

Restaging Femininities on the Neo-Victorian Popular Stage

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The neo-Victorian fascination with nineteenth-century popular entertainment has been consistent since Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and it has proved a fruitful ground for contemporary authors to explore issues as space, gender and the body. The main body of literature has been written by women writers and the quaint admixture of stages, spectacles and performers place the female body in focus. Authors and feminist scholars have jumped at the opportunity to explore past and present gender issues by letting twentieth- and twenty-first century theories bear on Victorian performance culture. The aim of this paper is twofold; On the one hand, I will provide a panoramic overview of neo-Victorian entertainment fiction in an attempt to identify principal aesthetic forms and main tropes. On the other hand, I will pay special attention to its feminist potential and how different representations of Victorian femininities can be linked to contemporary concerns. Here, I will bring the discussion up to the present by analysing representations of the female body in recent neo-Victorian literature, taking *The Fascination* (2023) by Essie Fox as an example.