now has defied explanation.

Michael Quentin Morton has written a number of books on the history of the Middle East, including *Keepers of the Golden Shore: A History of the United Arab Emirates* (Reaktion, 2016).
Russia as Empire

Past and Present

Kees Boterbloem

‘An original synthesis and a stimulating overview of how Russia acquired and maintained its land-based empire.’
– Brian Boeck, Associate Professor of History, DePaul University

Covering more than 1,000 years of tumultuous history, Russia as Empire shows how the medieval empire of Kyivan Rus’ metamorphosed into today’s Russian Federation. Kees Boterbloem vividly and lucidly describes Russia’s various incarnations and considers how the concept of empire evolved from tsarist Russia to the Soviet Union, and how and why it survives today. He discusses the ideological architects of these empires and the ideas of their political leaders – the tsars, Lenin, Stalin, Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. Russia as Empire considers the role of the various empires’ inhabitants, from nobility to clergy to communist party members, revealing how and why they adhered to, or believed in, their country’s imperial mission. What emerges is a highly original overview that illuminates the continuities and discontinuities in Russian history.

A professor at the University of South Florida, Kees Boterbloem is the author of many books, including The Life and Times of Andrei Zhdanov (2004) and Moderniser of Russia: Andrei Vinius, 1641–1716 (2013).
Why Waste Food?

Andrew F. Smith

About one-third of all food grown for human consumption is lost or discarded every year, despite financial, environmental and ethical reasons not to waste food. We grow enough food to adequately feed everyone on the planet, yet hundreds of millions of people suffer from hunger, malnutrition or food insecurity. Together, this food waste accounts for about 8 per cent of the world’s total greenhouse gas emissions. So, if wasting food is such a patently bad idea, why do we discard so much?

In *Why Waste Food?*, Andrew F. Smith investigates one of today’s most pressing topics, examining the causes of avoidable food waste across the supply chain, and highlighting the ways in which everyone can do something to tackle this global concern.

Andrew F. Smith teaches at the New School, New York City. He is the author or editor of 32 books, including *Fast Food: The Good, the Bad and the Hungry* (Reaktion, 2016).

An examination of food waste across the global supply chain

**FOOD CONTROVERSIES**

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Savoir-Faire
A History of Food in France
Maryann Tebben

‘A very readable, wide-ranging and original synthesis on the subject.’ – Michael D. Garval, Associate Professor of French Studies, North Carolina State University

This is a comprehensive account of France’s rich culinary history, not only full of tales of haute cuisine, but seasoned with myths and stories from a wide variety of times and places; from snail hunting in Burgundy to female chefs in Lyon, and from cheese appreciation in Roman Gaul to bread debates from the Middle Ages to the present. It examines the use of less-familiar ingredients such as chestnuts, couscous and oysters, French food in literature and film, and the influence of France’s overseas territories on the shape of French cuisine today. It also includes historical recipes for readers to try at home.

Maryann Tebben is Professor of French and head of the Center for Food Studies at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Massachusetts. She is the author of Sauces: A Global History (Reaktion, 2014).
Saffron
*A Global History*
Ramin Ganeshram

Explore the dramatic history of the world’s most expensive spice in *Saffron: A Global History*. Literally worth their weight in gold, sunset-red saffron threads are prized internationally. Saffron can be found in cave art in Mesopotamia, in the frescoes of ancient Santorini, in the dyed wrappings of Egyptian mummies, in the orange-hued robes of Buddhist monks, and in unmistakable dishes around the world. It has been the catalyst for trade wars, as well as smuggling schemes, and used in medicine and cosmetics.

Complete with delicious recipes and surprising anecdotes, this book traces the many paths taken by saffron, revealing the allure of a spice sought globally by merchants, chefs, artists, scientists, clerics, traders, warriors and smugglers.

Journalist and chef Ramin Ganeshram is the author of a number of cookbooks and *The General’s Cook: A Novel* (2018). She lives in Westport, CT.

The dramatic history of the world’s most expensive spice
Intoxicating and evocative, vanilla is so much more than a spice rack staple. It is a flavour that has defined the entire world – and its roots reach deep into the past. With its earliest origins dating back 70 million years, the history of vanilla begins in ancient Meso-America and ends with its current significance. It has been used by nearly every culture as a spice, a perfume and even a potent aphrodisiac, while renowned figures from Louis xiv to Casanova to Thomas Jefferson have been captivated by its aroma and taste.

Featuring recipes, facts and fables, Vanilla unravels the delightfully rich history, mystery and essence of a flavour that reconnects us to our own heritage.

Rosa Abreu is an Assistant Professor at New York City College of Technology.
Giorgione’s Ambiguity

Tom Nichols

The Venetian painter known as Giorgione or ‘big George’ died at a young age in the dreadful plague of 1510, possibly having painted fewer than 25 works. But many of these are among the most mysterious and alluring in the history of art. Paintings such as Three Philosophers and The Tempest remain compellingly elusive, seeming to deny the viewer the possibility of interpreting their meaning. Tom Nichols argues that this visual elusiveness was essential to Giorgione’s sensual approach, and that ambiguity is their defining quality. Through detailed discussions of all Giorgione’s works, Nichols shows that by abandoning the more intellectual tendencies of much Renaissance art, Giorgione made the world and its meanings appear always more inscrutable.

Tom Nichols is Reader in History of Art at the University of Glasgow. His previous books for Reaktion include Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity (2015) and Titian and the End of the Venetian Renaissance (2013).
Piero della Francesca and the Invention of the Artist
Machtelt Brüggen Israëls

‘The book is as magisterial as its subject in achieving a new and compelling perspective on his life and work.’ – Patricia Rubin, Emerita Professor of Art History, New York University

As one of the most innovative and enlightened painters of the early Italian Renaissance, Piero della Francesca brought space, luminosity and unparalleled subtlety to painting. In addition, Piero invented the role of the modern artist by becoming a traveller, a courtier, a geometrician, a patron and much else besides.

In this nuanced account of his life and art, Machtelt Brüggen Israëls reconstructs how Piero came of age. Successfully demystifying the persistent notion of Piero’s art as enigmatic, she reveals the simple and stunning intentions behind his work.

Machtelt Brüggen Israëls is Lecturer in Italian Renaissance Art at the University of Amsterdam and Visiting Professor at the University of Florence. Her previous publications include The Berenson Collection (2015).
A new account of the short yet extraordinary life of Rosa Luxemburg

As an economist and political theorist, Rosa Luxemburg created a body of work that still resonates powerfully today. Born in Poland in 1871, she became a revolutionary leader in Berlin, publishing works including ‘Reform or Revolution’ and The Accumulation of Capital. In this account of her short yet extraordinary life, Dana Mills examines Luxemburg’s writings, including her correspondence, to reveal a woman who was fierce in professional battles and loving in personal relationships.

What is her legacy today, a hundred years after her assassination in Berlin in 1919 at the age of 47? Luxemburg’s emphasis on humanity and equality and her insistence on revolution gave coherence, as this compelling biography illustrates, to a fraught life story and a colossal economic and political legacy.

Dana Mills is a political theorist, lecturer, campaigner for socialist-feminism and anti-racism, dancer and the author of Dance and Politics: Moving Beyond Boundaries (2016). She lives in Oxford.
Joseph Conrad

Robert Hampson

Joseph Conrad is widely recognized as one of the greatest writers of the early twentieth century. Robert Hampson traces Conrad’s life from his childhood in a Russian penal colony, through his early adulthood in Marseille and his years in the British Merchant Navy, to his career as a novelist. It describes how these experiences inspired Conrad’s work, from his early Malay novels to his best-known work, ‘Heart of Darkness’. Robert Hampson also discusses Conrad’s important relations with other writers, in particular Ford Madox Ford, as well as his late-life political engagements and his relationships with women. Featuring new interpretations of all of Conrad’s major works, this is an original interpretation of Conrad’s life of writing.

Robert Hampson is Research Fellow at the University of London’s Institute for English Studies. He is the Chair of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) and the author of three monographs on Conrad.
In myths and legends squids are portrayed as fearsome sea-monsters, lurking in the watery deeps waiting to devour humans. Even as modern science has tried to turn those monsters of the deep into unremarkable calamari, squids continue to dominate the nightmares of the Western imagination. Taking inspiration from early weird-fiction writer H. P. Lovecraft, modern writers such as Jeff VanderMeer depict squids as the absolute Other of human civilization, whereas non-Western poets such as Daren Kamali depict squids as anything but threats. In *Squid*, Martin Wallen traces the many different ways humans have thought about and pictured this predatory mollusc: as guardians, harbingers of environmental collapse or an untapped resource to be exploited. However humans have perceived them, squids have always gazed back at us, unblinking, from the dark.

Martin Wallen is Professor Emeritus at Oklahoma State University. He is the author of many books, including *Fox* (Reaktion, 2006).
The turtle is an ancient creature, once sharing the Earth with dinosaurs; for more than 100 million years, turtles have played a crucial role in maintaining healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems. While it may not set records for speed on land, the turtle is exceptional at distance swimming and deep diving, and some are gifted with astounding longevity. In human thought, the animal’s ties to creativity, wisdom and warfare stretch back to the world’s earliest written records.

In *Turtle*, Louise M. Pryke celebrates the slow and unassuming manner of this doughty creature, which provides a living model of endurance and efficiency. In the increasingly fast-paced world of the twenty-first century, it has never been more important to consider the natural and cultural history of this remarkable animal.

Louise M. Pryke is an Honorary Associate and Lecturer at the University of Sydney. She is the author of *Scorpion* (Reaktion, 2016), *Ishtar* (2017) and *Gilgamesh* (2019).
Nashville

*Music and Manners*

Richard Schweid

Nashville is a city of sublime contrasts, an intellectual hub built on a devotion to God, country music and the Devil’s pleasures. Refined and raucous, it has long represented both culture and downright fun, capable of embracing pre-Civil War mansions and manners as well as honky-tonk bars and trailer parks. Nouvelle cuisine co-exists with barbeque and cornbread; the Frist Art Museum is near the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Nashville has, in less than eighty years, transformed from a small, conservative, Bible-bashing city into a booming metropolis. Nashvillian Richard Schweid tells the history of how it all came to pass, and colourfully describes contemporary Nashville and the changes and upheavals it has gone through to make it the South’s most exciting and thriving city.

In recent decades digital devices have reshaped daily life, while tech companies’ stock prices have thrust them to the forefront of the business world. In this rapid, global development, the promise of a new machine age has been accompanied by worries about accelerated joblessness thanks to new forms of automation. Jason E. Smith looks behind the techno-hype to lay out the realities of a period of economic slowdown and expanding debt: low growth rates and the rise of labour-intensive jobs at the bottom of the service sector. He shows how increasing inequality and poor working conditions have led to new forms of workers’ struggles. Ours is less an age of automation, Smith contends, than one in which stagnation is intertwined with class conflict.

Jason E. Smith has written extensively on contemporary politics and political economy, in journals including Artforum, The Brooklyn Rail, Commune, Critical Inquiry and Radical Philosophy. He lives in Los Angeles.

A trenchant exposé of workers’ struggles in our age of ‘smart machines’
Ripe, sensuous, irresistible: the cherry tree and its stunning blossoms conjure up many literal, metaphorical and visceral sensations. We enjoy cherry picking, a cherry on top, and even lose one’s cherry. Cherries have been consumed since prehistoric times, reaching great popularity among the ancient Romans. They have come to symbolize such divergent concepts as fertility, innocence and seductiveness, inspiring Dutch still-life paintings, Freudian theory, contemporary pop artists and one of the first food emojis. In Japan and other Asian cultures, short-lived but beautiful cherry blossoms are important elements throughout art and literature.

In this intriguing natural and cultural history, Constance L. Kirker and Mary Newman recount the origins, legends, celebrations, production and health benefits of this beloved tree.

Constance L. Kirker is a retired Pennsylvania State University professor of art history and co-author of Edible Flowers: A Global History (Reaktion, 2017) with Mary Newman. Mary Newman has taught at Ohio University and the University of Malta.
Agents of War
A History of Chemical and Biological Weapons
Expanded Second Edition
Edward M. Spiers

‘A succinct and readily accessible account of the history and key issues from World War I to the present.’ – Military Review

‘An important reminder of the substantial destructive and psychological power of chemical and biological weapons.’ – Political Studies Review

Often described as the misuse of science, chemical and biological weapons have incurred widespread opposition over the years. Despite condemnation from the United Nations, governments and the disarmament lobby, they remain very real options for rogue states and terrorists. In this much-needed history, Edward M. Spiers breaks new ground by presenting his analysis in both historical and contemporary contexts, giving a comprehensive chronological account of why, where and when such weapons were used or suspected to be deployed.

Edward M. Spiers is Emeritus Professor at the University of Leeds. He is the author of nineteen books, including Chemical Warfare (1985) and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Prospects for Proliferation (2000).
Children Draw
*A Guide to Why, When and How Children Make Art*
Marilyn JS Goodman

‘Informed both by psychology and teaching, and aimed at parents and carers, this richly illustrated book is a fascinating exploration.’ – *The Bookseller*

‘An essential MUST-HAVE in your creative armoury.’
– *Early Arts Magazine*

‘Pays loving attention to children’s artistic progression from those first scribbles.’ – *TLS*

*Children Draw* is a concise, richly illustrated book that explores why children draw and the meaning and value of drawing for youngsters – from toddlers aged two to pre-adolescents. It guides readers through the progressive stages and characteristics of drawing development as children grow and change mentally, physically, socially, emotionally and creatively. Packed with many delightful examples of children’s art, *Children Draw* is an essential book for parents interested in their child’s artistic activities.

Marilyn JS Goodman is an art and museum education specialist who has served as Director of Education for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Her previous books include *Learning Through Art* (1999).
Five Photons
Remarkable Journeys of Light Across Space and Time
James Geach

‘A masterclass in elucidating hard science with elegance and brevity.’ – Nature

‘Geach’s beautiful cosmic biography takes readers on a sweeping tour of all that was, is, and ever will be. Five Photons is as elegant as it is enlightening.’
– Lee Billings, author of Five Billion Years of Solitude

‘Think of it as a sequel to A Brief History of Time that explains some of the real detail of what has been discovered.’
– Popular Science

Five Photons tells the story of the universe through the journeys of light across space and time. It brings together tales of quantum physics and general relativity, stars and black holes, dark matter and dark energy. Let yourself be swept away towards a deeper understanding of the universe.

James Geach is Professor of Astrophysics at the Centre for Astrophysics Research at the University of Hertfordshire, and author of Galaxy: Mapping the Cosmos (Reaktion, 2015).
Bodies Politic

*Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650–1900*

Roy Porter

‘A magical history tour of illness and public attitudes to disease and doctors.’ – Val Hennessy, *Daily Mail*

‘Porter is one of the world’s best historical writers: his prose is pithy, witty, vivid, engaging and perfectly paced.’

– Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *The Independent*

‘[Porter’s] knowledge of the material is unrivalled, and when he writes in unadorned fashion of the careers of doctors, writers and artists, he could hardly be bettered.’

– Anthony Daniels, *Sunday Telegraph*

Packed with outrageous and amusing anecdotes, Roy Porter’s historical tour de force takes a critical look at representations of the body in death, disease and health, and at images of the healing arts in Britain from the mid-seventeenth to the twentieth centuries.

Before his death in 2002, Roy Porter was Professor in the Social History of Medicine at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, and the author of many books.

A magisterial account of representations of the body in health, disease and death

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‘A detailed but readable account of how ancient Egypt has been a focus of fascination throughout history.’ – The Bookseller

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Ronald H. Fritze is Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of History at Athens State University, Alabama. His previous books include Invented Knowledge: False History, Fake Science and Pseudo-religions (Reaktion, 2009).
A History of Writing

Steven Roger Fischer

‘An authoritative account . . . if you’re intrigued with writings past, Fischer’s book is well worth a read . . . a brilliant book.’ – New Scientist

‘It is wonderful . . . to see a subject that embraces so much of human civilisation handled with the wide knowledge and breadth of vision it deserves.’ – Nature

From the earliest scratches on stone and bone to the languages of computers, A History of Writing offers an investigation into the development of writing throughout the world. It covers the first stages of information storage – knot records, tally sticks, pictographic storytelling – the emergence of writing systems in Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium BC, the rise of the Greek alphabet, Chinese, Korean and Japanese writing systems, and the many alphabetic scripts of the West.

Steven Roger Fischer FRS is the author of many popular books including A History of Language (1999) and A History of Writing (2001), both published by Reaktion.
Three Germanies
From Partition to Unification and Beyond
Second Expanded Edition
Michael Gehler

‘This is a really superb overview of post-war German politics and political culture.’ – European Review of History

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Michael Gehler is Director of the Institute of History at the University of Hildesheim and Jean Monnet Chair of Comparative European Contemporary History and Europe’s Integration.
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