At Vanity Fair tells the story of Bunyan’s powerful metaphor, exploring how Vanity Fair was transformed from an emblem of sin and persecution into a showcase for celebrity, wealth and power. This literary history, focusing on reception, adaptation and influence, traces the fictional representation of Vanity Fair over three centuries from John Bunyan’s masterpiece, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), to William Makepeace Thackeray’s own *Vanity Fair* (1847–48). It explores the influence of anonymous journalists and booksellers alongside well-known authors including Ben Jonson, Samuel Richardson and Thomas Carlyle. Over time, Bunyan’s dystopian fantasy has been altered and repurposed to characterise consumer capitalism, channelling memories that inform and unsettle modern hedonism. By tracking the idea of ‘Vanity Fair’ against this shifting background, the book illuminates the relationship between the individual and the collective imagination, between what is culturally available and what is creatively impelled.

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AT VANITY FAIR

From Bunyan to Thackeray

KIRSTY MILNE
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Abbreviations and conventions

Abbreviations


Critical and Historical Views  The Pilgrim’s Progress: Critical and Historical Views, ed. by Vincent Newey (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1980)


ECCO  Eighteenth-Century Collections Online

EEBO  Early English Books Online


Abbreviations and conventions

Third Part   The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is To Come: The Third Part (London: E. Millet for J. Deacon, J. Back and J. Blare, 1693)


Conventions

Dates are New Style. The terminology of Vanity Fair is potentially confusing; I use the form Vanity Fair to refer to Thackeray’s novel, and ‘Vanity Fair’ when referring to Condé Nast’s magazine; otherwise, I rely on context to clarify usage.