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British Women Writers and the Reception of Ancient Egypt, 1840-1910: Imperialist Representations of Egyptian Women

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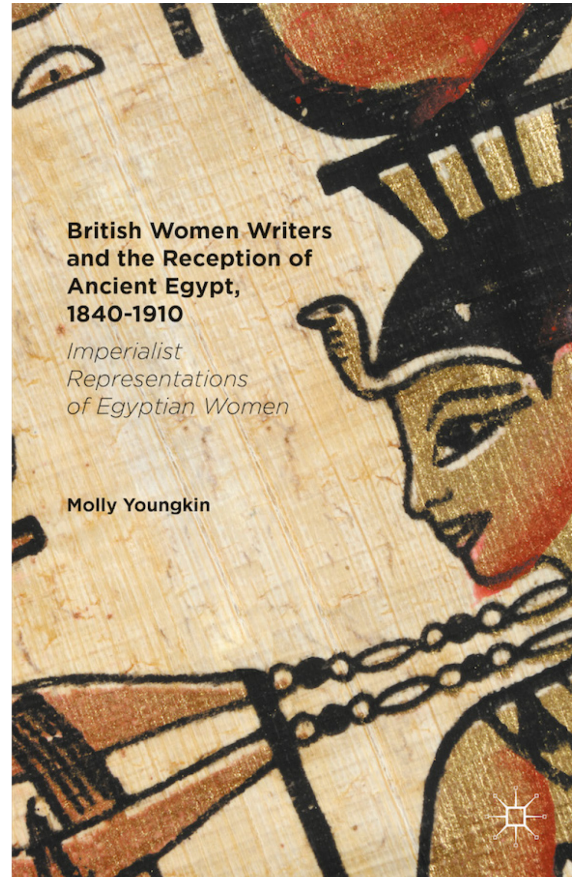
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Faculty Pub Night – Spring 2017

Date: March 14, 2017

Speaker: Molly Youngkin



About the Author

Molly Youngkin is Professor of English at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, where she specializes in nineteenth-century British literature and teaches courses in Victorian literature, as well as gender studies and narrative theory. Her first book, *Feminist Realism at the Fin de Siècle: The Influence of the Late-Victorian Woman's Press on the Development of the Novel* (Ohio State UP, 2007), examines the influence of feminist ideals in the debate over realism in the work of men and women authors writing in the 1890s. She also has published an annotated edition of Sarah Grand's 1888 novel *Ideala* (Valancourt Books, 2008), which was one of the earliest New Woman novels and helped lay the foundation for the intellectually independent woman of the 1890s. Her latest book, *British Women Writers and the Reception of Ancient Egypt, 1840-1910: Imperialist Representations of Egyptian Women* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), focuses on British women writers' knowledge of ancient Egypt and how this knowledge influenced their writings about women's emancipation. (*Author photo credit: Penelope Silver.*)

About the Author's Work

Molly Youngkin's new book, *British Women Writers and the Reception of Ancient Egypt, 1840-1910: Imperialist Representations of Egyptian Women* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), shows how British women

writers' encounters with textual and visual representations of ancient Egyptian women such as Hathor, Isis, and Cleopatra influenced representations of their desired emancipation in novels, poetry, drama, romances, and fictional treatises. Youngkin argues that canonical women writers such as Florence Nightingale and George Eliot – and less canonical figures such as Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper (who wrote under the name 'Michael Field') and Elinor Glyn – incorporated their knowledge of ancient Egyptian women's cultural power in only a limited fashion when presenting their visions for emancipation. Often, they represented ancient Greek women or Italian Renaissance women rather than ancient Egyptian women, since Greek and Italian cultures were more familiar and less threatening to their British audience. This notable distinction opens up discussion about the history of British women, their writing, and views about gender in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.