Alice Barnaby, ‘Chromotherapy: Bathing in Light’
Troubled by gout, rheumatism, sciatica, constipation, madness, baldness or general nervousness? A daily regime of bathing in light will ease your symptoms. Such was the advice offered by Augustus Pleasonton, Seth Pancoast and Edwin Babbitt, innovators in the experimental field of chromotherapy that emerged in Britain and America during the 1870s and 1880s. Directed by these authors to sit in pools of variously coloured light followers of chromotherapy were encouraged to purchase the chromolume, a device of stained glass described as being both medical and ornamental in nature. For the more dedicated enthusiast permanent changes to the home were recommended by replacing standard clear glass in drawing-room and bedroom windows with panes of red, blue and yellow glass. The merging of interior design, medicine and commercial enterprise with the contested nature of light’s physiological and psychological therapeutic qualities proved to be both a popular and problematic combination. Bathing in light indicates a shift in the relationship between domestic design, health and the body.

Anne-Marie Beller, “You’re obliged to have recourse to bodies“: Corporeal Proliferation in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Penny Fiction
The mid-Victorian sensation novel was frequently criticised for its insistent corporeality and unwholesome depictions of physical violence and sensuality. Margaret Oliphant identified Mary Braddon as a prime offender in this line and complained generally about the ‘fleshy and unlovely’ portrayals in women’s novels, with their ‘intense appreciation of flesh and blood, this eagerness of physical sensation’ (Oliphant, 1867). Yet Braddon’s productions for the penny fiction market display considerably more explicit emphasis on physicality than any of her relatively restrained three-deckers. In contrast to her middle-class novels, where, as her character Sigismund Smith advises, the emphasis should all be on ‘one body’, Braddon’s ‘penny bloods’ proliferate bodies, in the dual sense of corpses (referred to by Smith in my title quotation) and also through extensive casts of characters and multiple plot-lines. This paper will discuss the ways in which Braddon’s penny fiction exaggerates and extends the physicality of her more ‘respectable’ circulating-library fiction, through the tropes of physical proliferation and excess. My paper will focus primarily on The Outcasts, a penny serial later revised for the circulating library market as Henry Dunbar. My discussion will consider the ways in which Braddon’s revision of this text (consisting principally of the eradication of surplus ‘bodies’) engages questions of class, literary taste, and generic conventions.

Anna Bogen, “‘I, too, am a woman!’: Satire, the Body and the Girton Girl in Victorian College Fiction’
The late nineteenth century saw a hotly contested and very visible battle over women’s access to higher education. After the foundation of Girton College, Cambridge in 1869, the figure of the ‘Girton Girl,’ a younger offshoot of the New Woman, began to appear in the popular press, where her supposed characteristics were discussed, championed and reviled by those from different sides of the debate, and her position in a women’s college often became the subject of prurient speculation. This paper examines the construction and representation of the Girton Girl through a focus on Horace William Bleackley’s 1894 novel Une Culotte, or, a New Woman: an Impossible Story of Modern Oxford, a tale of cross-dressing Girton Girls who invade a male Oxford college, a text which simultaneously pays homage to and parodies the growing body of late Victorian college stories
written by popular authors like L. T. Meade. The paper argues that Bleackley’s bizarre text both highlights and questions the centrality of the body to the emerging discourse around the Girton Girl, exposing a series of mounting anxieties around the changing construction of gender within educational settings.

Anna Brecke, ‘Reading Palimpsestically: the body of the governess in popular Victorian fiction’
The governess inhabits a physically and socially liminal space. In this space, she is not unlike the prostitute, another stereotyped nineteenth century figure whose body threatens the stability of middle class homes. Representations of the governess are contradictorily the location of detailed description and erasure. We might consider them a kind of absent presence, problematized by elision of the individual within the cultural space she occupies. When she is under the weight of a gaze, her individuality is often disallowed in texts that use stereotyping of the governess as a way to indicate the presence of a governess. This paper investigates the way ‘governess’ operates as a stereotype but also seeks to uncover the palimpsestic nature of governess figures in the novel. A palimpsestic body is one weighed down by collective representative meaning that can supersede the individual, but both are visible in a single location. Reading representations of the gendered body palimpsestically allows for the stereotype and the individual to exist simultaneously. Governess figures like Jane Eyre and Lucy Graham, among others, are problematic palimpsests. They require us to interrogate the classic binary public/private, but also stereotype/individual, and absence/presence.

Lucy Brown, ‘Androgyny and disability in sensation fiction’
This paper will address the way that masculine representations of disabled men in two works of sensation fiction are undermined by the effeminate aspects of their characters. It will examine Land at Last (1866) by Edmund Yates and The Law and the Lady (1875) by Wilkie Collins, both of which contain disabled characters who appear caught between the masculine and feminine. This placement ensures that they are on the fringes of society. While Miserrimus Dexter of The Law and the Lady relishes this exclusion and thrives on it, Land at Last’s Lord Caterham finds himself cut off from society and his ideas dismissed due to the ‘deformity’ of his body and mind. Essentially, their masculinity is eclipsed by their disabilities. In addition, the implication within both texts is that Dexter and Caterham are impotent, rendering them unable to reproduce and contribute to society in that way. The paper will draw on theories of masculinity, disability studies and the sickroom to demonstrate the relationship between effeminacy and disability in these two novels.

Jonathan Buckmaster, “‘Oh Doctor, Doctor, don’t expect too much of me! I’m only a woman, after all!’: The (dis)embodiment of Lydia Gwilt in Collins’s Miss Gwilt’
Miss Gwilt (1875), Wilkie Collins’s dramatization of his own novel Armadale (1866), represented an opportunity to powerfully embody one of his most compelling characters, the seductive villainess Lydia Gwilt, and thus enrich her literary impact. However, Collins transformed (or ‘altered’) his source novel significantly, and the impact of his lead character is a matter for debate. Drawing on theories of adaptation, performance history and a number of surrounding paratexts (theatre reviews, Collins’s correspondence and so on), this paper will evaluate how Collins simultaneously embodies and disembodies the controversial figure of Lydia Gwilt in Miss Gwilt. Mindful of Richard Pearson’s assertion that ‘rather than attempting repetition and replication of his novels’, Collins’s adaptations of his own novels were an attempt to ‘deliberately distance themselves from the originals’, I will consider Collins’s ‘alterations’, and examine what is added and what is removed. The movement from page to stage contributed a physicality of performance, a series of connotations associated with the actress Ada Cavendish, and a number of other possibilities
inherent in the melodramatic form. However, at the same time, Collins's remediation also carries a sense of reluctant loss, through the weakening of Lydia Gwilt's agency in events, the restriction of access to her inner self, and her altered relationship with the other characters.

Kirsty Bunting, 'Collaborative Bodies: The Affair at the Inn and the Mystery of the Minerva Literary Society'
I propose a paper which follows on from recent critical interest in works such as The Fate of Fenella (published in 1892 and written by twenty-four authors) which have argued that round robin novels were marketed as literary curiosities and published in response to a growing readerly interest in detecting individual hands within a composite text. My paper discusses The Affair at the Inn (1904) by the understudied authors Mary and Jane Findlater, Kate Douglas Wiggin and Allan McAulay (pseud. Charlotte Stewart), examining their collaborative method (each author is responsible for one character) and the ways in which the multiple-authorship is inscribed in the novel. I ask what effect this mode of writing and the fact of the novel's all-female authorship had on its reception by critics and readers. To help contextualise the novel's reception I also discuss an anonymous short story of 1901 entitled 'The Mystery of Collaboration: A Practical Experiment' (MacMillan's Magazine) in which seven female authors wrote a round robin novel. The comic treatment of the writers at collaborative play reveals much about contemporaneous concerns for the quality and 'Authority' of the round robin. This paper asks why the authors of The Affair at the Inn chose to write as a body in the teeth of such concerns and what drew readers to their novel which proved popular enough, and perhaps so pleasurable to write, that a second work (Robinetta) by the same group followed seven years later.

Lisa Coar, 'Fat Boy Slim: "Chiselling" the Victorian Male Body into Shape'
This paper will expose how the growing bodies of nineteenth-century males were often prodded, incised, and surgically probed. Through its own critical 'probing' of the fat boy's paunch, it will essentially dismiss the timeworn myth that fat is, and always has been, 'a feminist issue.' As we shall move on to discover, the overindulgent fat boy – who intuitively spilled from the seams of the literary press— was inexorably stigmatised by nineteenth-century culture. Satirists poked fun at his pronounced convexity, and medics reviled his carnality with scorn. Yet, with disciplinary maxims looming large, the fat boy's body became reformable: a body that one might, to borrow the words of John Ruskin, 'chisel into shape.' Using calorific intake as a manipulative 'tool,' writers of both popular and canonical fiction began to sadistically experiment with his adipose flesh. Corporeal snipping, starving, cutting and carving became popular figurative tropes. From an examination of Lewis Carroll's surgo-medical tendencies in Sylvie and Bruno (1889), to an exploration of the anorectically-motivated 'chiselling' in both Catherine Sinclair's The Grand Feast (1839) and J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan (1901-1904), this paper will ultimately reveal that nineteenth-century literary culture was, as a rule, eager to render the fat boy slim.

Lori Comerford, 'Framing the Self: Clothing, Class and Autonomy in M.E. Braddon's Wyllard's Weird'
During a period infamous for its fashion, M.E. Braddon created a novel in which the characters achieve agency through their recognition of the fluid nature of self and class; characters who know and learn that the often subconscious sartorial performances we engage in everyday can be consciously manipulated in order to provide a pathway to a unique and individual life. These performances allow their bodies to occupy liminal spaces in society which, in turn, grants them power over themselves and others. From the depths of rural Cornwall to the metropolitan lights of
Paris, Braddock's *Wyllard's Weird* is full of characters that frame and reframe their bodies and their place in the world through the clothing they wear.

Cheryl Deedman, 'Penny Romantic Fiction 1839-89: The Importance of Virtue and the Protection of the Female Body'

In the mid-nineteenth-century entrepreneurial publishers exploited the opportunity presented by lower print production costs and higher rates of literacy to produce a proliferation of cheap romantic fiction in the penny periodicals and as penny-a-part novels. Some of these had vast circulations. The *London Journal*, for example, the most popular fiction carrying weekly of the period, had a circulation of 500,000 copies in the mid-century; this popularity was due in part to the romantic serials it carried.¹ The content of these romances has been little studied. I have found penny romantic stories have common themes. In a usual story the heroine becomes separated from her family or orphaned, is without 'protection' of a parent or other, older relative, and at this point she, and her body, are vulnerable. The sexual act (or even passionate desire) is not described in these romances, but it is a driving force for the narratives. A heroine's most important role during the period when she is vulnerable is to protect her virtue and her purity. Heroines who behave appropriately are rewarded with marriage and a 'happy ever after'. Ones who don't are punished, usually dying an unpleasant death. This paper will concentrate on the issue of sexual behaviour and morality and how this is dealt with in penny romantic fiction. The content of fiction can help determine the 'moral temperature' and give an understanding of what was acceptable to discuss or describe. What is *not* said is also significant, as are the messages about acceptable modes of behaviour according to the authors and publishers of fiction. Morality and sexual behaviour concern both the control of women by men, and their self-control. Most importantly it concerns control over women's bodies.

Greta Depledge, "There's a dark side in these new discoveries: sacrificing the few whilst blessing the many." Chloroform and the death of Lady Oswald in Mrs Henry Wood's *Oswald Cray*

This paper will discuss Mrs Henry Wood's 1864 novel *Oswald Cray* and consider Wood's use of a chloroform death in this narrative. The medical profession and its handling of medical advance is brought under scrutiny and the challenges of a rapidly changing society, with two aspects of modernity - medical advance and advancing railway travel - linked, and their possible effect on the human body considered.

In this novel the realism of medical controversy is coupled with recognisable sensation features - dark secrets, inheritance issues, love and loss and Wood brings together a literary form and medical application that were both regarded with suspicion for the possible effect they had on mind and body.

Valerie Fehlbaum, 'The Dismemberment of Trilby'

If the name Du Maurier is pronounced today, most of us think of *Daphne* Du Maurier's twentieth century popular fiction, often rendered even more popular on screen by Hitchcock (*Rebecca, The Birds*) or by Roeg (*Don't Look Now*). However, in Victorian times it was her grandfather, George, who was primarily a well-established illustrator/cartoonist and then produced what John Sutherland calls 'possibly the best-selling single novel of the nineteenth century' - *Trilby*. For our present purposes it is significant that the eponymous heroine first appears as an androgynous

figure ‘who would have made a singularly handsome boy’. Serving as a model for a group of artists, especially her beloved Little Bilee, she is initially exploited as a dismembered woman’s body, ‘head, hands, feet – everything – especially feet’, and in fact it is by her toes that her identity is later confirmed. For after leaving her coterie of artists she is then exploited as a disembodied voice, ‘a singing machine’ (my italics), this time taking on the name of her mesmerist husband, La Svengali. And what remains today is precisely the name of her Pygmalion, Svengali, and an article of clothing to cover another body part – a trilby.

Anna Gasperini, “Like the carcasses in the butcher’s shop”: A social reading of the anxiety towards the commodification of bodies in the Victorian Penny Bloods’

In the Penny Bloods, an early form of Victorian sensation fiction, corpses would be constantly manipulated: dug up by body-snatchers, recently killed by burkers, eaten in meat pies, and sold to surgeons, they contributed to shaping the idea of the Bloods as hack writing catering on the unsavoury tastes of working-class, uneducated readers. Even though scholarly interest towards the genre has recently awakened, no explanation has yet been sought to this gloomy feature other than a lower-class love for gore. This paper proposes an alternative, social reading of corpses in Bloods relating their representations of body-snatching, burking and cannibalism with Victorian lower-class anxiety about violation of the body after death, legalised in 1832 by the Anatomy Act. Examining specimen episodes from such Bloods as The Mysteries of London and Manuscripts from the Diary of a Physician, I will show that Penny Bloods represented corpses as profit-making commodities and conveyed this idea through images of cannibalism. I will argue that, if examined in the perspective of the everyday life of their working-class audience, the gory features of this genre acquire a more complex meaning, which makes it necessary to reconsider the standpoint that Penny Bloods, being poor-quality literature, are unworthy of analysis.

Janine Hatter, ‘Parasitic Parents: Consuming and Consumable Bodies in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s ‘The Good Lady Ducayne’ (1896)’

Women’s bodies as consumable commodities is nothing new when it comes to reading vampiric fiction, nor is the threat of patriarchy that is associated with the Gothic’s dominant male vampire figure. However, my paper considers how Braddon’s fin de siècle short story subverts generic, class and gender expectations, even before Stoker’s classic text Dracula (1897) had fully established the conventions. In this tale, the protagonist, Bella, becomes the site of male scientific experimentation, economic exchange within a capitalist culture and of female empowerment – for other women, thus she loses control of her own body both physically and metaphorically. To illustrate my analysis, I will utilise Marxist, feminist and psychological theory to demonstrate that, for Braddon, the threat against women is not from the Gothic’s overpowering patriarch. Instead, the terror of the tale originates from the monstrous mother-figures: Lady Ducayne, the Superior Person and Bella’s own mother. I argue that by demonising the three main women in Bella’s life Braddon suggests that the horror of society is not controlling patriarchy, but its attempt to control and dominate women through domesticity.

Jessica Hindes, “‘Dead, buried and resurrectionised’: The Undead Poor in G.W.M. Reynolds’s Mysteries of London’

This paper deals with death and resurrection in G.W.M. Reynolds’s penny serial The Mysteries of London (1844-56), one of the bestselling works of the early mass market. Drawing upon traditions including melodrama, gothic, and Newgate fiction, Reynolds returns repeatedly over the twelve volumes of his work to images of the resurrected corpse. Working-class villains like the Resurrection Man and Barney the Burker bear titles which associate them with a grisly trade
already largely eliminated by the time of the *Mysteries*’ composition; hanged criminals like Tom Rain (a highway man) and Philip Ramsey (a forger) are rescued and reanimated on the dissecting surgeon’s table. In my paper I explore the implications of this preoccupation, relating Reynolds’s unexpectedly resilient bodies to the political arguments made elsewhere in the work about capital punishment, self-fashioning and the possibility of reformatory justice. Reynolds’s undead poor (for that is indeed how they are characterised) can be associated with the unquashable secrets of later Victorian sensation fiction: serving a kind of disciplinary function with regard to the wealthy who dispatch them so lightheartedly. Always threatening to resurface accusatorially, the corpse in *The Mysteries of London* carries revolutionary potential.

**Rehan Hyder, ‘The Thug in the Drawing Room: Mystery and Miscegenation in Victorian Fiction’**

This paper will examine representations of the Thug in popular Victorian fiction. Focusing on Louisa May Alcott’s *The Fate of the Forrests* (1885) the paper will discuss how discourses of essential difference were articulated via the compromised mixed-race body. Focusing on the central protagonist, Felix Stahl, this paper will discuss how the colonial ‘taint’ of Thuggee shapes notions of racial and cultural difference in Alcott’s story. The moral bankruptcy, physical weakness and compromised masculinity of Stahl’s character are all explicitly linked to dominant colonial discourses around racial mixing. The contrast between Stahl and the story’s other central character, Ursula Forrest – portrayed as an ideal embodiment of Victorian femininity – will also be discussed in order to underline the role of corporeal representation within colonial discourse. The paper will discuss Alcott’s work in relation to the wider influence of ‘Oriental’ themes in Victorian literature with a particular focus on the sub-genre of Thuggee related fiction. I will argue that such tales were often closely-bound to fears of cultural and racial mixing, and the central figure of the ‘half-caste’ protagonist – an individual whose bloodline crosses the boundary of East and West – became key to the articulation of such concerns.

**Jennifer Jones, ‘A Sensible Response to Rendering Bodies Insensible in Charles Dickens’ Journals’**

In *Household Words* (1850-1859) and *Household Words Narrative of Current Events* (1850-1855) Dickens frequently published articles, news items, and stories that discuss, but do not overtly sensationalise the use of anaesthetics such as nitrous oxide, ether, and chloroform. This even tempered approach was characteristic of these journals; Dickens reportedly did not wish to alarm his readers (see for example his 28 February 1850 letter to his subeditor W. H. Wills). For other topics, such as the suffering depicted in sensation novels, he relaxes this rule somewhat in the later journal *All the Year Round* (1859-1870); the measured or restrained depiction of anaesthetics, however, remains unchanged. This paper will explore the restraint Dickens, as an editor, exercises over the representation of anaesthetics and his journals’ opposition to those who object to the use of such drugs. For example, the authors in Dickens’ journals are particularly dismissive of doctors who opposed the use of anaesthesia because they thought pain played some vital role in healing and of religious people who claimed that pain could bring the sufferer closer to God.


‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’, the *Pall Mall Gazette’s* 1885 sensational exposé of the trade in virgins on the streets of London, is a text now familiar to Victorian scholars, a familiarity largely due to Judith Walkowich’s seminal study, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (1992). The subject of my own inquiry is the impact of the *Pall Mall Gazette* articles on working class readers, specifically the neighbourhood of Marylebone where the
Armstrongs lived—a sweep and washerwoman who parted with their daughter Eliza in June 1885, unsuspecting that she had been purchased by W.T. Stead as a publicity stunt in order to demonstrate the ease with which a virgin could be sold into prostitution, a stunt which would be written up under the title ‘A Child of Thirteen Bought for £5’ (Eliza’s identity protected under the pseudonym ‘Lily’). Stead’s subsequent criminal trial at the Old Bailey revealed numerous inaccuracies in the published account of Lily—inaccuracies originating largely in Stead’s misunderstanding (or casual disregard) of the facts given him by his assistant, the ex-brothel keeper Rebecca Jarrett, who had got hold of the child. Yet the Armstrongs’ neighbours held to their belief in the textual authority of the Pall Mall Gazette article; they continued their campaign of harassment against the family long after the trial, with tragic consequences. It is my purpose to scrutinise the ‘Common Reader’, an unsophisticated readership unfamiliar with high-end print culture, in particular Stead’s own brand of sensational journalism.

Pam Lock, ‘Drinking to escape: theories of alcoholism and suicide in Anthony Trollope’s fiction’
This paper examines alcohol’s relation to suicide and emerging theories of alcoholism with reference to two representative Trollopian suicides: the slow death of alcoholic Sir Roger Scatcherd in Doctor Thorne (1858), and the quick dispatch of Augustus Melmotte by brandy with a prussic acid chaser in The Way We Live Now (1874-5). Trollope’s representation of the connections between drinking and suicide draws on contemporary newspapers and periodicals. His fascination with alcohol’s destructive influence on the human body (inside and out), particularly graphic descriptions of the melting and swelling of internal organs caused by long-term heavy drinking, reflects the increasingly medicalised discourse of contemporary reports (influenced in turn by Magnus Huss’s pioneering study Alcolhimus Chronicus (1849)). The characterisation of Scatcherd and Melmotte also reflects contemporary suicides by ruined self-made men, notably that of John Sadleir in 1856. At the same time, Trollope’s analysis of relations between alcoholism and suicide also anticipates significant in twentieth century developments in suicidology, such as Karl Menninger’s Man Against Himself (1938) and Jean Baechler’s view of alcoholism as a form of self-annihilation that constitutes ‘gradual suicide’ (Suicides, 1979).

Tiziana Morosetti, ‘Constructing the Zulus, 1853/1880: the “exotic” body and its narratives’
If the ultimate theoretical goal of human zoos was ‘to demonstrate the superiority of the white race and/or of Western civilization’ (Blanchard et al., Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires, 2008, 22), to get to that theoretical goal ‘exotic’ exhibitions had to go through practical steps that were often informed by the same prejudice to which they eventually planned to lead their public. Such steps included presenting the exhibits in their ‘typical’ environment, dressed in their ‘distinctive’ manner, and carrying out their ‘routine’ – the details of which were suggested by a whole range of texts (travelogues, anthropological reports, medical treatises) that, although presenting data as scientific, involved a high degree of fiction. The ‘Zulu Kaffirs’, exhibited by Charles Caldecott in 1853, as well as the ‘Friendly Zulus’ exhibited by Farini in 1880 are a case in point. In this paper I would like to explore the narratives underlying the exhibitions of such ‘exotic’ bodies, whose relization on stage was the result not only of the scientific and political milieu of the time, but also of the expectations of an audience used to a variety of accounts of the ‘exotic’.

Joanne Ella Parsons, ‘Eating English Masculinity: Food and the Figure of the Foxhunter in R. S. Surtees’ Jorocks’ Jaunts and Jollities’
R. S. Surtees’ Jorocks is compared to the epitome of corpulent English masculinity in the text when he is described as ‘John Bull-like’ and this paper will examine exactly how this specific type of masculinity is manifested within the ‘well-rounded limbs’ of the foxhunter. As well as interrogating
how Jorrocks’ body engages with the discourses of English nationhood it will also discuss how his
diet reflects his status because Jorrocks literally consumes Englishness through the vast quantities
of food he ingests. His meals are made up of Victorian staples such as mock-turtle soup and are
heavily meat-based, as the text is punctuated by his frequent consumption of beefsteak and mutton
in-between bouts of foxhunting. This glut of food becomes manifested in Jorrocks’ largesse and this
paper will argue that through his dietary choices and his corpulent body he is representative of a
particular form of English masculinity. This sense of the character’s Englishness is illuminated
further when he visits France. This is where his diet is thrown into confusion due to his inability to
contemplate the consumption of foreign foodstuffs and so he refuses the variety of beef dishes
available to him, insisting on roast beef instead. This episode will facilitate my discussion on how
diet is a means to represent nationhood and it will, therefore, examine the significance of food and
its relationship to English masculinity and identity.

Fiona Pettit, ‘Periodical Print and Fictional Freaks’
Throughout the nineteenth century, the popular freak show entertainments demonstrated the
interconnectivity of popular culture and medicine. The bodies exhibited in freak shows challenged
popular understandings of ‘normative’ bodies and lives. At the same time, these bodies also
captured the interest of medical practitioners, who sought to classify and categorise the
extraordinary attributes exhibited by freak show performers. The popularity of freak shows and the
increase in periodical press in the latter part of the nineteenth century meant this relationship was
frequently depicted in print media. Amongst the print representations of freak shows and their
diverse audiences were frequent fictional portrayals. For instance, in 1877, a short story titled “A
Freak of Nature” appearing in Tinsley’s Magazine highlighted not only the widespread interest in
freakish bodies, but also an assumed medical authority over them. This story focuses on the freak
specimen collector, Dr Barton, who lives and works in the small fictional community of Barnum.
This paper will explore fictional representations of freaks, such as the story mentioned above,
circulating in popular periodical print at the end of the nineteenth century, and elucidate some of
the popular understandings of ‘normal’ bodies and bodily ownership associated with the freak show.

Alice Rowe, “in the grip of the enemy”: Drugs and the Body of the Addict in Nineteenth-
Century Periodical Culture
This paper examines the portrayal of the addicted body and the physiological impact of drugs,
comprising both fictional texts and medical articles from journals such as the Strand Magazine
and the Lancet. The central focus of the addict’s body will be considered in both professional and
literary contexts in order to consider how this problematic human form was conceptualised within
popular culture. The nineteenth century witnessed fundamental pharmacological developments,
such as the isolation of morphine, first marketed in the 1820s, and the hypodermic needle,
introduced in the 1850s, which revolutionised drug use and consequently altered perceptions of the
body that was subjected to these chemical substances. Tension is evident between physiological
understandings of the addict’s body, which enact a Foucauldian supervisory or monitoring effect,
and an increasing emphasis on psychological concepts of addiction that seem to anticipate the
trauma-based modelling of Freud and the Vienna School. While the formulation and evolution of
this anxiety regarding the addicted body is not limited to periodical culture, it is here that a
complex and thorough engagement with this discourse is found in a variety of configurations, both
popular and specialised.
Detlef Wagenaar, “‘Build up the Savile and draw its best into the Rabelais’—the literary network of the Rabelais Club’

This paper discusses the rise and fall of the Rabelais Club: an elitist body of great men of letters and artists who met a few times a year between 1879 and 1889. It was founded by the American author Charles Godfrey Leland and the bestseller novelist Walter Besant, both members of the Savile Club, who shared an admiration for the works of the renaissance writer François Rabelais. Due to the often coarse humour in his work, Rabelais’ works were somewhat of an acquired taste in Victorian times—a taste which, according to Besant and Leland, set the true men of letters apart from the general reading public. Although it started as an appreciation society, both Besant and Leland quickly entertained loftier ideals of an almost Masonic international community of great authors and artists. Although this ideal was not realised, the nucleus of the Rabelais was present at the birth of the Society of Authors, which would become, under Besant’s leadership, the first successful British union of writers.

Julie Watt, ‘Death Sentences: The Romance and Reality of Letitia Elizabeth Landon’

About a decade before Little Nell’s famously melancholy demise, several characters in the novels of Letitia Landon suffered lingering deaths, lingering from chapter to chapter presumably because the readers revelled in the details of their bodily misery, thus earning good money for the writer. One character in the novel, Ethel Churchill, however, suffers a rapid and minutely described death. Landon tells us exactly how prussic acid was manufactured by Sir George’s wife and how she secretly laced his coffee with it, and then goes on to describe, with medical precision, Sir George’s death throes. When Landon herself died suddenly from, I believe, her chronic, documented, heart condition, the newspapers put it about that she had been poisoned by prussic acid added to a cup of coffee on the orders of her husband, thus causing him to lose his job and reputation, a reputation still sullied today. However, her death throes as described by contemporary witnesses tally medically with those of her chronic condition, rather than with those of the poisoning so carefully researched by Landon. It is a pity she could never appreciate the morbid irony.

Jacqueline Young, ‘Fanning Subversion: Mrs Archibald Little and the Campaign against Footbinding in China’

To nineteenth-century Western eyes, footbinding was an inexplicable, injurious practice. To later generations of Chinese and Western feminists, it was an instrument of patriarchal oppression. In the 1890s, as Chinese intellectuals pressed for the custom’s abolition, an expatriate Englishwoman, novelist Mrs Archibald Little, emerged as an adept strategist. Drawing inspiration from her prominent role in several British reform movements, amongst them the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts (1869–86), she formed the Tien Tsu Hui (Heavenly Foot Society) and recruited other expatriate women to join her in dissuading Chinese women from crippling themselves. This paper explores Little’s crusade to emancipate women from bodily imprisonment and to offer them instead a revisionist life-narrative in which female education, self-determination and securing a foothold in China’s societal structures were prominent. It raises questions about Western involvement in Chinese domestic affairs, and examines how this popular novelist, during an anti-footbinding tour of southern China, adapted Chinese literary forms and alluded to uniquely feminine vernacular modes of narrative expression. Her determination and far-reaching vision ensured that the female foot, once a symbol of oppression, became a marker of radical reform as China moved rapidly towards modernity.