Jad Adams, ‘Feminist solidarity and eugenics in the life and work of Ménie Muriel Dowie and Ella Hepworth Dixon’

Thinking women of the 1890s were challenged both by questions of their role in society, and their reproductive function in terms of the health of the race. Both feminism and eugenics were ‘modern’ but they often led in contradictory directions, so that a rhetoric of can-do womanhood and feminist solidarity was at variance with a notion of progressive evolutionary theory and eugenics.

Ella Hepworth Dixon’s first book My Flirtations (1893), was a critique of the marriage market written under the pseudonym Margaret Wynman: the object was to win a man. Her major novel, The Story of a Modern Woman (1894) took as its text, ‘All we women must help each other now,’ the author described it as ‘a plea for a kind of moral and social trades-unionism among women.’ However, in the context of the novel, the unmarried and childless heroine is seen as a failure. The main character’s life experience is an unsuccessful relationship where a man asks the heroine to marry her then relents and abandons her for a wealthy wife. Emphasis is on the importance of wealth and position for success.

Ménie Muriel Dowie proved herself the equal of any man and better than most in hunting, shooting and exploration. Her first book, A Girl in the Karpathians (1891) described her adventures in the mountains alone but for a peasant guide. The view presented in her major novel Gallia (1895) is that marriage partners should be selected on the basis of their fitness to produce offspring of quality. Gallia is not concerned about her intended husband’s having a mistress or having once loved another woman, or even that she herself is in love with someone else; the point is that they are genetically suited to ensure racial fitness. ‘I want you to be my husband or, rather, the father of my child,’ she says.

This paper intends to respond to the challenge of Angelique Richardson in Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century which criticised ‘the reluctance of feminist history and, in particular, feminist literary history, to accept the role played by women in the early history of eugenic thought.’

Marta Miquel-Baldellou, ‘Sensational Victorian Women Outwitted: Lucretia, Anne, and Lucy after Bertha Mason’s Footsteps’

Bertha Mason remained a secondary figure until Jean Rhys resurrected her through her postcolonial adaptation of Brontë’s novel, Wide Sargasso Sea, and Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert exalted Rochester’s demented wife as a seminal madwoman in the attic in the late 1970s. Although Brontë’s novel cannot be termed as sensation fiction, Bertha is part of the eighteenth-century gothic novels as well as a forerunner figure in Victorian sensation fiction. Since then, Neo-Victorian present-day attempts either to revive mystified memories or indulge in idealisations of the hysterical woman have contributed to deconstructing the so-called Victorian ethics of self-control and cult to true womanhood.

In Victorian times, women writers’ sensation novels featuring insane women and fallen angels of the house underlined a socially and culturally tumultuous period of anxiety, legal dependence and subdued sexuality women were to face. Madness, female hysteria and its evolution, as Foucault pointed out and Showalter corroborated, became a metaphor to give voice to the unspeakable, that is, women’s condition. Through personifications of madness and sensation displays, instances of gender subversion found their way onto the page, while patriarchal testimonies cast a suspicious glance over women’s threatening usurpation of power as writers or as demented heroines. Male and female interpretations of women’s madness as portrayed in novels usually differ, and yet to what extent are male writers condemnatory of female insanity and do women’s writers subtly resort to madness to subvert their own social demonisation?

Under Bertha’s extensive shadow and from a Neo-Victorian perspective, this paper will focus on three Victorian heroines that end up behind bars due to their apparent or assumed madness. Lucretia Clavering in Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s Lucretia; or, The Children of the Night (1846), Anne Catherick in Wilkie Collins’ The
Woman in White (1860), and Lucy Audley in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret (1862). Bertha incarnates madness as a result of sexual deviance. Lucretia is enclosed in a lunatic asylum due to her unusual brightness and her unlimited ambition to achieve her goals. Anne is incarcerated due to her highly economic income, which was not becoming to a young lady as it defied the social-established convention of women’s economic dependence. Thus, these four Victorian prototypes of female insanity disclose those values that were often demonised were they found in women: Bertha’s exuberant and exotic sexual freedom, Lucretia’s unusual intelligence and unlimited ambition, Anne’s independent economic condition, and Lucy’s will to take hold over her own life.

It is the aim of this paper to analyse the different ways female madness is represented through these four key Victorian novels, describing similarities and differences among these four female characters; the sort of madness they personify, and thus, the sort of feminist thesis they convey; whether they are conceived as victims or villains; the end they ultimately encounter; the way the authors envision these four characters and whether some sort of evolution can be traced through them; and finally, the role sensation plays in highlighting these four madwomen as both social and cultural reflections of Victorian times to be unveiled by female readership.

Anne-Marie Beller, “‘Sensation is her Frankenstein’: History, the Canon, and M. E. Braddon’s The Infidel’ During the closing decade of the nineteenth century, Braddon returned to the genre of historical fiction, which she had first attempted in 1872 with Robert Ainsleigh. London Pride (1896), In High Places (1898), and The Infidel (1900) all attest to her meticulous research and respect for the subject at hand, but they were received unenthusiastically, if politely, by the review press. Appraising some of her late nineteenth-century fiction, including London Pride, the well-researched story of the Restoration, the Academy commented that ‘they are good novels, and more than a proof of versatility, but they are scarcely “Braddon”’.

The judgement serves to demonstrate how the critical reception of Braddon’s work throughout her career was shaped and influenced by the resilient perception of her as a sensationalist. W. Fraser Rae’s observations on Braddon’s early career proved to be prescient, when he commented that she was a ‘slave ... to the style which she created. “Sensation” is her Frankenstein.”

In this paper I want to situate Braddon’s last Victorian novel, The Infidel, within the wider contemporary literary landscape and explore the ways in which this work engages with several topical concerns and literary vorges of the day, while simultaneously displaying an implicit nostalgia for a lost period. I will suggest that this under-valued novel dramatises Braddon’s career-long effort to escape the damaging effects on her critical reputation of the ‘sensation’ label, yet at the same time reveals her increasingly outmoded adherence to the literary values and ideals of her youth. By reading this historical novel against questions of genre, canonicity, and the meaning of the term ‘popular’, the paper will offer an assessment of Braddon’s place within literary discourse at the fin de siecle.

Ana Clara Birrento, ‘Margaret Oliphant’s Autobiography, or essentially the story of a woman’ Undoubtedly a popular Victorian novelist, very much into the feminist agenda of the 80s, Margaret Oliphant has not been able to be established into the Victorian canon. However, this prolific writer contributed to the making of the English literary scene of the nineteenth-century. The paper will discuss her Autobiography looking at the interrelation between areas of individual and social experience; it will analyse the interrelations between the public and the private processes and between the historical formations and social structures which constitute Oliphant’s story as a woman and as a writer. Studying the emergent narrative of the self in the social context, the paper shows how Oliphant was able to rediscover forms and contents, giving voice to her points of view and experiences, facing, challenging and resisting to the hegemonic, ideological and cultural structures of the mid-nineteenth century.

Her Autobiography reveals a field of contradictions between the consciousness of the dominant ideology and the continuous creation of an experience or of a new discursive practice, with new meanings and values.

2 W. Fraser Rae, ‘Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon’, North British Review 43 (1865): 180-204, 197.
Julie Bizzotto, "Nationalism, Sensation and Intertextuality": East Lynne in the pages of the New Monthly Magazine

East Lynne was one of the most successful selling novels in the nineteenth century, gaining its author Ellen Wood immense popularity and widespread renown. This paper examines the original periodical publication of East Lynne within the pages of the New Monthly Magazine, analyzing how one of the first sensationalized texts found its way into a conservative, bourgeois journal. East Lynne is evaluated as a product of Wood’s longstanding involvement with the New Monthly Magazine and her acute awareness of the style of fiction that was anticipated by its audience. Thus East Lynne’s association with and publication in the New Monthly is shown to play an influential and important part in its development as well as Wood’s progression as a writer and her evolution in to what critics will label a sensationalist, an identity that will follow her throughout her career. The paper will also touch on the appearance of Ouida’s full-length serial, Granville De Vigne, which overlapped with East Lynne’s serialization in the New Monthly, demonstrating how Wood initiated a promulgation of sensational texts in the magazine. Generally, the paper will assess the cultural space that allows Wood to produce a work such as East Lynne as well as the novel’s influence on the evolving complexion of fictional literature in the early 1860s.

Peter Blake, "The Age of GAS": George Augustus Sala, Marcus Clarke and Colonial Bohemia

John Sutherland described Marcus Clarke’s For The Terms of His Natural Life (1870-2), as ‘the greatest Australian novel of the nineteenth century.’ A historical novel that graphically depicted the barbaric conditions of transported convicts in Hobart, Van Diemen’s Land, it also contained a more contemporary sensation theme with its complicated inheritance plot that culminated in a fictional portrayal and pre-judgement of the celebrated Tichborne Claimant case of the early 1870s.

Famous for its citational and intertextual quality, the novel was influenced by Dickens, Balzac, and Charles Reade’s It Is Never Too Late To Mend (1856), with its sensational documentation of the prison system and the hardships of colonial life in Australia. The most important influence on Clarke, however, was George Augustus Sala, a popular British author of the 1850s and 60s who would become the most famous journalist of the age. This paper will trace the effect of Sala’s neglected sensation novels and Bohemian journalism on For the Terms of His Natural Life. Both Sala and Clarke avowed their citizenship of Bohemia; both men were urban explorers, ‘peripatetic philosophers’ sketching the Bohemian demimonde and criminal underworld in their respective metropolitan environments and delineating high and low life and the instability of identity in nineteenth century society. The use of the Tichborne case in the novel was representative of this preoccupation, as was the portrayal of the dissipation of the Reverend North, which incorporates some of the most harrowing and realistic depictions of the debilitating effects of alcohol in nineteenth century fiction. This paper will also consider the influence of sensation and Bohemia on the colonial experience and will question how Clarke, a former sheep-farmer from Dinkledoodiedum, was able to transcend his environment and execute the Bohemian masterpiece his European counterparts failed to produce.

Anna Brecke, 'A Designing and Infamous Woman: Lady Audley as actress and director'

This paper uses Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s background with and love of the stage as a lens through which to examine her most celebrated character, Helen Maldon of Lady Audley’s Secret. Looking at elements of the Victorian theatrical world in the novel and the relationship between the theatre and the sexually free woman, this paper explores the way in which Lady Audley’s Secret was tied to the theatrical world of 1860s London, before it was adapted for the stage. The staging of the novel places Helen Maldon in the position of an actress and director as she manipulates setting, characters and situations for her own advantage. She participates in several types of performance as she takes on different roles within the narrative, such as wife and mother or seductress. Braddon also employs the imagery of theatrical publicity in descriptions of Helen Maldon. Like an actress, her success depends on her ability to mislead and enchant men. In this way, Helen Maldon proves to be a representation of the theatrical influence that was so significant in Braddon’s career. Although Braddon did not adapt the novel for the stage herself, her characterization of Helen Maldon and use of the theatrical made stage adaptation possible.
Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier, “Infinitely watchable”: On the adaptability of Victorian popular fiction
While in Britain the 1990s saw the advent of several impressive TV films based on Victorian popular novels, in Germany TV film versions of Collins’s *The Woman in White*, *Armadale*, and *The Moonstone* from the 1970s are being made available on DVD only this year. It is highly likely that all these film versions rekindle the interest in the texts and that the growing reception of Victorian popular novels in secondary schools is connected to them. This paper will investigate the nature of the adaptability of Victorian popular fiction. Certainly there are definite reasons for the fact that TV productions today still rely on Victorian popular and melodramatic devices, such as serialisation, (short) *tableaux vivants* or cliffhangers. I will argue that Victorian popular novels were seminal with regard to our contemporary reading and viewing habits and that the impact of Victorian popular novels on filmmaking might well be growing in the coming years.

Katherine Byrne, ‘Academia, Anti-Suffrage and Ambiguity: Mrs Humphry Ward and the New Woman’
Mary Ward seems to continue to be one of the most critically neglected writers of the Victorian period, despite being hugely popular in her own lifetime. She is best known for the best-selling *Robert Elsmere*, but published some twenty other novels, all of which were widely read, and which manage to combine entertaining escapism and romance with the most pressing and serious moral, political and religious questions of the period. Given the intellectual depth of most of her writing it seems unfair that she has been effectively removed from the canon and from critical interest, but it appears that her seemingly conservative and reactionary political views have damaged her reputation and made her critically undesirable. Particularly damaging was her role, from 1908 as leader of the anti-suffrage movement, which goes some way towards explaining why she has not been reclaimed by feminist critics. It is, however, reductive to dismiss Ward because of the anti-suffrage stance she adopted in later life; almost all of her novels examine and subvert gender roles, interrogating the position of the New Woman in society, and giving voice to her resistance to conventional domesticity and her struggle for intellectual equality. This paper will, through an exploration of Ward’s self-consciously academic and controversially anti-maternal heroines, explore her complex and uneasy relationship with late Victorian feminism, as well as with the uneasy marriage of popular fiction and intellectual polemic her books represent.

Mei-Fang Chang, ‘New Womanhood vs. Old Womanhood: Sisterhood in Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) and *From Man to Man* (1926)’
This paper seeks to examine sisterhood in the work of Olive Schreiner, a prominent New Woman writer acclaimed by W. T. Stead as “the Modern Woman, *par excellence*, the founder and high priestess of the school [of the Modern Woman novel].” Attention is given to two texts with which Schreiner frequently compared: *her magnum opus*, the nowadays much-discussed *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), and her favorite and yet unfinished novel, *From Man to Man*, posthumously published by her husband S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner in 1926. The paper will focus on two aspects of sisterly solidarity: cousinship in *African Farm*, and biological sisterhood in *From Man to Man*. It contends that both texts break off from the canonical sister narrative where sisterhood is to negotiate with or assimilate into women’s traditional destiny in marriage, a rupture that neither biological nor metaphorical sisters fulfill the sororal bond. While *African Farm* conveys the New Woman’s exploitation of the Old Woman’s self-sacrifice on the matter of heterosexual love, *From Man to Man* presents what I term “affective dislocation” between one New Woman sister and one Old Woman sister to lay bare their sibling alienation. By approaching the novels through the sisterly polarization and Tess Cossett’s model for female solidarity, this paper explores the ways in which sisterhood in Schreiner’s fictional world is too loosely connected to construct a supportive women’s sorority.

Allan C. Christensen, ‘Bulwer Lytton’s *What Will He Do With It*? as an apology for popular art’
The enormous popularity of Edward Bulwer Lytton endured throughout his novelistic career. In 1834 the *American Quarterly Review* considered him “without doubt, the most popular writer now living”, and in 1859 an article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* pronounced him “now unquestionably the greatest living novelist in England”. He hoped indeed that both the vast popular readership and a class of elite readers would recognise his greatness, and the appeals to both groups constitute an underlying dialectic in his artistic development. The climax of that development occurs in *What Will He Do With It?*, the last novel of the especially popular *Caxton* trilogy. We may also appreciate the work, exactly 150 years after its publication in
1859, both as Bulwer’s greatest aesthetic achievement and as a metafiction that proposes a theory of art “of an essentially popular nature”. Presumably like the novel itself, the ambiguous confidence artist called “The Comedian” exercises in the story an enormous power, ultimately for good, over individuals of all social classes. His greatest success occurs when the haughty, aristocratic and misanthropic protagonist succumbs to him as to an alter-ego and, humanised by the comic spirit of popular art, joins the community of “that great reality—the People”.

*Note: Darwin’s Origin of Species of 1859 is being especially widely celebrated this year, and other works that appeared in that annus mirabilis of Victorian publishing include Adam Bede, Smiles’s Self-Help, Richard Feverel, A Tale of Two Cities, Omar Khayyam, Mill’s Liberty, and Idylls of the King.*

Dr Sara Clayson, ‘“From Sex to Sex”: The Evolutionary Purpose of Androgyne in The Great God Pan’
In spite of Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species and T.H. Huxley’s popularisation of ‘natural selection’ earlier in the century, much of the evolutionary thinking at the fin de siècle continued to attempt reconciliation between materialism and spiritual ideas about the origins of life. My reading of Arthur Machen’s The Great God Pan draws on the tensions that emerge from the convergence of these seemingly opposing ideologies in contemporary evolutionary discourse, culminating in an image of androgyne that is associated with both the human past and its potential future.

The notion of evolutionary progress, which saw gender differentiation as the culmination of a process that began with an androgyneous being, was unsettled by a belief in an enduring and latent androgyne that could be reawakened in the evolutionary process. The discourses of ‘inversion’, attempted to address this apparent contradiction by ascribing an evolutionary purpose to an androgyne ‘primitive’ past. By exploring the notion of evolutionary purpose in fin de siècle sexology, I will argue that Helen Vaughan embodies the often paradoxical conceptions of ‘inverted’ gender and needs to be understood not only as an example of degeneration, but also as offering a vision of future evolutionary perfection.

Silvana Colella, ‘The Worth of Commerce: Charlotte Riddell’s City Novels’
In the second half of the nineteenth century, Charlotte Riddell was well-known as the ‘novelist of the City of London’. She carved for herself a niche in the market, producing novels that extolled the advantages of commercial modernity. Too Much Alone, George Geith, Austin Friars, City and Suburbs, The Race for Wealth, Mitre Court, and The Senior Partner focus on ‘the pathos of the City, the pathos in the lives of struggling men,’ as Riddell declared in an interview. My paper argues for the historical and cultural relevance of her unconventional take on commercial modernity and the business ideal. Riddell’s novels are notably hard to find even in well-stocked libraries. However, the Gabinetto Vuesseux in Florence — a library founded in 1819 by Giovan Pietro Vuesseau, a wealthy merchant from Geneva — has over thirty entries under her name. Nearly all her City novels were acquired as soon as they came out and were most likely read by the commercial traveller, the occasional tourist passing through Florence for business or pleasure, or by the English speaking population residing there. The archives of this library provide precious historical data. Checking the records of loans allows cogent hypotheses about Riddell’s actual readership — hypotheses that I will discuss in the second section of my paper.

Missy Coleman, “‘A Sensation all too Warm’: Popular Psychology and the Alienated Female Self in Sensation Fiction”
In the mid-nineteenth century, new conceptions of the mind and its function rose to prominence. Anita Vrettos describes how, under the influence of philosophers and scientists like Francois Joseph Gall, the mind came to be seen as a fragmented, contested space (A Companion to the Victorian Novel, 2006). To the mid-Victorian imagination, this meant that deviance was no longer the result of an inherently criminal personality; all minds carried the potential for transgressive, anti-social behavior.

The Sensation novelists of the 1860s had their fingers on the pulse of pop psychology, and they exploited new anxieties engendered by Galls theories to excite readers. In these novels, the female subconscious is frequently the greatest threat to domestic tranquillity. This paper focuses on the psychological construction of female characters in two novels, Mrs. Henry Woods East Lynne and M. E. Braddons Lady Audleys Secret. Both feature women who are plagued by impulses that clash with social norms and threaten the stability of
the domestic ideal. However, these women are not essentially villainous. Drawing on popular theories of the human mind, these novels reveal the ways in which social pressures faced by women instigate their transgression.

Kate Compton, ‘“More like jewel-setting”: Reassessing Charles Reade’s material realism’
My paper addresses those aspects of Reade’s material realism that have exiled him from the literary canon, and argues for a new approach to nineteenth-century conceptions of professional authorship and intellectual property. ‘Jewel-setting’ is Reade’s term for the method by which he produces his ‘matter of fact’ fictions, each of which is ‘set’ with ‘facts’ or ‘jewels’ illicitly extracted from other texts. No text is sacred; Reade raids the ephemeral print culture of the period and ransacks the decorous three-decker, taking from authors both obscure and canonical. Robert Macfarlane presents Reade’s style of authorship as symptomatic of a recyclical creative culture, and I think unfairly dismisses Reade’s texts as relics of a naive and ultimately sterile mode of literary production. My argument focuses on Reade’s fiery public defence of his fiction in Trade Malice (1875), and his novel, A Simpleton (1873), set during the South African diamond rush, placing these texts alongside previously unexamined examples of jewel-setting from newspaper journalism and periodical children’s literature. I will explore how jewels themselves are utilized as coded cultural signifiers, and examine the ways in which gemstones are figured as repositories of ‘story’ that can actively contribute to, or undermine, their new narrative context.

Alice Crossley, ‘Being Resigned to the Ideal: Thackeray and the Serial Bildungsroman’
This paper will draw upon the importance of the Bildungsroman as a recognizable and popular novelistic form in the mid-Victorian period, which lends itself to the exploration of adolescent development. I will argue that Thackeray’s adoption of the form in the connected Pendennis novels, which comprise Pendennis (1849-50), The Newcomes (1854-5) and The Adventures of Philip (1861-2), provides the reader with the opportunity for self-development while simultaneously exploring the progress of the protagonist. The serial production of these novels compounds the effect and amplifies this process of parallel development, as months pass between installments.

By providing occasion for self-reflection in protagonist, reader, and even narrator, a shared narrative experience becomes possible. The apparent coherence in the text, created by the linear trajectory of the hero’s growth, is, I suggest, an illusion: the impossibility of achieving the ideal of bildung provides both reader and protagonist with an impetus to self-reflection. In this paper I would like to examine the ways that Thackeray’s Bildungsroman amplify the frustration engendered by the conflict between real and ideal, linear and cyclical time or movement, and the private and the social, offering an exercise in compromise as well as an exploration of individual potential.

Greta Depledge, ‘Florence Marryat, science and medicine’
Florence Marryat’s place amongst popular writers of her day has been well established. Whilst her abilities as a writer were often dismissed by many of her contemporary critics who compared her unfavourably with other writers, this paper will consider how Florence Marryat raised questions about contemporary science and medicine in a number of her best-selling novels. Marryat brought these issues to the attention of vast numbers of the reading public, many of whom would not have accessed more highbrow writing on these subjects. Marryat’s engagement with the medical and scientific debates of her day is under-researched and warrants further study.

In works such as The Dead Man’s Message, Petronel, Nelly Brooke, Her Fathers Name and The Blood of the Vampire Marryat responds to concerns that surrounded the figure of the nineteenth-century medical man. By taking an interdisciplinary approach to her work it is clear that Marryat was interested in issues surrounding the physical and mental health and treatment of women in the nineteenth century, the pathologisation of behaviour and contemporary scientific thought and advance behind medical practices.

This best-selling author arguably reached a wide audience with her challenging representation of nineteenth-century medical issues. Her handling of the complicated dynamics of doctor/patient relationships and her engagement with the image of the man of science as a potentially sinister and dangerous figure in nineteenth century literature provides us with compelling evidence that this writer is worthy of the academic interest she is currently receiving.
Anna Despotopoulou, ‘Women in transit: the challenges of mobility in the work of Rhoda Broughton’
In the latter half of the nineteenth century over sixty fictional narratives were published in British periodicals with the words railway or train in their title (verifiable through the ProQuest British Periodicals database). The proliferation of stories set in trains or railway stations during that period reflects a mid-Victorian tendency to explore the new urban spaces generated by technology as well as a concern with the blurring of boundaries between public and private/domestic space. Affecting the everyday routine of women, train transport epitomized the physical and emotional challenges involved in their attempt to negotiate public space. While male writers use the railway to test out scenarios of chance erotic encounters or economic speculation, for women popular writer such as Rhoda Broughton the train ride often becomes a dreaded experience, its representation expressing the heroines’ anxiety arising from the forced invasion of privacy, the threat of sexual abuse, and unease with close physical contact. Moreover, for Broughton the railway becomes a medium for the exploration of woman’s complex response to the transitory nature of experience, the rapidly shifting states of consciousness, and modernity’s fleeting images. It will also be argued that her style—her use of central reflectors, whose thoughts and feelings swiftly flow through free association, and her disregard of objective time—reflects changing cultural attitudes concerning the empowering or disempowering appropriation of mobility and speed by women in public space.

Daniela Evans, ‘Suicide and the Popular Novelist: the Bitter End in Braddon’
Suicide was a popular topic for Victorians, discussed widely and featuring regularly in comedy, tragedy and melodrama. It is unsurprising, then, the subject should form a central position in a novel by one of the most popular authors of the day, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, with her characteristic insight into the literary marketplace. This paper will look at the place of suicide within Victorian culture, providing a reading of the central episode in Braddon’s 1888 novel, The Fatal Three, based on John Bowlby’s attachment theory. Bowlby’s psychoanalytical theory, derived from his work with children separated from their parents from the 1940s, showed the profound effects deprivation of early parental care can have on children, impacting on their behaviour, identity and relationships throughout life. Braddon’s novel shows a child, Fay Fausett, whose deprived early years form her into a dysfunctional adult, who eventually takes the ultimate step of ending her own life. Using Bowlby’s theoretical framework, I will read Fay’s suicide as a symptom of her negative early childhood experiences, which demonstrate Braddon’s conviction of the irrevocable and damaging effects that these can have, both in terms of their impact on the individual, and their wider effects on family and society.

Valerie Fehlbaum, ‘The Laugh of the New Woman: Ella Hepworth Dixon’
Although Ella Hepworth Dixon did not figure in the Daily Telegraph’s list, I would argue that she was indeed a very popular novelist in the early 1890s. The re-publication of her renowned Story of a Modern Woman (1894) and some of her short stories have re-established her in fin de siècle and gender studies. At this point I would like to discuss her earlier work, My Flirtations, which has recently been selected for a digitization project. Unlike The Story, which she herself described as ‘rather gloomy’, My Flirtations was immediately acclaimed as ‘one of the most amusing books we have come across for a long time’. With typical self-deprecation, she suggested its success ‘was largely due to the delightful illustrations by Mr. (now Sir Bernard) Partridge of Punch’. The illustrations certainly helped, but to my mind it is her humour and satirical comments on barely disguised contemporaries which made it so popular.

Perhaps by its nature humour, especially satire, is closely tied to a particular time and place, hence the relegation of My Flirtations to the obliterettes of literary history. However, Ella Hepworth Dixon is particularly interesting in any discussion of late nineteenth century writers as her career epitomises that of many women. For family and financial reasons she very quickly had to find a means of supporting herself, and the tremendous growth in periodicals, especially those aimed at a female readership, offered her the opportunity to make both a living and a name for herself.

One of the most prolific turn-of-the-century popular novelists, G. A. Henty was also a writer whose works were commonly given as school prizes. He therefore had a privileged position in the development of
imperial ideas of masculinity and courage and their dissemination to Britain’s myriad subjects around the world.

Henty’s works range widely over time and space, but they largely cover imperial conflicts, ranging from the Anglo-Burmeese War and the Mutiny to the Norman Conquest and the fall of Jerusalem. By casting his net beyond the bounds of formal empire, Henty clarifies how novelists treated informal empire and the Pax Britannica it was meant to instill, as well as how they used narrative to extend Britain’s position of global and maritime supremacy into the distant past. This paper focuses on those Henty novels in which Britain helps other countries secure independence from rival imperial powers, such as With Cochrane the Dauntless (1897, chronicling Brazil’s break from Portugal) In Greek Waters: A Story of the Grecian War of Independence (1893), and By England’s Aid: The Freeing of the Netherlands (1891). It thereby elucidates how Britain perpetuated—and marketed—notions of global guardianship in the period after Abolition.

Anne-Marie Frank, ‘Telling it how it is in Charles Reade’s novels’

This paper proposes to examine how criticisms of contemporary society is discussed in popular novels during the nineteenth century. Charles Reade’s It is Never too Late to Mend and Hard Cash will provide examples which address abuses in prisons, medical ethics, torture and abuse in mental asylums, the collapse of banks and shares.

George Eliot’s reception of Charles Reade’s It is Never too Late to Mend and a negative commentary of the kind of realism Eliot advocates will contextualise the contentious nature of popular novels in nineteenth century England.

I will argue that the kind of realistic novels which are discussed provide the twenty-first century reader with an insight of the problems Victorians sought to address; problems which at times are yet to find a solution in the present age.

Alberto Gabriele, ‘Sensationalism Across the Channel: Periodical Fiction and Book Trade in England and France in the 1870s-80s’

Following up on my research on the global distribution of periodicals in the 1860s I want to focus on one aspect of it, the lasting impact and commercial success of the sensation novel formula in England and France past the craze of the 1860s. In examining the publisher Vizetelly’s launch on British provincial papers of the titles of his ‘French Sensation Novel’ series I shall discuss the publisher’s strategy in marketing French fiction in the British papers and the changing definitions of the Sensation novel genre.

Both French and British authors in the 1870s and 1880s used the narrative functions of the sensation novel to address different concerns and anxieties. The middle-class setting of many of these novels confirm the general trend among sensation novelists to narrate stories of criminal behavior involving a different social group than the ‘dangerous’ working classes or the degenerate aristocracy of earlier examples of ‘sensation’ fiction. What distinguishes these novels of the 1870s-80s is the open form of the periodical novel that incorporates suggestions coming from other genres of fiction and transforms the narrative development of the typical sensation novel plot. Some authors, like Mary Elizabeth Braddon, in publishing her work in French papers, created a new narrative development: a happy ending awaits the ‘sensational’ heroine.

Accessing the archives of periodical fiction and booksellers catalogues reveals the vital, protean force of the sensational genre. Thrilling narratives from popular literature constantly transform assumed notions of generic conventions, thus expanding the categories of traditional literary history.

Debbie Harrison, ‘The body of evidence: Forensic medicine and the doctor-detective in The Moonstone and Middlemarch’

The science of forensic medicine that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the creation of a new type of fictional detective – the pioneering young doctor and master diagnostician, who was able to reconstruct a crime scene due to his advanced medical knowledge. Importantly, the legal developments that brought together medicine and crime under a single jurisdiction coincided with a socio-medical shift in the understanding and treatment of the alcoholic, narcotic, and nicotine addict. The combination of these two trends enabled writers of fiction to explore the imaginative possibilities of a drug- or alcohol-related crime that could only be solved by a physician.
This paper focuses on two such pioneering fictional doctors: Ezra Jennings in Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868) and Tertius Lydgate in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1872). Despite manifest intellectual powers, the young doctor cut an ambivalent figure in these novels. Jennings and Lydgate are both positioned as outsiders in the communities in which they practice, and while they are portrayed with considerable sympathy, they are also presented as professionally flawed: Jennings, who solves a nicotine- and opium-related crime, is an opium addict; Lydgate is a victim of blackmail, which compromises his position in relation to the suspicious death of the alcoholic Raffles. The result in both novels is an electrifying account of forensic medicine, addiction, and flawed professional integrity.

Helen Hauser, ‘Dickens’s Bony Economics’
In Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5), the inapty-named Pleasant Riderhood refuses to marry the articulator Mr Venus. She adamantly “not wish to regard [her]self, nor yet to be regarded, in that bony light”. Dissection and re-articulation are, for her and her time-period, the worst possible occupations. Pleasant’s father is a sort of murderer, and she associates with some of the most criminal classes of people, but to them nothing is worse than being an articulator of skeletons.

*Our Mutual Friend* was Dickens’s last completed novel, and the text incorporates/represents Dickens’s lifetime preoccupation with bodies and identities, with dissection and rearticulation, and with corporeal and textual economies. Pleasant Riderhood refuses to marry a man who makes money from taking apart and putting together the dead. Her disgust reflects a historical prejudice, but it also represents criticism of Dickens’s occupation itself. Throughout his career Dickens had been acutely conscious of making money off the disassembly and re-articulation of his characters’ bodies and lives.

This paper, “Dickens’s Bony Economics”, looks at the ways money, anatomy, and textual construction operate in the novel. It also addresses these themes as they inform other Dickens novels, and argues that Dickens’s popularity was based upon the contemporary fascination with and dread of dissection.

Tamar Heller, “‘A Bad Style of Book Altogether’: Rhoda Broughton, Geraldine Jewsbury, and the Perils of Publishing Sensation Fiction’
Although Rhoda Broughton was one of the nineteenth century’s most popular writers, only recently has her work been rediscovered by scholars, who have been particularly interested in her first two novels, *Not Wisely but Too Well* and *Cometh Up as a Flower*, both published in 1867 and classified as sensation fiction. My paper addresses the publication history of *Not Wisely but Too Well*—the first novel Broughton wrote but the second published—as an example of the complex negotiations between Victorian writers and publishers in bringing controversial novels into print. Though initially accepted by Bentley’s on the recommendation of J.S. Le Fanu, Broughton’s uncle, *Not Wisely* offended Geraldine Jewsbury, Bentley’s reader and, ironically, an unconventional author herself. Labelling *Not Wisely* a “bad style of book altogether,” though, Jewsbury upheld conservative standards of sexual propriety, and eventually *Not Wisely* was published by Tinsley’s after Bentley’s published *Cometh Up as a Flower* instead. Examining the correspondence between Jewsbury, Bentley’s, and Broughton, as well as the revisions Broughton made to *Not Wisely*’s original serialisation in order to make it less risqué, my paper illuminates a significant chapter in the publication history of Victorian popular fiction.

Naomi Hetherington, ‘Feminism, Freethought and the Crisis of Femininity in Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* and Kathleen Mannington Caffyn’s *A Yellow Aster’

This paper shows how disbelief is used to configure a crisis of femininity in two New Woman novels: Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) and *A Yellow Aster* (1894) by Kathleen Mannington Caffyn, writing under the penname of Iota. By comparing these two works, the paper argues for the importance of discursive doubt in the formal development of the New Woman (or the Modern Woman) genre. W.T. Stead’s article naming “The Novel of the Modern Woman” in the *Review of Reviews* in 1894 famously took *African Farm* to be “the forerunner of all” such novels. Stead also included *A Yellow Aster* in his descriptive survey on account of the heroine Gwen Waring’s acceptance of a proposal of marriage as a scientific “experiment”. Yet, unlike Schreiner, who consistently and publicly demanded women’s access to education and a professional labour market, Caffyn distanced herself from the political goals of the organised women’s movement. It is perhaps on this account that, in contrast to the growing body of feminist
scholarship on Schreiner, Caffyn has received little attention in modern critical studies of the New Woman. A comparison of A Yellow Aster with The Story of an African Farm points up the ambivalences inherent in late nineteenth-century feminism. Their common fantasy structure helps to explain the gap between thinking and acting that characterises New Woman heroines. Failing to imaginatively restructure heterosexual relations, the marriage problem novel invokes the female freethinker as a figure of uncertainty and loss.

Kylee-Anne Hingston, ""Skins to Slip Into": The Slipperiness of Identity and the Body in Wilkie Collins's No Name"
In my paper, ""Skins to Slip Into: The Slipperiness of Identity and the Body in Wilkie Collins's No Name," I use disability theory and the serial publication of Collins's No Name to reveal how the serial context interplays with the novel's portrayal of identity and the body. In spite of the serial context and contemporary critical reaction to sensation fiction, both of which call attention to Victorian preoccupation with the instability of social identity and the body, scholars of Collins's No Name tend analyze the novel's representation of the body by primarily focusing on the issue of female identity alone. These scholars fail to notice that in the novel nearly all bodies—even the apparently healthy ones—reveal themselves to be uncontrollable and abnormal, and that the management of one's identity and body preoccupies every character. In actuality, the ubiquity of uncontrollable bodies and identities in No Name and its serial context makes the border between normal and abnormal indistinct: all bodies and identities elude characters, and attempts to pin down either through naming or narrative fail to keep their tenuous hold.

Helena Ifil, ' "What do we want in the woman when we have educated her?": Mary Elizabeth Braddon and mid-Victorian debates over female higher education'
This paper will focus on how Mary Braddon's little-known novel Lost for Love (1874) engages with the 1860s and 1870s debates about the role of women and the emerging opportunities for women to pursue a course of higher education. I will compare Braddon's portrayal of women and female intellectual ability in Lost for Love (and some of her better known novels), with articles on the same subject in both popular and medical journals. Although Braddon's unconventional private life drew criticism from her contemporaries, her novels promote a largely conservative ideal image of the wife as the natural heart of the domestic sphere. Nevertheless, Braddon's writing suggests that for nineteenth-century women to fulfill their domestic responsibilities competently, they need to be more accomplished, well-informed and self-sufficient individuals. Braddon also implicitly advocates intellectual learning in women for the sake of personal satisfaction, rather than for professional or public ends.

Katherine Inglis, 'Pulp Dickens: Textual Mutilation in Our Mutual Friend'
Strange things happen to paper in Our Mutual Friend. Books and documents are coveted, caressed, mangled, buried and resurrected. For Nicodemus Boffin, travelling across London in a cab packed with books, 'wollumes' are gorgeous fetishes and a gateway to knowledge, but his pretended quixotic bibliomania points towards the dangerous potential of paper. Reading (particularly for pleasure) and writing can be perilous. The terrible fates of texts - m'sprision, burial, mutilation - correlate with the fates of their authors and readers. Our Mutual Friend's fantasies of pulping extend from texts to subjects, most notably at the paper-mill, the site of a death and an attempted murder. As a site where form (fabric or timber) is reduced (pulped) to formlessness (pulp), but then given new form (paper), the paper-mill enacts the diverse meanings of 'pulp' at work in the novel. If bodies and texts can be pulped, then they can be reformed. Beaten, mutilated and left for dead near the mill, Eugene Wrayburn is dragged from the water and reformed, morally and physically. Dead things in Our Mutual Friend - bodies, Mr Venus's compositions, texts - have a tendency to reanimate. If the novel's fascination with the decomposition of paper expresses anxiety towards literature, then its insistence on resurrection is a riposte to the derogation of popular literature as mere pulp.

Theresa Jamieson, ""Tearing her...into bits": Richard Pryce and the Fabrication of the Fictional Female'
By 1913 Richard Pryce was acknowledged by his contemporaries as a writer who had 'a way with him when it [came] to the analysis of a woman's nature...Whatever type of woman, he [took] delight in tearing her
inmost soul into bits and putting them all together again in...detailed and very lifelike portrait[s].\textsuperscript{23} As such Pryce's novels feature a host of diverse female characters, from simple-minded maidens, to dazzling and vindictive mothers, and even a morphine addicted murderess. However, the 'sheer humanness' of Pryce's approach ensures that each of these 'lifelike portraits' is a study in miniature of the history and circumstances which create a modern woman.\textsuperscript{4}

Though Pryce had, by the end of the nineteenth century, 'attained a very distinct position as a novelist', these days his work seems hardly to be read; and his novels are certainly not easy to obtain.\textsuperscript{5} This paper, therefore, will analyse three novels from the late nineteenth century - An Evil Spirit (1887), Time and the Woman (1892), The Burden of a Woman (1895) - in order to identify those elements of Pryce's work which account for the popularity of his novels with their contemporary audience, and to explore the value of these and Pryce's wider oeuvre to current scholarship.

\textbf{Juliet John, ``Coming Face to Face with Multitudes'': Dickens's Public Readings'}

This paper will explore the effect of Dickens's professional public readings on Dickens's self-image and reputation as a popular novelist. It will explore in the ways in which the feelings of 'personal' communication or the experience of community that Dickens sought to create between himself and his audience through the public readings depended on the material translation or verification of those feelings into numbers - into numbers of people and numbers of dollars or pounds. Dickens was most satisfied that he belonged to a community - or an 'ocean of humanity', to use his own words - when that community seemed most visibly numerous, or when the scale of that community made itself felt in his profits. This paper will argue that the public readings, even more than Dickens's journalism, bring his humanist and reformist ideals about culture into collision with his acceptance of culture as commerce. They are a site of conflict and tension between Dickens's concern for his reputation as a respectable novelist and his desire to maintain his image as a writer of 'the people'.

\textbf{Charlotte Jones, 'Trollope's Turkish Bath: Exploring the Social History of Turkish baths through Victorian Popular Literature'}

This paper takes Anthony Trollope's short story The Turkish bath as a framework for assessing how the relatively new social phenomena of the Turkish bath was received in the Victorian metropolis. I assess the way in which Trollope familiarises the reader with the ritual of the Turkish bath and how his experiences of the Jermy Street Turkish bath, Piccadilly shape public attitudes towards Turkish baths. Concepts of masculinity and class pervade this short story and this research is particularly concerned with the ability of the Turkish bath to function as a shared ritual which suspends conventional norms.

This research uses Trollope's The Turkish Bath as an example of the way in which popular Victorian literature can be used by historical researchers to construct accurate representations of the time period with particular reference to the use of discourse analysis. The wider context of this research attempts to provide an additional dimension to the social history of Victorian London by taking a neglected institution and considering the Turkish bath within the wider framework of the socio-economic milieu of the Victorian period.

\textbf{Jane Jordan, 'A dozen penny tracts... bound up at random': the serialisation of Mrs Henry Wood's A Life's Secret'}

This paper examines the serialisation of Wood's A Life's Secret in The Leisure Hour ('A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation'), a weekly penny paper issued by the Religious Tract Society. The novel, typically for Wood an uneasy combination of sensation and social realism, was in fact the first of a quartet of anti-strike novels published by Wood between 1862-1870 (A Life's Secret was serialised from January-May 1862, and later issued in book form in 1867). Its contemporaneity (the novel draws on the events of the 1861 Builders' Strike) led to the storming of the offices of the Religious Tract Society by (understandably) aggrieved Trades Unionists who threatened the life of the anonymous author. It is, though, the manner in which the novel was first presented that concerns me here. Each weekly instalment featured the kind of

\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{5} The New York Times, March 30\textsuperscript{th} 1913 \textsuperscript{4} Ibid \textsuperscript{5} The Star, 1895}
narrative picture more commonly associated with temperance tracts – hence the sneering of the Saturday Review referred to in the title of this paper – tracts which offered dire warnings against the improvidence of working men and the improper use of the worker’s ‘leisure hour’. The heavy-handed moralising of the printed text and its accompanying illustrations were designed to appeal to a readership as yet lacking literary sophistication, and serve to challenge recent assumptions that after the success of East Lynne Wood avoided the issue of teetotalism (it was of course the Scottish Temperance League that had given her her first break with the publication of Danesbury House, and £100 in prize money). It has been suggested that Wood sought to distance herself from ‘this subgenre of religious fiction and its associations with a lower class readership’ in order to position herself instead ‘as the authentic voice of the mercantile middle-class’ (Riley, 174, 176). The serialisation of A Life’s Secret, and that of Wood’s other industrial novels, demonstrates that her fiction had its roots in one of the most primitive forms of popular fiction – the penny tract.

Andrew King, ‘“Why not indeed?”: Ouida’s The Massareres (1897) and the Lure of Modernity’
Ouida’s last novel, The Massareres, despite its commercial success, was dismissed by Elisabeth Lee, Ouida’s first biographer, as “unpleasant”. Later commentators have had little to say of it other than it is a satire on the contemporary mores of the aspirant middle class. While one its major themes is capitalism, The Massareres by no means concerns the middle-class but continues Ouida’s lack of interest in them: all the characters are aristocratic or nouveau riches originally from the poorest rural class who enter the highest levels on Society.

On the cusp on the new century and looking towards it, it is nonetheless in many ways a summa of the nineteenth-century novel, deriving its plot and characters from Austen, Thackeray, Dickens, Zola and Ouida herself, The Massareres is one of Ouida’s most ambitious, brilliant and comic novels. But its liminal status sets problems that the novel is flagrantly unable or unwilling to resolve. I argue that The Massareres, like Marx’s Communist Manifesto, is both a critique of capitalist modernity and an energetic celebration of its power and glamour. Unlike the Marx, however, while the novel tries to praise the refusal of capitalism, it is unable to envisage any realistic future outside it. The only alternative offered is a benevolent paternalist rural aristocracy. This, however, involves not only complete isolation both from the rest of society and even from itself, but the literal collapse of the heroine into it when she is unable to face either her past or her alternative future as a teacher (and thus a member of the salaried middle class). It is not even an alternative that can be described directly by the narrator. It can only be referred to by characters who have remained within capitalist modernity.

The characters that do have an active future all exist in the ambit of the anti-heroine, the ironically named Mouse, a wonderfully energetic, unscrupulous and impoverished aristocrat and literary descendant of Thackeray’s Becky Sharp and Ouida’s Lady Dolly. After various setbacks, including rape and blackmail, which strongly encourage us to be sympathetic towards her, Mouse proves to be a more successful survivor in the capitalist competition for resources than any banker or businessman. We end by admiring this propeller of modernity despite any ethical doubts we may have about her methods of survival. As the novel’s last words put it, “why not indeed?”, its question mark refusing the cloistered enclosure of Ouida’s priggish and unattractive heroine, and opening the future instead to Mouse’s energy and ingeniously manipulative wiles.

Shu-Fang Lai, ‘“Look into your own heart and write!”: Charles Reade’s A Good Fight’
Charles Reade was a so-called Victorian “lost author”, most neglected and under-rated by modern scholarship. Yet he was at his time a most topical novelist whom Trollope called “almost a genius”, or the best of “the second best” writers who deserve revisiting. In fact, he himself was very confident of out-rivaling Dickens, boasting that his serial “A Good Fight is a masterpiece, A Tale of Two Cities is not a masterpiece”, and that in America he should rank “three times higher” than in England. Criticisms of his works have been so full of uncertainty. Even in his own age, because of his peculiar personality and choice of subjects, appeal to sensationalism and obsession with drama, he received severe criticism. This paper is to look at the serialization of A Good Fight in Once a Week, in competition with Dickens’s weekly All the Year Round. Investigations will be made into Reade’s approach in pursuing historical fiction in contrast to Dickens’s, and the two novelists’ different manifestations of sensationalism to throw light on this legendary writer in the dynamic milieu of the world of Victorian journalism.
Tara MacDonald, ‘Ambivalent Sensationalism in Salem Chapel and St. Martin’s Eve’

We will not deny that [sensationalism] may be used with high and pure results, or that we should have little fault to find with it were it always employed with as much skill and self-control as in the ‘Woman in White’ but that is an unreasonable hope. – Margaret Oliphant, “Sensational Novels” (1862)

Despite Oliphant’s claim that sensation would not likely be combined with “high and pure results,” many writers – including Oliphant herself – attempted to do just that, to write novels that combined the pleasurable excitement of reading sensation fiction with the moral outcomes of domestic fiction. Novels by such writers, including Ellen Wood, Rhoda Broughton, Florence Marryat, and Amelia Edwards, have not been studied to the same degree as those by more “radical” sensationalists, such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Yet novels that convey a moralized or ambivalent sensationalism should not be dismissed as ineffectual or unsophisticated versions of more sensational stories. Indeed, ambivalent sensation novels often render the boundaries between the sensational and the realistic problematic or unstable because of their preoccupation with utilizing sensational elements while simultaneously critiquing them or detaching them from the main plot of the story. In my paper, I intend to show how two such novels, Margaret Oliphant’s Salem Chapel (1863) and Ellen Wood’s St. Martin’s Eve (1866), register debates over sensationalism, realism, and morality through key metafictional moments. Further, I hope to challenge the dominant reading of sensation fiction by suggesting that these novels, which have been labelled “domesticated sensationalism,” “domestic sensationalism,” and “conservative sensationalism,” constituted the main current of sensation fiction, rather than an inconsequential or minor sub-genre.

Andrew Mangham, ‘Dickens and the Interpretation of Suicide: A Medical Context for The Pickwick Papers’

In 1839, George Henry Lewes visited the young Charles Dickens at Doughty Street and reported that his host’s “scientific corps is deficient”. While Lewes admitted that Dickens had a sharp and penetrative intellect, he was disappointed by evidence that the novelist did not share his own passions for science. Thanks to the work of scholars like Kathleen Tillotson and John Stonehouse, we are now in possession of evidence that suggests otherwise. Dickens engaged with a broad range of scientific ideas, as is demonstrated in the catalogue of the books that Dickens owned at the time of his death. The index reveals how the author owned a considerable number of medical textbooks. Some of these, including Samuel Cooper’s Dictionary of Practical Surgery (1838), dated back to the ‘Boz years’ and featured marginal annotations in Dickens’s handwriting. The author’s letters also reveal that he was familiar with some leading figures in medical research, most significantly John Elliotton. Best remembered for his passionate endorsement of mesmerism, Elliotton was also a pioneer of forensic science and auscultatory medicine.

This paper will concentrate specifically on The Pickwick Papers in order to construct a case study on Dickens’s use of medical ideas in his fiction. The way in which Boz observes, dissects, and studies provincial life in Pickwick appropriates a great deal from the medical methodologies of Elliotton and his colleagues. In particular, I am interested in how the form of Pickwick (posthumous papers outlining the lengthy tour of the Pickwick Club) draws on clinical procedures for determining and examining cases of suicide. In both discourses (Pickwick and medicine) there is a preoccupation with ‘endings’ – premature, delayed, and absent. In forensic analysis, diagnosing the type of ending, in cases of sudden death, is a crucial part of determining whether or not a person has died by his/her own hands. Combined with the suicide of Robert Seymour, Pickwick’s original illustrator, these ideas radically changed the text’s format and led to Dickens’s preoccupation with avoiding telos. Like a life that is not suicidal, Pickwick has no end in sight until its endpoint is actually within spitting distance.

Dickens’s friend Edward Bulwer-Lytton did things differently: he would write the third and final volume of any given novel first. He did this in order to avoid rushing the dénouement, but the overall effect is the production of a suicidal text; like an individual intent on self-destruction, the ‘behaviour’ of Bulwer’s plots is influenced by a predetermined conclusion. Dickens’s novels, The Pickwick Papers especially, have no such foresight of their finale. Often dismissed for exploiting the monetary values of his plots by drawing them out endlessly, Dickens was actually influenced by the complex philosophical questions, asked mainly by medical researchers, surrounding the search (or abandonment) of closure. Hence, situating Dickens within his original, medico-historical context is a vital part of understanding his works comprehensively.
Ruth Morris, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's The Doctor's Wife: An evolutionary reading of "time"'
Much ink has been spilled about the impact of Darwin and perhaps more broadly that elusive term 'Darwinism' upon literary narratives of the mid-nineteenth century. I propose that an evolutionary reading of The Doctor's Wife is possible through its representation of Time.

The Doctor's Wife, arguably Braddon's first so-called 'realist' novel, purports to be based on Flaubert's Madame Bovary. The differences from the source text could be explained by considering the respective scientific contexts. Flaubert was writing Madame Bovary in 1850s France which was scientifically very different from 1860s England. By 1864, the year of The Doctor's Wife, ideas around the genesis of the world had changed considerably, especially in England. The publication of Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life (1859), challenged the previously widespread catastrophist view of creation proposed by the French naturalist Georges Cuvier. In catastrophism and Madame Bovary, time passes quickly and is cyclical, being punctuated by magnitudinous events. Origin and The Doctor's Wife both describe time as passing more slowly, progressing continuously and of a clear linear construction of past, present and future.

François Nectoux, 'From Roman Populaire to Victorian Popular Novel: some parallels between France and Britain at the end of the 19th Century'
An interesting aspect of the development of the popular novel as a publishing and cultural phenomenon in the second half of the 19th Century is that it occurred in similar circumstances and took similar forms in different countries such as France and in Britain. The two countries were engaged in a social revolution that saw the rise of literacy, industrialisation and urbanisation create the conditions for the spread of the novel as the soap of its days. This paper will first explore some of the parallels and differences between the French and the British popular novel at social and cultural levels, before introducing and discussing some of the main thematic, narrative and stylistic aspects of the French Roman Populaire. It will do so by introducing the works of the prolific French author Xavier de Montépin, much admired by English authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson, and who made an art of industrialising the popular novel genre in all its archetypal excesses. Works used in this introductory approach are the Husband's Lover and The Bread Peddler (which was translated in many countries and frequently adapted in films and TV dramas later in the 20th Century).

Flaminia Nicora, 'Thrilling Empire: the 1857 Indian Sepoy Rebellion and popular fiction'
In 1897, in the pages of the famous Blackwood's Magazine, Hilda Gregg assesses the literary impact of the Mutiny: "Of all the great events of this century, as they are reflected in fiction, the Indian Mutiny has taken the firmest hold on the popular imagination". The different episodes of the Mutiny are the backdrop for a proper strand of the historical novel, often written by Anglo-Indians. The paper focuses on the features of a subgenre rather popular with the Victorians, neglected (although evoked) by major, canonic novelists. The Mutiny novel has been identified by recent criticism as one of the pieces of the mosaic in the construction of British identity. This model of identity supports the national imperialist vocation, extolling British qualities and representing historical events in mythical, stereotypical and racist fashion, according to clear, and closely monitored, ideological values. At the same time these novels offer fertile ground to explore the uncertainties and the contradictions that complicate the pattern, warning against any simplistic attitude towards Victorian Weltanshaaung. An interesting author in this regard is George Chesney, mostly known for his The Battle of Dorking or for his works about Indian administration. Chesney is the author of a Mutiny novel, The Dilemma (1876), that sets a plot typical of the sensational novel against the background of the Rebellion, revealing the powerful anxieties inherent the colonial adventure. Other novelists who wrote on the Rebellion (G. Henty, J.F. Fanthorne among them) are equally interesting to explore the ambiguities of identity construction.

Glenda Norquay, 'Reviving Romance? Robert Louis Stevenson and Stanley J. Weyman'
In the 1880s Stevenson was heralded many, including novelist Rider Haggard and critic George Saintsbury, as the writer who would revive masculine romance. In 1915 he was still being described in appropriately chivalric terms by W. L. Phelps as 'the young knightly figure' who would release the spirit of English fiction 'from the dungeon into which she had been locked by the giant Realism.' Yet, as Italo Calvino has pointed
out, Stevenson wrote the kinds of books he liked to read, and he was always in search of other writers who could fulfil his desire for chivalric romances. One such writer was Stanley J. Weyman, a highly successful and popular novelist in the 1890s and early years of the twentieth century. Like Stevenson, he was inspired by the fiction of Alexandre Dumas père and produced in the early 1890s a number of novels positively received by his fellow novelist and Samoan exile: 'I feel that I have a continual promise of pleasure in your writing', RLS wrote to him in 1894.

This paper explores the literary relationship between Stevenson and Weyman, their engagement with Dumas, and their production of chivalric romances which sustain the genre yet acknowledge its inherent nostalgia. Concentrating on a comparison of Stevenson's late novel, St Ives (completed by Quiller-Couch and published in 1897) and one of Weyman's earliest historical romances A Gentleman of France (1893), it suggests that both writers exploit the popularity of the romance genre but also articulate and expose the dynamics of the form in ways that suggest a process more nuanced than that of simple revivification. The romance form at the end of the nineteenth century has been critically understood as either satisfying a desire for the simplistic assertion of absolutes or offering a form which allowed the negotiation of social change. This paper suggests that a further function, as deployed in these two novels, is to represent and reflect on romance as paradigmatic of the reading experience itself.

Galia Ofek, 'The Book of Job and New Woman Books'
In Mary Cholmondeley's Red Pottage (1899), the New Woman heroine and author protests: "I had been deceived. I had done my part. God had not done His. He should have seen to it that the book was not destroyed" (336). This cry of outrage reverberates with Job's, who, at the unjustified loss of all that he has cherished, questions divine justice: "Is it good upon thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thoughshouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? . . . Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgement" (10.3, 19.7).

I propose to explore the role of the Book of Job in late-Victorian feminist fiction. New Woman publicists and novelists, including Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, Olive Schreiner and Mary Cholmondeley returned to key phrases and images from the biblical text and interpolated them into their own novels and socio-political commentary. They accentuated the hermeneutic, aesthetic, ideological and political potentialities of Job's painful trial to traverse the boundaries between their own non-canonical texts and the Judeo-Christian canon, as well as to express their rage at rigid cultural and social boundaries. The intertextual references pointed out that as a dissenting and uncompromising protest against accepted social judgement and human perceptions of heavenly justice, the Book of Job was still incorporated into the canon, and so it set a precedence which they could follow. The Book of Job was under intense scrutiny and re-evaluation in the nineteenth century. Admired and praised by Carlyle, Froude and many biblical critics, it served to highlight late-Victorian discursive and ideological attempts to grapple with loss of faith in times of crisis and change. As The Westminster Review claimed in 1889, Job became synonymous with the search for meaning - the efforts to trace its 'message' or 'morals', the investigation of the "author's purpose and plan" and finally, Job's parallel attempt to find God's purpose and plan in the universe. It also served New Woman novelists to investigate and define their own purposes and plans for women in relation to the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton, "'But why write them down [?]': Mary Cholmondeley's diaries and the violation of the female artist'
In Cholmondeley's early diaries writing figures as both impulse and displacement, an alternative to marriage as much as a means of shaping the world around her. It is also a point of reference for marking changes in the self, an insight that appears in Hester Gresley's philosophy in Red Pottage. Ironically it is after the huge success of this novel in 1899 that the act of keeping a private diary is figured as both surrender to, and conflict with, the reading public. Before her death Cholmondeley tore out a number of pages from the final volume, leaving the jagged edges to gesture towards the secrets she had changed her mind about revealing. Paradoxically, the later entries also insist on personal experience as in any case un-narratable.

In her fiction Cholmondeley persistently depicts the appropriation of female artists by their public. Most famously, Hester Gresley insists on the distinction between printed and written pages, but her manuscript is read without her consent and subsequently burned. In a late story, 'The Goldfish', Cholmondeley prophetically imagines an artist whose private work can be revealed only after her death.
Beth Palmer, ‘Florence Marryat, sensation and literary performance’
This paper analyses Florence Marryat as a canny literary performer in the early years of her career as a novelist. I concentrate on Love’s Conflict (1865), The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt (1867), and Véronique (1869) to examine the ways in which Marryat negotiated the negative connotations of being ‘popular’ and ‘sensational’. She quickly became adept at turning hostile critical alignments of her self and her fiction to her own advantage.

Far from denying this sensationalist characterisation, Marryat deploys it as one of a number of roles that she would perform in her multifaceted career. Indeed she sees sensation itself as central to her literary persona and reliant on re-constructions of personal experience. She writes in her introduction to Véronique that her novel’s most sensational incidents are ‘drawn from life’. Their ‘appeal to your feelings’ is contingent upon the readers’ perception of these sensational incidents as authentic experiences. Reading Marryat’s early novels becomes an act of reading a sensational self-construction, where fiction and life-writing blur and the sensational excitement is doubled. Marryat’s early novels forged the skills in performance (both literary and theatrical) that would mark out the rest of her energetic career.

Ged Pope, ‘The Suburban Male Body in Victorian Popular Fiction’
Some years ago Terry Eagleton predicted that ‘there will soon be more bodies in contemporary criticism than on the fields of Waterloo’. In Victorian Studies alone we have the Degenerate or Diseased body, the idealised Manly, Empire-building body and its opposite, the Feminised, or Aestheticised, body, not to be confused with anxieties around the Feminine body. To this list we can add what I call the Suburban body, the focus of my talk, which can be found in popular suburban-set fiction, notably Grossmith’s Diary of a Nobody, Jerome’s Three Men in a Boat, also some fiction by Wells, and in work by minor writers Keble Howard, Barry Pain and William Pett-Ridge.

The suburban male body in popular Victorian fiction (it is perceived as a male problem) has two key features: it is ugly and it is useless. Suburbanites are physically unattractive, ageing, unfit, weedy, in poor health and often inappropriately feminised. More importantly, the domesticated, home-loving suburban male is grossly incompetent and unskilled; the unhandyman cannot manipulate the unwieldy world around him, is clumsy and accident-prone, has no facility with the stuffed and aestheticised interiors. It serves to evict the suburbanite from any easy homeliness, from any sense of belonging. The suburbanite, in popular Victorian novels, does not fit in.

Christine Pullen, ‘A Metropolitan Muse: London Life in the Novels of Amy Levy’
‘Mine is an urban muse and bound/By some strange law to pave ground’ -Amy Levy chose his line from Austen Dobson’s ‘On London Stones’ as the epigraph for her final collection of poetry, which was published not long after she committed suicide at her parent’s home in Bloomsbury in September 1889. But although urban themes permeate her poetry, it is in her popular novels The Romance of a Shop and Reuben Sachs that her day to day experience of London is brought most vividly to life.

Levy’s literary engagement with the city was consciously modern and not rooted in the past. Like her, the female characters in her novels revel in the opportunities that were opening up to women in the metropolis at that time. They ride about on omnibuses, write articles for newspapers, open their own businesses and visit the newly fashionable department stores. All this set against a backdrop of bustling activity interspersed with the cry of the newsboy announcing the latest news from home and abroad transmitted via telegraph, which was in itself a recent innovation at that time.

My paper is therefore an exploration of the ways in which Levy’s experience of London life influenced her fiction, interwoven with an account of her own personal experience of the city that she loved, and in which she lived, worked and ultimately died.

Patricia Pye, ‘Metropolitan Moralizing in Hall Caine’s The Christian and Joseph Conrad’s “The Return”’
In August 1897, when Hall Caine’s The Christian was published, Joseph Conrad was writing ‘The Return’, which appeared the following year. Conrad, the archetypal struggling artist during this period, had little in common with the popularly successful Caine. However, ‘The Return’ represents Conrad’s first attempt at a story with a metropolitan setting, just as The Christian does for Caine; a comparison of the two works reveals other significant similarities. This paper will explore these, in the context of late-nineteenth-century concerns about London as a sinful city and the concomitant contemporary fashion for evangelical-style preaching and
sermonizing. It will argue that this is expressed through the characterisation of Alvan Hervey ('The Return') and Father Storm ('The Christian') — two contemporary 'moralizers' who preach at their wayward women. Conrad and Caine may have inhabited very different literary worlds within 1890s London, but these first metropolitan stories reveal much about struggles with morality and self-expression in the modern city.

Minna Vuohelainen, 'From "vulgar" and "impossible" to "pre-eminently readable": Richard Marsh's shifting critical fortunes, 1893-1915'

This paper examines the critical fortunes of Richard Marsh (1857-1915), a bestselling author of horror, crime, sensation, comic and romantic fiction. The paper charts the changing tone of reviews of Marsh's work as the author's popularity increased, his publication pattern stabilised, and his publishers became more respectable. The focus of the paper will be on critical responses to Marsh's work in high-cultural, conservative reviews such as *Academy* and *Athenaeum*, which have been sampled as indicative of middle-class views. The paper will argued that a shift took place in critical responses to Marsh after the publication of his bestselling novel *The Beetle: A Mystery* in 1897. Reviews of Marsh's early work were generally somewhat dismissive if not wholly negative, mirroring the low status of the author and his publishers. *The Beetle*, by contrast, received a lot of critical attention, including many acknowledgements of its power as a shocker and the author's ability as a craftsman. It was in the aftermath of the success of *The Beetle* that Marsh began to attract more positive reviews. He was increasingly commended for his easy style, skilful plot construction, humour and innovativeness in devising fresh situations. A clear shift is, then, noticeable from the earlier sneers at genre fiction towards an appreciation of a recognised name within the niche market for sensational and romantic popular fiction. In the final years of his career, Marsh appears to have attained a reputation as one of the leading providers of popular romances and thrillers, his name carrying a promise of a lucid style and of imaginative freshness within his chosen generic categories. The paper charts this process of winning critical recognition for genre work, exploring the reasons for Marsh's shifting critical fortunes.

Alisha Walters, 'The Moonstone and Hybridized Constructions of National Identity'

My paper argues that Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* contributes to an anxious mid-century debate regarding the actual and ethical limits of national, racial British identity, which was seen to be increasingly hybridized in the wake of empire. My argument—which is drawn from a chapter of my dissertation, in which I examine Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868) and *Armada* (1866) in the context of Victorian discussions of hybridized, and potentially raced conceptualisations of national identity—focuses primarily upon the relationship between Franklin Blake and Ezra Jennings, the mysterious, half foreign, half English doctor in the novel. I argue that their mirrored desire, central to the novel, acts as a vexed nexus of imperial desire, as *The Moonstone* suggests that contemporaneous constructions of national identity are always contingent upon a real, though troubling and uneven, relationship with the colonial "other." I assert that Collins' novel forces the reader to confront the personal and national ethics of this hybridizing desire, in which longing for the other, while a violent action, is also seen as a constitutive element of modern British identity. I conclude by positing that Collins attempts to address this ethical quandary by suggesting that interaction with the other, while violent, is also bi-directional, as the British subject is, too, irrevocably altered, and partially othered himself through the act of imperial contact. While recent scholarship has discussed *The Moonstone* and sensation fiction in relation to their engagement with race and empire, Collins' contribution to the larger cultural conversation regarding the specifically hybridized nature of British national identity has yet to be sustained or adequately addressed.

Claire Whitehead, 'Connecting race and the European occult: The importance of Egypt in the late nineteenth century work of Richard Marsh and Marie Corelli'

A popular novel appeals to the hearts of its reading public. Almost unknown a century later, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897) proved the most successful of his prolific output, being adapted for both film and stage well into the 1920's, and clearly articulated something strongly felt by his late Victorian readership. While there are numerous cultural concerns expressed in the novel, they are products of a central issue, that of the power of the occult in the hands of the Egyptian 'Other'. Employing a new historicist methodology, the paper looks at two

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areas of research: political activity and travel writing in Egypt in the nineteenth century and the developing importance of hypnosis in medico-judicial discourse. In the twenty years that precede Marsh's novel, British rule was brutally and unofficially enforced in Egypt, while hypnosis gained medical credence and appeared as a recognised defence in a French murder trial: Egypt and the occult were simultaneously infiltrating Europe. The paper sets out to prove that, along with Marie Corelli's Ziska (1897), The Beetle reveals a darker interpretation of the Egyptian revival in the Victorian era than has previously been considered, and thus deserves greater recognition in the canon of late-Victorian popular fiction.

Emilio Zampieri, 'Guy Boothby (1867-1905): A Manufacturer of Best-Sellers'

At present a most neglected popular fiction writer of the 1890s, Guy Boothby was one of the most prolific and famous authors of his day. He turned out books at an incredible speed, his average output being at least 6,000 words a day, and his 'machine-made' methods of production included the practice of dictating words into a phonograph. Unlike some of his colleagues who posed as great writers, Boothby frankly admitted that he had undertaken the profession only to afford a splendid living. He freely used and mixed most of the ingredients of popular entertainment - adventure, crime, mystery, exoticism, the occult, and so on - and thus created a generic melting pot that quite appealed to the general public. As a matter of fact all his books - about fifty in little more than ten years - seem to have sold well. All this makes Boothby an outstanding 'manufacturer of best-sellers' within the phenomenon of the mass production of fiction in the 1890s and at the turn of the century. This paper aims to revive the critical debate on the still obscure Boothby case and examine the reasons that underlie the incredible success of the author's most popular creation, the 'Dr Nikola' series (1895-1901).