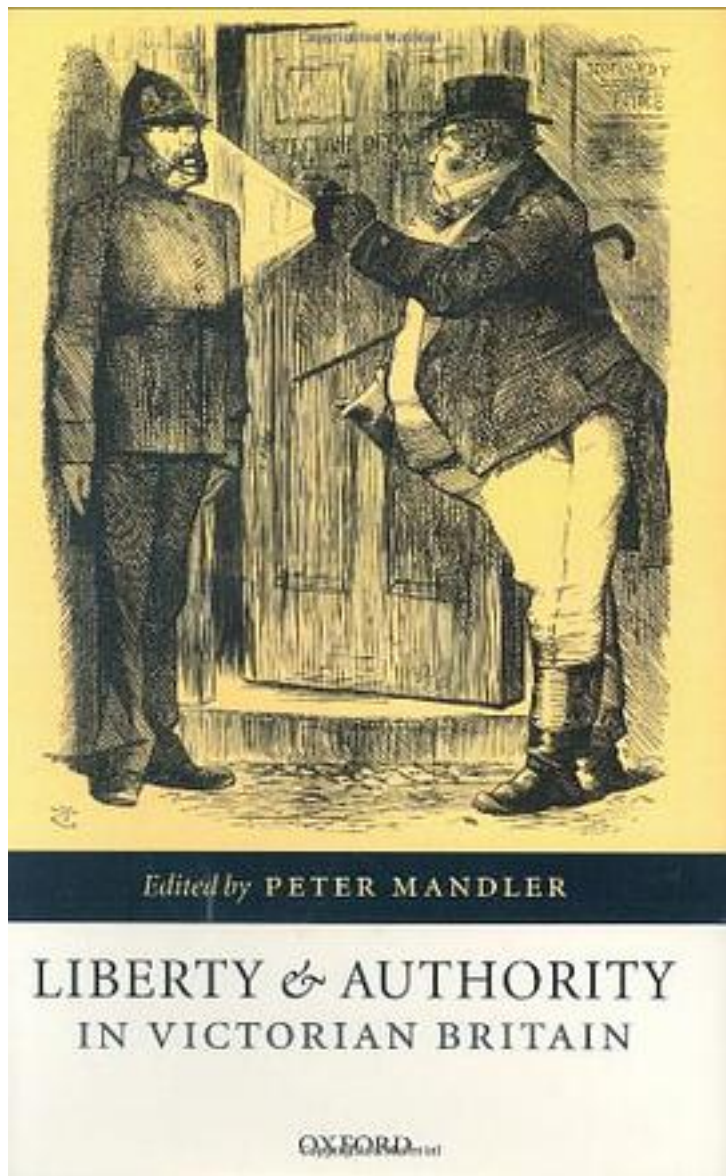


Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain



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Victorian Britain is often considered as the high point of 'laissez-faire', the place and the time when people were most 'free' to make their own lives without the aid or interference of the State. This book explores the truth of that assumption and what it might mean. It considers what the Victorian State did or did not do, what were the prevailing definitions and practices of 'liberty', what other sources of discipline and authority existed beyond the State to structure people's lives - in sum, what were the broad conditions under which such a profound belief in 'liberty' could flourish, and a complex society be run on those principles. Contributors include leading scholars in British political, social and cultural history, so that 'liberty' is seen in the round, not just as a set of ideas or of political slogans, but also as a public and private philosophy that structured everyday life. Consideration is also given to the full range of British subjects in the nineteenth century - men, women, people of all classes, from all parts of the British Isles - and to placing the British experience in a global and comparative perspective.

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