



# **At Home in the Institution: Material Life in Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England**

*Jane Hamlett*

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*At Home in the Institution* takes a new look at institutions in Victorian England, by exploring their material life. The book focuses on asylums, lodging houses and schools - examining decoration and the use of space as well as the things that inmates were allowed. Although all three had very diverse aims, their authorities were often influenced by the relationships, rituals and material culture of contemporary domesticity, demonstrating the reach and importance of these ideas in society.. Yet an assessment of the everyday life of these places often shows the limits of these ideals in practice, the disruptions to domestic routines and the notions of class and gender that they were supposed to inculcate. While the material world was used to control, it also afforded agency to patients, lodgers and pupils - from the schoolboy carving initials on a desk to the pauper lunatics who bred songbirds.

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