The Crimean War (1854–1856) was the first to be fought in the era of modern communications, and it had a profound influence on British literary culture, bringing about significant shifts in perceptions of heroism and national identity. Stefanie Markovits explores how mid-Victorian writers and artists reacted to an unpopular war: one in which home-front reaction was conditioned by an unprecedented barrage of information arriving from the front. This history had formal consequences. How does patriotic poetry translate the blunders of the Crimea into verse? How does the shape of literary heroism adjust to a war that produced not heroes but a heroine, Florence Nightingale? How does the predominant mode of journalism affect artistic representations of “the real”? By looking at the journalism, novels, poetry, and visual art produced in response to the war, Stefanie Markovits demonstrates the tremendous cultural force of this relatively short conflict.

Stefanie Markovits is Associate Professor of English at Yale University.
Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as “background,” feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
THE CRIMEAN WAR IN THE BRITISH IMAGINATION

STEFANIE MARKOVITS

Yale University
For Ben
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