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Abstracts and Biographies
“Mortal wounds on my adversary’s vanity”: Magical Rivalries of the Victorian Period
Beatrice Ashton-Lelliott

Performance magic in the nineteenth century was an often-fatal occupation, and this paper will explore the personal but frequently dramatized rivalries at the heart of the biographies of the Victorian period’s most famous stage magicians. Considered the ‘father of modern magic’, Jean Robert-Houdin’s wildly popular Memoirs (1858) found fans in the likes of Dickens, but this purportedly factual account of his early career often acts primarily as a work of fiction, with Robert-Houdin’s main aim being to entertain. This is particularly clear in relation to its most contentious character: Torrini. Described by Robert-Houdin as an exiled aristocrat who becomes a travelling mountebank, Torrini is now accepted by magic historians to be entirely fictional following unsuccessful attempts to trace his life through archival work. Throughout the narrative of Memoirs, Torrini is engaged in a constant rivalry with Pinetti, a real-life magician, going on to develop a sensationalised ‘battle-field’ with his rival and coming to view his ‘glittering’ stage apparatus as deadly ‘weapons’. The competitive nature of the profession was often the very reason for the creation of magician biographies and mythologised origin stories, and I will argue that this ouroboric cycle of one-upmanship is echoed in many Victorian novels. This paper would also touch upon the public nature of magic debates seen in the popular press at the time, such as arguments over the validity of the Davenport Brothers’ spiritualist claims. In NeoVictorian fiction, the idea of dramatic magical rivalries has taken hold, most prominently seen in Christopher Priest’s novel The Prestige and its 2006 film adaptation by Christopher Nolan. Drawing on current NeoVictorian scholarship, I will close by examining what the duality and conflict present in NeoVictorian reinventions of magicians can reveal about our current concerns regarding selfhood and its Victorian conceptions.

Biography
Beatrice Ashton-Lelliott is a PhD researcher at the University of Portsmouth studying the autobiographies of nineteenth-century magicians and the analogous representations of fictional magicians and conjuring in Victorian literature. Her other research interests include occulture, magical realism, second-generation Romantic poetry and fantasy fiction.
‘The Character of the Soldier in Victorian Literature’
Kath Beal

The Victorian age was one of expansion, that of population, industrial and manufacturing opportunities. Job prospects moved from the countryside to the expanding towns and cities. For Britain, colonial expansion resulted in the biggest Empire the world had ever known. To maintain this vast empire a huge military force was required. The Royal Navy and the Army guarded the domains and ensured that Britain retained her position as the dominant world power and her status as a wealthy nation. Joining the armed forces was a common event in the Victorian era, albeit a male-only occupation. Commissions could be bought and a career as an officer was an acceptable occupation for the sons of middle and upper-class families. For the lower classes, a military career was often one prompted by economic necessity. Social attitudes to the military changed over time and this paper will explore whether the literature reflects these changing attitudes.

Given the military’s ubiquitous presence it is hardly surprising that soldiers are frequently depicted in Victorian literature, art and music. In this paper I consider a whistle-stop tour of soldiers in mid to late Victorian fiction. In George Moore’s Esther Waters (1894) and Thomas Hardy’s Far From the Madding Crowd (1874), soldiers are pivotal characters, but they are presented in contrasting ways. In Esther Waters, Jackie, the son of the eponymous heroine, is a young man who has overcome the difficulties of his early life and is now proudly wearing the Queen’s uniform, while Hardy’s Sargent Troy is a promiscuous bully who deserts his pregnant lover and later abandons his wife. I will also briefly consider Hardy’s Drummer Hodge and an excerpt from Kipling’s Barrack Room Ballads: poems that exhibit a growing sense of disillusionment with army life for working-class soldiers. These poems provide a different image of the military from that depicted in earlier jingoistic poems such as Tennyson’s The Charge of the Light Brigade and instead focus on the soldiers’ grimmer and harsher reality.

Biography
Kath is a (very) mature postgraduate researcher at Hull University with an interest in all things Victorian, but especially social and cultural attitudes towards women: with a particular interest in the ‘fallen’ women and how they are depicted in Victorian literature. She enjoys pre-Raphaelite art and likes visiting old cemeteries.
‘Cosmopolitan Patriots: The Italian Risorgimento and Masculine Self-Fashioning in Vittoria’
Richard Bonfiglio

This paper examines the transnational construction of masculinity in George Meredith’s novel, *Vittoria* (1866), set during the 1848 revolutions in Italy. My reading of the novel brings together three fields of study often treated independently of one another (the Italian Risorgimento, Victorian masculinities, and cosmopolitanism) to address two interrelated historical questions. Firstly, I question why the Enlightenment ideal of cosmopolitanism became, according to Georgios Varouxakis, a “tainted term” in the nineteenth century and consider its problematic nature as a question of masculine self-fashioning. Secondly, I ask why a new form of masculinity associated with new imperialism, as John Tosh and Bradley Deane, among others, persuasively argue, began in the 1870s to supplant an entrepreneurial and domestic-oriented mid-Victorian ideal of masculinity. I argue that the figure of the “cosmopolitan patriot” represents a crucial fault line within recent debates about Victorian masculine identity that frequently pit metaphorical, agonistic battlefields associated with mid-Victorian society against literal battlefields imagined in late-Victorian representations of empire. This paper contends that the mid-Victorian figure of the cosmopolitan patriot both grappled with the logic of internal, metaphorical battlefields, analyzed in the seminal work of James Eli Adams and Herbert Sussman, while also creating a fantasy space of manly battle typically associated with the late-Victorian “flight from domesticity.” I examine the manner in which Meredith’s novel complicates the figure of the patriot through its representation of the heroic actions of its Anglo-Italian female protagonist and attempts to reimagine masculine identity in transnational terms through its critical representation of Austrian, Italian, and English masculinities. I analyze the tensions and contradictions associated with the cosmopolitan patriot to better understand the transition from mid- to late-Victorian hegemonic masculinity and to broaden recent nationally orientated approaches to mid-Victorian masculinity studies.

**Biography**
Richard Bonfiglio is Associate Professor of English Literature at Sogang University in Seoul, South Korea. He teaches Victorian literature and culture, and his current project examines transnational masculinities in mid-Victorian fiction.
‘No Peace at Home: Supernatural Disturbance in Domestic Home-Space’
Anna Brecke

Ruskin’s “true wife” and Patmore’s “angel in the house” provided Victorians with an ideal woman whose inherent feminine virtue created a moral center for the Victorian home. Coupled with Isabella Beeton’s rules for militaristic domestic management, the role of a good Victorian woman is seen to be characterized by a set of virtues—morality, chastity, frugality—that when exercised in domestic space should combine to create a natural sense of home and safety. In supernatural domestic fiction however, the feminine presence often carries with it corruption or vulnerability that allows supernatural elements to penetrate the home-space. Home-space might be physical space, but it may also be the relational spaces that exist between spouses, parents and children, or in close female friendships. Furthermore, a connection between domestic disruption and feminine presence is often placed on the female body through due to nineteenth century medical attitudes that link femininity with weakness and disease. This paper examines the role played by female characters as disrupters of Victorian domesticity in short fiction by Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Rhoda Broughton. Two tales from Broughton’s Twilight Stories, “The Man with the Nose” and “Behold! It was a Dream!” explore feminine weakness as a conduit for the supernatural effects of mesmerism and prophetic dreams. In Braddon’s “The Shadow in the Corner” and “Herself,” female characters’ contact with the supernatural destroys previously unthreatened home-spaces. Supernatural domestic stories often rely on these connections between a female presence and supernatural presence to create the uncanny experience of not being safe at home.

Biography
Dr. Brecke recently completed her PhD at the University of Rhode Island on gender representation and canonicity in Victorian popular fiction. Her work can be found in The Victorian and the Victorians Institute Digital Annex, and you can hear her talking about all things Braddon on episode 4.5 of the Victorian Scribblers podcast. She is a co-organizer of The Mary Elizabeth Braddon Association and an Executive Board member of the Mid-Atlantic Popular and American Culture Association.
‘Gothic Invasions: Demonising the Armed Forces of Europe’
Ailise Bulfin

From nightmare visions of revivified Egyptian mummies on the loose in London to hordes of Oriental barbarians sacking Europe’s capitals to armies of brutish Prussians stomping down London’s Strand, the popular fiction of fin-de-siècle Britain was suffused with anxiety about invasion. This anxiety can be traced to concerns about the potential downside of Britain’s continuing imperial expansion – fears of growing armed inter-European rivalry and colonial rebellion, and was frequently expressed indirectly via the gothic mode, in the form of the gothic’s familiar monsters, the vampire, the demon and the mummy. What is less explored is how gothic themes and conventions were also deployed in the narratives that most obviously belong under the heading of ‘invasion fiction’ – those explicitly depicting the military invasion of the island of Britain by the armies of one or more of the European great powers. From their origins in General Sir George T. Chesney’s seminal, admonitory The Battle of Dorking (1871) to their culmination in the paranoid, Germanophobic worldview of William Le Queux in the early twentieth century, ‘invasion-scare’ tales habitually resorted to the gothic in order to adequately describe the brutality of the invading armies they depicted. This paper investigates the demonisation of the armed forces of Britain’s rival European powers in this body of fiction, demonstrating its stylistic and thematic similarity to the gothic tales of invasion. It argues that this gothicisation was tactical, designed to emphasise the threat Europe’s armies posed to Britain’s dominant imperial position and to strengthen the case for British military ‘preparedness’ that many of these military invasion tales were explicitly written to make. It concludes that in this tactical villainization, invasion fiction both anticipated and functioned as a rehearsal for the vast quantities of atrocity propaganda produced in support of the British campaign during World War I.

Biography
Dr. Bulfin’s work explores the dark side of the human imagination across nineteenth-century to contemporary literature, with a particular focus on representations of catastrophe, war and trauma. She took her PhD at Trinity College Dublin, funded by an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship, and subsequently held an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship there. She has published a number of critical essays on such topics as gothic fiction, xenophobia, invasion scares, natural catastrophe and climate change, and her monograph, entitled Gothic Invasions: Imperialism, War and Fin-de-Siècle Popular Fiction 1890-1914, is due out in April 2018 in the acclaimed University of Wales Press Gothic Literary Studies series. Her current research focuses on representations of child sexual abuse in nineteenth-century and contemporary culture. Her work has been funded by the Irish Research Council, Royal Irish Academy and the Wellcome Trust.
“The Pure Human Pity of the Story”: MacDonald, Ward, and Counter-Controversial Fiction
Miriam Elizabeth Burstein

By the late 1840s, in the wake of bestsellers like Grace Kennedy’s *Father Clement* (1823), critics felt sure that the genre of the “controversial novel” needed little introduction—and equally sure that these novels, invested as they were in doctrinal disputation, featured dubious theology and ludicrous plots. But such complaints raised more serious questions about the novel as a means of modelling religious practice, on the one hand, and creating religious communities, on the other. Novelists, too, worried about the controversial novel’s divisiveness. Some, like Elizabeth Hardy in *The Confessor* (1854), warned that religious disputation by Protestants self-deluded about their theological literacy achieved nothing. But others sought a more capacious approach to community by imagining how authoring, reading, and listening to narratives (religious and secular) might be productive spiritual practice. I explore this counter-controversial strategy through the work of George MacDonald and Mary Augusta Ward, especially MacDonald’s Walton trilogy and Ward’s *Robert Elsmere* and *The Case of Richard Meynell*. For MacDonald, storytelling’s religious effectiveness, written or oral, partly resides in the process’ duration: storytelling asks audiences to reflect, pause, and delay judgment. Meanwhile the narrator downplays their own authority in favour of collaboratively arriving at new spiritual insights, with mutually transformative effects. Ward, possibly responding to MacDonald, was conflicted about both religious authority and written vs. oral narrative. Her proto-Messianic preachers are charismatic oral storytellers, and their narrative effects depend on embodiment and immediacy. For Ward, new religious possibilities emerge in the real-time interplay between the speaker and his audience (even a resistant audience): gifted storytellers make the audiences feel faith anew by successfully dramatizing both joy and suffering. Yet Ward is also uneasily aware that this approach’s transformative effects may be too local (and temporary) to have any real effect on the organized religion her characters wish to change.

**Biography**
Miriam Elizabeth Burstein is Professor of English at the College at Brockport, State University of New York. She is the author of *Narrating Women’s History in Britain, 1770-1902* and *Victorian Reformations: Historical Fiction and Religious Controversy, 1820-1900*, and editor of Mary Augusta Ward’s *Robert Elsmere* (2nd ed. forthcoming 2018).
“The Hate that Changed”: Cycling Romance and the Aestheticization of Women Cyclists in the 1890s’
Eva Chen

Cycling romance mushroomed in mass magazines during the mid-1890s bicycle craze. These stories, varying in length from three to ten pages, typically feature middle-class women cyclists who meet and marry ideal men as a result of their cycling. Since cycling invariably took place outdoors and exposed women to the excitement as well as danger of expanded mobility, cycling romance differs from most domesticity-themed love-tales of the time by celebrating a new, modern, actively mobile and potentially transgressive femininity that is restless with domesticity and desirous for fun and greater freedom. Ultimately, however, this new femininity is tamed and subsumed under a heteronormative framework of romance and consumerism.

Women’s cycling was a subject of great controversy in the 1890s but was relatively under-treated in literature. Cycling romance played a key role in shaping and transforming public attitudes toward women cyclists, by readily acknowledging conservative anxieties, often expressed through the male characters. It then seeks to assuage such anxieties by emphasizing the beauty, femininity and fashionable elegance of the women cyclists, who invariably melt the hearts of the male characters and change their opposition. The stories become an integral part of the ad-laden magazines’ overall discourse of consumption, by stressing that the consumption of the bicycle enhances, rather than detracts from a woman’s elegant femininity and her chance for romance and marriage. Even romance and marriage are ultimately tied in with consumerist choice, and seen to be expanded by bicycling.

Biography
Eva Chen is Professor of English at National Cheng-Chi University in Taipei, Taiwan. She is the author of three books and numerous articles on women and urban modernity. Her work has appeared in MFS: Modern Fiction Studies, Victorian Literature and Culture, European Journal of Cultural Studies, Women’s Studies, Feminist Media Studies and etc.
Although it is the object of heated controversies, the recent vote on Brexit is not difficult to account for. It is the consequence of longstanding insular policies and deeply ingrained assumptions of ethno-cultural superiority which gained strength and widespread acclaim in the age of Victoria. As is well known, various forms of propaganda and pseudo-scientific theories supported British expansionism in the colonies. The same theories were used to racialize the Continent, though to a lesser extent. Conflicts of views, customs and civilizations were manifest in Victorian attitudes to France, Italy and other European countries which, nonetheless, continued to be powerful cultural magnets for British travellers. On a political plane, moreover, British relations with the Continent wavered between contrast and alliance, hostility and support.

The binary “war and peace” is a fitting metaphor for the complexity of Anglo-European relations. Amply troped in Victorian fiction, the ideological conflicts/encounters between Britain and its neighbours reflect the political and cultural attitudes of a nation that, while striving to assert its supremacy, was unable to suppress its fascination for the Other.

My aim is to explore different manifestations of these complex dynamics in the age’s popular fiction. Some concepts developed by cultural theorists (i.e., Ashcroft, Bhabha, Said, Young, etc.) will be employed to detect dominant and alternative attitudes to the Continent, with special attention to France and Italy. As will be shown, popular writers undoubtedly contributed to reinforcing the cultural war waged by their nation, as they gave voice to circulating prejudices and anxieties about the non-British. In some cases, however, these writers challenged stereotypes in their representations of migrants as well as of foreigners living abroad. Sensation novelists, in particular, offer thought-provoking images of European characters and customs which betray a strong curiosity for the Continental Other and a wish to develop fertile forms of intercultural relations.

Biography
Mariaconcetta Costantini is full professor of English Literature at G. d’Annunzio University of Chieti- Pescara (Italy). Her research mainly focuses on Victorian literature and culture, with a special interest in sensation fiction and the Gothic. She is the author of five monographs, numerous book chapters and articles. She serves as a member of the Editorial Board of various international journals including Gothic Studies and the Wilkie Collins Journal. She has been IGA Executive since 2007 and was appointed Trustee of the Dickens Society for the period 2017-2020. Her latest monograph is Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel (Peter Lang, 2015).
In 1891, the *Pall Mall Gazette* declared that “[n]o more curious problem has ever presented itself to the literary student than that of collaboration. Various theories have been put forward in regard to it: many and strange explanations of it have been given. But, in spite of all this, the ‘art’ has remained a mystery.” In the last decades of the nineteenth century an unprecedented amount of coauthored fiction flooded the literary marketplace. The sharing of the creative act challenged deep-rooted assumptions of solitary authorship, and sparked a lively debate in the press over the benefits and the limits of ‘writing in double harness.’

Within dual authorship, the literary page could either become the site of peaceful exchange or of bitter warfare. Collaboration could lead to harmonious comradeship, as many coauthors were (perhaps a little *too*) anxious to declare. Metaphors of marriage and domestic bliss were employed to describe the collaborative experience. Walter Besant’s much-debated advice to young writers – to find a nice girl of quick imagination to collaborate with, and possibly get engaged to – contributed to link coauthorship with love.

Yet to enter into a partnership was often presented as an endeavour entailing great risks, and bound to end in conflict. The strife involved in sharing textual spaces – rivalry, recriminations, accusations and truces, dictatorship of one of the partners – was the aspect most insisted upon: accounts of the bloodshed that might result from literary collaboration increasingly dominated the debate, so much that, by the new century, the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* concluded that “the Anglo-Saxon temperament is too shy and reticent to unbosom itself to a confidant with the unreserve for which collaboration calls.”

This paper will thus delve into the late Victorian discourse on literary collaboration, exploring its impact on popular culture and the ways in which coauthorship was imagined.

**Biography**
Annachiara Cozzi is a second-year PhD candidate and teaching assistant at the University of Pavia, Italy. Her research focuses on literary collaboration in the UK from 1870 to the 1920s, and in particular on coauthored novels. After her MA in English Literature and before starting her PhD, she has worked as a Language Assistant Professor at Trinity College Dublin.
‘Secular Eschatology: The Guilty Pleasures of Invasion Fiction’
Robert Dingley

The publication of Lieutenant-Colonel George Chesney’s *The Battle of Dorking* in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in May 1871 initiated a spate of short stories and novels detailing the invasion of England by one or other of the major European powers. In a high proportion of these fictions, Britain’s fatal lack of preparedness results in a catastrophic defeat, and even in those narratives where the enemy is finally repulsed ultimate victory comes at the price of widespread destruction and social chaos. The popularity of the genre throughout the closing decades of the nineteenth century is generally attributed to its combination of graphic incident with urgent minatory purpose, since authors tend to stress not only the immediate necessity for military reform but also the need to counter more general symptoms of national decline. To some degree, indeed, the invasion story can be read as a form of secular apocalypse in which an erring people is subjected to a cataclysmic judgment that may either signal the final eradication of a decadent old order (and Colonel Chesney’s narrator sees little hope for Britain’s future) or form the precondition for a transformed renewal. Invasion fiction, therefore, both seeks to pre-empt defeat by advocating reform and implicitly to welcome it as the catalyst for radical change. This paper will explore some of the consequences of this paradoxical double focus through close examination of a hitherto unnoticed and somewhat unorthodox example of the genre, a short story of 1880 in which the Prussian conquest of London takes the form of a New Year’s Eve dream.

Biography
Robert Dingley was formerly Research Lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford and Senior Lecturer in English at the University of New England, NSW. He co-edited *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy and Science Fiction* (2000) and has published more than forty articles and book-chapters on nineteenth-century literature.
'Waterloo Blues: War and Peace in Popular British Fiction set in Belgium after 1815’
Marysa Demoor

The battle of Waterloo was undoubtedly one of the most important battles in the nineteenth century. Successfully constructed by the press as a British realm of memory all British travellers to the continent thought it their duty to visit the battlefield and pay their respects to the memory of the fallen there. Authors and artists too, from Walter Scott to D.G. Rossetti, travelled to Brussels to visit the well-known plain. This paper will not only focus on the poetic travelogues about Waterloo that the likes of Scott and Rossetti wrote afterwards but also on the fiction that used it as its background or as its pivotal scene. But the fall of Napoleon also meant that the continent was open again to British travellers and this resulted in a great number of fictional tales that had the low countries and more specifically Flanders as their setting.

The aim of this exposé therefore is to look first at Britain’s relationship with Belgium in the nineteenth century such as the family relationship between Queen Victoria and her uncle Leopold. It will briefly dwell on Wellington’s painstaking efforts to appropriate Waterloo, with the help of the press, as his victory and his victory only. Throughout it will explore and expose the ways in which Flanders was Othered in order to define British identity in times of peace. It will focus on the writings of the Trollopes, Lady Morgan, Thackeray and Charlotte Brontë and thus draw a line between Victorian fiction set in Flanders and the popular creation of the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.

Biography
Marysa Demoor (Ph.D. 1983), is full Professor of English Literature at Ghent University, Belgium and a life member of Clare Hall, Cambridge, UK. Demoor is the author of Their Fair Share: Women, Power and Criticism in the Athenaeum, from Millicent Garrett Fawcett to Katherine Mansfield, 1870-1920 (Ashgate, 2000) and the editor of Marketing the Author: Authorial Personae, Narrative Selves and Self-Fashioning, 1880-1930 (Palgrave 2004). With Laurel Brake she edited The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press (Palgrave 2009) and DNCJ (Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism, BL 2009). Her current research focuses on the cross-fertilisation between Northern Belgium and Britain in the long nineteenth century.
‘Mary Ward’s War of Ideas: Romance’s Popular Audience and the Public Sphere’
Stephen Edwards

Although late nineteenth-century critics frequently characterised Mary Ward’s best-selling novels of ideas as over-didactic and too reliant on the tropes of melodramatic romance, the author’s own fiction theory and aspiration for popular status was very different. Ward envisaged an intimate relationship with her readers created through their sympathetic response to ‘novels with a purpose’ carrying ‘a criticism of life’. In an address given to the Author’s Club in 1901, she posed the question: ‘If the play of religious opinion, or social reform, or political power, as they affect human life is what interests the writer, and if that writer is drawn towards the form of the novel, what authority bars the way?’ It was ‘perfectly true that the purpose is nothing without the art; but humanity, the reader, the true and ultimate public, will take care of that’. Here, the aim was to invite the reader of popular fiction to enter a dialogical debate with the clashing opinions of the public world and questions of ‘social reform or political power’. It would achieve this through an intense reading experience that generated the ‘human’ impact of philosophical ideas.

This paper will consider the way Mary Ward entered contemporary culture wars over the status of popular fiction to open up the public realm of debate to a wider audience. It will discuss this in the context of Jürgen Habermas’s seminal theory concerning the public sphere and his perceived breakdown in the democratic involvement of a critical public in the public sphere during the nineteenth century. It will argue that Mary Ward’s romance mode fought a war of ideas with a largely male literary establishment by transposing the values of the personal and the individual, in short what had been considered the concerns of the domestic sphere, on to the public sphere.

Biography
Stephen Edwards is a PhD research candidate at Southampton University studying the potentially empowering, democratic inclusiveness of Mary Ward and Marie Corelli’s fiction — working title: ‘Readers and the Romance of Faith: Mary Ward and Marie Corelli in the Literary Marketplace’. Published work includes articles on Conrad and Kathryn Mansfield.
Imperial rhetoric of othering in mid-nineteenth-century Britain was not restricted to foreign colonies, but was also, according to the little known writer Blaze de Bury (1813?-1894), applied within Europe - particularly in Britain, which tended to consider the rest of Europe as the other. To this day Britain retains the term Continent when referring to (the rest) of Europe both geographically but also as an idea of something distinctly different to Britain. This homogenisation of “continental” European countries reflects an imperial Us versus Them mentality more prevalently discussed in the context of global empires. In her novel Mildred Vernon (1848), Blaze de Bury strives to highlight ‘that we should know them better’ and counteract our ‘ignorance and indifference’ about, and differentiate between, alternate European cultures by increasing transcultural literacy. This paper will demonstrate one way in which Blaze strove to achieve this, namely, by calling into question blind prejudiced inter-European othering by Britain, and, in so doing, drawing on familiar images of conflicts between Us and Them in the context of Britain’s global empires. Positions of the in-between or the crosser of borders (geographically and culturally), which are based on communication and require a pluricultural and transcultural literacy, are necessary for successful parley. Such is the position and self-proclaimed goal of Blaze de Bury’s oeuvre. By examining usages and criticisms of continental and imperial othering in this Victorian popular novel, this paper not only feeds into the growing recuperative field of nineteenth-century female political writers, but also questions approaches to postcolonial and European studies, which have artificially been kept separate in the academy. The notion of an inferior homogenous continental other should be dispelled, and inter-European cultural differences better understood, to parley, though literature, the war between a British Us and a “continental” Them.

Biography
Rachel is a PhD candidate in English at Oxford Brookes University. She holds a combined BA in English and Psychology. Her research presents evidence of female participation in Victorian fiction and non-fiction discourses on (trans)cultural identity in the context of European international politics, focusing on writer Blaze de Bury (1813?-1894).
“Soldat de la France”? Heroism and Gender in *Under Two Flags*
Helena Esser

In Oudia’s immensely popular, but still under-researched novel *Under Two Flags* (1868), Bertie Cecil, a London dandy in exile in Algiers, ponders whether to enter the conflict on the side of the French colonizers, or the Bedouin rebels - and flips a coin. Whether fatalist or nonchalant, Cecil’s action imagines sympathy with the colonized as an intrinsic feature of heroic masculinity. Through her singular portrait of the former hedonist turned disinterested soldier who prefers the noble Bedouins to his coarse French comrades, Ouida at once affirms and undermines ideals of Victorian masculinity and delivers a subtle critique of colonialist endeavours, safely displaced into the French context. ‘War’ becomes a space in which to dismantle and experiment with notions of heroism or gender: Whereas the character Bertie corresponds with other popular portraits of masculinity-in-crisis, such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s effeminate Robert Audeley or Wilkie Collins’ Walter Hartright, he is complemented by Cigarette, the youthful, foul-mouthed French-Algerian vivandière who, with her ambiguous non-feminine behaviour and fierce passion, is at once ‘unsexed’ and decidedly feminine. One of the most intriguing and as yet inscrutable characters in Victorian popular fiction, Cigarette - fierce, loyal, witty - mothers uncouth soldiers, is unhappily in love, and rides into battle. A compelling dilemma for academics seeking to account for her enigmatic femininity, Cigarette might productively be read as an embodiment of French Algiers as a space of adventure, suffering, and exile. In my paper, I examine how Ouida purposefully imagines ‘war’ as a space in and through which to outline and challenge complex, potentially transgressive interrelations of power, passion, violence, and gender.

**Biography**

Helena Esser is a PhD student at Birkbeck University researching re-imaginings of the Victorian cityscape in steampunk fiction. While steampunk is her main focus, she enjoys reading and researching Ouida and was delighted be able to blog about her on the BAVS Researcher Blog, and give a position paper on the author at NAVSA/AVSA 2017.
‘Victorian Pawn Wars: Exotic Objects and the Battle to Define the Racially ‘Other’ Body in late-Victorian Novels’
Courtney Floyd

My paper draws on the fields of Bibliography, Print Culture, and Thing Theory to identify the fictional Victorian pawn shop as a site at which a variety of second-hand print and art objects encountered, and reciprocally mediated, Victorian bodies—and particularly racially marked bodies.

Focusing on the fictional pawn shops of George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876) and Fergus Hume’s *Hagar of the Pawn-Shop* (1898), I ask why encounters between bodies and the dusty print and art objects in fictional pawn shops so often emphasize the racial Otherness of those bodies. Nancy Armstrong argues that such sites are places at which a mass of information is sorted, stored, and redistributed in order to create and maintain the immense imagined community that is the British Empire.

However, fiction featuring pawn shops often provides the perspectives of the Other bodies the pawn shop categorically manages. I demonstrate that characters designated as racial Others strategically use the print and art objects within pawn shops to mediate their own identities and embodied experiences of the world. While these strategic mediations are not always successful, they are informative. Because such narratives of provenance and procurement often define the bodies of the people amongst whom an object has circulated as well as the history and quality of the object itself, I argue that, at least in fiction, the pawn shop is one of the primary battle sites of racial identity formation in the metropole.

**Biography**
Courtney Floyd is a doctoral candidate in the department of English at the University of Oregon. She works at the intersections of literature, disability studies, and print culture. She is also the creator and producer of the biography and literature podcast, Victorian Scribblers, which is currently in its second season.
‘Cotton, Drug Addiction and the Opium War (1839-1842) in Elizabeth Gaskell’s Mary Barton’
Amanda Ford

Industrial strife and the unsuccessful Chartist march lead John Barton into a dependency on the drug opium, which gives him ‘his shrunk, fierce, animal look’. It is also the drug whereby penurious, exhausted mothers and unscrupulous nurses stifle the cries of starving babies, a contributory factor to the lamentable high level of infant mortality that haunts the text of Elizabeth Gaskell’s industrial novel Mary Barton. Perhaps less well known is the complex inter-relationship between opium addiction, the production of Manchester cotton and the Opium War between Britain and China in the years 1839-42, which produce the ‘terrible depression of trade’ that is the backdrop to the novel.

As Lancashire’s production of textile goods had outpaced the capacity of existing domestic and overseas markets, free trade and a search for new markets became the determining economic rationale. The burgeoning trade deficit with China raised alarms, particularly as the Chinese were reluctant to open up their market for English manufactured goods. By the 1820s, an ingenious solution was devised whereby a tripartite flow of trade stemmed the deficit. Opium was cultivated in vast quantities in provinces such as Bengal, and the drug was shipped in exponentially larger quantities to Chinese consumers, even though the Chinese court had prohibited its consumption. The revenue from this drug smuggling enabled the Indians to buy British cottons simultaneously financing British imports of Chinese silks and tea. This lucrative triangular trade came to a sudden end, however, when the Chinese authorities, alarmed with the deleterious effects of a booming drug culture, seized and destroyed opium from a British merchant ship in May 1839. In the ensuing Anglo-Chino war, via gunboat diplomacy, the British government effectively ‘legalized’ British merchant drug smuggling into China and ensured the opening up of the Chinese market for British goods.

Biography
Amanda Ford is a PhD student at King’s College, London. I am researching cultural materiality in the writings of Elizabeth Gaskell, particularly with regard to textiles. By utilizing the material quotidian in women’s lives Gaskell realism comments upon the representation of women’s identity during a period of socio-economic flux.
“I am modernity personified”: Human vs Improved Humanity in the Victorian Penny Dreadful and Penny Dreadful
Anna Gasperini

In Victorian penny dreadful series Varney the Vampyre (1845-47), Frankenstein-like Dr Chillingworth galvanizes Varney’s corpse back to life, and his first word as he awakens is “Death” (1:330). Two centuries later, Caliban, Frankenstein’s creature in Neo-Victorian TV series Penny Dreadful, states: “I am modernity personified. … We are men of iron and mechanization, we are steam engines and turbines” (Season 1, ep. 3). These quotations summarize the core concept of the supreme narrative of medical hubris, Shelley’s Frankenstein: will the “improved human” ultimately cause humanity’s destruction?

Fiction in English, particularly popular fiction, tends to recur to the Frankenstein trope whenever scientific progress affects our concept of “human”. I would argue that Varney’s re-elaboration of the Frankenstein narrative addressed nineteenth-century working-class anxieties about the progressive dehumanisation of the patient-doctor relationship (Foucault 1963), mingled with fears about experimentation over poor patients, both living and dead (Hurren, 2012). The same principle appears in Penny Dreadful: in the era of human tissues experimentation and aesthetic and prosthetic surgery, Caliban represents the possibility of the new, improved human supplanting the “old model”.

Building on my essay “Wonders and Monsters: negotiating medical-triggered redefinitions of humanity through popular fiction in nineteenth century and today” in Lesa Scholl’s Medicine and What it Means to be Human (in press, Routledge 2018), in this paper I analyse English fiction’s consistent return to the Victorian horror setting as a venue to confront anxieties about scientifically improved humanity. Shifting the focus from “humanity” to the “in/human” result itself, I examine how the “creatures” address issues of ethics and agency, and anxieties about annihilation at the hand of the “improved” human form of our own making. I will thus attempt to postulate a posthuman reading of re-elaborations of the Frankenstein trope as comments on the possibility that humanity will build its own substitute.

Biography
Dr Anna Gasperini received her PhD from the National University of Ireland Galway, where she completed a thesis on discourses of ethics, monstrosity, and medicine in the Victorian penny blood. She co-edited for Palgrave Macmillan the collection of essays Media and Print Culture Consumption in Nineteenth-century Britain (2016), and she is the current Membership Secretary of the Victorian Popular Fiction Association (VPFA).
“Mortal hatred [deepening] into something diabolical”: Property, Inheritance and Violence in J. S. Le Fanu’s Wylder’s Hand (1864)
James Green

Of the frequently morbid character of J. S. Le Fanu’s fiction, Terry Eagleton reminds us that ‘evil would seem an aberrant, untypical condition and yet, in an exploitative society, part of the stuff of everyday relations’. There is no better case in the author’s oeuvre than the sensation novel Wylder’s Hand (1864), in which conflict and antagonism lie scarcely concealed beneath the idyllic surface of rural England, erupting as ‘inhuman violence’ in the family feuds between the Wylders, Brandons, and Lakes. ‘Mortal hatred seems to deepen and dilate into something diabolical in these perverted animosities’ observes the narrator. Yet these supernatural levels of violence originate in something remarkably quotidian and materialist: private property and its inheritance. This paper proposes that Wylder’s Hand inheres these two concepts to conflict and misfortune, and that escaping from such effects—which is also to be free of the past—is a corollary of their abandonment. Though set in England, Irish contexts of domination and generation-al strife in the heart of empire; yet, property and inheritance were differently problematic in an English context too, and the interpersonal dynamics created by them—e.g., contestation and protection—are a mainstay of sensation novels such as Wilkie Collins’s No Name (1862). This paper argues that Wylder’s Hand demands attention not only in the context of sensation fiction, but also in the realist tradition, for its repudiation of the traditional values assigned to the transmission of property: whereas positive narrative resolutions often coincide with or are produced by inheritance, Le Fanu’s novel figures dispossession as a means of precluding the cycles of intergenerational conflict that can often be its by-product.

Biography
James Green is an AHRC-funded doctoral candidate jointly supervised at the universities of Exeter and Reading. His thesis explores the links between the Victorian sensation novel, temporality, and physiology, in the context of mid-nineteenth-century modernity.
‘Rest in Peace: Death Notices, Class War and Community in Victorian Socialist Newspapers’
Ingrid Hanson

From black-framed memorials for the executed Chicago Anarchists in 1887 to the brief death notices of working-class Leeds socialist, poet and journalist Tom Maguire in 1895 and full-page illustrated tributes to prominent middle-class socialist William Morris on his death in 1896, representations of public mourning are a central part of the narratives of class war and social change in Victorian socialist newspapers. This paper will consider the ways in which a series of death notices in the London-based *Commonweal and Justice* and the wider-circulation, Manchester-based *Clarion* make use of aspects of popular and regional Victorian death culture and mourning practices to re-situate the idea of a peaceful afterlife in the context of present struggle. Loss is converted into anger in these narratives, the conventional peace of death is deferred until the coming of a socialist future, and death itself becomes an active part of the struggle for change. I will consider the imagery, both visual and metaphorical, associated with the death of socialists, and accounts of the uses of poetry and song at socialist funerals to identify the ways in which these four newspapers offer differently inflected representations of socialist struggle as primarily rooted in the regional, the national or the international. Death notices become part of the ‘animated discussion’ of socialism generated and valued by these publications across different regions and draw together the socialists of different classes and different shades of belief through shared memorialising. By the subversive and sometimes gothic use of mourning and commemoration conventions, they work to bring about a cohesive and peaceful but plural - to borrow Hannah Arendt’s use of the word - socialist culture, in opposition to capitalism and imperialism and in dialogue with mainstream working-class cultures.

Biography
Ingrid Hanson is a Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *William Morris and the Uses of Violence, 1856-1890* (Anthem Press, 2013) and articles on death and martyrrology, masculinities, and peace. Her current project is a study of peace in C19 and early-C20 literature and culture.
‘Rats as Late-Nineteenth-Century British Invaders’
Janine Hatter

Rats in the popular imagination are deeply potent animals. As the harbingers of the Black Death not only do they represent disease and dying, but their links to such a fundamentally medieval disease makes them repositories of the past: just as they scurried across people and spread illness in the dark ages, so do they still. Throughout the Victorian period there was a vast quantity of anti-rat rhetoric in the newspapers, because rats were seen as an external invading force. In particular, there are numerous advertisements for rat poison (i.e. rat dynamite), because, like any war, it is fought with weapons. But, rats are not an external invading force – they are Victorian Britain’s literary signpost for the repressed, particularly for issues around overcrowding and poor health. A housing shortage, an increase in diphtheria and a supposed rat invasion all merged so residents were afraid to complain to landlords. These newspaper articles transparently ‘other’ rats as an invading force, through stories about ‘new breeds’ of rats, and how these are not ‘our rats’, these are new/foreign rats. It is this capacity to embody invasive, undesirable, even anachronistic, qualities that this paper seeks to draw out of a range of late-nineteenth-century popular fiction.

Rats feature heavily in Bram Stoker’s Dracula: ‘Rats, rats, rats! Hundreds, thousands, millions of them, and every one a life’. Stoker used rats as symbols of hauntings and the dispossessed in two pieces of his short fiction. In ‘The Judge’s House’ (1891) a student is haunted by a rat that seems to be the malignant spirit of the house’s previous occupant, a vindictive Judge who delighted in hanging. In ‘The Burial of Rats’ (1914) a young man stumbles into ‘The Kingdom of Dust’, the home of Paris’ rag-pickers. These examples demonstrate that the un-killable, constantly present, often unseen urban rat has remained a powerful vehicle for delivering horror as an invading force.

Biography
Janine Hatter is one of the VPFA’s Co-Organisers and her research interests centre on nineteenth-century literature, art and culture, with particular emphasis on popular fiction. She has published on Mary Braddon, Bram Stoker, the theatre and identity, and Victorian women’s life writing.
‘The Eastern Fairytale, the Place of Women, and Crimean War Poetry: Louisa Stuart Costello’s *The Lay of the Stork*’

Tai-Chun Ho

In her recent publications, Clare Broome Saunders has shed light on the literary career and work of Louisa Stuart Costello (1799-1870), a prolific woman writer who achieved critical acclaim in her lifetime but has been largely neglected. Building upon Saunders’ analysis of nineteenth-century women writers’ use of medievalism in war poetry, this paper argues that in *The Lay of the Stork* (1856) Costello not only draws on newspaper reports of the Crimean War but also incorporates the story of the Caliph Stork—an Eastern fairytale descending from the German writer Wilhelm Hauff—to empower the political engagement of both women writers and civilian women in wartime. Unlike her fellow poetesses, such as Louisa and Arabella Shore, and Adelaide Anne Procter, whose relatively short patriotic verse depict and celebrate domestic women faithfully waiting for their military husbands within the narrowly confined space of home, Costello has woven an enchanting, cosmopolitan tale of how a reclusive German lady named Lila in a castle seeks to reach out to the outside world by attaching a message to a stork flying to the East and by volunteering as a nurse healing the wounds of the Crimean soldiers. In October 1854 news of the wounded lying at the Scutari hospital provoked an outpouring of philanthropic endeavors, including Florence Nightingale’s nursing expedition, which in turn led to a heated debate on the role of women in the press and poetry. Situating Costello’s metrical romance in such context, this paper will consider the various sources of the Caliph Stork, including William Makepeace Thackeray’s ‘Sultan Stork’, which first appeared in *Ainsworth’s Magazine* in 1842, and examine how Costello’s use of this Eastern fairytale as well as first-hand accounts of the East circulating in the newspapers press at once affirms and challenges the established conceptions of women’s roles.

**Biography**

Tai-Chun Ho is Assistant Professor in the department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan. He completed his PhD at York in 2015. He is currently writing a book for Peter Lang entitled *Civilian Poets and Poetry of the Crimean Conflict*, which will be published in 2019.
‘Sceptics versus Spiritualists: Fictional and Non-Fictional Representations of Science and the Supernatural in the Victorian Periodical Press’
Helena Ifill

This paper explores fiction and non-fiction texts from the Victorian periodical press in which men of science discuss strange, potentially supernatural, occurrences. The texts move from a doctor recalling a hideous hallucination he saw as a young man in the morgue, to the public arguments over spiritualism carried out in the periodical press by the scientists William Benjamin Carpenter and Alfred Russell Wallace, to Braddon’s third-person narrative of a professor of natural science who has a mysterious experience. The comparison of these very different texts focuses on the extent to which the man of science is portrayed as a reliable authority, and looks at ways in which scientific authority may be asserted, undermined, or shown to be false. In all cases, as I shall demonstrate, the texts both reveal and contribute to the extreme ambivalence with which medical and scientific professionals were viewed by the Victorian public. What is revealed is not so a war between science and the supernatural, but between different types of authority on the battlefield of spiritualism.

Biography
Helena Ifill is based at the University of Sheffield. Her research interests include sensation fiction, the Gothic, the popular press and literary engagements with science and medicine. Her monograph, Creating Character: Theories of Nature and Nurture in Victorian Sensation Fiction was released in early 2018. She is one of the co-organisers for the VPFA annual conference.
Rhoda Broughton’s understudied novel Nancy presents an anti-adultery plot, in which the nineteen-year-old narrator refuses to betray her forty-seven-year-old husband. This paper looks at the battle between Nancy’s body and mind which threatens the domestic harmony of her May-December marriage, namely, what she terms the ‘lying changefulness’ of her ‘deceitful skin’.

Nancy is highly attuned to her physical self, detailing her body’s appearance, senses, feelings, and reactions. She is one of a group of six ‘ungenteel’, ‘vulgar’, and spirited siblings. United in terror of their tyrannical and unpredictable father, they are connected in such a way that they seem to comprise a single, many-limbed body. Nancy is wrenched apart from this collective self when she attracts the attention of her father’s friend Sir Roger Tempest, whom she decides to marry largely ‘to give the boys a helping hand’. Their marriage begins to suffer when they suspect each other of adultery, exacerbated by Nancy’s physical responses to Roger’s questions, her tendency to blush uncontrollably, along with the recurrent swelling of her nose and eyes. Blushing is a method of involuntary, silent communication which here, rather than revealing Nancy’s true feelings, results in misunderstandings which drive the plot.

In The Physiology of Mechanism of Blushing (1839), Thomas Burgess attributes this involuntary symptom ‘to the exquisite sensibility of youth, which […] wears gradually away in advancing years’. In Nancy’s case, blushing is a visible manifestation of the internal conflict of her rampaging adolescent body, separated from the rabble of her sibling group, as it adapts to her new role as an adult married woman. Her body in this period of transition becomes untrustworthy and uncontrollable. Yet the ‘burning’, ‘throbbing’, and ‘tingling’ that accompany her blushing also hint at Nancy’s awakening desire for her husband, the forming of a new united self.

Biography
Louise Benson James is a third-year PhD student at the University of Bristol. Her doctoral thesis looks at medical hysteria and the gothic in women’s fiction, 1850-1930.
‘What To Do About Murder?: James Payn’s *Found Dead* (1869) and the Moral Dilemma of Detective Fiction’
Emma Kareno

Squire Blissett has been found dead. Doctor Fungus begins a murder investigation. The local community resists his intervention and the detective role shifts to a young, male hero, Charlie Steen with the Squire’s beautiful daughter as his love interest. James Payn’s (1830-1898) novel *Found Dead* was published in 1869, between the ‘first English detective novel’ *The Moonstone* (1868) and Dickens’s alleged attempt at the genre *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). This paper argues that *Found Dead* is a missing link between these two famous novels and marks the moment when detective fiction emerges as a distinct genre from sensation fiction. *Found Dead* shows how detective fiction developed around a central moral dilemma.

Detective fiction wages war on crime to uphold the peace of respectable contentment. It is a modern truism that by making the culprit face justice time after time, the genre formula reconfirms the social status quo and prevailing ideas of law and order. It is equally acknowledged that the pleasure of reading detective fiction is in the thrill of the chase, the revealing of criminal cunning and homicidal passions hidden beneath the surface of society. This moral dilemma persists: do we read detective stories because they are reassuring or because they are subversive? Do we enjoy more the spectacle of crime or the victory of the social order?

James Payn, reader, editor, prolific writer and an all-round expert on popular fiction of his time, is just the man to help us explore these questions. *Found Dead* is not only a thrilling murder mystery, it illustrates how the moral dilemma of reconciling the desire for pleasurable excitement of crime with the need for condemning this crime and protecting the social status quo, was central to detective fiction from the very start.

**Biography**
Dr Emma Kareno has an M.A. from University of Tampere, Finland and a Ph.D. from Stirling University. She wrote her doctoral thesis on Victorian detective fiction. She is now a self-published writer and translator. She blogs on sensation fiction at perilsofsensation.blogspot.com/ and on Nordic crime fiction at palmuandcompany.blogspot.com/.
“So utterly Arcadian!”: Peace and the Rustic Garden Scene in Braddon’s Novels’
Jo Knowles

In Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *The Rose of Life* (1904), Daniel Lester announces his intention to ‘slumber the afternoon away in the garden’, in a way consonant with cultural visions of well-kept gardens as ideal locations of peace, seclusion and harmony. Braddon frequently refers not only to flowers and garden scenes in her novels, but specifically to their ‘rustic’ qualities as characterising the desirable pastoral haven of the countryside. Yet the ‘rustic scene’ is also one which constantly hovers on the brink of change, and in which figures such as Gilbert Fenton in *Fenton’s Quest* (1870) return eagerly only to find the peaceful scene they had hoped to embrace disrupted. Haynie’s reading of Braddon’s best-known novel, *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) shows that ‘rustic’ is not always coded positively in Braddon’s work; it can also be a marker of a neglected estate which has not kept pace with the modern world. Moreover, garden fashions and designs were in a state of flux, undergoing relatively rapid change during much of the nineteenth century, so that the peaceful qualities traditionally attributed to the garden scene are disrupted by this cycle of change, as well as by notions of contrast, conflict and rivalry attributed to preferences for difference garden styles, blooms and floral arrangements. Braddon’s references to floral and garden culture in her novels show a keen awareness of this.

**Biography**
Joanne Knowles is a Senior Lecturer in Media, Culture, Communication at Liverpool John Moores University. She has published on James, Dickens and Braddon. Current research projects address the significance of the garden in popular nineteenth-century fiction, and the changing cultural experience of the seaside scene (particularly the seaside pier) in Victorian culture.
‘The pen is mightier than the sword? Thackeray’s battles in *Vanity Fair*’
Julia Kuehn

Who is the enemy in *Vanity Fair?* The French in Waterloo in 1815, who kill not only young George Osborne and many other young British soldiers but who also bring Jos Sedley to reveal his un-English cowardice? Or is Becky Sharp the enemy, when it comes to her friend Amelia, her husband Rawdon and, occasionally, also herself? Is it contemporary Society, with a capital ‘S’, the Bunyan-inspired *Vanity Fair* where mammon, power and beauty rule – but ultimately mean absolutely nothing?

And who is the hero in this narrative that, famously, has no hero? Dobbin and Osborne who fight for the honour of the British nation, with more or less favourable results? Amelia who holds on to the ideal of a vanished love and of a suffering, passive femininity? Or Becky who does not, but who is far better equipped to deal with a contemporary world that engages in various fights not only beyond but also within its borders: there is a war raging between the classes (the have’s, and the have-not’s), and a war beginning to rage between the sexes.

This paper takes a fresh look at Thackeray’s social, realist novel *Vanity Fair* and especially at its critique of society: my two foci will be money and women, and the way that money and women are interlinked in Thackeray’s biting satire. In 1848, when the novel was published, the French may have been defeated but democratic upheavals on the continent showed that another war – fought by two platoons: the increasingly powerful middle-class on the one hand and proponents of ‘the Woman Question’ on the other – was not over yet. In fact, it had only just begun.

**Biography**
Julia Kuehn is Professor of English at the University of Hong Kong. Her research and teaching interests are in Victorian literature and culture, especially women’s, popular and travel writing (often related to China), and critical theory. Julia’s current monograph project is a comparative study of select nineteenth-century German and British realist authors.
‘From Infamous to Influential: Redefining the Literary Significance of the Penny Dreadful The String of Pearls: A Romance’
Manon Labrande

Recent popular culture has brought the words “Penny Dreadful” back into the limelight (eponymous TV series, republications of iconic stories). Before this revival, Penny Dreadfuls spent over a century excluded from public discourse and academic attention alike. From James Greenwood’s essay “A Short Way to Newgate” (1847), which informed against them, they suffered under the Arnoldian view on culture until Louis James’s Fiction for the Working Man (1963) triggered the ongoing legitimisation process to which this paper hopes to contribute. Penny Dreadfuls might be ‘bad’ literature – both ethically (thought to encourage young people to criminality) and aesthetically (too much descriptive detail); yet this double critique is also symptomatic of class tensions, as it overlooks the specificities of a new readership. In fact, the Penny Dreadfuls were a necessary step; a reaction to changing patterns of literary consumption at a time when an ever-growing taste for blood was materialising in Victorian entertainment.

This paper will consider The String of Pearls: A Romance (1846, attributed to Thomas Peckett Prest) and draw on seriality studies as well as on narratology to show how it foreshadows later literary works in a) its system of repetition and variation; b) its serial storytelling; c) its horror-filled interruptions to a teleological momentum; and d) its polyvocal narration. Relying on the Gothic in its suspense-filled and multifocal sensationalism, the original story of Sweeney Todd uses the major tropes that allowed the rises of genres such as true crime and detective fiction from the 1860s, as some of the Penny Dreadfuls’ qualities were appropriated, though not yet acknowledged. I contend that this work, like many others belonging to the genre, is not merely a working-class expression of literature through an emerging form of modern mass media, but an actual cornerstone of Victorian literary history that belatedly acquires much-deserved recognition.

Biography
Manon Labrande is currently a PhD student and university assistant at the University of Vienna. After completing an MA with honours in English literature at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris by examining the penny-blood character of Varney as a pivotal vampire character, her research now focuses on the exploration of the different facets of the Penny Dreadful and the reassertion of its literary significance among Victorian literature and sensationalism.
‘Palimpsests: Cultural Imaginaries and Charles Halcombe’s “Mystic Flowery Land”’
Klaudia Lee

Published in 1896 in London, *The Mystic Flowerly Land: A Personal Narrative of a Visit to China* was one of the three major works—the other two being novels—written by Charles Halcombe (b. c.1865) that were (largely) set in China. As a globe-trotter, writer, sailor, and one who had joined the staff of the *North China Daily News* and Imperial Maritime Customs in China in the late nineteenth century, Halcombe frequently asserted his narrative authority through the use of a range of anecdotes, archives and folklore that he presumably remembered and recorded during his sojourn in China. Published at a time when the country was embroiled in series of internal turmoil and suffered from external defeats, *The Mystic Flowerly Land* has often been seen as a work of travel writing and a historic record at the heyday of British imperialism and colonial expansion in the nineteenth century.

While recognizing the confluence between his work and the tradition of British colonial travel narratives, in this paper I focus on exploring how the multiple cultural layers, voices and literary forms that Halcombe incorporates in *The Mystic Flowerly Land* reveal its fragmented and ambivalent nature. From appropriating the styles of Romantic lyric poetry and Victorian popular urban sketches and reportage, to including Chinese and English newspaper cuttings and images of the Orient in the narrative, Halcombe textually recreates his own version of the mystic flowerly land to his intended readers. By invoking the concept of the palimpsest in my exploration of the polyphonic nature of Halcombe’s narrative, I intend to reveal its ‘palimpsestuous’ condition—‘a simultaneous relation of intimacy and separation’ in Sarah Dillon’s terms. As my paper will demonstrate, the textual and visual entanglements within the narrative ultimately reveal the ambivalent attitude of the writer and the various, and at times conflicted, cultural assumptions that underline the portrayal of China in the long nineteenth century.

**Biography**

Dr Klaudia Lee is an assistant professor at the Department of English, City University of Hong Kong. Her research interests are nineteenth-century literature and culture, cross-cultural exchange, Charles Dickens, spatiality, adaptation, translation and appropriation, and comparative literature. She is the author of *Charles Dickens and China, 1895-1915: Cross-Cultural Encounters* (Routledge, 2017). Her works have appeared in international journals such as *Victorian Periodicals Review, Victorians: A Journal of Literature and Culture and Journal of Victorian Culture*. 
“It was for her to do battle with respectability”: Annie Edwards, *Archie Lovell* and the Bohemian Novel

Chris Louttit

According to a critic writing in the *Saturday Review* in 1866, Annie Edwards had ‘a good place in the world of fiction, and a by no means inconsiderable share of popular favour’. Her status since then has been in decline; as Anne-Marie Beller and Tara MacDonald put it bluntly in *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers: Beyond Braddon* (2014), her work has ‘fallen into thorough obscurity’. If Edwards is considered at all by modern critics, it is as a footnote in the history of literary sensationalism as a member of the ‘fast’ or Braddon school of writers. This paper reassesses the position of Edwards in the popular fiction market of the 1860s by arguing that she is an innovative novelist at the forefront of fictional trends rather than merely a derivative writer. Her great early popular success, *Archie Lovell* (1866), does include familiar sensational elements including sexual transgression, suicide and a dramatic court-room scene. Intriguingly, this novel is also one of the most significant examples of the novel of Bohemian artistic life, a micro-genre that flourished on the literary scene in 1866. Edwards’s heroine Archie is a self-defined Bohemian at war with respectable society, who smokes cigarettes, wears her hair long under a sailor’s hat and dismisses social proprieties as Philistinism. Nonetheless, as even the *Saturday Review*’s critic noticed, she is an ‘attractive’, ‘engaging’ and ‘uncompromising’ character, who risks social shame to clear the name of a male friend late in the novel. Seen alongside the dangerously murderous sensation heroines fashionable in fiction a few years earlier, Archie represents a new type of attractively unconventional heroine and is a key part of Edwards’s revision of the conventions of sensationalism.

**Biography**

Chris Louttit is Assistant Professor of English Literature at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. His research focuses on mid-Victorian fiction and its print and screen afterlives, and his recent articles have appeared in *Adaptation, Book History* and *Critical Survey*. 
“he stood face to face with a remote antiquity”: At War with the Past in Grant Allen’s ‘Pallinghurst Barrow’ (1892) and ‘Wolverden Tower’ (1896)

Erin Louttit

Grant Allen’s short stories ‘Pallinghurst Barrow’ and ‘Wolverden Tower’, published in Christmas numbers of the Illustrated London News, both feature the supernatural. Although not now widely remembered as the author of ghost stories, Allen’s adept use of the genre examines some of the same themes and preoccupations evident in his other writing. Most notably, and most characteristically, Allen contrasts the scientific rationalism of the present with the superstition and ignorance of the past. The images that emerge are of the triumph of progress and the modern, yet the success is not an uncomplicated one. The paranormal forces with which the protagonists contend nearly defeat them, and the narrative endorses the view that these are real, not imagined or hallucinatory horrors. Death threatens the protagonists throughout both narratives, and neither escapes their hostile environment fully free from injury. The past, in spite of being conquered, remains in conflict with the present. Despite its victory over history and unfounded belief systems, the present is shown as less peaceful and, ultimately, less safe and less free from superstition, than fits comfortably with an image of steady scientific and cultural advancement.

Biography

Erin Louttit is an independent scholar. Her scholarly interests include literary faiths, gender, the supernatural, and the literature and culture of the long nineteenth century.
‘Prayer, Truth-Telling and the Outworking of Reconciliation in Elizabeth Gaskell’s Fiction’
Elizabeth Ludlow

In a letter to her friend Mary Ewart, Elizabeth Gaskell recalls her motivation behind the composition of *Mary Barton*: ‘I wanted to represent the subject in the light in which some of the workmen certainly consider to be true, not that I dare to say it is the abstract absolute truth’.¹ Though the novel, she contrasts the living conditions of the Manchester mill-owners with the workers and, in an attempt to ‘impress […] what the workman thinks and feels’ on her readers, she bears witness to what she perceives as the misery of their lives.² After unpacking how Gaskell’s engagement with strands of Unitarian thought informs the way in which she represents truth-telling, I trace how her representation of the characters who bear witness and facilitate reconciliation connects with her Christology and with contemporaneous debates about the Incarnation. Throughout the paper, I draw on episodes in *Mary Barton, North and South, Lois the Witch*, and *Sylvia’s Lovers* to explain how Gaskell connects truth-telling and bearing-witness with moments of prayer and with the process of becoming Christ-like. I conclude with the recognition that, while she retains a commitment to the interface between storytelling, devotional practice, and social action, her later fiction expresses an ambivalence about the move from a recognition of truth to altruism and a scepticism about the longevity of acts of reconciliation.

**Biography**
Elizabeth Ludlow is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK. She is the author of *Christina Rossetti and the Bible: Waiting with the Saints* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) and several journal articles. Her current research project considers prayer and the female body in Victorian women’s writing.

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This paper takes up the conference theme of war by discussing class conflict in the fiction of popular writer Ellen Wood. I begin by discussing Wood’s narrative voice, which bears similarities to what Robyn Warhol has termed the ‘engaging narrator,’ a narrator who frequently employs the second person in order to appeal to the reader’s social conscience. Indeed, Wood uses direct address – to ‘you’ or ‘reader’ – often in her texts, as she manipulates this appeal to emotion to function within the morally ambiguous mode of sensation fiction. She also frequently employs free indirect discourse, a narrative technique in which the character’s thoughts are reproduced seemingly directly, even though the narrator continues to speak of the character in the third person. These techniques encourage the reader not just to feel for a fictional character but to feel what that character feels.

Yet feeling what others are feeling is of course not always positive; it can be unnerving, even frightening. The paper then considers how Wood represents the flip side of contagious feeling through her interest in the mob, as depicted in A Life’s Secret (1862), Verner’s Pride (1863), and Bessy Rane (1870). The fear of the mob (a fear not unique to the Victorian period of course) is that the mass of bodies and feelings will turn violent. The mob thus represents the dark side of emotional contagion and it is depicted largely as an unthinking, working-class, and male group response. In particular, my paper discusses A Life’s Secret, a fascinating text that features both a sensational plot and a critique of what Wood saw as immoral Trade Unionists. The serial publication of the text led to an actual riot, in which rioters demanded to know the name of the author (the serial was published anonymously), a striking example of the convergence of fictional and actual bodies.

Biography
Tara MacDonald is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Idaho. She is the author of The New Man, Masculinity, and Marriage in the Victorian Novel and co-editor of Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers. She is currently completing a book on Victorian sensation fiction and affect and has published widely on Victorian and neo-Victorian fiction.
‘At War with Nature: Malthusianism, Dickens, and the Language of Poverty’
Andrew Mangham

Nineteenth-century efforts to understand, talk about, and remedy the problems associated with poverty were dominated by the language of T. R. Malthus’s demographic theory. In his Essay on Population (1798), Malthus argued that famine, war, and pestilence were ‘positive checks’ used by nature to control population numbers. The New Poor Law (1834) drew heavily on Malthus’s ideas, and encouraged a laissez-faire approach to poverty. Those who hungered inside the workhouse or outside of it did so in accordance with what had been decreed by the laws of nature.

This paper will argue that Dickens’s social-problem writing sought to expose the ways in which questions of poverty had been set out and interpreted badly by individuals who had, essentially, meant well, but whose bling faith in the wisdom of laissez faire had prevented a proper understanding of what Carlyle called the ‘Condition-of-England Question’. The Chimes (1844), according to John Forster, was the most overtly Radical fiction Dickens ever wrote, with the text’s main political target being set on the statistical brainwashing of political economists. Yet, lumped in with such evils we find the arrant stupidity of men like Alderman Cute, a character based on Sir Peter Laurie, the London Mayor who had expressed a determination to ‘put down suicide’ in the Capital. Dickens portrays Alderman Cute as having the similar intention to ‘put down Starvation’ and thus signals the narrow and simplistic thinking that developed as a result of Malthus’s catch-all theory.

What Dickens’s social fiction does, by contrast, is stress the complex reality of poverty by offering an alternative, materialistic vision of the problem. Dickens drew upon the works of sanitary reformers, medical men, and physiologists to present a world in which good reform comes from a detailed, self-reflexive, and material understanding of the lives of real men, women, and children.

Biography
Andrew Mangham is an Associate Professor at the University of Reading. He is the author of Violent Women and Sensation Fiction (2007) and Dickens’s Forensic Realism (2016) as well as the editor of The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction (2013), The Female Body in Medicine and Literature (2011) and the forthcoming The Male Body in Medicine and Literature (2018).
‘Invasion Fiction and the Late-Victorian Prehistory of the Wellington House Propaganda Project’
Michael Matin

On September 2, 1914, less than a month after the outbreak of the First World War, an extraordinary meeting of twenty-five of Britain’s best-known writers was secretly convened in London. Attendees included J.M. Barrie, Arnold Bennett, G.K. Chesterton, Arthur Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, and H.G. Wells. The purpose of this gathering was to enlist in service of the war effort the country’s most accomplished and influential writers. The event had been arranged and was presided over by Charles Masterman, who had been appointed by Prime Minister Asquith to lead the fledgling British propaganda campaign. Known as the Wellington House project, this became one of the most successful propaganda campaigns of the twentieth-century. This paper examines the way that British national and imperial invasion anxieties were generated by freelance propagandists during the late Victorian years in a way that would pave the way for the later, formal war-time propaganda effort of Wellington House.

Biography
Dr. Matin chairs the Warren Wilson College Department of English. Although he has been engaged in a number of writing and editing projects, the pre-1914 invasion-scare genre has remained at the center of his scholarly life for more than twenty years. Along the way, he was awarded a U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for his work on this body of literature. He also had the privilege of getting to know I.F. Clarke – the pioneering scholar of future-war fiction, of which the invasion-scare genre is a subtype – in the decade before his passing. He completed his doctoral dissertation on these texts in 1997 and subsequently published numerous essays on the historical, political, and cultural circumstances in which they developed and flourished. These essays range from an analysis of the early phase of the genre’s popularity (with the 1871 publication of The Battle of Dorking) to an assessment of some of its twenty-first-century manifestations. He is currently bringing his work together in a book titled Securing Britain: Invasion-Scare Literature before the Great War.
'Unmanned: H. G. Wells and the Breakdown of Masculinity'
Yael Maurer

H.G. Wells’ *War of the Worlds* has been read as an allegory of colonial domination and its catastrophic effects. Critics have pointed out the ambiguous nature of Wells’ fictional project to account for the racist images of the aliens and their depiction as the ultimate “others”. At the same time, the authorial position seems to denounce colonial rule by flipping the table on the British colonizers, who find themselves in the role of the colonized and nearly lose their beloved country in the process. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Wells’ colonial allegory of the will to remake the “other” in your own image by “scientific” means enacts the horror at the heart of colonial domination. In both texts, the colonial metaphor is closely related to notions of masculinity and its discontents.

In *The War of the Worlds*, we find entrenched notions of masculinity threatened by an alien invasion which domesticates and effeminizes men, while in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the fear of the feminine “other” is transposed into the “alien” volcanic island as well as to the transformed beasts at the mercy of Dr. Moreau’s hideous experiments. While the Martian aliens in *The War of the Worlds* are sexless, cerebral beings who suck the blood of the men they capture, in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, it is the feminine and “alien” creature that finally destroys the patriarchal figure who aims to remake and control her. Both texts enact the breakdown of the masculine subject’s will to power and the dominant fear of “unmanning” at the heart of this wish for world domination. Wells presents masculinity as a destructive force which perceives itself under constant threat of annihilation thus demonstrating the paradox at the heart of the constructed masculine self.

**Biography**
Dr. Yael Maurer is a lecturer at the English and American Studies department at Tel Aviv University. Research interests include postcolonial studies, science fiction and the Gothic. Books: *The Science Fiction Dimensions of Salman Rushdie* (monograph), *Cityscapes of the Future* (edited collection).
‘A Short Tale of Aboriginal Haunting: Colonial War, Peace and Super-Nature in Wells’ “Pollock and the Porroh Man”’
Holly-Gale Millette

First published in May of 1895, H.G. Wells’ ‘Pollock and the Porroh Man’ considers the colonial condition of Us versus Them, using one man’s inner turmoil and conflict as its narrative force. In other words, in this tale, the protagonist is at War with – and seeking to make Peace with – himself. The text sees a rather unattractive white middle-class male empire builder made abject by the disembodied head of the African Aboriginal he has harmed. Although Voodoo is never mentioned, the Porroh Man of the title is drawn as a ‘medicine man’ who the reader is never dissuaded from reading as a warring spirit meting out judgment upon an oppressor.

This paper considers Wells’ social commentary on reparation, entitlement and black lives that matter. Writing about Dahomey (now the present day African Republic of Benin) at a time when the Pan African repatriation movement was crystallising and just as DuBois was receiving his PhD, Wells narrates the retreat of the doomed colonial from Africa, and exacts judgement on him and achieves reparation via a humorous supernatural morality tale. Like much of Wells’ work, he offers the reader a cautionary tale which, if not heeded, will haunt our future histories as certainly as Pollock is haunted by his Porroh Man.

Biography
Holly-Gale Millette is Senior Teaching Fellow within Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton. Her current writing and research is situated in the Gothic and Neo-Victorianism; adaptation; televisual texts; and the history and radicalism of British travellers, itinerants and those off the grid.
‘The Burden of the Present: The Place of Conflict in William Morris’ News From Nowhere’
Nickianne Moody

This paper discusses the role of conflict in utopian narrative and its place in Victorian popular fiction at the end of the nineteenth century. Patrick Parrinder (1976:266) calls News From Nowhere Morris’ “utopian masterpiece” which draws on a tradition of social analysis and employs an effective satirical technique. It can be placed in a group of four ‘exploration of the future’ narratives published in the late 1880s and early 1890s: Hudson’s A Crystal Age, Bellamy’s Looking Backwards and Wells’ The Time Machine. All these narratives investigate the secrets of the future and the changes in human nature and social relations which will result in apparent utopian lives.

News From Nowhere responds to Looking Backward, but Bellamy’s socialist utopia appalled Morris. His review of the book critiqued it as celebrating a servile corporate culture that manifested the middle class embrace of industrialisation. Parrinder (1976:268) argues that the significance of News From Nowhere is the way it demonstrates Morris’ use of artistic expression imagine dynamic alternatives to contemporary lives and social organisation. In News From Nowhere he portrays communities and characters living fulfilled and meaningful lives. He is able to imagine “a coalition of divergent individuals” (Parrinder (1976:269) which co-exist peacefully when usually this is the element that undermines the utopian project.

Utopian fantasy allows him to create, in homage to Dickens, the “Golden Dustman” cultured and yet holding an essential role for the community that allows him and his fellows to lead a “full and reasonable life”. Classless London is a renewed paradise in this future. The narrative style and structure offers the reader utopian pleasures as they explore this new world, its population and its values. Nevertheless, to sustain this fantasy of a utopian future Morris must draw upon the realism of conflict in the past which laid its foundation. The dreamlike exploration of the social relations of Nowhere leads to the revelation of an essential class war in the penultimate chapter.

Biography
Nickianne Moody is Principal Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. Publications include work on most popular genres, nineteenth and twentieth-century fiction, popular culture and more specifically cultures of reading. Current research is based on the Liddell Hart Collection of Costume held at Liverpool John Moores University, and a monograph on Marie Corelli.
‘Promoting Human Brotherhood in the Cause of Peace: the writings of Isabella Fyvie Mayo’
Lindy Moore

Isabella Fyvie Mayo’s first serialised fiction was ‘The Secret Drawer’. Published in *Kind Words: a Weekly Magazine for Boys and Girls* in 1867, it is set against the wars for the Unification of Italy. In it a young woman refers optimistically to the forthcoming Great Exhibition of 1851: “The better nations know each other, the less they will fight. Wars are like quarrels, they spring from misunderstandings and suspicions”. As an earnest Christian evangelical who contributed to a wide range of Victorian periodicals from 1866 to 1914, Isabella Fyvie Mayo’s lifelong mantra was the Biblical phrase ‘God...hath made of one blood all nations of men’. This paper examines some of the literary genres she used to emphasise the brotherhood of man and the similarity of people’s motivations, beliefs and actions across differences of culture, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender or class. She incorporated slight illustrations into some of her own fiction, she popularised information provided by foreign writers and, in articles and sketches, she gave cross-cultural comparisons of everyday life arising from her own contacts and travels. She both criticised and countered the prevailing xenophobia which defined foreigners, whether in Britain or encountered by the British abroad, in racialised terms, as different or ‘other’, and the colonized, in particular, as ‘exotics’, as non-white, and ‘uncivilised’ – a differentiating which allowed whites to separate themselves from indigenous peoples in the colonies and led to frontier wars of extermination. She not only criticised the racist stereotyping of imperialist adventure stories but gave agency to colonised peoples and anticipated that, when they provided their own written fiction, the British would learn ‘the other side of the story’.

Biography
Lindy Moore is an independent researcher. She is exploring the late nineteenth-century anti-racism movement through the life of Isabella Fyvie Mayo. Published articles include ‘Opposing Racism and Imperialism: Isabella Fyvie Mayo’s search for literary space(s) (1880-1914) in *Empires and Revolutions: Cunninghame Graham and his contemporaries*, ed. Sassi and Stroh, 2017.
‘Narratives of Tailors, Seamstresses, and Poverty in 1850’
John Morton

Central to a ‘war on poverty’ in myriad periodicals in the year 1850 were the figures of the struggling seamstress and tailor. Louis James has claimed that the issue was ‘stale as news’ by the end of the 1840s, so frequently were the figures discussed in writing of that decade, and yet in 1850 fictional narratives of struggling garment-workers proliferated in periodicals of many kinds. This paper will first of all give an overview of these various narratives, from G.W.M. Reynolds’s The Seamstress – the first and only instalment in what was originally envisaged as one in a series of studies of ‘Slaves of England’, in Reynolds’s Miscellany – to the cautionary morality tale of Lettice Arnold in the Ladies’ Companion; from Charles Kingsley’s Alton Locke to other shorter narratives in Eliza Cook’s Journal and the Family Herald. Its central focus will be Lettice Arnold, which differs substantially in periodical format and book-bound form. It will then go on to highlight common features of these narratives, demonstrating that they tend to follow a fairly consistent pattern, yet none were considered ‘stale’ enough to withhold from publication; and they vary wildly in their conclusions, from anti-climax to tragedy. The paper will go on to outline these various suggested ‘solutions’, or otherwise, to the common social problem these narratives present, also taking into consideration the likely effect of these on their various diverse readerships; It will end by discussing why it might have been that these narratives proliferated in this year, the year before the Great Exhibition.

Biography
John Morton is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Greenwich. Recent publications include a chapter on Alfred Austin in Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Case Studies (a book he co-edited with Andrew King and Alexis Easley), as well as the co-edited Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers. He is Deputy Editor of the Tennyson Research Bulletin, and has published widely on Victorian and neo-Victorian poetry. He is currently working on a literary biography of the year 1850. University of Greenwich, a charity and company limited by guarantee, registered in England (reg. no. 986729). Registered office: Old Royal Naval College, Park Row, Greenwich, London SE10 9LS.
'The Difficult Task of Coping with Complexity: The Representation of First Indian War in XXth Century English Novels'
Flaminia Nicora

Even after Indian independence, the First Indian war never ceased to be a recognizable topic in the English novel. From Reid’s *Masque of the Mutiny* (1947) and John Master’s *Nightrunners of Bengal* (1951), through M.M. Kaye’s *Shadow of the Moon* (1957) and Farrell’s *Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), MacDonald Fraser’s *Flashman in the Great Game* (1975) to Zadie Smith’s allusions in *White Teeth* (1999) or Julian Rathbone’s *The Mutiny* (2007), the narrative representation of 1857 events has voiced political worries about British political status, Imperial nostalgia, melodrama, parody, open laughs and bitter criticism.

The Mutiny novel in the twentieth century deploys a number of narrative possibilities that seem to open the paradigm built since its first appearance in 1858. Part of the interest of following the development of the topic along the decades lies in the formal variety of the different novels. However, even more fruitful results may come when the representation of the Indian War is considered as a ‘litmus test’ to approach British culture and the ways colonial history is revised and interpreted. How has the cultural role of melodrama changed over time? How is the complexity of the historical event coped with through different narrative choices? These are some of the questions the paper will address.

**Biography**
“the ideal was not there”: Making Peace with Dickensian Kent
Carolyn Oulton

The population of Kentish ‘Dickens Country’ or ‘Dickens Land’ exploded after the author’s death, as the ‘old salt’ who mends a child’s boat in ‘Our Watering Place’ came forward to identify himself, and Betsey Trotwood’s domicile was discovered in different parts of Dover (in fact it is based on what is now the Dickens House Museum in Broadstairs).

The desire to find ‘originals’ is a familiar aspect of nineteenth century reading culture. But Dickens’s portrayal of Folkestone and Broadstairs and the seaside setting in David Copperfield interact with the always contested status of holiday reading, in ways that he may not have foreseen.

Place has a way of following David around, insofar as his memories of one location are used to frame or negotiate his standing in another. This habit of transposition anticipates the sense in which later visitors could make themselves ‘at home’ in Kent, as heritage guides encouraged them to stake their claim through the fictional scenes they had already encountered. This portable heritage demanded active reading practices, quite literally as readers were reconfigured as walkers or tramps who would cover the terrain ‘with Dickens’. For greater practicality excerpts from the novels were helpfully provided to avoid encumbering the reader / walker with the weight of a David Copperfield.

Dickens was a safe bet for both public and circulating libraries, reinforcing his association with the county. So it is ironic that one Folkestone resident recalls his appearance as initially disappointing, while his son Charlie attracted indifferent audiences when he read in the town in the 1880s. Equally ambiguous is the fate of Gladys Waterer, a twentieth century owner of Aunt Betsey’s cottage. A successful novelist and dramatist, she is remembered solely as the inaugurator of the Dickens Festival.

Biography

Carolyn Oulton is Professor of Victorian Literature and Director of the International Centre for Victorian Women Writers at Canterbury Christ Church University. Recent work includes Dickens and the Myth of the Reader (2017). She is currently researching the reading and literary culture of seaside resorts from the 1840s to 1930s.
‘Nature or Nurture: Internal Battles of Gender and Family in Mary Shelley’s
Frankenstein’
Sandra Perot

Mary Shelley’s creature in *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* (1816) possesses human and inhumane qualities. The experiences of Frankenstein’s monster are used to show both the importance of family, and the issues or conflicts inherent between its members. This familial connection is particularly true of the father and child relationship between the scientist Frankenstein and his creation. In addition, the issue of having only one creator or parent and existing as the only member or offspring of a species further serves to blur gender roles by placing both Frankenstein and Frankenstein’s monster in simultaneous and dual roles of mother and father, daughter and son. When Frankenstein’s monster is treated as inhuman he lashes out inhumanely. The reversal of power between Frankenstein as creator and Frankenstein’s monster as creation results in further destabilizing of the patriarchy. Here the son, or Frankenstein’s monster, holds a commanding dominance over the father or Frankenstein and as such the situation renders the notion of hierarchical family systems moot. Frankenstein’s monster serves to blur rigidly understood conceptions of patriarchy and parent/child roles by challenging the unitary quality of families and the roles developed within them.

The grotesque physical result from Frankenstein’s attempt to recreate the perfect physical man also highlights the possibility that our conceptions of ideal masculinity are inherently perverse when applied to real life. This same thought experiment is used with concepts of race as related to Frankenstein’s monster’s physical form, and the results of mixing of races especially. As Frankenstein’s monster was not intended by Shelley simply to fulfill the role of detestable monster, his moments of compassion and his desire to belong somewhere evoke our sympathy far more than Frankenstein’s actions ever do. Thus, Frankenstein’s monster’s character is in fact a case against anthropocentrism while at the same time serves to challenge Victorian gender roles. Ultimately, these images of the monster and ideas of ecological thought are Shelley’s tools for addressing issues of gender roles, race and of finding one’s proper place in the family and in pre-Victorian society.

**Biography**

Sandra Perot holds a PhD (ABD) in History from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her dissertation, “Late Eighteenth-Century Theatre: Women and Cultural Diplomacy in the Transatlantic Anglophone World (1752-1800)” examines actresses and women playwrights as cultural diplomats during the Revolutionary Era. She currently teaches history and works as an independent researcher on 18th and 19th century women’s fiction.
‘The Bullet Catch, or Conjurors at War! Victorian Secular Magic in (and as) Conflict’
Christopher Pittard

In War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception, Paul Virilio comments on the capacity of early cinema to surprise, and therefore its use as a weapon. In tracing theoretical and historical connections between warfare and the development of cinema, Virilio refers (largely in passing) to an art form closely connected to the late Victorian development of cinema: performance magic. This paper extends the scope of Virilio’s broader argument backwards historically, to argue for a connection between Victorian secular magic and military-political conflict, focusing on two literary examples.

The first is an episode from Benson Earle Hill’s military memoirs Home Service; or Scenes and Characters from Life at Out and Head Quarters (1839). Hill describes a performance by the Indian conjuror Khia Khan Khruse (the model for Charles Dickens’ conjuror alter ego Rhia Rhama Rhoos) of the bullet catch trick. The description of the trick, in which the bullet is marked with the symbol of the naval and military stores and the gunpowder used is identified as “genuine Piggott and Andrews”, brings imperial commercialism into dialogue with an ultimately triumphant Orientalist magic. This scene of east and west brought together through the bullet catch is inverted in the second example, the famous episode of the French conjuror Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin’s Memoirs (1859) in which Robert-Houdin is tasked by the French government to quell an Algerian uprising by demonstrating that Marabout shows of strength are simply tricks. Robert-Houdin’s war magic appears as the opposite of Khruse’s; here, the bullet trick acts for purposes of disenchantment by Western agency. Yet if Khruse’s bullet catch is ultimately a parody of war, an entertainment incidental to military action, Houdin’s bullet catch becomes politically weaponised, even if the gun itself proves harmless.

Biography
Dr Christopher Pittard is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Portsmouth. He has published widely on Victorian literature and popular culture, including articles in 19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century, Studies in the Novel, Victorian Periodicals Review, Clues, and Women: A Cultural Review. His books include Purity and Contamination in Late Victorian Detective Fiction (2011) and the co-edited Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes (2018).
While H.G. Wells is widely recognised as a seminal author of early science fiction (SF), Edward Bulwer-Lytton has been only marginally acknowledged for his contributions to the genre. Yet, both best-selling authors produced innovative forms of early SF, incorporating contemporary scientific knowledge into the fantastic in order to create an aura of rationalist verisimilitude, and fictionally enter into scientific debate. Significantly, both worked in the context of a personal conviction that scientific investigation and its fictional extrapolations were best pursued within a naturalistic framework. Despite these similarities, however, only Wells’ texts survived the inter-generic conflicts that have defined science fiction, predominantly associating the genre with scientific rationalism at the expense of the magical, religious and supernatural.

This paper will propose that the contrast between Wells’ long-term success and the once popular Bulwer-Lytton’s ultimate obscurity can be attributed, in part, to this triumph of reductionism. Using their deployment of thought-transference (clairvoyance, telepathy, etc) as an example, I will treat Bulwer-Lytton and Wells as representative antagonists in a clash of fictions connected to a wider conflict over the boundaries of scientific naturalism — a debate in which the terra incognita of mental powers was centrally contested terrain. Both authors placed the narrative devices of their scientific romances within a naturalistic framework, but for Bulwer-Lytton the boundaries of the natural were much more expansive. Bulwer-Lytton justified thought-transference with appeals to scientific authority, but without obscuring the magical and mesmeric aspects of the concept, an approach that would become anathema in a genre influenced by Wells’ rigid rejection of the supernatural. A comparison of the two authors allows a representative view of an important aspect of SF’s developmental history, in which its generic identity was often clarified via the rejection of esoteric phenomena.

**Biography**

Aren Roukema is a SSHRC doctoral fellow, completing PhD research at Birkbeck, University of London. He is editor of *Correspondences* and Co-Director of the London Science Fiction Research Community. Publications include an upcoming monograph, *Esotericism and Narrative: The Occult Fiction of Charles Williams* (Brill, 2018).
‘*Tipping the Velvet*: A War against Victorian Gender Roles and Romance’
Duygu Serdaroğlu

Considered as a kind of bildungsroman, *Tipping the Velvet* by Sarah Waters is set in the late 1800’s, in oppressive Victorian England and explores the boundaries of gender roles, sex and romance in the Victorian era. Not only does it portray the political and social subversions in the Victorian era, it also depicts the sexual subversions and with the protagonist of the novel, Nancy, the “other” side of the Victorian social life is shown in the novel. The novel also breaks the peaceful depiction of the Victorian life as the age is pointed out with its strict social rules such as class distinction, mannerism and the strictly divided gender roles because of the ideal image of the Victorian lady/gentleman, and gives an upside down picture of the society in terms of romance, love and sex. This paper attempts to dwell on the theme of “(personal) war and peace” in the Victorian era by focusing on the gender roles, sex and love and also how the subversions of the gender create a war against the peacefulness of the Victorian era in connection with the body politics with references to Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*.

Key Words: *Tipping the Velvet*, Sarah Waters, gender, Neo-Victorianism, Victorian era

**Biography**
Dr. Duygu Serdaroğlu has been working as a lecturer since 2006 both in the Department of English Language at TOBB University of Economics and Technology in Ankara, Turkey. Her main research interests are literary theory, contemporary novel, postmodernism, New Historicism, Neo-Victorianism and gender and cultural studies.
Many advertisements for beauty products in Victorian women’s magazines promised that they would enable users to retain the markers of youth: a full head of luxurious hair with no bald spots, coloured rather than grey hair, a full set of teeth, a trim waist, and a clear and smooth complexion. As ageing was associated with qualities that were antithetical to female beauty, older women were situated differently with respect to the naturalised ideals that were predominant in discourse aimed at girls and younger women. Specifically, older women could be viewed as grotesque for attempting to look younger until cosmetic intervention was more fully accepted. A 1904 beauty manual by Lady Jean, *Beauty as a Fine Art*, discusses the woman of 40 who must approach ageing with aggressive tactics: “anything that threatens to rob her of the outward sign of youth is combated and defied by all reasonable means.” This paper outlines the process by which women moved from understanding ageing as something that must inevitably be accepted to a process to be fought “by all reasonable means”, as consumer products promised to extend the span of youthful beauty. It contrasts this emerging discourse informed by consumer culture with popular fictional representations of ageing women who grapple with, or fail to acknowledge, their loss of sexual appeal. It will compare figures such as elderly Lady Cleopatra Skewton in Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1848) who embraces youthful dress, cosmetics, and other “false” accoutrements, unable to accept the passing of her physical allure, with those of spinster characters who are similarly mocked, pitied, and implicitly critiqued for their use of artifice. The paper will demonstrate how these fictional women, who had already visibly aged, were positioned in an unwinnable situation according to emerging discourses surrounding beauty and cosmetics fuelled by consumer culture.

**Biography**
Michelle Smith is a Senior Lecturer in Literary Studies at Monash University, Australia. She is currently researching a cultural history of female beauty in Victorian print culture. Her books include *From Colonial to Modern: Transnational Girlhood in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Children’s Literature* (1840-1940) (2018) and *Empire in British Girls’ Literature and Culture: Imperial Girls, 1880–1915* (2011).
Narratives about war toys and toy wars elucidate adult anxieties about a child’s power. In the early 1880s, Robert Louis Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne developed their own war game. The games became so extensive that they lasted for weeks, and Stevenson was committed to replicating real war as closely as possible: he created rules to account for supplies and experimented with ways to mimic sickness in war. Stevenson even went so far as to invent several newspapers to report on the battles between himself and his stepson. In 1898, Osbourne published a collection of this mimic war correspondence as “Stevenson at Play.” This correspondence was remarkably critical of Osbourne, something the stepson even notes in his introduction to the piece: “The reader will see what little cause I had to love the Yallobally Record, a scurrilous sheet that often made my heart ache, for all I pretended to laugh and see the humor of its attacks” (711). The press calls Osbourne “incompetent” and “careless” and repeatedly returns to Osbourne’s status as a child. By naming one of the newspapers Yallobally Record, Stevenson further heightens the critiques levelled at Osbourne. Stevenson is clearly aware of the power the popular press has over shaping public opinions regarding war, a power he uses to assert his own dominance over Osbourne. As Bernard Mergan has pointed out, toys grant children ownership. I would add that this ownership grants children power. Stevenson’s need to continually establish his authority as both a game designer and war reporter speaks to his anxiety about this potential for power. But, as we know too well, perhaps Osbourne just needed to blame “fake news.”

Biography
Deanna Stover is a PhD candidate in English at Texas A&M University working on her dissertation, “Deadly Toys: Mini Worlds and Wars, 1815–1914.” She has published in the Children’s Literature Association Quarterly and Women’s Writing, and has co-edited a digital edition of H.G. Wells’ Little Wars in Scholarly Editing.
‘Charlotte Dacre: Female ideal and female villains in Zofloya and The Passions’
Pauline Suwanban

This paper will explore the battle between the patriarchal female ideal and the unnatural woman in Charlotte Dacre’s two novels Zofloya (1806) and The Passions (1811). Commercially successful, noticed by Shelley and Byron, Dacre was largely neglected by her contemporaries. After the publication of Zofloya, she was criticised for indecency. In this novel, the protagonist Victoria is seduced by Satan, who is disguised as a young Moor. She is encouraged to torture and kill, until he throws her into an abyss. Before her death, Victoria’s body begins to mirror Zofloya’s, becoming darker and unwieldy. Her body is presented as a lusty, demonic and masculinized. The Passions is a story of revenge and emotional extremities. Appollonia, a young society woman maliciously befriends the wife of a former lover. Encouraging her ‘friend’ to commit infidelity, she succeeds in destroying the utopian family unit, but is eventually murdered.

These female villains struggle to overcome their alter-egos, who are depicted as passive and angelic women preferred by the men. Victoria’s body stands in stark opposition to Lilla, her love rival, who is pale, frail and child-like. Appollonia is criticized for her intellect and agency; cast aside for the ignorance of the chosen wife, Julia. The heroines face violent deaths as punishment for their actions, perhaps indicating Dacre’s conservative stance. Recently, Jennifer Airey unearths Dacre’s underlining contempt for patriarchal systems that prevent her characters from succeeding (2017). The reader is left to negotiate between two options: the ‘perfect’ wife or the she-monster. This distinction has influenced the meaning of strength and power in female characterisation: a strong woman is one that is physically able, vocal and ultimately masculine.

Biography
Pauline Suwanban is a first year English PhD candidate at Birkbeck university. Her research explores the development of popular romance, by drawing connections with amatory fiction and gothic. She engages with themes of male dominance and Orientalist fantasy, and how they create complex sexual feeling for the female reader. She is a research intern at Birkbeck Institutes and subject editor at Dandelion Journal.
‘In Fleeting Favour: Mid-Victorian Military Fashion Fads’
Kara Tennant

This paper will discuss a range of military-themed fashions from the mid-Victorian period, focusing upon three key modes of the late 1850s and early 1860s that were named after, or took inspiration from, military clothing or events. Starting with the colours ‘Solferino’ and ‘Magenta’, both named after Italian battles of 1859, I then consider the ‘Garibaldi blouse’ inspired by the Italian revolutionary leader, before moving to the ‘Zouave jacket’, styled after the uniform worn by the Zouave Regiments of the French Army.

I will situate these fashions within their social and cultural contexts, considering them in terms of issues of empire, colonialism and national identity, before focusing upon their significance as fleeting fads. Indeed, all of these innovations were adopted with initial enthusiasm, but enjoyed relatively short-lived bursts of popularity. After just a few years of modish appeal, the Garibaldi blouse was soon considered somewhat passé. In 1861, it was derided for its ‘loose, untidy appearance’ in the very publication that had, just the previous year, lauded it as a fashion item that was ‘so much in favour’ with its readers.

Alongside this, I examine these fashions as emblems of female liberation. The Garibaldi blouse, for example, was described by one turn-of-the-century journalist as a ‘forerunner of our modern blouse’, notable for its spacious, unstructured design that afforded its wearer far more freedom of motion than the characteristic tailored bodices of the period. Visually, too, these garments presented a different model of fashionable femininity, which I will examine through fashion-plates from periodicals including The Ladies’ Treasury, The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine, and Le Follet, also considering the influence of fashionable French paintings including James Tissot’s Portrait of Miss L. L. (1864) and August Toulmouche’s enigmatic The Love Letter (1863).

Biography
Kara Tennant currently teaches Fashion Theory and Contextual Studies at the University of South Wales. Her research focuses around mid-Victorian fashionable femininity. She is particularly interested in the Victorian dressmaker, the fashionable home, the ladies’ periodical and the fashion-plate, alongside the ‘translation’ of the Victorian period for modern audiences.
This paper argues that Israel Zangwill’s *Children of the Ghetto* problematizes the newspaper’s role in developing nineteenth-century Anglo-Jewish identity. Acknowledging the centrality of newspapers to the Jewish community, Zangwill dramatizes the limitations of newspaper form and function to the cultivation of a broader affective attachment. The newspaper’s regularity dulls its editor’s sense of the passage of time, so that its routinized labour makes it seem as if he is not fully conscious. In contrast, novelistic realism enables Zangwill to convey the complex feelings that the Jewish ghetto elicits in his main character, Esther Ansell, both when she resides there and later returns. The newspaper looks like a form conducive to affective connections only when it is repurposed by readers and made to work more like a novel. Whereas George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* concludes with Daniel’s yearning towards Palestine and an independent nation for his people, *Children of the Ghetto* valorises the Jewish ghetto as a place of nostalgic attachment, a setting that fosters affective attachment based not in anonymous nationalist imaginings but in lived and material communal proximity. Late-nineteenth century Jewish newspapers amplify the problems of representing a coherent Anglo-Jewish population and integrating it into a larger national public. Where *Daniel Deronda* mostly evacuates the importance of the newspaper to the Anglo-Jewish community, Israel Zangwill re-locates it to the core of the Jewish question in *Children of the Ghetto*. This will also argue that *Children of the Ghetto* responds to patterns of community developed in *Middlemarch*, foregrounding a subplot in Eliot’s novel: Will Ladislaw’s work as a newspaper editor. Ladislaw’s editing of *The Pioneer* is reworked in Raphael Leon’s work for *The Flag of Judah*, as both characters seek to allow for communal reforms but run into obstacles posed by the structural limitations of the newspaper.

**Biography**

I am an assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong and earned my Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. My book project, *In Black and White: News, Fiction, and Fraud in the Victorian Novel*, analyses the representations and mediations of newspapers in the Victorian novel and their approaches to community.
‘Race, Affect, and “the bonds of brotherhood”: Emotion as a Mechanism of Racial National Identity in Wilkie Collins’ Armadale’
Alisha Walters

Wilkie Collins’ novel Armadale was composed and published in the immediate wake of the controversial and socially divisive Morant Bay uprising in Jamaica of 1865, a lightning-rod incident between the disenfranchised black population and the white planter class that pushed discussions of race—and the so-called ‘racial hybrid”—to the front of national consciousness. The uprising and its violent suppression provoked a crisis of national feeling about empire and race, and discussions often focussed on the mixed-race Jamaican, George Gordon, deemed an instigator of the riot by the conservative press. My paper contends that Armadale, which is also set in the context of Caribbean trauma and written in the direct wake of the Jamaican revolt, uses figures of mixed race to stage antithetical views about racial identity that were dividing the nation in the wake of the uprising: white racial purity and racial inclusion. In particular, Collins’ text, with its white and racially mixed characters tied to West Indian empire, shows the limits of constructing an imperial nation exclusively along ideals of white racial inheritance. Instead, Armadale posits a nation founded upon “the bond of brotherhood” between the races. What enables this idea is the text’s insistence upon affect, or feeling, as a superior and sustainable model of creating a diverse nation, instead of racial inheritance models. The novel suggests that in the imperial context, emotion alone has the power to radically and positively transform the diverse peoples and spaces of the colony and the metropole.

Armadale contains descriptions of generational theft and murder linked to the planation economies of the Caribbean, and it suggests that the only way to break the cycle of intergenerational imperial violence is cross-racial affection. This national model is exemplified in the pairing of two men who are distant kin, one white, one mixed-race, and both named Allan Armadale. Through them, Collins shows mental and physical sympathy between the white subject and the racial hybrid. I argue that affect, or the “bond of … love,” becomes the only sustainable way of transcending the colonial trauma that has hitherto formed the ties between Britain and its subjects. My argument complicates understandings of how Victorian racial identities were constructed, and I discuss the discourse of emotion as an under examined mechanism of racial nation building in the period. My paper, taken from my current book-length project on race and affect in the Victorian era, contributes to scholarship on racial identity, emotion, and national identities.

Biography
Alisha Walters is an Assistant Professor of Victorian literature at Penn State, Abington College. Her work examines representations of race and racial mixture in the nineteenth century, and she is concerned with the ideological anxieties that underpin popular and scientific conceptions of race in the Victorian period. She has published on race and emotion, and her in-progress book manuscript focuses on the tensions between empiric and affective ideas of race, particularly as they are focalized through representations of people of colour in Victorian fiction.
“‘Narratives of battle must nowadays be served up red hot’: special correspondents and the Franco-Prussian War’

Catherine Waters

Ever since Russell’s dispatches from the Crimea served to diminish the distance between the home front and remote battlefields in the 1850s, the British reading public had demanded reports from ‘our special correspondent at the seat of the war’. While the American Civil War had brought about significant stylistic changes and placed a new premium upon speed in American newspapers, it was the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 that marked a watershed in the development of war reporting in Britain. All of the major British newspapers sent specials to cover the conflict. It was the first European conflict to be reported extensively by telegraph, but it was also distinguished by reversion to earlier forms of transportation and communication technology that were used to transmit the news during the siege of Paris. It sharpened the rivalry between correspondents at the same time as cultivating their camaraderie and their perception of themselves as members of a profession. While it afforded some specials the opportunity to make their name, it also brought into critical focus the fraught and potentially dangerous nature of their role as they became victims of the spy mania that arose in France, as well as embroiled in charges of fake news. Their reports were praised for their immediacy and authenticity, and yet at the same time derided for their sensationalism, stylistic excesses and blurring of the boundary between fiction and fact. In short, the Franco-Prussian War and the controversy that surrounded its reportage enable us to see special correspondence as a significant part of the changing cultural formations of the popular newspaper press in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Biography

Catherine Waters is Professor of Victorian Literature and Print Culture at the University of Kent. She is the author of *Dickens and the Politics of the Family* (Cambridge 1997) and *Commodity Culture in Dickens’s Household Words: The Social Life of Goods* (Ashgate 2008). The latter monograph was awarded the 2009 Robert and Vineta Colby Prize by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals. She has been working on an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project investigating the writing of the Victorian special correspondent. An online exhibition of work from the project (co-curated with Ruth Brimacombe) is available at [https://research.kent.ac.uk/victorianspecials/#](https://research.kent.ac.uk/victorianspecials/#) and her monograph, *Special Correspondence and the Newspaper Press in Victorian Print Culture, 1850-1886*, is forthcoming in the series, Palgrave Studies in the History of the Media.
‘Class War, Conflict and Resolution: Morris versus Wells’
Gary Wihl

Class conflict in Victorian Britain reached a peak in the 1890’s. The Labour Movement found political expression in the formation of the Socialist League. Through the writings of Engels, Morris, and Bax, Marx’s message of class revolution and the exploitation of labour circulated widely in periodicals and new works of political theory. In fiction, the clearest expression of class conflict is found in Morris’s romantic utopia, *News from Nowhere* (1889), specifically the historical chapter entitled “How the Change Came,” a detailed projection of the stages of revolution and counter-revolution, ultimately resolving in a Communist Utopia. Morris’s depiction of class warfare has been the subject of theoretical debate about the relationship of Marxism to Utopianism and to the emergence of a new popular genre of fiction, science fiction, ever since, particularly in the works of literary and cultural historians like Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson.

Morris’s contemporary in the 1890’s, H. G. Wells, took exception to Morris’s picture of class warfare. *The Time Machine* (1895) may be read as a response to Morris’s projection of revolutionary class warfare (this connection has been made by Patrick Parrinder in an essay in *Science Fiction Studies*). In the conflict between the Eloi and the Morlocks, allegorical figures of upper and lower class characteristics, Wells projects conflict, but lack of progress. In fact, he projects perpetual class conflict, into the very distant future, as a process of degeneration, caused by the extreme separation of leisure and beauty from labour and industry, though in this case the exploitation is reversed with the Morlocks living off the herd-like existence of the Eloi.

In the contrast between Morris and Wells, class conflict and class war are popularized through two influential works of fiction. Their conflicting views represent uncertainty about the continued stability of gross class inequality—an issue that resonates up to the present day. The difference between past and present is that for Victorian writers in the 1890’s, class conflict could be imagined as overt, violent, predatory, whereas today we disguise or disarm conflict through the workings of the mass consumer market—as the next generation of Socialist thinkers foresaw.

**Biography**
Gary Wihl is Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis. He is the author of books on Ruskin and literary theory. His current work focuses on politics and literature in the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe, George Eliot, Walt Whitman, William Morris and D. M. Thomas.
“‘Silly Novels and Silly Novelists”: George Eliot’s Negotiation with the Sensation Fiction’
Di Yang

This paper examines how George Eliot negotiated with popular sensation fiction in her time. George Eliot’s literary career concurred with the rise of the contemporary popular sensation fiction, thus forming an ongoing rivalry relationship throughout her publishing career. Even before she had started her professional novel writing, she wrote the harsh review ‘Silly Novels and Silly Novelists’ to rebuke the female novelists who wrote pretentious popular novels. After she began her career as a professional novelist in 1857, sensation fiction grew to be increasingly popular in the book market and came to be a formidable rival for Eliot’s didactic moralist novels, which led Eliot to complain about readers’ obsession with Lady Audley’s Secret. Despite Eliot’s dislike of her contemporary sensation fiction, she came to grips to catering for her readers’ hunger for sensation via reconciling elements of sensation fiction with her serious realist novels. A close reading of her novels will reveal the fact that she is employing the signature features of sensation fiction in terms of characterization, plot, rhetoric devices and theme. Both Eliot and sensation novelists are concerned with issues like ‘the fallen women’, ‘the fatal women’, adultery, bigamy, divorce, violence and madness. They also employ similar intricate parallel subplots full of fraud, forgery, crimes, blackmail, threats, mysterious identities, surveillance and spying to achieve the sensational effects. This paper sets out to pinpoint how Eliot appropriates fictional elements from her contemporary sensation fiction school and embeds them in her own fiction. Specifically, I will start with a brief summary of sensation fiction’s major characteristics, trace why Eliot is discontent with sensation fiction, then move on to analysing how Eliot borrows from sensation fiction in spite of her reluctance, finally conclude with my own thoughts on Eliot’s two-decade long rivalry and reconciliation with sensation fiction in times of rising literacy and expanding middle-class patronage in the book market.

Biography
Di Yang is a third-year doctoral research student in School of English, University of Sussex. I am currently working on how George Eliot participated in shaping Victorian ideology through her literary works, mainly focusing on her interaction and negotiation with her contemporary social critics Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold in terms of religion, social and art criticism, as well as philosophy.