

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-14773-6 - 'Michael Field': Poetry, Aestheticism and the Fin de Siècle

Marion Thain

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'MICHAEL FIELD'

'Michael Field' (1884–1914) was the pseudonym of two women, the aunt and niece Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who lived and wrote together as lovers. The large oeuvre contains poems, dramas and a vast diary. Marion Thain recounts the development of a fascinating and idiosyncratic poetic persona that, she argues, itself became a self-reflexive study in aestheticism. The constructed life and work of 'Michael Field' is used here to deepen and complicate our understanding of many of the most distinctive aesthetic debates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; a process unified by the recurring engagement with theories of time and history that structures this book. This analysis of poetry, aestheticism and the fin de siècle, through the performance of 'Michael Field', has implications that reach far beyond an understanding of one poet's work. Scholars of both Victorian and modernist literature will learn much from this innovative and compelling study.

MARION THAIN is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Birmingham.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For John and Vivien Thain

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page viii</i>
Introduction: 'something fierce, subtle, strange, singular'	I
1 The diaries and dramas: life-writing and the temporal patterns of aestheticism	20
2 <i>Long Ago</i> : the male pseudonym, fin-de-siècle sexualities and Sappho's historical leap	42
3 <i>Sight and Song</i> : Botticelli and ekphrastic paradox	66
4 <i>Underneath the Bough</i> : dual authorship and lyric song	90
5 <i>Wild Honey from Various Thyme</i> : apian aestheticism and the lyric book collection	130
6 The Catholic poetry: the spiritual and historical 'turn' of the century	168
Conclusion: modernism and the fin de siècle	201
<i>Notes</i>	216
<i>Bibliography of material by Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper</i>	247
<i>General bibliography</i>	252
<i>Index</i>	267

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

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ix

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