

Victorian Popular Fiction Association

3pm Saturday 22nd May 2010 Study Day

Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London, Gower Street, WC1E 7HU,
Room G35

Please note new location and start time

Janice Allan (University of Salford)

'Pianos and "pernicious literature": class and infanticide in Ellen Wood's *Parkwater*'

Despite the growing critical interest in Ellen Wood, *Parkwater* (1879) – a cautionary tale about the dangers of over-educating working-class girls – remains both under-studied and under-read. This paper will explore how the novel capitalises upon contemporary anxieties that class identity is performatively constituted and thus open to impersonation. At the same time, by comparing the 1857 *New Monthly Magazine* serial to the 1879 edition, I will suggest that Wood's chameleon-like powers of adaptation bring her into an uneasy alliance with the fraudulent working-class schemer at the heart of her story.

Janice Allan is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Salford. She is the editor of *Bleak House: a sourcebook* (2004), sits on the Editorial Board of *Clues: a Journal of Detection* and has published a number of pieces on sensation fiction and its critical reception. Recent and forthcoming publications include: 'The Canon: Mapping Writers and their Works' in A. Maunder and J. Phegley's *Teaching Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (2010); "'Conversing with Monstrosities": evolutionary theory and the contemporary response to the novels of Wilkie Collins' in M. Llewellyn and D. Birch, *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2010); and a chapter on Dora Russell for P. Gilbert's *Blackwell Companion to Sensation Fiction* (2011). She is currently working on *The Sensation Novel Sourcebook* for Liverpool University Press.

Andrew Mangham, (University of Reading)

'Anatomical Sketches by Boz'

This paper will explore the impact that forensic medicine, particularly autopsy practice, had upon the style of Dickens's earliest work. It will be argued that *Sketches by Boz*, and Dickens's formative style more generally, had much to learn from the theories and methodologies of medical jurisprudence.

Andrew Mangham is lecturer in Victorian literature at the University of Reading, UK. He is the author of *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction* (2007), editor of *Wilkie Collins: Interdisciplinary Essays* (2007) and co-editor of *The Female Body in Medicine and Literature* (2010). He is currently at work on a monograph entitled *Dickens's Anatomy: Medicine, Journalism and the Rise of Boz* and is editing *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*.

The Victorian Popular Fiction Association has been established to offer a regular forum for the dissemination and, hopefully, publication of the vast amount of research currently being done on Victorian popular fiction. The planning of the Victorian Popular Novelists 1860-1900 conference of September 2009 confirmed to the association's founders that research into this area of Victorian studies was both diverse and rewarding. We plan to hold an annual conference but also anticipate that regular research seminars would be productive and informative, enabling academics working in this field to share their work and establish and maintain a vibrant network of collaborative scholarship. Information about the VPFA, and about our 2nd annual conference, Victorian Popular Culture: Prose, Stage and Screen (IES, 22-24 July 2010), can be found on the VPFA home page given below.

Greta Depledge and Jane Jordan