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**‘Mind, Matter(s), Spirit: Forms of Knowledge in
Victorian Popular Fiction and Culture’**

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Abstracts and Biographies

‘It’s Murder at the Ball: Scripting and Illustrating a Graphic Novel Adaptation of a “Lost” Russian-Empire Detective Novel (Semyon Panov’s *Three Courts*, 1876)’

Carol Adlam

This paper presents and discusses an ongoing project of adaptation and cultural translation. The source-text is a Russian-language novella: *Tri suda: Ubiistvo vo vremia bala* [*Three Courts, or Murder During the Ball*] (1876). Its graphic novel adaptation is the cornerstone of a Knowledge Exchange and Impact project called ‘Lost Detectives: Adapting Old Texts for New Media’, led by Dr Claire Whitehead (University of St Andrews). As co-translator, script-writer, and illustrator of the graphic novel work in progress, I propose a discussion of the challenges of creating a visual adaptation of a text that is non-canonical, and doubly estranged from a present-day audience by being both largely unknown to Russian speakers, and inaccessible to an English-language audience.

The paper focuses on strategies of adaptation to inform the creation of a visually consistent textual world as well as inviting reflection on the constructed nature of that world. I will explore decisions I have made as script-writer to retain the quasi-serialised structure and narrative order of the source text, while compressing much of its repetitive and dilatory quality. I use macaronic language (via the character of the narrator - a technocratic court functionary, and the detective - a man of action) as a means of allowing the reader to experience both ‘proximate’ familiarity and temporal/cultural distance. As illustrator I have made analogous decisions, drawing on contemporaneous visual material (photographs, architects’ plans, lithographs) while using anachronistic and/or imagined paratextual elements (e.g. censors’ stamps, records, and other marginalia) to comment on that world.

My paper argues that the graphic novel medium is a transformative medium, enabling new forms of knowledge about the literary and socio-political contexts of the source text, as well as creating a new artefact through which can be examined issues of adaptation, appropriation, and cross-cultural neo-Victorianism.

Biography

Carol Adlam an author-illustrator, and Senior Lecturer in Illustration at Nottingham Trent University. She specialises in graphic novels and children’s books, working closely with museums and archives. She is category winner of the 2018 World Illustration Awards for Research and Knowledge Communication. Further details at www.caroladlam.co.uk.

**“Mr. Lewis’s book is safe to be popular”: Magical Masculine Knowledge and *Conjurer Dick* (1885)’
Beatrice Ashton-Lelliott**

Conjurer Dick, the 1885 novel by Angelo Lewis, topped several ‘books for Christmas presents’ lists the year it was published. *The Academy* periodical notes that its author was the recent winner of ‘the £100 Prize recently offered by the “Youth’s Companion,” Boston, for the Best Story for Boys’, and the *Western Daily Mercury* stated that the novel ‘will be read with the utmost delight by boys’ (1885, p. 6). Angelo Lewis was best known by the public under another name, however: Professor Hoffmann. As Hoffmann, Lewis was an internationally recognised magician and responsible for a variety of conjuring manuals such as *Modern Magic* (1876) and *More Magic* (1890). The novel, one of the only examples of fiction about magic written by a practising magician, does not, as the *Saturday Review* noted in 1885, ‘make out that the life of a professional showman is by any means an easy or happy one’ (1885, p. 816), and parents of the assumed male readership of the novel would most likely have been glad of this fact. This paper would explore the highly gendered and societally complex attitudes towards performance magic and knowledge of conjuring tricks during the nineteenth century, particularly through the prism of *Conjurer Dick* and its enigmatic author. By exploring the reception of *Conjurer Dick* in the periodicals and press of the Victorian period, I hope to establish to what extent Hoffmann’s novel accentuated or refuted negative stereotypes of magicians during this time, and in particular how attitudes towards magical knowledge in youths, particularly boys, differed in comparison to that of adults in popular culture.

Biography

Beatrice Ashton-Lelliott is a PhD researcher and tutor at the University of Portsmouth studying the autobiographies of nineteenth-century magicians and representations of fictional conjuring in Victorian literature. She is currently in her second year of research, and her other research interests include occulture, magical realism, Romanticism and fantasy fiction.

‘Matters of the Home: The Domestic Economy of Ellen Wood’s *The Shadow of Ashlydyat*’

Anne-Marie Beller

“She resorts to no garnishes for her plain English fare, but serves up murders and mutton, suicide and rice-pudding, stolen cheques and thick bread and butter”.

Despite the substantial body of scholarship on sensation fiction over the last twenty years, the work of Mrs Henry Wood has received significantly less critical attention than that of her contemporaries Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. This may be due in part to a persistent academic discomfort with the characteristics that define Wood’s novels: melodrama, sentimentality, and what one Victorian reviewer called her “confident Philistinism”. Unlike Braddon and Collins, there is little scope to uncover the metafictional and aesthetic qualities privileged by 20th and 21st century literary criticism – what Jane Tompkins termed the “Modernist demand” for “psychological complexity, moral ambiguity, epistemological sophistication, stylistic density”. Yet recent research on popular genres such as Melodrama has given us a critical vocabulary with which to talk about the narrative strategies of such fiction. In this paper, I discuss Wood’s 1863 novel, *The Shadow of Ashlydyat*, and argue that the very qualities which devalue Wood’s fiction for modern literary critics are those that appealed most to her female readers and secured her immense popularity. She speaks to the representative anxieties and concerns of her middle-class female readers: family conflict, economic instability, social reputation. This paper will examine Wood’s conflation of the private and public spheres, through her determined domestication of the public world of work and finance.

Biography

Anne-Marie Beller is Senior Lecturer in Victorian Literature at Loughborough University. She has published widely on sensation fiction and Victorian women’s writing. Anne-Marie is currently completing 2 books – one on Mary Elizabeth Braddon, the other a critical edition of Geraldine Jewsbury’s Athenaeum reviews. She has recently finished articles on Victorian translation and female psychopathy.

‘Erasing the Trauma in *Wuthering Heights*: Catherine Earnshaw’s Ghostly Illness Onscreen’

Marta Bernabeu

Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) undoubtedly dwells on issues of the mind and the body through its main characters, Catherine and Heathcliff, whose experience is shaped by the trauma of their separation and the subsequent emotional and physical pain stemming from it. As Gorsky puts it, “in *Wuthering Heights*, when Catherine attempts to accede to her socially-approved role, she denies her nature and faces personal disintegration; when she violates the rules, she becomes sick” (173). Catherine’s illness in *Wuthering Heights* is explicitly and symbolically mentioned in Brontë’s novel, yet is often overlooked by readers, and underestimated as a consequence of her troublesome relationship with Heathcliff. This is specially so in onscreen representations of the story, which tend to underrepresent the weight of Catherine’s emotional distress and consequent mental and physical illness. In fact, they usually choose to diminish the significance of Catherine’s ghost, which has been argued to be the remnants of the trauma both her and Heathcliff suffered from their separation (González Díaz, 22-26). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to show the extent to which some adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* deal with the representation of these issues and link this depiction to the notions of resistance against the pre-established social order that has induced Catherine’s sickness. To that purpose, the onscreen adaptations from 1939, 1992, 2009 and 2011 will be analysed in terms of their depiction of Catherine’s illness and the inclusion and treatment of Catherine’s ghost, as well as the affective implications of the narrative choices involved in these matters.

Biography

Marta Bernabeu is a second-year PhD student from the University of Salamanca (Spain), currently undertaking research activities at the University of Oxford as part of an Erasmus exchange programme. Her research explores the figure of the outsider in the Brontëan tradition and its onscreen representations from an affect approach.

‘Of Mahatmas and *Chelas*: Theosophical Transport, Technology, and the Miraculous in Marsh and Anstey’
Shuhita Bhattacharjee

I examine the way in which the Theosophical idea of spiritual transport as an altered state of mind is portrayed in relation to the physical notion of transportation in Marsh’s *The Mahatma’s Pupil* and Anstey’s *A Fallen Idol*. In these novels we encounter the English disciple of the Tibetan Theosophical mahatma who tries to recreate Theosophical magic through tricks of his own for an enraptured London audience—Mr. Pye who performs in Mr. Redford’s frontyard or Nebelson in Mrs. Staniland’s crowded parlour. In both novels, Theosophy with its mystical altered states is opposed to colonial idolatry as the more authentic form of spirituality and is represented as a form of nineteenth-century occult that, in keeping with contemporary modernity, is not “fine-boned” but technological, scientific, and “fleshly” (Tatiana Kontou, Sarah Willburn, Joy Dixon).

I show how, at a time when the West was at the helm of the most elaborate systems of transport/communication (railways/telegraph) that collapsed time and shrunk space (Schivelbusch, [Carlos López Galviz](#), Günter Dinhl), the Theosophical transport of spiritual messages through electromagnetic forces (explained by the use of the Theosophical concept of ‘precipitation’ in *The Goddess: A Demon*) offers a parallel to the Western technological templates for transport while also challenging visibly the scientific laws that these Western modes claimed as their exclusive preserve.

Most significantly, as I show, the figures of the Mahatma and his English *chela*/disciple are imbricated in the debates surrounding ‘miracles’ in the polemical nineteenth-century ‘crisis-of-faith’ narrative. The English *chela*, flamboyant in his display of miraculous transport, is revealed to be a fake capable of only the most inept physical transports (such as the unintended crashing of pots and pans in the wrong backyard or the materialization of the wrong letter from the mahatma)—something for which he is ultimately reprimanded implicitly or otherwise by the Eastern mahatma who then goes on to perform actual miraculous transports of letters and spiritual moods, dismantling the rationalistic argument against miracles by offering the inexplicably transported goods as evidence. To this, the texts attach a commentary on the authenticity of mind-altering occult spiritualities such as Theosophy by critiquing its nineteenth-century proliferation as entertainment.

Biography

Shuhita Bhattacharjee is an Assistant Professor of Liberal Arts (English) at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (India). Having completed her PhD from the University of Iowa, she is currently working on a Routledge USA monograph that examines the nineteenth-century literary-cultural representation of colonial idols, and on an Orient Blackswan book about *Postsecular Theory*. She has published in *English Literature in Transition*, and has current and forthcoming publications on the Victorian Gothic and on diaspora literature with Palgrave Macmillan, Rowman and Littlefield, and Edinburgh University Press.

‘The Manifestation of Religious Hypocrisy in Victorian Novels’

Rachel Bodnariuc

This paper explores the connection between Calvinism and religious hypocrisy in Victorian novels. In it, I suggest that the religious hypocrite is a type who shows up in several Victorian novels and that he or she is usually portrayed as subscribing to the tenets of Calvinism. At times, he appears in the *bildungsroman*—such is the case with Mr. Brocklehurst in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Other times, she appears in the mystery novel—Miss Drusilla Clack in Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* being a case in point. Sometimes, the hypocrite is an object of ridicule; other times, he or she is a menace to society. I argue that Victorian novelists—including Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, George MacDonald, Charles Dickens, and Wilkie Collins—may, in fact, see a causal relationship between religious hypocrisy and Calvinism and express this relationship in their works. I also argue that conceptions of providence are fundamental to the Victorian understanding of Calvinism. It is in this regard that Calvinism as a theological sect may be problematic for Victorian novelists—in that the doctrine of providence lends itself well to the religious hypocrite. Furthermore, the preoccupation Victorian novelists had with Calvinism and the doctrine of providence speaks to a certain anxiety and uncertainty that they, and perhaps Victorians in general, may have felt about the function and purpose of religion for society and the individual. In this paper, I illustrate that this anxiety was not exclusive to one religious denomination, but rather pervasive.

Biography

Rachel Bodnariuc is currently enrolled in the Master of Arts Program in English Studies at Simon Fraser University. She specializes in the Victorian period and is deeply interested in conceptions and perceptions of the divine—as well as interpretations regarding the nature and value of religious language.

‘Unspeakable Matters: Child Sexual Abuse and Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction’ Ailise Bulfin

Despite widespread romantic ideas of childhood as an ideal, innocent state, the material realities of child neglect, exploitation, physical and sexual abuse were well known in the nineteenth century. The modern conception of child sexual abuse (CSA) can be traced to a set of intersecting nineteenth-century legal and medical theories concerning the notion of sexual harm to children (especially as developed in the new science of sexology), and also to contemporary sensational journalism. Though CSA could be discussed directly in these factual discourses, it tended to be referred to euphemistically, distanced from the middle-class family and framed as a lower-class issue of public morality; and the cultural arena provided even less scope for engaging with the issue. Given that sexuality could not be openly represented in nineteenth-century literature, there was little potential for direct representation of non-normative, abusive sexuality. However, it is possible that the unspeakable issue of CSA may have been indirectly broached in the popular genre of gothic fiction, long-theorised as a vehicle for addressing taboo topics in metaphorical form.

This paper will examine the potential indirect representation of CSA in the popular late-Victorian gothic tradition, arguing that the prevalent gothic trope of the threatened, murdered and even ritually-sacrificed child may be read as an oblique way of engaging with the issue. It will explore the depiction of threatened children in a range of popular gothic tales from Bram Stoker’s well-known *Dracula* (1897), in which the highly sexualised female vampires consume a child victim contained within the Count’s ‘dreadful bag’, to other less well-known, comparable narratives, such as Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Uncle Jeremy’s Household* (1887). In each case, the analysis will move beyond the figure of the child to examine the figure of the abuser, the dynamics of their relationship, the act of abuse and the wider circumstances, to ascertain firstly if the relationship or act may be read as sexually charged and secondly whether the abuser is othered in any way. Given the gothic’s predilection for monstrous outsiders, it seems likely that it was replicating the widespread social disavowal of intrafamilial CSA by pushing the threat onto external and even racially-other sources.

Biography

Dr Ailise Bulfin researches nineteenth-century and contemporary culture, focusing on representations of catastrophe, war and trauma. She has published a number of critical essays on gothic fiction, xenophobia, invasion scares, natural catastrophe and climate change, and the recent monograph *Gothic Invasions: Imperialism, War and Fin-de-Siècle Popular Fiction* (2018). She currently lectures in Victorian and Modern Literature in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. And she recently completed a medical humanities project at the School of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin, focusing on representations of child sexual abuse in nineteenth-century and contemporary culture.

**“The Sound Mind in the Sound Body”: Temperance, Vegetarianism and Alternative Remedies – the Pursuit of Physical and Moral Purity in Temperance Publishing’
Deborah Canavan**

The temperance publishers William Horsell (1807-1863) and Job Caudwell (1820-1908) were committed teetotallers, strong advocates of vegetarianism, and staunch campaigners for complementary health remedies, such as homeopathy and hydropathy. In partnership they published the *Temperance Star* (1857-1876) and the *Temperance Spectator* (1859 –1867), which promoted publications supporting abstinence from ‘flesh food’ and enticed readers to explore the benefits of water cures and natural remedies. William Horsell was the first secretary of the Vegetarian Society, founded in 1847 at the Hydropathic Institute he ran in Ramsgate, Kent.

Following Horsell’s death in 1863, Caudwell went on to publish the *Journal of Health* as well as *Vegetarian Cookery for the Million* (1864). The publishing office at 335, Strand, doubled up during lunchtimes as a Homeopathic Institute ‘the first in Great Britain’ from where he also dispensed his own brand of homeopathic Cocoa.

This paper explores the strong associations between temperance and vegetarianism as well as the ‘alternative’ health remedies that developed during the nineteenth century. It considers the common language used and the moral arguments made which, at times, unified elements of these movements. It also aims to shed light on what led temperance vegetarians to believe that the eradication of ‘flesh food’ from their diet would ‘prevent drunkenness, war, capital punishment, slavery, sporting, and the many other cruelties originating in this leading error of diet’.

Biography

Deborah Canavan is a third year PhD Student at the University of Greenwich, London, in receipt of a Vice-Chancellor’s scholarship. Deborah’s research question focuses on the significance of gender in the production and representations of two temperance magazines, the *British Workman* (1855-1921) and the *British Workwoman* (1863-1913?).

‘Mind, Matter, Spirit: The Supernatural as a Form of Knowledge in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, *The Lady of the Shroud*, and *The Lair of the White Worm*’
Alexandra Cheira

In *Dracula*, *The Lady of the Shroud*, and *The Lair of the White Worm*, Bram Stoker used the ageless vampire, the white snake who metamorphosed into a beautiful yet sinister woman, and a wrongly assumed undead woman as the embodiment of the supernatural as a form of knowledge of the mind, body (matter) and spirit of both supernatural being and his/her victims who become their persecutors when they realise what they are dealing with. The three novels display a skilled blend of well-researched historical elements with legend and folklore. Hence, Stoker anchored the stories in a historical context in order to lend credence to the knowledge of mind and matter. At the same time, he remarkably focused on the understanding of the spirit of the supernatural beings by providing early clues as to their difference from ordinary mortals, which learned men such as *Dracula*’s Professor Van Helsing or *The Lair of the White Worm*’s Sir Nathaniel were able to decipher as the mark of the inhuman being who hid behind a human body. In this paper, I argue, the contrast between the realistic setting and the historical context which provide a detailed examination of the current understanding of mind and matter, and the investigation into the depths of the unknown spirit vis-à-vis the creation of supernatural beings makes these novels interrogate the knowledge of the human condition itself, as well as its limits and limitations.

Alexandra Cheira is a researcher at ULICES and a PhD candidate at the University of Lisbon. Her current areas of research include contemporary women’s writing, women’s studies and, particularly, gender issues and wonder tales in A. S. Byatt’s fiction. She has published articles and book chapters on A. S. Byatt’s fiction, *The One Thousand and One Nights*, the *conteuses*, Victorian women writers and contemporary gendered sexual politics.

‘The Female Sailor - A Trans-Generic Wayfarer’ Mollie Clarke

My research into newspaper articles published throughout the 1840s, reveals that an abundance of young sailors were discovered to have been women, so much so that an article from *The Examiner* (1843) recalled that ‘every newspaper [had] its paragraph announcing the discovery of a female sailor’. For these women and others like them, passing as a sailor provided them with freedom and opportunities that weren’t readily available during this period.

As an entertaining trans-atlantic *fictional* character however, depictions of the female sailor reveal that the appeal of travelling at sea extends beyond escapism or employment opportunities. Looking specifically at Thomas Peckett Prest’s character Rosina in his serial novel *Gallant Tom* (1841), alongside the newspaper articles which document the discovery of supposedly ‘real’ female sailors, this paper will explore how writers of newspaper and popular fiction would utilise tropes from other genres within their work to entice and captivate audiences.

The existence of the female sailor extends further Matthew Rubery’s claims that Victorian fiction was influenced by nineteenth-century journalism, and Mary Shannon’s observation that literature and the theatre were closely intertwined, to highlight that subsequent relationships between genres and forms were abundant at this time, and extended beyond newspapers and performance to include; erotica, autobiography, illustration, photography and other visual modes. What’s more, these relationships were reciprocal, for as I will demonstrate, newspaper reports of the 1840s were likely influenced by the scandals that featured within popular fiction; and illustrations that accompanied serial fiction, evidently appropriated theatrical tropes within them.

I will subsequently argue that the Victorian female sailor transcends both gender and genre alike, for whilst the character herself portrays the mutable nature of gender at sea, the literature about her also reveals the mutable nature of genre.

Biography

Mollie Clarke is a TECHNE PhD candidate at Roehampton University. Her thesis entitled, ‘Female Cross Dressing, Genre, and Popular Literary Forms from 1840 to 1900’, considers the extent to which ‘performativity’, evidenced by real life FTM cross-dressers, was also underpinned by a generic ‘performativity’: a porosity of boundaries both within and around Victorian popular forms.

“Voice on Voice, Power on Power”: Trance Poets and the Paradox of Female Authorship in American Spiritualist Literature’
Clara Contreras Ameduri

In 1860, the celebrated medium and advocate of women’s rights Lizzie Doten made the following declaration in the spiritualist periodical *Banner of Light*: “Woman does not need to cultivate her intellect in order to perceive spiritual truths. Let her live, only, true to her Divine nature and her spiritual perceptions” (qtd. in Braude 85). Such a statement summarizes the main reason behind the essential function of female leadership in American Spiritualism. Due to the associations between the passive and sensitive feminine ideal and women’s supposedly innate moral and spiritual superiority, spiritualist culture granted its female followers a central role in the emerging movement while remaining compliant with the values of the period. Spiritualist women found a considerable amount of advantages in this ambivalent source of power. Occupations such as mediumship and trance speaking offered them the opportunity to take active participation in the male-dominated spheres of religion and politics. “Trance poets” Lizzie Doten and Acsha W. Sprague constituted valuable examples of prolific women writers who claimed to employ their mediumship to invoke the creative energies of deceased authors through automatic writing.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the paradoxical function of spiritualist culture as an empowering tool for women writers and mediums in nineteenth-century American culture. In order to do so, it is necessary to consider the reasons behind the success of “ghostwritten” poems dictated by the spirits of male predecessors. Taking into account the concept of the anxiety of authorship proposed by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, it is plausible to observe how Doten’s *Poems from the Inner Life* (1863) and Sprague’s *The Poet and Other Poems* (1865) present a sharp contrast between the remarkable influence exerted by these women and the need to validate their creative process by external agents.

Biography

Clara Contreras is a third-year doctoral student in British and American literature working under the supervision of Dr. Miriam Borham and Dr. Ana María Manzanás at the University of Salamanca. Her research areas include supernatural fiction, women writers and the influence of Spiritualism on Victorian and Neo-Victorian literature and culture, with particular interest in the Late Victorian period. Before enrolling in a PhD programme she completed a Bachelor’s degree in English Studies at the University of Seville. She also holds a Master’s degree in Advanced English Studies by the University of Salamanca. She is currently examining on the role of Victorian Spiritualism in the reception of Otherness across time and space, with special emphasis on transatlantic and intercultural connections. She can be contacted at clara.contreras@usal.es.

‘Victorian Popular Fiction and Its (Im)moral Censors: The Disparagement of Book Reviewers’

Mariaconcetta Costantini

This paper aims to explore the questionable role played by book reviewers in the mid- to late-Victorian context. As is well known, the rapid growth of popular literature raised aesthetic and ethical questions concerning the supposed impurity of cross-generic texts and the morality of their authors, who were accused of sacrificing their talents to gratify a tasteless mass readership. The heated controversy around the sensation novel in the 1860s well exemplifies this phenomenon. While posing problems of literary contamination, however, this vast non-fictional production also triggered irritated responses from some novelists, who on their turn questioned the professionalism of reviewers and the credibility of their poisonous libels. Women sensationists in particular were violently attacked by orthodox critics for their ‘unladylike’ meddling in the literary world. For this reason, these novelists were more eager than their male counterparts to charge their censors with obtuseness and dishonesty.

This process of counter-attack took various forms. In some cases, popular novelists wrote non-fictional pieces, offering alternative perspectives of the genres they practised or showing the limits of their detractors. This production was meant to convey a different metaliterary truth that could counterbalance what were depicted as fake critiques penned by professional swindlers. Well-known cases of defence are the essays authored or commissioned by women novelists like Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Ellen Wood, who became editors of influential periodicals. In the 1860s, for instance, Braddon launched a campaign in *Belgravia* to defend fiction (and her own works) from critical attacks. Journalists like George Augustus Sala and J. Campbell Smith contributed essays that disparaged the judgmental pose, the favouritism and malice of conformist reviewers.

Besides considering these non-fictional works, my paper will focus on some fictional parodies of cruel reviewers. The bias attached to these figures in novels by Braddon and Wood not only poses pressing literary questions; it also raises more general issues about the sincerity and professionalism of a group of cultural producers who, like the novelists themselves, were subject to the pressures of a highly competitive marketplace.

Biography

Mariaconcetta Costantini is 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 books, has edited volumes and published numerous articles and book chapters both in Italy and abroad. Her latest publications include the volume *Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel* (2015), and a forthcoming book on Ellen Wood.

‘Literary Matters: Charlotte Brontë, Sensation Fiction, and the Victorian Literary Marketplace’

Jessica Cox

In 1847, following the publication of *Jane Eyre*, G. H. Lewes wrote to Charlotte Brontë advising her to ‘beware melodrama’ [sic] and ‘adhere to the real’.¹ In her response, Brontë recounted her attempts to secure a publisher for her first novel, *The Professor*, which was repeatedly rejected as ‘deficient in “startling incident” and “thrilling excitement”’. This exchange² reveals much about *Jane Eyre*’s position in the Victorian literary marketplace, and its crucial influence on a then embryonic genre, which, within a few years, would come to dominate the circulating libraries: the sensation novel.

This paper explores the tension that exists between Charlotte Brontë’s desire for critical acclaim and the demands of the literary marketplace, and which is consequently reflected in *Jane Eyre* – a novel which combines, sometimes uneasily, realism and sensationalism. It stands at the crossroads between literary ‘respectability’ and popular success – the two key directions the novel as a genre moved in over the course of the nineteenth century. In the second part of the paper, I examine *Jane Eyre*’s position as an intertext for a wide range of sensation novels, from well known works such as Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1860) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862), to lesser known or forgotten texts including Caroline Clive’s *Paul Ferroll* (1855) and Eliza Meteyard’s *Mainstone’s Housekeeper* (1860).

Biography

Jessica Cox is a Senior Lecturer in English at Brunel University London. She has research interests in Victorian sensation fiction, the Brontës, cultural representations of breastfeeding, and neo-Victorianism, and has published widely in these areas. Her book, *Neo-Victorianism and Sensation Fiction*, will be published by Palgrave later this year.

¹ Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes, 6th November 1847, in Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (New York: D. Appleton, 1858), pp. 34-35.

² Only Brontë’s letter survives.

‘The Death of Dracula: Weaponry in Stoker’s Writing’

Matthew Crofts

While the Victorian period saw near-constant wars across the British Empire, many readers would have had knowledge of exotic weaponry only from fiction. Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) gives pride of place to specific weapons, enthusiastically endorsed by certain characters. These include the Winchester repeating rifle, which the Texan Quincy Morris states he has ‘a kind of belief in [...] when there is any trouble of that sort around’. The specificity of this weapon stands apart from the numerous vague references to guns throughout the text, raising questions of how familiar knowledge of this rifle would have been to a late Victorian readership, and the cultural associations it would have brought with it. The use of two particular styles of knife is also instructive, with each signalling an interaction across geography and culture. The American Bowie knife comes with a very specific history, as well as some modern mythologizing, while the inclusion of Harker’s ‘great Kukri knife’ results from Britain’s colonial endeavours. The kukri actually appears in Stoker’s fiction consistently, being described not only in his mummy novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars* but in his short story ‘The Gypsy Prophecy’. This paper will explore not only the appropriateness of these weapons being employed in the vampire hunter’s arsenal, but also their familiarity to the reading public.

Biography

Matthew Crofts is completing his doctoral research, examining the reoccurring elements of tyranny and torture across a range of Gothic novels and historical backgrounds. These include classic Gothic subjects such as the Spanish Inquisition, through to Victorian imperialism and even modern Gothic forms and science fiction hybrids.

‘Real Fictions: Investigative Journalism and the Popular Novel, 1860-1890’

Stephen Donovan

This paper offers a critical reappraisal of the relationship between the emergent field of journalistic investigation and the novel in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Hitherto scholars have largely considered investigative journalism either as a variety of historical source material (e.g. W. T. Stead’s 1885 Maiden Tribute exposé as one of several sources of inspiration for R. L. Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [1886]), or as a topical theme or profession which conveniently lent itself to fictional treatment (e.g. Robert Barr’s *Jenny Baxter, Journalist* [1899]). By contrast, this paper will address a unique and unexamined category of textual intersection in which popular authors themselves undertook incognito undercover investigations and then incorporated their insights and experiences into a novel—a novel, moreover, whose basis in first-hand undercover testimony featured prominently in its marketing and reception. This peculiar and complex hybrid form, it will be argued, has far-reaching implications for our theoretical understanding of the development of the novel, particularly with regard to epistemology and literary style. As the case studies of James Greenwood (1832–1929) and Lewis Wingfield (1847–1891) will show, such *investigative novels* offer seeming confirmation of the thesis that Victorian investigative journalists, far from merely imitating the ways in which novelists mobilized the resources of figurative language, dramatic incident, and the imagination—Tom Wolfe’s famous call in *The New Journalism* (1973) for “journalism that would ... read like a novel”—in fact made possible a number of innovations in the form of the novel itself.

Biography

Stephen Donovan is Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, Uppsala University, Sweden. His research interests include periodicals history, Victorian and Modernist literature, and early-twentieth-century popular colonial fiction. He has published widely on Joseph Conrad, popular culture, serialization, early cinema, and imperial writing about Africa, and is currently working with Matthew Rubery on a project titled “Fictions of the Real” (Swedish Research Council, 2018-2021) examining the relationship between investigative journalism and the novel in Britain between 1840 and 1930.

‘Playing Cute: Sensation Villainy and the Aesthetics of Small Things’

Laura Eastlake

In *Our Aesthetic Categories* (2012), Sianne Ngai defines ‘cute’ as an aesthetic ‘preoccupation with small, easy to handle things [...] an aesthetic that celebrates the diminutive and the vulnerable.’³ Following Hannah Arendt and Theodore Adorno, Ngai identifies the cute as a predominantly twentieth-century phenomenon, and one which is inextricably bound up with the mass-market commodification, even eroticization and fetishization of the cute object or person. Yet, whilst cultural critics have focussed on the prevalence of the cute aesthetic as a modern and postmodern phenomenon, it is difficult to imagine of a literary character more enamoured with ‘small things’ – from tiny, sugary confections to his menagerie of pet mice – than Wilkie Collins’s Count Fosco, or a character who so perfectly conforms to the definition of the cute commodity itself as ‘appealing specifically [...] for protection and care’ than the ‘childish, helpless, babyfied little creature’ that is Lucy Audley in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862).⁴

From its earliest days the sensation novel has been read (and decried by conservative critics like Mansel and Oliphant) as appealing to popular readerships through the perversion or manipulation of gendered knowledges, whether it be Lady Audley’s performance of angelic domesticity or Fosco’s gleeful acts of consumption presented as ‘the innocent tastes of women and children.’⁵ This paper suggests, however, that both the threat and the seemingly-paradoxical popularity of the sensation villain can be usefully understood in terms of cute aesthetics, which may include but also go far beyond purely gendered performances. By positioning themselves in relation to small, soft, or sweet objects with associations of childishness as much as femininity, Fosco and Lady Audley are able to at once pursue their ultimate goals of material acquisition and economic security and to obscure the outward signs of that pursuit in a dynamic not dissimilar to the appeal of the sensation genre itself as mass-market commodity.

Biography

Dr Laura Eastlake is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Edge Hill University. She is the author of *Ancient Rome and Victorian Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and has published on the early novels of Wilkie Collins. She is Peer Reviews Editor of the *Wilkie Collins Journal*.

³ Sianne Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 3; 9.

⁴ Ngai, p.60; Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley’s Secret* (Toronto: Broadview, 2003), p. 168.

⁵ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 289.

“Your cursed French novels!”: Ouida’s Transnational French Imaginary’
Helena Esser

Ouida’s popular fiction, which combined lavish style and social satire with elements of the social problem novel, Gothic, or even desert adventure, certainly complicates matters of genre. What is more, however, her blend of sensation fiction and romance, often considered scandalous or transgressive for British standards, seemingly also challenges matters of ‘national’ culture, literary practise, and perhaps even of academic discipline. Pamela Gilbert and Jane Jordan have examined the idea that Ouida’s novels were tolerated because they were considered to be ‘French novels written in English’, and have discussed her in the context of Zola, Sand, and Balzac. I want to continue this inquiry from a different perspective and suggest that, in addition, novels such as *Chandos* (1866), *Under Two Flags* (1867), and *Moths* (1880), with their libertine dandies, demi-mondaines, and adultering Femme Galantes, successfully leveraged forms of received cultural knowledge in the form of a shared imaginary of Second Empire France. The splendour and frivolity which characterise her British and international society are reminiscent, I posit, more of Octave Feuillet’s popular French fiction than of most British sensation fiction and therefore indicative of a widely shared imaginary about Second Empire Paris which Ouida adapted for a British readership. In my paper, I want to investigate Ouida’s fiction in the context of the nameless, yet seemingly self-explanatory French yellow-backs which continually appear within her stories by considering Feuillet as a possible tangent, as well as considering the presence of ‘French’ aesthetics in her work in order to interrogate matters of taste and transnationality.

Biography

Helena Esser is a PhD student at Birkbeck College, London. Her research examines how steampunk fiction re-purposes a shared urban imaginary of Victorian London. While steampunk is her main focus, she also enjoys reading and researching Ouida whenever possible.

“Dangerous Imaginings”: Renegotiations of Reality in the Weird Fiction of Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood’

Kahn Faassen

In *The Invention of Telepathy*, Roger Luckhurst writes that the *fin de siècle* should be read “less as a passage of secularisation than as a confused and confusing series of engagements over the relative value of ‘spirit’ and ‘matter’”. In this paper, I argue that the Weird fiction written by Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood constitutes exactly such an engagement. The Old Weird should be considered as more than a reactionary impulse against reductionist Victorian materialism, and seen as a productive effort to recover, among other things, the faculty of the imagination as an alternative form of knowledge. Under the influence of a pervasive Victorian interest in mysticism as well as the nascent discipline of psychology, early Weird fiction is concerned with the exploration of atypical states of consciousness and, consequently, the reimagination of the possibility conditions for knowledge and experience. Machen and Blackwood were impacted by the writings of such prominent thinkers as Henri Bergson, William James, and Frederick W.H. Myers, who had such a “redefinition of our understanding of reality” (Owen, 138) as their intellectual project. This confluence of ideas can be found in Machen’s and Blackwood’s own interest in mysticism and involvement in hermeticist and occultist circles, such as the Order of the Golden Dawn.

It is the aim of this paper to examine the odd sense of non-contradiction felt by *fin-de-siècle* occultists between a growing awareness of the importance of the fictionalizing mind in the creation of occult reality (Owen, 184) and the supposedly verifiable realness of this reality, and how this preoccupation with the human psyche and the visionary ‘real’ seeps into the Weird through the trope of mind fevers, “poisonous” imagination, and the ecstatic rapture of the soul.

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Biography

Kahn Faassen is a PhD student working on Weird fiction at K.U. Leuven. His project focusses primarily on the construal of the sublime in the oeuvre of Arthur Machen, William Hope Hodgson, and Algernon Blackwood, and on how these works engage with changing epistemic paradigms in late 19th - early 20th century Britain leading up to the First World War.

‘A Haunting in Time and Space: Vernon Lee’s “Oke of Okehurst”’

Barbara D. Ferguson

Written under her pseudonym Vernon Lee, Violet Paget’s 1886 work “Oke of Okehurst” deploys many of the tropes familiar to readers of the Victorian ghost story – an ancestral country manor, an unhappy marriage, an evocative landscape, and an intrusive past – ticking the boxes of genre expectation, then snatching the list away when no spectre appears to us. Okehurst is haunted more by the enigmatic Mrs. Oke than by any apparition. She is a “most marvellous creature... far-fetched, poignant... uncanny,” whom the narrator struggles to capture in sufficient detail, and this paper argues that from the beginning her eeriness is linked to her atemporality as she moves through her astonishingly preserved Elizabethan home, only half-present in her voice and appearance. Just as the story’s narrative perspective shifts from present to past and back again, Mrs. Oke too resists fixity in time, becoming a figure both unsettling and untenable. Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham have noted Lee’s male narrators’ frequent susceptibility to the *genius loci* of their settings, something equally true of “Oke of Okehurst” (2006, 14); this paper borrows that invocation of a localized spirit to read Mrs. Oke akin to that *genius*, infused with an otherworldliness and seemingly transtemporal knowledge of her Okehurst home and its inhabitants. It is a knowledge distinct from, and apparently threatening to, her husband’s mundane genealogical knowing – its assertions are unwelcome. Positioning Mrs. Oke as an atemporal being also raises the repercussions of human presentism: how might it affect our reading of her as a tragic figure worthy of our sympathy, or one complicit in her own end? To what extent do the fixed perspectives of those around her doom Mrs. Oke from the start?

Biography

Barbara D. Ferguson is a PhD candidate in Victorian British literature at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Her dissertation examines the mass media presentation of nineteenth-century science and Spiritualist investigation as each sought to demarcate what constituted “legitimate” knowledge and practice. She often writes about ghosts for fun.

“Riverdale” and Victorian Popular Fiction’

Brooke Fortune

Initially airing in 2017, The CW’s “Riverdale” has become one of the most popular shows on American television, especially among teen and young adult viewers. Although (very) loosely based on the “Archie” comics, “Riverdale” is strongly evocative of serialized Victorian popular fiction from the 1830s and 1840s, such as the work of George W. M. Reynolds, William Harrison Ainsworth, Frederick Marryat, and early Dickens. The series eludes contemporary storytelling methods in favour of an episodic, sensationalized structure more concerned with suspense and thrills than character development or plot consistency. “Riverdale” features narratives reminiscent of the Victorian school tale, the picaresque, and crime fiction. And while not overtly Neo-Victorian, the show clearly references the Victorian Gothic through the storyline of Cheryl Blossom, a character oppressed by her family at Thornhill Mansion, which she eventually burns to the ground in an explicit invocation of *Jane Eyre*.

The success of “Riverdale” suggests not only that contemporary viewers remain interested in many popular Victorian stories and tropes, but also a continued hunger for the type of media consumption so worrisome to gatekeepers of Victorian “high” culture. In an era that boasts a high number of prestige television shows, the enormous popularity of “Riverdale,” often deemed “trash” or a “guilty pleasure,” is an extremely potent text for Victorianists in examining how debates surrounding narrative, art, culture, and their intersections with issues of class, cultural literacy, and youth education have remained fairly static since the nineteenth century. This paper will outline the remarkable similarities between “Riverdale” and early Victorian popular fiction before turning to analysis of how the show engages these questions concerning art, entertainment, and mass culture that surround and shape popular sources, in both the Victorian and contemporary contexts.

Biography

Brooke Fortune is a PhD candidate at the University of Florida. Her dissertation focuses on narratives of masculinity and adolescence in popular Victorian texts such as *Jack Sheppard* and *Under Two Flags*. She has published work on *Jack Sheppard* in *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*.

‘Penny Blood or Domestic Romance? Engagements with Genre in 1840s Working-Class Fiction’

Celine Frohn

Roughly fifty years after Louis James’s lamentation that working-class literature from the 1830s and 1840s was underexplored in literary studies, the last few years have seen an increased interest in penny bloods. These cheap serialized fictions were published in periodicals that cost a penny or less, and saw a peak in popularity in the 1840s. Few studies on these texts critically engage with the genericity of the penny blood. What constitutes a penny blood, beyond its publication in a certain manner in a certain historical period? This paper tackles this question by applying a dual approach: studying paratextual evidence of conscious genre markers, as well as the genericity of the texts themselves. In particular, this paper aims to broaden the conception of penny bloods as merely sensationalist, repetitive fiction with plots that ‘were merely vehicles to get the reader from one scene of gore, violence and torture to the next.’ (Killeen, 2012, p. 50)

I argue that the anachronistic designation ‘penny blood’ has unwittingly narrowed the scope of research on 1840s periodical fiction on particularly violent stories, ignoring the wide range of stories all published in the same format. Significantly, London-based publisher Edward Lloyd, who published several of the most successful penny bloods like *The String of Pearls* and *Varney the Vampire*, sold them under the name of ‘romance’, or ‘domestic romance’. This paper investigates the penny blood’s engagement with the history of the romance. It will reflect on the usage of the word ‘domestic’ in this context, as well as outlining how the penny blood positions itself in regard to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century forms of romance, such as the Gothic romance and Scott’s historical romance.

Biography

Celine Frohn received her MA in Cultural History from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. She is currently a PhD researcher at the University of Sheffield, working on humour and melodrama in early penny bloods.

‘Prescient Heroines, Helpless Lawyers: Gender, Genre, and Self-Reflexivity in Sensation Fiction’
Felipe Espinoza Garrido

Sensational heroines are prone to intuitions, hunches, or dreams that foreshadow crucial plot points and events that take place in far-flung corners of the world. In Collins’ *The Woman in White* (1859), for instance, Marian Halcombe’s dream of Walter Hartright relates to us his entire sojourn to the Americas and back, while Ann Catherick’s dream – quite accurately – warns Laura Fairlie of her intended husband’s depravity. All of these twists and turns would soon become stock patterns of sensation fiction, and as the formula of female prescience was reproduced in countless novels, heroines were, as this paper argues, effectively endowed with an intuitive knowledge of the generic structures of sensation fiction. Based on these observations, this paper explores how such perceptions are both gendered and self-reflexive, drawing primarily on Harriet Gordon Smythies’ hitherto overlooked novels, among them *A Faithful Woman* (1865), *The Woman in Black* (1862-63), and *Acquitted* (1870). It is particularly *A Faithful Woman*’s Juliet Rivers whose intuitive grasp of her lover’s plight throughout the novel is marked as a superior and distinctly female understanding of the world, while it playfully draws attention to the novel’s rigid adherence to sensation tropes. This paradigm shift towards a different, subversive epistemology is placed in stark contrast to the inability of a number of male characters to believe or understand basic diegetic events, dismissing them instead, as a prominent lawyer does, as “sensational romance of the Ann Radcliffe school”. Against this backdrop, this paper explores sensation fiction’s potential to renegotiate gendered knowledge regimes of the Victorian Age, addressing fundamental questions regarding the validity of different genres of women’s narration in Victorian patriarchal structures.

Biography

Felipe Espinoza Garrido is a Lecturer in English, Postcolonial and Media Studies at the University of Münster, Germany, where he wrote his PhD with a thesis on ‘Post-Thatcherism in British Film’. Currently he is researching a book on empire imaginations in rediscovered women’s sensation fiction.

“Dissolution and Change”: Myth, Matter and Degeneracy in Arthur Machen’s *The Great God Pan*
Billie Gavurin

This paper will examine the relationship between classical myth, materiality, and degeneration theory in Arthur Machen’s 1894 novella *The Great God Pan*. At the story’s climax, the femme fatale Helen Vaughan, daughter of the goat-god Pan, undergoes a transmutation from human, to animal, to primordial ooze, before finally assuming the shape of a faun. I will suggest that the breakdown of Helen’s unstable, metamorphic body reveals deep contemporary anxieties about both the implications of evolutionary science for human specificity, and the nature of matter itself. Her collapse into formlessness is a vividly realised degeneration; the reader is able to ‘watch’ as evolutionary processes which would, in reality, occur imperceptibly over a vast span of time are performed in reverse.

While the scientific content of *The Great God Pan* has received some critical attention, little has been said about the surprising degree of interaction between evolutionary science and myth throughout the text. Drawing upon classical and early modern mythic sources, I will argue that Machen plays upon the long-standing association of Pan with ‘all-ness’ to suggest that the god functions not only as a symbolic embodiment of ‘everything’, but that he exists in a literal sense at the level of matter, as an immanent ur-substance like that into which Helen dissolves at the close of the story. Pan, god of all things, becomes a protoplasmic demon, whose presence within matter threatens disruption and chaos.

Ultimately, I will suggest that the text’s fascination with mythic recurrence functions as a reminder of the inescapability of degeneracy. Just as it is implied that another Helen will eventually be unleashed upon the world, so humanity can never free itself entirely from the taint of the bestial that afflicts our very material beings.

Biography

Billie Gavurin is a second year PhD candidate at the University of Bristol. Her thesis focuses on the relationship between mythic animal-human hybrids and contemporary evolutionary thought in *fin-de-siècle* fiction.

‘Co-created “Otherlands”’: Nonsense and Participatory Culture in the Nineteenth Century’

Alina Ghimpu-Hague

The traditional focus on contemporary manifestations of participatory culture and on the role played by the internet in facilitating these developments is understandable given the potential for upheaval of the former and the seemingly ever-increasing agency afforded by the latter to those involved in this mode of cultural production. It is also problematic, as it eclipses the long and rich history of informal knowledge networks, citizen engagement, collaborative problem-solving, and the transparent transformation of artistic products by the public. Furthermore, by concentrating on a specific distribution channel, it obscures the fact that the primary enabler of participatory culture is not a specific technology, but rather what this technology provides: access to a fast, vast, reliable, and affordable communication conduit. While Victorian communication networks lack the near-ubiquity of contemporary online connections, their reach, efficiency, and affordability are, nevertheless, comparable, and often exceed the capabilities of the early internet.

Similarly, the scholarly and popular focus on the published editions of Edward Lear’s first *Book of Nonsense* and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* tends to draw attention away from their original versions. In doing so, they downplay the informal and collaborative nature of their development as well as their heavy reliance on volumes by other authors in terms of both content and structure. As a result, the original manuscripts of Lear’s first collection of limericks and, respectively, Carroll’s first Alice story (*Alice’s Adventures Underground*) are commonly discussed as conventional single-author texts. This paper aims to accelerate the re-evaluation of these early version by analysing excerpts from of the two authors’ letters and diaries to show that the original manuscripts are, in fact, the outcomes of collaborative processes and that they constitute prime examples of the creative harnessing of distributed knowledge typical of participatory culture.

Biography

Alina Ghimpu-Hague is a postgraduate researcher in the Department of English at Royal Holloway, University of London with a particular interest in Victorian readers, genre writing, and multi-modal narratives. Her forthcoming book, *Consuming Strangeness: Nonsense and Mass Culture in the Nineteenth Century* is due to be published next year.

“Can I say I believe in it, too?": Hesitation and the Difficulties of Decision in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*'
James Green

'What *is* this Spirit of the Nineteenth Century?', asked Frances Power Cobbe in 1864, offering in the *Fraser Magazine* piece that followed the latest iteration of a question of recurrent interest to the historicist consciousness of the period. But, instantly, Cobbe perceives that spirit to be dualistic and Manichean in character; she clarifies its 'evil side' as being 'the disposition to accept as a finality that condition of hesitation and uncertainty which in the nature of things should be one of transition'. Only a few months after this identification of endemic doubt in British society, Wilkie Collins started to write, 'hesitatingly at first', his novel *Armadale*. Its plot unfolds principally during the 1850s, but Catherine Peters considers that its author's 'real concerns [were] with the 1860s'. This paper asserts likewise that the novel is preoccupied with conditions peculiar to that decade, but, distinctly, that these are the changed and changing statuses of 'hesitation' and 'uncertainty', discerned with growing worry by figures such as Cobbe. Its complex plot reproduces and intensifies the multitude of competing theories and ideas that confronted mid-Victorian intellectuals, and the 'difficulties of decision' that were its corollary. Reading it against contemporary ideas about action and epistemology, I propose that *Armadale* interrogates the mode of living most suitable to the modern world, in which doubt and ambivalence become an ineluctable aspect of being rather than a temporary state on the road to certainty.

Biography

James Green is a final-year PhD candidate, jointly supervised at the universities of Exeter and Reading. His AHRC-funded project considers the Victorian sensation novel in its relation to mid-nineteenth-century modernity.

‘The Small Matter of the Tozer Brooch: Declining Hairwork in Margaret Oliphant’s *Phoebe, Junior* (1876)’
Heather Hind

Margaret Oliphant’s *Phoebe, Junior* (1876) tells the story of a young woman and her uneasy relationship with the older generation of her family. Phoebe Beecham, a modern middle-class woman from London, pays a visit to her grandparents, the side of the family “in trade”, in order to secure, on her mother’s behalf, an inheritance. Having won the admiration of her grandmother, she is offered a family heirloom: a large gold brooch filled with the childhood locks of her aunts and uncles. It is a piece of hairwork “very well known in Carlingford” by the working-class and dissenting communities of her family. Phoebe, too, is acutely conscious of the outmodedness of this piece, as well as the bonds of family the brooch and its exchange represents, and so seeks a way politely to decline its bestowal upon her. If she is to marry another member of the middle class, and ideally a richer gentleman, she must negotiate, break or rework certain ties with her family. I argue that hairwork plays a key part in this negotiation. Hairwork reifies and preserves an identity and makes a material and lasting object of a moment in history: it is a person’s past made mobile. This mobility—the way hairwork may be passed along lines of kin, be bestowed upon another, or be gifted or sold out of family and friendship circles—threatens to remember and recirculate the past in undesirable ways. Because the brooch affirms Phoebe’s mother’s working-class parentage and, as “Phoebe Junior”, her own roots, its continued presence and attempted bestowal challenges Phoebe’s claim to middle-class ascendancy. In this paper I explore how the forms of knowledge that accrue around the Tozer brooch—family, class, time, place—are brought to bear on the present and its ongoing and shifting alliances.

Biography

Heather Hind is a PhD student at the universities of Exeter and Bristol. Her thesis on “Hairwork in Victorian Literature and Culture” focuses on the writings of the Brownings, the Brontës, Wilkie Collins and Margaret Oliphant. She is book reviews editor for *Literature and History* and a BAVS postgraduate rep.

‘Dissecting the Urban Body: Anatomical Readings of London’s Sanitary System’ **Naomi Hinds**

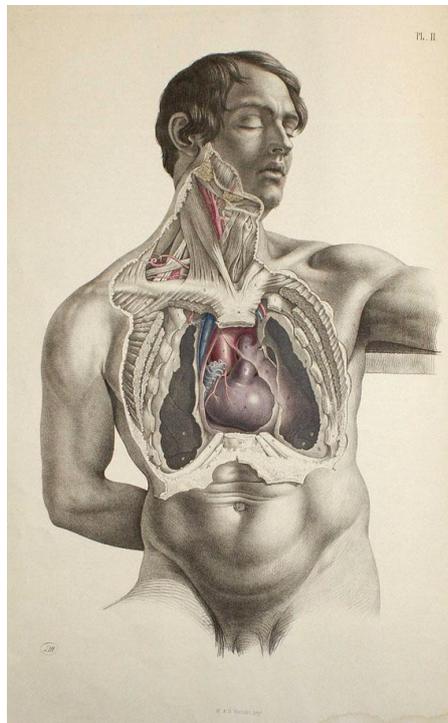
Writing in 1851, the self-proclaimed ‘sanitary surgeon’ Frederick Oldfield Ward asserts a disturbing truth: London is sick, its urban body diseased. As his scalpel cuts through London’s surface, Ward reveals London’s disorganised sanitary system – its monstrously dilated arteries, the stagnant blood that coagulates within them, the damaged nerves, the feebly beating heart which sets the whole system in motion.

This anatomical mapping of the city’s body is fundamentally a means of knowing the city, making it legible in order that it may be treated. Ward wielding his scalpel, theatricalises this process of knowing; London’s urban body is laid down in an operating theatre, its innards revealed for the instruction, fascination and disgust of a gawping audience.

Through the works of the overlooked sanitarian Frederick Oldfield Ward, I will explore how the anatomical drawings and surgical practice of the mid-nineteenth-century influenced readings of London’s woeful sanitary condition. These readings were not to completely depart from the disciplinary tendencies of Edwin Chadwick and the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, but organs – be they urban or bodily – could be coerced to speak in a new way.

Biography

Naomi Hinds is a first year English PhD Student at University College London, funded by the Wolfson Foundation. Her research explores how the increased concern about waste and the circulatory routes that it should take through Victorian London infected the language of mid- and late-nineteenth century literature.



“A Wholly Posthumous Dickens”: T. P. James’ Spirit Pen Adventures’ Camilla Ulleland Hoel

Three years after Charles Dickens’ death in 1870 the itinerant printer T. P. James declared that the Spirit of Dickens had provided him with the completion to the unfinished *Edwin Drood*, and he published it in due course signing himself “The Spirit Pen of Charles Dickens”. Those disposed to believe him hailed it as a work of genius from the great beyond; those who were not found it a poorly executed fraud. In the preface to his completion James also declared that he would soon publish a “wholly posthumous” novel by Dickens, titled *The Adventures of Bockley Wickleheap*, which “bids fair to equal anything from his pen while on Earth”. *Bockley Wickleheap* was thought to be wholly lost, but one page of the story was found by a local historian in Brattleboro in 2011, published in James’ monthly *The Summerland Messenger* in March 1875. The March number of *The Summerland Messenger* also contains a one-page extract from “The Story A Humpback’s Pilgrimage”, also signed “the Spirit Pen of Charles Dickens”. My research also led me to a third title, *The Brown Little Man’s Story of Happy Days* – a Christmas story preserved in its entirety.

This paper looks at this series of adaptation and appropriation at the edges of Dickens’ work, analysing the strategies of imitation in James writing as Dickens completing *Edwin Drood*, and in James writing as Dickens writing “wholly posthumous” literature. The main focus of the paper is an analysis of the strategies of imitation used in James’ writing, and the question of what it means to write a Dickensian text and why James chose this avenue of publishing as an alternative to publishing under his own name.

Biography

Camilla Ulleland Hoel is an Associate Professor of English at the Royal Norwegian Air Force Academy. She has a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, in which she analysed completions of and speculations about Dickens’ unfinished novel. Her primary research interests are endings in Victorian and Edwardian serial publication, Sherlock Holmes, and science fiction.

‘Clerks, Rent and the “complaints of tenants”’: Charlotte Riddell’s Mundane Ghost Stories’

Helena Ifill

Although most famous nowadays as a writer of ghost stories, Charlotte Riddell was also well known in the Victorian period as a novelist of the City. Her novels often centred on men of business, bankruptcy and professionalism. This in part explains the frequency with which Riddell pulls business into her supernatural fiction – her “ghost hunters” are often clerks or other men from the world of work, and their motivations for solving the seemingly ghostly mystery are as much to do with securing tenancies for an empty building as they are to do with discovering truths or ending the suffering of the haunted (or the haunter). While Riddell is certainly not the only Victorian author to put a young working man in the role of hero, her choice (as a female popular author) to focus on lower-middle-class clerks is an unusual one, that allows for a near-unique approach to the ghost story – a genre that by the mid-nineteenth century was already in danger of appearing old and worn. This paper considers what this authorial choice brings to the genre, and how it allows Riddell to playfully interrogate issues of Victorian class and gender.

Biography

Helena Ifill (University of Sheffield) specialises in Victorian popular literature, particularly sensation fiction and the Gothic, and its engagement with science and medicine. She is a co-organiser for the VPFA Annual Conference and co-series editor of Key Popular Women Writers and New Paths in Victorian Literature and Culture. Her recent monograph, *Creating Character: Theories of Nature and Nurture in Victorian Sensation Fiction* (MUP, 2018) focussed on the works of Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Wilkie Collins. Her current projects concern doctors and patients in Gothic fiction, and the works of Charlotte Riddell.

“Dancing between disconnected items”¹ and Sati, 1850-1870’

Maninder Järleberg

The fires of sati were (legally) extinguished in India – or so they believed – by the English in 1829. However, these fires would be rekindled in the collective consciousness of the English after the gruesome and violent events of 1857’s sepoy mutiny, which etched the image of India – or anything related to it – as a symbol of barbarism and moral depravity in the minds of the English. As I have discovered in my research, this reincarnation of sati would take on an unexpected afterlife of its own within the English cultural sphere, and become a symbol of universal suffering and oppression of women. The foreshadowing of this afterlife of sati within the English cultural/public sphere can be glimpsed in *Punch*’s satirical piece on an ideal English wife published in 1849 : “Had the dear creature been born to wear a nose-ring and bangles instead of a muff and bonnet...she would have done suttee, after your brown Brahmin father had died” (Brown, 13). This form of reception, commodification, and appropriation of narratives of sati point to an archetypal moment of sati’s cultural mobility. The tales surrounding sati and – what I call – “cold sati” show recurring patterns of localization and indigenization. In my paper I will demonstrate how the nineteenth century form of reading that involved ‘dancing between disconnected items’—namely lateral reading—connected not only the different forms of daily journalism and creative writings of the time, but also built bridges between people, histories, and ideas that were separated in time and space. It is this unique amalgamation of different medial forms that allowed the cries of Hindu widows to speak on behalf of the English women. Keeping with the theme of *Interdisciplinary approaches to Victorian popular fiction and culture*, I showcase—by taking sati as my case study—the ways in which the contemporary periodicals were able to ‘rehome’ the image of sati within the English cultural, social, and political context.

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Biography

Maninder Järleberg is a PhD Candidate at the Department of Language, Literature and Communication at Utrecht University. She received her master’s degree from Uppsala University (Sweden), and then moved to Netherlands to pursue a PhD at Utrecht University under the supervision of Prof. Ann Rigney and Dr. Barnita Bagchi. She specializes in Victorian literature and culture, and has a keen interest in colonial cultural transfers, the formation of modern cultural identities and nuanced workings of cultural memory studies within nineteenth century literature and periodicals. She is writing a dissertation titled “Afterlives of Sati in England, 1850-1900: A literary perspective”.

¹ In her book *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*, Deborah Wynne refers to the rise of the nineteenth century phenomenon of reading seemingly disconnected items in periodicals as a form of ‘dancing between disconnected items’ (Wynne 21).

‘Prescribing the Feel of Home in Victorian Domestic Guides’

David Johnson

Victorian domestic guides may not seem to fit the category of popular fiction, but they were a popular type of writing, and the content within them was more complex than a simple categorisation would allow. While the pragmatic content of many guides, such as recipes and medical advice, can rightly be called non-fiction, other sections on topics such as moral guidance, personal development and even the duties of occupants of the home, if not strictly fictional, can be considered more aspirational than factual in nature. As such, a careful analysis of the language within a wide cross-section of domestic guides from the nineteenth century can illuminate prescriptive ideas about how home and family life should be. This twenty-minute presentation will draw from the field of emotions history, using in particular Barbara Rosenwein’s method of developing an emotions lexicon, to discuss the way emotional constructs were prescribed for domestic space. The emotions lexicon developed from domestic guides is of value both to assess authorial intent in creating mood or tone within a story in the popular fiction of the period, and also as an historical yardstick by which potential gaps between prescription and practice in the Victorian home can be found. This presentation therefore sits at a unique intersection of themes relating to Victorian popular fiction as well as the historiography of the period that can best be accessed through the domestic guides of the period, portions of which could rightly be considered popular fiction.

Biography

David Johnson is a PhD candidate at Newcastle University, writing on the emotions history of the Victorian home. He is currently on leave from a small college in Colorado to undertake his PhD effort, and has previously published a social history of *Doctor Who* called *Madman in a Box*.

“That’ll knock ‘em”: *Fin-De-Siècle* Literary Culture and the Problematic Appeal of Music Hall Merriment?

Peter Jones

This paper examines the significant impact that the popular humour of the music hall had upon literary culture during the *fin de siècle*. The runaway commercial success of the music hall was grounded in its ability to anticipate the popular tastes of its audience and to make them laugh, and then laugh again. This success was impossible to ignore and placed those seeking to carve out a niche in the literary marketplace in a double bind. Should they attempt to co-opt the styles and refrains of the music hall to sell copy and risk being branded as sell outs, or retreat from the perceived vulgarity of popular sentiment and appear out of step with modern cultural trends?

In this paper, I will make the case that the expressive power of popular comedy shattered the tonal decorum and compositional codes of social realism. Gestures and styles that sparked amusement on the part of the music hall audiences, also inspired significant experiments in genre formation that obtruded upon, or directly took issue with, the gloomy temper of realism epitomised in ‘novels of misery’ by George Gissing, Somerset Maugham or Thomas Hardy. During the 1890s and into the Edwardian era upstart genres emerged including the ‘New Humour’ movement spearheaded by Barry Pain and Jerome K. Jerome, alongside the closely intersecting group of ‘cockney school’ writers such as William Pett Ridge, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Nevinson, Israel Zangwill and Albert Neil Lyons. J. L. Austin’s and Michel De Certeau’s theories of performative utterance and the ‘speech act’ are used here to demonstrate how music hall speech and song had a transformative impact on seemingly stable procedures of speech presentation, narration and character formation. A more acute conception of the genealogy of realism can be attained by considering the process through which a firm disjunction between earnest literary diction and popular comic laughter was abraded during the *fin de siècle*.

Biography

Peter Jones is an early career researcher and lecturer whose work examines the intersection between literature and mass entertainment and urban cultures. Peter teaches at Queen Mary University, is editorial fellow at History Workshop Online, and is an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research and at Birkbeck. This paper emerges from a chapter in *Victorian Comedy and Laughter: Conviviality, Jokes and Dissent* (contracted to Palgrave and forthcoming in 2019) which assesses the impact that vernacular music hall comedy had upon *fin-de-siècle* literary genre formation. Recent publications include an award-winning article in *The London Journal*, looking at the history of street markets. Peter is Vice-President of the Literary London Society and co-ordinates the ‘Stray Voices’ project at the IHR, which traces the hidden history of homelessness and vagrancy: <https://strayvoices.blogs.sas.ac.uk/>

‘Manners over Mind: Victorian Etiquette and its Influence’

Luisa Kapp

Etiquette manuals were a prevalent disseminator of knowledge in Victorian times. They were a popular literary genre that originated in the 1830s, shortly before Victoria would ascend the throne, and advised people how to eat, dress, greet, court and regulated behaviour in any given social situation via restrictive sets of rules. In one Victorian etiquette writer’s words, etiquette ‘designate[d] the rules and ceremonies recognised and exacted by civilized society’.

This paper will aim to explore etiquette manuals’ narrative and its ways of exercising control over readers. The manuals were removed from larger frameworks such as religion and morality, and instead concentrated narrowly on the controllable aspects of social life. One can infer a very complex picture of society as the arbiter of human existence, with gentility as the ideal to be attained by imitation. Etiquette literature’s language is decidedly different from conduct literature of previous centuries; readers were reprimanded in short, pragmatic sentences, often consisting of imperatives such as ‘Don’t put your elbows on the table’. Instead of friendly or parental guidance, which readers would have expected in the eighteenth century, readers were given clear, impersonal instructions which they were told had the power to decide their future.

Etiquette manuals thus also manipulated readers’ emotions and played on hopes and fears of readers in that they promised them access to superior social circles and ensuing success. Reading more closely, however, etiquette manuals’ promises are not upheld and while they teach their readers how to *assimilate*, they also implicitly tell them that they cannot *integrate*. Etiquette literature can thus be seen to exercise great mind control over readers, a facet which escapes superficial notice and which give these manuals an interest beyond their reputation for being a rather trivial and sometimes cynically profiteering literature pedalled by publishers to aspirational readers.

Biography

Luisa Kapp is currently pursuing a PhD in book history at the University of Oxford working on the concept of Victorian etiquette, behaviour, and social mobility. She has previously worked in journalism and publishing.

‘Hierarchical Trauma and Amputated Masculinity in *Treasure Island*’ **Emon Keshavarz**

The *fin de siècle* did not invent the literary amputee, but it did produce a new type of dismembered man, one whose affliction mirrored the cultural concerns of his creation. This literal impairment exists as a metaphor for the complexities of masculine identity during a period of substantial imperial concern: ‘Men made the Empire, according to countless stories consumed by late Victorian and Edwardian readers, and [...] the Empire made men.’⁶ *Treasure Island* demonstrates how somatic damage can highlight the connection between masculinity and the British Empire.⁷ Published at the beginning of a period that would be retrospectively defined by Europe’s ‘Scramble for Africa’, the novel asks us to consider a complex notion unique to this epoch: if masculinity is attained by exploring unknown lands and conquering them, then what happens when there is nowhere new left to colonise?⁸ The men of the *fin de siècle* can still go out, yet they return, like Long John Silver, less of a man than when they left, with his literal loss signifying the symbolic fragility of late-Victorian masculinity.

There is a masculine hierarchy in *Treasure Island* which sees the man with the most damaged body positioned on top. The facially scarred Bones fears the fingerless Black Dog, who is an underling of the eyeless Pew. The one-legged Silver either terrifies or commands the aforementioned characters, leading to his description as ‘hyper-masculine’.⁹ This label, however, ignores the latter stages of the narrative, where Silver’s authority is stripped from him as a result of the same injury that previously masculinised him.

This paper will demonstrate how trauma to the body paradoxically signifies masculinity while perpetually threatening it. Drawing on historical pirates and imperial propaganda, it will show the ways in which *Treasure Island* critiques contemporary expectations of young British males; expectations which Stevenson shows to be unattainable.

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Biography

Emon Keshavarz has recently submitted his doctoral thesis at Durham University. His research focuses on physical damage to the male body in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century literature, investigating how examples of physical impairment interact with contemporary perceptions of masculinity in the works of R. L. Stevenson, J. M. Barrie, W. H. Davies, D. H. Lawrence, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway.

⁶ Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the new Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 94.

⁷ Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (London: Penguin, 2008).

⁸ Chamberlain explains how 1869 - 1914 was a period of major European colonisation in Africa. Muriel Evelyn Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Harlow: Longman, 2010), pp. xii – xviii.

⁹ Ryan Sweet, ‘Pirates and Prosthetics: Manly Messages for Managing Limb Loss in Victorian and Edwardian Adventure Narratives’ in *The Victorian Male Body*, ed. by Joanne Ella Parsons and Ruth Heholt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 87-107, p. 89.

**‘Death and Feminine *Jouissance* in Ellen Wood’s *East Lynne*’
Jungyoun Kim**

Ellen Wood’s *East Lynne* has been less favoured and more obscured from the twentieth century and onwards, despite her immense popularity in the nineteenth century. Her novel demands, however, a new perspective to look at the heroine Isabel’s suffering and death with Jacques Lacan’s concept of fantasy and *jouissance*. Wood’s outwardly conventional and moralistic tone were one of the reasons that modern scholars of Victorian literature and even sensation fiction show little interest in her novels. Yet, Isabel’s masochistic suffering should, however, be examined along with her psychological needs and her patriarchal surroundings. Isabel and her husband Carlyle’s relationship, their yearning and frustration are based on their construction of fantasy of wholeness. Their impossible relationship based on fantasy leads her to seek the possibility of *jouissance* beyond the Symbolic order. Lacan’s concept of *jouissance* illumines Isabel’s suffering as an outcome of her struggle to achieve her subjectivity in a patriarchal structure, and the very rupture in that stronghold of system. The Lacanian reading of *East Lynne* provides a new way of approaching women’s subjectivity and frustration in the Victorian social structure. It is not to give a pathological psychoanalysis to the characters, but to see how the novel represents the characters’ subjectivities and their societies within what cultural limitation and possibility.

Biography

Jungyoun Kim is a lecturer of English Literature and Translation Studies at Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Korea. She received her M.A. in Translation Studies, and Ph. D. in English Literature in 2016 from Sungkyunkwan University. Her research interests include Victorian and Neo-Victorian novels in relation to psychoanalytic criticism and cultural studies, as well as Victorian literature in the context of ecocriticism. She has published several articles in both international literary journals and Korean journals. She is currently a visiting scholar at Swansea University in Swansea, Wales, U.K.

‘Thinking through “faithfulness” in the adaptation of Victorian Popular Fiction: the operatic materialisations of Ouida’s *Two Little Wooden Shoes* (1874)’
Andrew King

Two Little Wooden Shoes was one of the most popular texts by Ouida, printed and consumed in at least 4 continents and 11 languages. Ouida is best known today for having written the first novel (*Moths*, 1880) in which a divorced woman ends happily, and for *Under Two Flags* (1867) which popularised the notion of the French Foreign Legion. Both of those focus on high society heroes and heroines and a corrupt society given over to consumerism. But Ouida also had another string to her bow: stories focusing on the very poor in collision with the wealthy, of which *Two Little Wooden Shoes* is an early example. It concerns a nameless Flemish foundling who falls in love with a bourgeois painter from Paris. Though flattered by her infatuation, the painter does not sexually seduce her and simply returns to France after her usefulness as his model is over. Besotted, she follows him to Paris where she finds him in bed with a prostitute. Her illusions destroyed, she throws herself in the river. Reviews at the time were no more critical than usual for Ouida, though there was a good deal of praise too: the (27 April 1874, p.3), for example, thought that Ouida “had never imagined a more pathetic history”).

There are three operatic versions of the story: an Italian, a Hungarian and a French. All are now forgotten (though music for a projected fourth, by Puccini, found its way into *Suor Angelica*). Each adaptation alters the end of the story in significant ways. Do these versions therefore “fail” the original? Contemporary critics of the operas thought so, but this (multimedia) paper is concerned to show how our understanding of the material local conditions under which adaptations were and are made is more important than an ideal of “faithfulness” which confines itself to a somehow immaterial and purely textual study.

Biography

Andrew King is Professor of English at the University of Greenwich. His research focuses on nineteenth-century publication forms that hitherto have been marginalized by academia, including mass-market fiction and periodicals such as trade, professional or penny fiction.

‘The Narrative Legacy of Imperial Knowledge in Haggard’s *Heart of the World*’
Marisa Palacios Knox

In H. Rider Haggard’s memoir *Days of My Life*, he describes a recurring nightmare in which he believes he is “doomed from æon to countless æons to the composition of romance in the afterlife!” Haggard admits that in the 1890s he had begun to weary of writing romance, which he describes as a resource depleted by the parallel efforts of imperialism and previous authors, including himself, who have exploited every inch of the globe for imaginative inspiration. This paper will argue that Haggard grapples with his disillusionment with the genre that brought him fame and fortune—and the romance of imperialism itself—in his two novels set in Mexico, particularly *Heart of the World* (1895). Early in the novel, the indigenous Ignacio fears death and imparts to his English friend Strickland the stone and secret knowledge that designate him as successor to the Aztec empire, thereby transforming his lineal claim into heritable property that can be verbally bequeathed to an unrelated white man. Though Ignacio ultimately outlives Strickland, he seeks to replicate that dynamic by making another Englishman, denoted by the generic pseudonym of Jones, the heir of his property along with his first-person memoir that forms the bulk of the novel. Haggard thus positions the symbolic Englishman—as opposed to other Mexicans—as the aptest beneficiary of indigenous lands and lore. At the same time, the Englishmen of this novel lack agency both within the plot and as narrators. While staking claim to a new frontier of romance in *Heart of the World*, Haggard simultaneously undermines his ability as well as that of other “informal imperialists” to tell these stories when they can no longer originate their own.

Biography

Dr. Marisa Palacios Knox is an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She has published articles on Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Gissing in *Victorian Poetry* and *Nineteenth-Century Literature* respectively, and most recently an article on “Imagining Informal Empire” in *Literature Compass*.

‘Between Dream and Reality: An Altered Mental State as a Narrative Catalyst’ Maija Kuharenoka

Sheridan Le Fanu’s story ‘Drunkard’s dream,’ first published 1838 in the *Dublin University Magazine*, focuses on an altered mental state experience of an alcoholic carpenter that can be described either as a dream or as a brief journey into the afterlife. This shocking event altered his course of life albeit not for long.

In a somewhat similar manner, ‘The Teamster’, a ballad by Mathilde Blind published much later on in the century, in 1889, uses the same narrative technique to mark an important turn in her protagonist’s life. What is more, both texts have a working-class protagonist and use the altered state to add a moral element to the story.

Using the two works mentioned above as the base, this paper will explore the usage of altered state of mind as a critical moment in a narrative in relation to the ideas of class, mind and social norms governing each end of the century. Drawing on works from authors of dissimilar backgrounds and working predominately in different genres, allows establishing a broader understanding of the period’s literary practices.

Biography

Maija Kuharenoka is an independent researcher who has completed her PhD in 2018 at De Montfort University. Her previous research focused on Mathilde Blind’s 1889 volume *The Ascent of Man*, with particular emphasis on its history of composition, creation and history of ideas present in the poems.

‘Dickensian Matters: Gold, Silver and Iron’

Shu-Fang Lai

Some material matters have appeared recurrently in Dickens’s novels. In fact, matters such as gold, silver and iron have become key words charged with historical, aesthetic, and moral meanings. His imagination about the materiality of these minerals and metals, their physical appearances, characteristics such as resistance to corrosion, and other broadly related subjects (such as Gold Rush) allow him to make the best use of the words. Therefore these material matters in Dickens’s fictional world often appear as powerful tropes or symbols in his rhetoric: for example, “gold” can be related to ideas about “mammonism” or “gentleman.” There are the “Golden Dustman” (in *Our Mutual Friend*), George Silverman in his serial story, the ironmaster with his farther named “Steel” (in *Bleak House*), and many references to the matters as the conspicuous representatives of Dickens’s response to the material age. In this paper, I will address subjects related to these material substances in Dickens’s novels, to show what sociohistorical and cultural contexts are thrust in his use of the matters in fictional writings.

Biography

Shu-Fang Lai, Professor at National Sun Yat-Sen University, Taiwan. She teaches Victorian Literature, 19th-Century English Novels, and Literary Translation. She has published two books on Victorian Literature, articles in *Dickensian*, *Dickens Quarterly*, *VPR*, *Victorian Newsletter*, *Scottish Literary Review* and some book chapters, and edited *The Land of Story Books: Scottish Children’s Literature in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2019).

‘Church Building: Family and Community in Charlotte Yonge’s *The Daisy Chain*’

Kate Lawson

In Charlotte Yonge’s *The Daisy Chain* (1856), the impoverished village of Cocks Moor—“a bad wild place” inhabited by “wild people”—is to be transformed by the building of a new church. As Talia Schaffer writes, Ethel and her family understand their Cocks Moor church project as one that involves “taking humans they perceive as ‘wild’ weeds lying in waste ground and transforming them into civilized, permanent, decorous specimens.” The new church building is the centre for this “permanent” social and religious transformation.

New church buildings were initiated by the New Churches Act (1818); by 1856, approximately six-hundred had been built across England, many in small rural villages such as the novel’s Cocks Moor. Given the importance and success of church building throughout the nineteenth century, it is ironic to reflect that, in the twenty-first century, many of these churches have become unsustainable. In 2015, the BBC reported that “Thousands of churches could be closed ... under new plans being considered by the Church of England” and that “the old parish system may no longer be sustainable.” The problem was particularly acute in rural areas where “Sunday worshippers are in single figures.”

This paper argues that the problem of the sustainability of the small rural church is in fact already implicit within Yonge’s novel. The Cocks Moor church—built through the “ambition” of Ethel and the generosity of her late sister’s fiancé—is located in a community whose population is mobile and transitory and whose connections to the church are provisional. Even Una M’Carthy, its local champion, moves away and then dies. New churches need enthusiasts such as Ethel, but as Melissa Schaub writes, the building of the church is in fact “a sublimation of [Ethel’s] inability to control her own domestic space.” Thus while the Cocks Moor church is built, its sustainability—like the sustainability of Ethel’s domestic world—is always uncertain.

Biography

Kate Lawson is Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Waterloo, Canada. She is the editor of the Broadview edition of Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*, and her article on Charlotte Yonge’s *Clever Woman of the Family* appeared in *Victorian Literature and Culture* in 2014.

‘Capturing the Spirit of Bohemia: The Life of the Artist in 1860s Popular Fiction’ Chris Louttit

The generation of self-styled Bohemian writers that included Robert Barnabas Brough, George Augustus Sala and Edmund Yates has tended to be associated with journalism and the theatre rather than the fiction of the period. Sala and Yates were notably modest about their achievements as novelists, positioning themselves instead as successful pressmen. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that scholars working on Victorian Bohemia including Peter Blake, Jacky Bratton and Christopher Kent have discussed it in relation to periodical studies and theatre history. My lecture questions this straightforward association of Bohemians and Bohemianism with these contexts by uncovering a less familiar connection between the subculture and Victorian popular fiction. It does so by turning attention to the 1860s craze for fictions of Bohemianism that peaked in 1866. As a *Saturday Review* critic noted on the 19th of May that year, ‘The inhabitants of Bohemia have invaded fiction, and run wild and rampant over the scenes of half the novels that are intended and supposed to entertain us’. Or, in the slightly weary words of a critic writing in April 1866’s *Westminster Review*, ‘Some half-dozen Bohemian novels and tales lie before us’. In this lecture, I map the contours and characteristics of this sub-genre of fiction, noting its origins in French fiction and stray earlier examples of the 1850s before focusing in detail on Annie Edwardes’s *Archie Lovell*, Annie Thomas’s *Walter Goring*, Florence Marryat’s *For Ever and Ever* and Edmund Yates’s *Land at Last* (all 1866). These novels, I argue, deploy the transgressiveness of Bohemianism to breathe some new life into the by then familiar form of the sensation novel. As examples from an intriguing and neglected micro-genre, they offer a new perspective on the mechanics of changing fashions in popular fiction while also reframing our understanding of the sometimes fraught relationship between male Bohemian writers and their female competitors.

Biography

Chris Louttit is Assistant Professor of English Literature at Radboud University in Nijmegen. His interests lie in two main areas: the work of mid-Victorian novelists including Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, and the afterlife of the period in fiction, television and film and visual culture. He has published articles in *Book History*, *Critical Survey*, *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* and *Gothic Studies*, co-edited special issues of *Nineteenth-Century Prose* and *Neo-Victorian Studies*, and is working on a longer project on the interconnections between the sensation genre and Bohemianism.

**‘Mind over Matter: Olivia Shakespear’s *Beauty’s Hour*’
Erin Louttit**

Olivia Shakespear’s *Beauty’s Hour* (1896) is an odd and wonderful fin-de-siècle text that shows what a woman can do when she puts her mind to it. The novella has suffered undeserved neglect despite its 2016 republication by Valancourt, and this paper aims to aid the work of reclamation Shakespear merits. Mary, Shakespear’s heroine, uses her mind to transform and control her corporeal appearance, suggesting both the protagonist’s mental abilities and the relative unimportance of physical matters. In using supernatural powers in an almost mundane fashion, Shakespear allows her focus to shift to larger questions of women’s social standing and unnatural relations between the sexes. In this work, the occult is simply to be pressed into service, while the truly harmful elements of life are socially constructed and condoned.

Biography

Erin Louttit is an independent scholar. Her research interests include the occult and supernatural, poetry, faith and religion, gender and the literature and culture of the long nineteenth century.

‘Women of Many Ideas: Knowledge, Curiosity and Intuition and the Victorian Female Detective’

Angelica Michelis

While it is the Victorian *fin de siècle* that gave birth to the genre of crime fiction as such, the figure of the detective emerged earlier in the century, notably in the writing of Edgar Allan Poe and his short stories featuring C. Auguste Dupin. Driven by his quest for knowledge, the Victorian sleuth-*flâneur* traverses the urban labyrinth in search for clues, mapping the city as an epistemological grid where he can find information about the criminal, and perhaps more crucially about his own masculinity. As a figure of the public sphere and with his professional method of pseudo-scientific ratiocination, the male detective provided a site where discourses of masculinity could be negotiated in relation to modernity, its forms of knowledge and the condition of their possibility. However, what happens to these conditions and epistemological forms if we explore the ways in which the female detective engages with crime, its causes and effects? Masquerade and the donning of disguises are staple tropes in detective stories but when they are utilized by the Victorian female detective, these tools of the trade often function as a challenge to established ways of understanding the world and thus present alternative narratives of knowledge and cultural imaginations of the real. ‘I was not a woman of one idea, and if one dart did not hit the mark I always had another feathered shaft ready for action in my well stocked quiver’ (27), says William Stevens Hayward sleuth Mrs Paschal in his *Revelations of a Lady Detective* published in 1864. By looking at a selection of short stories from the 1860s to the Victorian *fin de siècle*, this paper aims to take a closer look at female detectives’ ‘well stocked quiver’ of ideas in order to explore the extent to which their approaches to detective work, the criminal and the scene of crime contribute to as well as challenge epistemological constructions of crime and deviance in the second half of the 19thc.

Biography

Dr Angelica Michelis is Senior Lecturer at the Department of English at Manchester Metropolitan University. She has published widely on contemporary and 19thc poetry, the Gothic, Women’s Writing, crime fiction, and on food as cultural discourse; her most recent publications include: ‘Feeding the Vampire: The Ravenous Hunger of the *fin-de-siècle*’ in, *Devouring: Food, Drink and the Written World in Britain, 1820-1954* ‘, 2017. ‘The chef, in the kitchen, with the knife: Food, cooking and crime in Anthony Bourdain’s culinary crime fiction’; in Carolina Miranda (ed), *Blood on the Table* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2018); ‘Man-eaters: Confessional Food Writing as narratives of Masculinity’, chapter in Lorna Piatti-Farnell (ed), *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food* (London: Routledge, 2018).

‘Domesticized Fantasy and Gothic Spaces in “Curious, if True” and “The Old Nurse’s Story”’

Danbee Moon

While Elizabeth Gaskell is best known for her novels, she also wrote many short stories that were published in popular Victorian periodicals. Gaskell’s stories portray the supernatural as a type of ambiguous reality. This paper considers functions of fairytales, ghosts, and the real and the fantastic within domestic spaces in Gaskell’s Gothic fiction. I suggest that understandings of what is strange or commonplace are complicated by characters who refuse, or are unable, to make such distinctions, and narrators that are oddly distanced, as if ignorant of the implications of the events that they are retelling. “Curious, if True,” one of Gaskell’s last ghost stories, includes uncannily familiar nineteenth-century conventions and fairy tale characters that “perform” their own pasts. As Carrie Wasinger puts it, the text “challenged the conventions of mid-Victorian realism by defamiliarizing the domestic narrative.” In “The Old Nurse’s Story,” ghosts do not belong exclusively to the realm of the exotic, but make frequent and unchecked appearances in everyday life. As with “Curious, if True,” gossip and stories of the past affect present time and location. These Gothic tales reject any logical or naturalistic explanation. Identification becomes increasingly impossible within narratives that erupt and conflate reality and fiction, and past and present. Family histories are unable to be contained in narratives, and are literally performed by ghosts that seek retribution. Both stories end with a climactic display of the fantastic: in the former, a fairy godmother appears, in the latter, the lights abruptly go off after a violent scene from the past is reenacted by ghosts in front of living witnesses. Stories within stories in Gaskell’s Gothic fiction create slippages between the real and the fantastic in domestic spaces.

Biography

Danbee Moon is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the University of Washington. Danbee is currently working on her dissertation which examines the functions of reading in nineteenth-century novels, and women’s education in the Victorian home. She teaches undergraduate composition, and have recently presented papers at PAMLA and NAVSA.

“Your poetry is only very poor prose”: Education and Poetry in Victorian Popular Writing of 1850’
John Morton

This paper will examine the ways in which Victorian writing in the popular press, with an intended readership chiefly of working-class men and women, tried to ‘educate’ its readers about poetry.

It will begin with an example of intentionally ‘bad poetry’ – written by a fictional character in a *Reynolds’s Miscellany* serial from 1850 – before going on to discuss the ways in which working-class readers were either encouraged to read, or produce, ‘good poetry’ in the same year.

In this, it will discuss the essays on poetry in, as well as verse submitted to, *The Literature of Working Men* (an offshoot made up of readers’ contributions to the *Working Man’s Friend*), along with the often-hostile advice given to aspiring poets in the correspondence columns of periodicals such as *Reynolds’s Miscellany* (an example of which is the quotation in the title to this abstract).

It will compare such approaches to poetry with those of an imaged working-class aspiring poet, Alton Locke, in Charles Kingsley’s novel of that title, published the same year, considering the realism – or otherwise – of Kingsley’s portrayal. It will show that poetry was central to the idea of being ‘educated’ at the time, and will investigate issues related to social hierarchy.

Biography

John Morton is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Greenwich, UK. He is Deputy Editor of the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*. He is the co-editor of *Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Case Studies* (2017) and the *Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (2016).

‘The Cult of Ophelia: Madwomen in Victorian Popular Fiction’

Tong Mou

Ophelia is a very potent and visible figure in literature, popular culture, and paintings throughout the 19th century, from stage actresses to the Pre-Raphaelite images. The cultural myth of this minor Shakespearian heroine, who outlives the vicissitudes of time, obsesses Victorians with her paradoxical juxtaposition of essential femininity and madness, which indicates both innocence and explicit sexuality.

Miss Havisham in Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, though monstrous and vengeful, remains in line with Wordsworth’s “The Thorn,” which captures the stereotype of a jilted madwoman. The typical Ophelia-like, harmless, mourning, delicate figures might be too melodramatic for the taste of experienced readers. Anne in Collins’s *The Woman in White* is another visible Ophelia with her angelic appearance and white outfit, who imprinted an enticing image upon the hero’s mind. Deviating from the powerless Ophelia, however, Anne posed a threat to the villain’s property and identity. The visibility of Ophelia declines in Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*, in which Lucy not only exercised female violence, but also kept her madness questionable throughout the fiction. In Richard Marsh’s “Lady Wishaw’s Hand,” Ophelia-like figure is further reduced to a perfectly shaped, delicate but monomaniac, whimsical and criminal hand. In this late 19th-century version, Ophelia-like figure still fascinates readers in a fragmented body part.

Tracing the cult of Ophelia in Victorian popular fiction, this paper attempts to show how the traditional images of animalistic madness are transformed into the Ophelia-like madwomen, in terms of “the angelic invalid myth” and the cult of sensibility. It then brings to the foreground a debate between moral insanity and moral management and the respective pathology and treatment. In light of all that, the paper finally tries to discuss how ideal femininity is constructed with the paradoxical and untamable female traits lurking around that cannot be oppressed by the overarching patriarchal discourse.

Biography

Tong Mou is a PhD candidate in Peking University (China) with several domestic publications, and currently a government-funding visiting scholar in University of Exeter, working with Professor Corinna Wagner on Victorian visual and literary cultures and medical humanities. Her dissertation project is the medical discourse and disease writing in Charlotte Brontë’s novels.

‘Depressed Minds and Broken Spirits: Retail Work and Emotional Health in Victorian Popular Culture’

Alison Moulds

‘I did not rise to these demands upon me. My mind withdrew itself from my duties. I did my utmost to go on living within myself. My disposition to reverie increased.’¹⁰

In his autobiography, H. G. Wells recalled his adolescence as a draper’s apprentice. He had drawn on these experiences in his popular fiction – his novels *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), *Kipps* (1905), and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) all depict men who face the drudgery and shame of shop work and indulge in fantasies of adventure and romance.

Wells’ fiction participated in a much broader public debate about the welfare of shop assistants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Shop assistants and apprentices were seen as overworked and underpaid, and retail work was often regarded as monotonous and underappreciated. Under the ‘living-in’ system, shop assistants tended to live on-site – in accommodation provided by their employers – a practice which blurred the boundaries between work and leisure time.

This paper will consider the representation of shop assistants’ depressed minds and broken spirits in Victorian and Edwardian writing. In particular, I will investigate to what extent discussions of shop workers’ welfare broached questions about their emotional health and wellbeing. How far were feelings of contentment, satisfaction and happiness considered important? Drawing on popular fiction and periodicals, medical journals and parliamentary debates, I will explore how the emotional side of shop life was mediated and understood. The paper will examine both negative and positive emotions associated with shop work. While some commentators suggested that living-in subjected employees to constant surveillance and scrutiny (and therefore stress and anxiety), others argued that the system provided workers with a support system and substitute family. As I will show, these competing representations of shop life in the popular and cultural imagination both stimulated and stymied social reform.

Biography

Dr Alison Moulds is Engagement and Impact Manager on the Living with Feeling project at Queen Mary University of London and Engagement Fellow on the Surgery & Emotion project at the University of Roehampton. She was previously Postdoctoral Research Assistant on the Diseases of Modern Life project at the University of Oxford, where she completed her DPhil. She works on medical history and popular culture in the Victorian period.

¹⁰ H.G. Wells (1934), *Experiment in Autobiography* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1967), p. 89.

‘Novel Ways of Knowing: Charles Reade and the Triple-Decker Form’

Sara Murphy

What kinds of knowing does the novel afford? High realist fiction appears to make claims for a kind of panoptic knowledge that includes large swaths of the social body, moving across the divide between private and public, external appearances and internal states. But do more popular genres, sensation, for instance, make similar claims? The case of Charles Reade here is informative and intriguing. Reade, quite notoriously, insisted on the basis of his work in fact, and accumulated vast amounts of research to support his fictional output. The ways of knowing his novelistic project was designed, so he says, to offer are rooted in his desire to inform the public of legal, economic, and governmental wrongs: he writes, as the subtitle to his novels *Hard Cash* and *It's Never Too Late to Mend* claim, “matter-of-fact romances.” This paper investigates the claim that this rather oxymoronic generic modifier is inseparable from the material form in which the novels appeared. Perhaps more than any other major nineteenth-century novelist, Reade exploited the triple-decker form, using each volume to move over a wide array of distinct geographical locations, into the stories of specific characters, some of whom only exist in a single volume, and to address specific arenas of the social and even specific kinds of knowing. In the case of *It's Never Too Late to Mend*, for instance, Reade covers a country romance and economic struggles, the silent system of prisons, and the gold rush and penal colonies in Australia. In some respects, Reade’s work represents the paroxysm of the sprawling multiplot novel; in other respects, his deployment of the triple-decker to develop his particular novelistic practice is precisely what made him less palatable to readers by the early twentieth century. This paper argues, it is precisely this deployment of a very particular, material form that enabled a specific way of novelistic knowing.

Biography

Sara Murphy is an associate professor of literary study at NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study, a college within the university with an interdisciplinary curriculum, where she teaches courses in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novel, critical theory, and the intersections between literature and law. Her most recent work has been on sensation fiction and law; she is currently also working on a project concerned with the novel and human rights discourse. She is a 2018 recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award, the highest award for teaching at the University.

“That was how I earned the Treasure”: *The Sign of Four* and the Traumatic Story of Jonathan Small
Sharon Murphy

Arthur Conan Doyle first published *The Sign of (the) Four* in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890, and scholars have typically interpreted the tale in terms of what it reveals of the concerns or preoccupations of the late-Victorian period. For some, the narrative is therefore peculiarly illustrative of late-nineteenth-century decadence; for others, of the fact that the British Empire was hugely dependent upon the global trade in narcotics (Keep and Randall, 1997, 207). Others again have considered the tale in terms of what it reveals of the late-Victorian fear of 'contamination' from Empire, and/or the significance of the many 'damaged,' or 'abject' returning colonials who feature in Doyle's narratives (for examples, Siddiq, 2006, and Raheja, 2006). In this latter context, the crippled Jonathan Small has been (briefly) mentioned by many, but my contention is that the true importance of this character largely has been overlooked. Put simply, what I will be suggesting is that the story that Small relates to Watson, Holmes, and Athelney Jones in the final chapter of Doyle's narrative is not simply a 'strange' one: it is, rather, the narrative of a deeply traumatised man, who is, quite possibly, suffering from some form of mental disorder. What I will show is that Small reveals that he has actually suffered a series of traumas during his time in India and on the Andaman Islands; as we might put it today, that that he suffered a number of 'deeply distressing or disturbing experience[s]', or 'emotional shock[s] following ... stressful event[s] or physical injur[ies]', which led to him developing 'a long term neurosis' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2003). The focus of this neurosis, I will contend, is represented by the all-consuming nature of his obsession with Major Sholto; specifically, by his determination to avenge himself upon the individual whom he believes has stolen the treasure that he rightfully 'earned'.

Biography

Dr Sharon Murphy is an Assistant Professor in the School of English, Dublin City University. She is the author of *The British Soldier and his Libraries, c. 1822-1901* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), and of *Maria Edgeworth and Romance* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004). She has also published in essay collections and journals.

“‘Bitter discontent grown fierce and mad’”: *Barnaby Rudge*, *Chartism*, and Melodrama’ Kate Newey

Charles Dickens’ novel, *Barnaby Rudge*, was published between Carlyle’s oracular calls to arms in *Chartism* and *A History of the French Revolution*, and the several adaptations of the novel into stage melodrama.

Carlyle called Chartism ‘a new name for a thing which has had many names,’ which ‘did not begin yesterday; will by no means end this day or to-morrow.’ In *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens responded to the upheavals and anxieties of the early 1840s by going back to yesterday - the 1780s and the Gordon riots. Like Carlyle, he uses historical knowledge to understand the condition-of-England of his contemporary experience.

Part of that contemporary experience was the rapid appropriation and adaptation of Dickens’ novels into stage melodramas. *Barnaby Rudge* was no exception, and Dickens’ gestures to the occult knowledge of his characters in the novel become theatricalised, known through generic tropes of melodrama performance.

In this paper, I will explore *Barnaby Rudge* and its stage adaptations in relation to Carlyle’s prophetic writings, as examples of the way that historical knowledge was used not only to represent, but also to deny the ‘bitter discontent’ of the early 1840s. I’m particularly interested in the ways in which Carlyle’s and Dickens’ ambivalence to the actions, agency, and effects of the masses through political action and cultural practice is mediated through stage melodrama.

Biography

Kate Newey is Professor of Theatre History at the University of Exeter. She specialises in nineteenth-century British popular theatre and women’s writing. She has published widely on melodrama and pantomime, popular culture, and women’s writing. Her books include *Women’s Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain* (Palgrave, 2005) and *John Ruskin and the Victorian Theatre* (Palgrave, 2010, co-authored with Jeffrey Richards). She is currently working on her AHRC-funded project, ‘Theatre and Visual Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century’ (with Jim Davis, Warwick University).

‘Sensation Fiction and the Theatre: Braddon, Boucicault and Matters of Adaptation’ Beth Palmer

Sensation fiction has received much scholarly attention over the last 30 years and has been a key source of interest for this conference. However, sensation fiction has less frequently been read in relation to the close context of sensation theatre. Nick Daly, Kate Mattacks, Caroline Radcliffe are exceptions here, and there have been several excellent studies of individual adaptations of sensation novels for the stage. This paper, though, attempts to create a sense of sensation fiction as fully imbricated with the theatre, not just as source material for adaptation, but as part of an intermedial and ongoing network.

Focussing on a network of novels and plays including Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s novel *The Octoroon; or, The Lily of Louisiana* (published in the *Halfpenny Journal*, 1861-62) and Dion Boucicault’s play, *The Octoroon* (first performed in New York in 1859 and opening in the West End in 1861), this paper will trace out the relationships across and between texts and performances. It will deal with the drama and the novel as distinctive but simultaneous entities, rather than presenting them as disconnected or derivative. Situating the novel in its serialised periodical setting allows us to read Braddon’s *Octoroon* as a text in an on-going dialogue with its theatrical contexts.

Braddon and Boucicault’s works are similar in terms of plot and content, but the comparisons I seek to draw are primarily about the ways in which each uses techniques and strategies associated with the other form. Stimulating the effects of the theatre in the novel – and vice versa – is key, I argue, to the affective, bodily reactions stimulated by sensation. Foregrounding acts of reading in theatrical performances, or embodied performances in literary texts, are examples of intermediality we see in sensation novels and drama. These intermedial connections are also traceable in the ‘sensation scenes’ to be found in the novel and the play. These are scenes that draw on our sympathies and attempt to excite and shock us: slave auctions, conflagrations, attempted murders. Although Boucicault, among other sensation writers, was chary of the term, I argue that sensation scenes are not purely crowd-pleasing add-ons. Rather, these scenes represent heavily freighted and affective moments in novels and plays requiring sophisticated spectators to activate connections across genres and between private and public sites of performance and reception.

Biography

Dr Beth Palmer is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Surrey. Her published work includes a monograph, *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies*, (2011), an edited anthology of Victorian sensation plays, *Sensation Drama: An Anthology* (2019). She has published on numerous aspects of nineteenth-century print culture and women's writing and co-edited volumes on nineteenth-century readership (2011, forthcoming 2020). She is currently working on a project entitled *Sensational Genres* which examines the relationship between the sensation novel, the press and the theatre in Victorian Britain.

‘Vanishing Points: Sidney Paget, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sherlock Holmes’ Christopher Pittard

Rather than being incidental supplements to Arthur Conan Doyle’s texts, Sidney Paget’s illustrations for the *Strand Magazine* play a crucial role in the narratives’ creation of meaning. In *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes* (2019), I discussed Paget’s illustrations in terms of seriality and the manner in which the sequence of images reinforces continuity in the stories; in this paper, I expand on this reading to consider the ways in which Paget’s images mediate the limitations of detection through their use (or refusal) of depth of field and visual perspective.

Katherine Voyles argues that “The movements between the far and the near, the large and the small, and the distant and the intimate give structure to and set the boundaries of the Holmes stories.” Voyles’ reading is intriguing but has a notable blind spot; Paget’s illustrations themselves. Part of Paget’s absence from this reading is the fact that his viewpoint as it appears in the *Strand* does not match Holmes’ zoom lens. Paget’s images offer a Watsonian view whereby the initial principles of Holmesian detection have been taken on board (irrelevant details have been excluded), but not fully developed to their logical conclusions (relevant details remain in mid-range). Where Paget *does* invoke ideas of zooming in and out, and extensive depth of field, he does so to signal crisis in the Holmesian universe, most notably in ‘The Final Problem,’ where Holmes gradually becomes lost among encroaching landscape.

This in turn raises the issue of visual perspective, its relation to Paget’s work, and the parallel epistemological and perceptual questions raised by both visual perspective and Holmesian detective fiction. While Holmes’ much vaunted ‘science of deduction’ implies an objective field of knowledge, in practice Holmes’ method depends on the perspectival position of the observer. In ‘The Musgrave Ritual’ Holmes characterises his method as a kind of perspectival empathy, using the metaphor of the astronomical ‘personal equation’ (the adjustment made by the observer to compensate for the position and perspective of the observer). In ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’, Holmes’ act of misrecognition is a failure to allow for this personal equation in a space which has become more visually complex, Paget moving from single plane portraiture (a mode associated by Doyle with the ‘savage eye’ in ‘Up an African River with the Camera’ (1882)) to the linear perspective of the receding view of Baker Street, the setting in which Holmes famously fails to recognise the disguised Irene Adler. In the visual culture of the Holmes stories, then, images of receding perspective signal errors of perception and crises of detection.

Biography

Christopher Pittard is senior lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Portsmouth, and course leader for the MA *Victorian Gothic: History, Literature, Culture*. He is the co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes* (2019), and the author of *Purity and Contamination in Late Victorian Detective Fiction* (2011). His third book, *Literary Illusions: Performance Magic and Victorian Literature* (forthcoming Edinburgh UP, 2021), considers the intersections between conjuring performances and the work of Dickens, Gaskell, Henry Cockton, and magician biographers. He has published widely on Victorian literature and culture, including articles in *Studies in the Novel*, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, *Victoriographies*, *Women: A Cultural Review*, *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, and *Humanities*.

“Half-witted creatures” in “the novel of incident” and the Inauguration of Dwindling Shareholder Responsibility with the Limited Liability Act (1855)’
Julia Podziewska

“There is always ... one, or it may be two, half-witted creatures”, E. S. Dallas maintained as he pointed out the features that distinguished “the novel of incident” from “the novel of character”. Such “crazed beings”, he perspicaciously continued, have a “utility ... beyond belief” for a novel’s plot in that “[t]hey see [things] which nobody thought they would see, and remember [things] which nobody thought they would remember ... even more remarkable [are] the things which ... they cannot be made to comprehend, and cannot be counted upon to repeat”. This observation from *The Gay Science* (1866) encourages us to rethink the simple-minded, the lunatic, and the brain-fevered protagonist, to move on from contextualising them in terms the contemporary mind sciences and instead reconsider their textual and narratological roles.

In the first half of my argument I demonstrate the plot functions of protagonists depicted as “half-witted” and “crazed” in novels by Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. In the second half of my argument I move on to connect the partial responsibility and loss of reason on which novel of incident narratives so frequently rest with contemporary commercial arrangements, a discursive current which Dallas argued to be a factor equally as decisive in the shaping of the mid-nineteenth century novel of incident. Drawing on both *The Gay Science* and parliamentary debate about limited liability, I further illuminate Collins’s and Braddon’s deployment of non-normative states of mind, contending that as well the mid sciences with which they have long been associated, these novels are as much rooted in the emergence and legitimization of new property forms and relations.

Biography

Julia Podziewska has just finished her PhD at Sheffield Hallam University. Her thesis was on Wilkie Collins and the Inheritance Plot.

‘Gods, Morals, and Disease: Contamination in Kipling and Doyle’

Molly Robinson

Expanding empire, scientific discoveries, and industrial advancements made the Victorian period a time of transition. So much growth and progress created anxieties regarding the unfamiliar and gave rise to fears of contamination. In an era where infectious disease was beginning to be understood and was the leading cause of death for otherwise healthy individuals, Victorians had good reason to be wary of contaminants. However, the fear of contamination was not limited to disease and physical ailments, but was also applied to other situations where Victorians were confronted with ideologies, technologies, and circumstances new or foreign to them. These anxieties are reflected in the popular literature of the time, especially in Kipling’s “The Mark of the Beast” and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet*. Kipling’s short story engages with instances of contamination on the spiritual, mental, and physical levels. Following the story of an Englishman, Fleete, who besmirches a native idol, is touched by a leper, and subsequently contracts a mysterious ailment, Kipling emphasizes the unknown as the story is set in a foreign territory and involves strange religion. Fleete’s puzzling illness and the way his English companions help cure him transgress accepted boundaries between man and beast, disease and health, and savage and civilized. *A Study in Scarlet* explores the theme of contamination within the context of a criminal investigation. Criminals and investigators alike contaminate the privacy of middle and upper class Victorians, and Doyle involves the new American Mormon territories as part of the tale in an effort to showcase what happens in a society in which each citizen is allowed to intrude on and surveil their neighbour. Ultimately, fears of contamination reveal deeper suspicions and concerns regarding the Other in many forms, infiltrating and corrupting Victorian bodies, societies, and souls from within.

Biography

Molly Robinson is currently an English post baccalaureate student at California State University, Fullerton and an Educational Counseling post baccalaureate student at National University. Though she has studied many topics and disciplines, Molly is working on her thesis on Victorian era detective and crime fiction.

‘Science Fiction and Occult Empiricism: Psychological Experience in *Karma: A Novel*’ Aren Roukema

In *Karma: A Novel* (1886), Theosophist Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840–1921) fictionalised his experiences with the mediumship of Theosophical Society founder, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. *Karma* reflects, and is generated by, a significant Victorian knowledge problem: Confronted with thousands of claimed psychical experiences, mental physiologists sought empirical explanations for such events by turning to under-developed sciences of the mind. Such research was often defined by an empiricist rejection of narrative accounts of inner experience, as scientists questioned the possibility of verifying accounts of unrepeatable, subjective events; other researchers, however, most famously the members of the Society for Psychical Research, continued to enlist accounts of individual occult experience as empirical proof of supernatural phenomena.

In the vein of psychical research, but guided by the radical epistemology of Theosophy, *Karma* is structured around a set of experiments designed to substantiate phenomena including clairvoyance, astral projection, and telekinesis. Aware that normative empirical methods will not accomplish this task, a powerful German occultist has gathered a group of elite English researchers and socialites to witness and verify exhibitions of these and other psychical abilities. In the process of describing these displays, Sinnett’s novel presents a methodology for the empirical study of accounts of psychical experience.

This paper analyses *Karma*’s contribution to Victorian debates surrounding the epistemology of experience, arguing that the novel takes advantage of science fiction’s aura of empiricist verisimilitude in order to present occult experience as scientific method. *Karma* thus illustrates the manner in which the Victorian tension between human experience and empirical method could generate science fictional texts, and in turn be illustrated, interrogated, and redefined by them.

Biography

Aren Roukema is a SSHRC doctoral fellow at Birkbeck. Recent publications include *Esotericism and Narrative* (Brill, 2018) and “Naturalists in *Ghost Land*: Victorian Occultism and Science Fiction,” in *The Occult Imagination in Britain: 1875-1947* (Routledge, 2018). He is Editor of *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism*.

“In deference to the public taste”: Limits of the Exotic in Philip Meadows Taylor’s Indian Romances’
Dhrubajyoti Sarkar

In spite of considerable success with his first two fictional works *Confessions of a Thug* (1839) and *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840), Philip Meadows Taylor found it quite difficult to negotiate an acceptable publishing contract for *Tara*, his third novel. As Taylor became confident to provide an authentic picture of the Indian scene with first-hand knowledge of custom and geography of the land, the publishers and the reviewers increasingly found them to be alienating factors for the potential readers. Those apprehensions stand vindicated by the initial sales data; notwithstanding critical acclaim, *Tara* clocked poor sales figures.

This paper proposes that Taylor’s detailed and authentic representation of manners of the main Indian religious communities both attracted and deterred his initial readers. In the middle of his literary career the so-called authentic exotic details ended up discouraging many readers of his time. The author bowed down to the popular expectation while writing *Ralph Darnell* (1865), the second volume of the sequel, by moving a large part of the plot to familiar English locale. The move was dear to the publishers, but could not salvage a financial fortune for the work.

This paper proposes to conclude that as Taylor abandoned the publishers’ formula to fall back more squarely upon the repository of his personal Indian experiences, his later novels eventually earned him the lasting fame in the sobriquet of Scott of India. Therefore, the swings of the literary fortune of Taylor’s novels during the late Victorian period can be considered to be a representative case that tested the limit of popular taste’s interest with the unfamiliar religions and exotic religious custom.

Biography

Dhrubajyoti Sarkar teaches at Department of English, University of Kalyani, India. His doctoral dissertation at University of Hyderabad analysed the nature of textual authority in nineteenth-century social reform texts of colonial Bengal. His areas of specialization are Victorian Studies, literature of the Raj and religion-culture interface.

“I had been hanging about the banks in Lombard Street [...] since nine o’clock in the morning”: Mid-Victorian Police Memoir Fiction and Exploring the Urban Cityscape
Samuel Saunders

This paper forms a small part of a larger research project into the literary significance and socio-cultural connections of mid-Victorian ‘police memoir’ fiction, a popular form of writing throughout the mid-nineteenth century which reached its peak in the 1850s and 60s but which rapidly declined in popularity from around 1875. The project connects ‘police memoir’ fiction to a multitude of mid-Victorian socio-cultural developments and aims to establish it as a noteworthy form of Victorian popular fiction.

However, this paper is interested in one particular aspect – how the genre solidified the police’s connections with the growing urban cityscape, and how it aided its ‘exploration’. Across the early-to-mid nineteenth century, London famously grew startlingly quickly, leading to corresponding legislative measures to attempt to regulate and manage the new urban sprawl. The establishment and expansion of the Metropolitan Police was one such reaction to this urban growth, and this paper argues that the corresponding popularity of ‘police memoir’ fiction can help us to better understand how and why the police became to be perceived to be almost part of the growing city themselves, and how officers were seen as guides to help explore it.

The paper uses map-data and journalistic sources to highlight how various contemporary commentators made a conscious connection between the city and its regulation through law enforcement. The police were perceived as entrenched as part of the city and the paper suggests that authors came to use the police as a means of exploring and better understanding their own urban surroundings. This, the paper also argues, allowed readers to more consciously experience the growth of the city from a larger perspective than their own lived experiences, and contributed to the still-prevalent and largely stereotyped image of the police officer as an integral part of the urban landscape.

Biography

Samuel Saunders received his PhD in 2018 from Liverpool John Moores University, where he currently teaches English Literature on a sessional basis. His thesis, which looked at the connections between Victorian journalism and crime fiction, is currently under contract to be published as a monograph with Routledge in 2020.

‘The Sternness of my Own Cold Stone Building: Gothic Reflections of Childhood and the Home in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*’
Terry Scarborough

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* reflects a vast spectrum of social and cultural anxieties at the Victorian *fin de siècle*. The immense social and scientific developments and social changes of the late-nineteenth century found expression in Gothic renderings of monstrous and abject images through which sublimated recondite interpretations of everyday life. Commonplace are readings of *Dracula* which address unease surrounding gender, science, economics degeneration theory and crime, to name a few. But a significant insight into late Victorian life has remained strangely neglected: the role of the Victorian family and home. I propose a study of Stoker’s Gothic reflection of the increasingly fragmented and individualized family unit during the late century as reflected in Dr. John Seward’s *home* for the insane and R. M. Renfield’s positioning between the parental figures of Seward and the Count. Furthermore, I will investigate Abraham Van Helsing’s characterization of the Count as a “child-brain” in relation to Victorian theories of childhood and child psychology, most specifically in the works of James Sully. Moreover, this approach will address on a familial level the Count’s relation to Lucy Westenra. The analysis will encompass narrative elements including Stoker’s innovative application of the epistolary mode and Victorian communication technology to reveal the continuing interest in youth as an embodiment of both potential and threat in the face of a perceived monstrous modernity.

Biography

Terry Scarborough is College Professor in the Department of English at Okanagan College, Kelowna British Columbia, Canada where he teaches literature and composition. His research interests include the urban Gothic, the Victorian city, the ghost story and Dickens studies. He is currently completing a monograph which explores the connections between animals and sanitary reform in Dickens.

‘Communing with Souls on Saturn: Space Exploration and Spiritualism in John Jacob Astor’s *A Journey in Other Worlds*’

Fiona Schroeder

There has been a tendency in existing scholarship to read the journey into space as an imaginative extension of contemporary processes of geographical exploration and imperial expansion, a perspective that often ignores the complex inner workings of individual texts. David Seed’s description of John Jacob Astor’s *A Journey in Other Worlds* (1894) as an explicit celebration of “[t]he combination of territorial expansion and technological advances” (150) typifies this oversight. This paper will move beyond reductive understandings of Victorian interplanetary fiction to explore the neglected complexities of the novel which, in its second half, moves away from imperialistic fantasies of a New World in space to metaphysical musings on the workings of the human soul, and the possibility of an afterlife on Saturn

Astor’s novel is one among a number of contemporary works which combine the fantasy of space exploration with ideas taken from the Spiritualist movement. However the Spiritualist turn halfway through Astor’s text seems incongruous, and not in keeping with Seed’s analysis: having claimed Jupiter as “a new promised land” (Astor 262), the protagonists’ spiritual awakening on Saturn leaves us uncertain whether their plans for the expansion of the American empire into space will be realized. The ideologies of imperial capitalism, anchored in the material realities of natural resources and geographical space, give way to a theological imperative. By more carefully examining the second half of the novel, this paper will seek to highlight the nuances and contradictions that sit, not only at the heart of *A Journey in Other Worlds*, but also the popular scientific romance genre more broadly, and to counter the assumption that “[t]he expansionist impulse is very rarely questioned in this body of fiction” (Seed 236).

Biography

Fiona Schroeder is an AHRC-funded PhD student at the University of Exeter. Her thesis examines fantasies of space exploration in late-Victorian science fiction. Reading these against the closure of the world frontier, the project explores the ways in which popular fiction was not only energizing, but also complicating and challenging contemporary ideologies of imperial capitalist expansion.

‘Cocaine Addiction, Skin, and Sexuality in Arthur Machen’s “The White Powder”’ **Douglas R.J. Small**

This paper examines the influence of *fin-de-siècle* cocaine addiction on metaphorical and narrative structures of popular fiction, with a particular focus on the way in which representations of cocainism foregrounded the skin as a physical and ideological site where mind, matter, and spirit might unsettlingly converge. Cocaine only truly entered the Victorian public consciousness in 1884, when it was discovered that the alkaloid could serve as the first effective local anaesthetic. Comparatively soon thereafter, though, reports began to proliferate regarding the newly-popular compound’s potential addictability, and the uniquely frightening consequences of that addiction. Victorian commentators dwelt at length upon the aphrodisiac and hallucinogenic properties of cocaine habituation. The Irish addiction specialist Connolly Norman wrote that the cocainist was “tormented by sexual excitement and sexual hallucinations”, and beset by “revolting, dirty, sensuous illusions.” Another, more viscerally horrifying effect was Magnan’s Sign, or “the cocaine bug”, a tactile hallucination and delusion whereby the user became convinced that insects or worms were infesting and burrowing beneath their skin. As such, the addict’s skin – already commonly regarded as “covered with puncture marks and abscesses” from injecting the cocaine itself – was seemingly further polluted by the hallucinatory derangement of the addict’s own thoughts.

Taking as its primary case study Arthur Machen’s 1895 short story ‘The White Powder’, this paper argues that *fin de siècle* cocainism was often framed as a condition in which the hallucinatory derangement of the addict’s spirit might become materialised in their skin, both as a site of erotic contact and of diseased contamination. Machen’s story, I suggest, utilises the common tropes of cocaine addiction to construct the effects of its mysterious White Powder, and, in the words of one Victorian cocainist, “project” the “phantasmagoria” of the addict’s mind onto the material surface of their skin.

Biography

Dr Douglas Small is a Wellcome Trust Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of ‘Sherlock Holmes and Cocaine’ and ‘Masters of Healing: Cocaine and the Ideal of the Victorian Medical Man’. He is currently preparing a monograph on the history of cocaine from 1870 to 1920.

‘Victorian Views of the Arctic’ Jacqueline Stamp

This paper will argue that Victorian popular fiction not only echoed people’s perceptions of the Arctic regions in the nineteenth century but also helped to shape them. With reference to a range of Victorian popular fiction, across the readership age-range, it will explore ways in which fictional representations of the Arctic reflected and affected readers’ knowledge and perceptions of the region as the century progressed.

From the dire warnings of Mary Shelley’s Captain Walton in 1818, through the wistful imaginings of a young Jane Eyre in 1847, to the apocalyptic nature of M. P. Shiel’s *Purple Cloud* in 1901, fictional representations of the Arctic follow a circular trajectory echoed in other media.

Mid-century, with public and political enthusiasm for Arctic exploration equivalent to that devoted to space travel a century later [CITATION Pot07 \p 3 \l 2057], popular fiction represented the Arctic as a place where men could prove their manliness and secure the respect of their peers, coincidentally developing, as Jen Hill and Francis Spufford have identified, the qualities usually only expected of women: “courage, resolution, patience, endurance” [CITATION Hil08 \p 90 \l 2057]

At either end of the nineteenth century the region was represented as a desolate, impenetrable anathema to civilisation, fortune and health. Changes in representations and perceptions were driven primarily by politics and economics but were also susceptible to public emotions, as this paper will indicate.

Fiction aimed at children and young people portrayed the Arctic variously as a fantasy land of ice-queens and goblins, as a heathen land ripe for Christian mission, or, latterly, as an early focus for conservationists.

Referencing each of the above genres and some poetry, this paper will recognise the ways in which Victorian readers, young and old, came to know the Arctic through their popular fiction, and how that ‘knowledge’ developed over the century.

Biography

Jacque graduated from the University of Kent in 2016 with a Master’s in Dickens and Victorian Culture. She is now studying for a PhD in English Literature at Canterbury Christ Church University, where her research focuses on representations of the Arctic in Victorian literature, art and popular culture.

**‘Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Metaphorical Medical Matters’
Isabelle Staniaszek**

‘He took his dissecting-knife and went to work at an intellectual autopsy. He anatomised the wretched woman’s soul.’

(Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *John Marchmont’s Legacy*, 1863)

Sensation fiction writers often took inspiration for their plots from developments in contemporary science and culture. The relationship between sensation plots and medicine gives us insight into Victorian fears about technical and professional developments in medicine as well as the gendered concerns over the perceived physical and psychological effects on its readership. M. E. Braddon deployed medical characters and plots to some degree in almost all of her (twenty-five!) novels of the 1860s. Celebrated today as a pioneer of the sensation genre, at the height of her success Braddon experimented with other genres, taking a particular interest in realist fiction from France by authors such as Flaubert, Sand, and Balzac. While her attempts at realist novels (such as her rewriting of *Madame Bovary* (1857), *The Doctor’s Wife* (1864)) were not proclaimed overly successful, some of her most sensational plots owe something to her interest in the ‘morbid-anatomy school’ of the French realists. This paper will demonstrate how Braddon’s frequent use of the language of dissection and anatomy can be read as evidence of her enthusiasm for French literature, explore how anatomy and dissection came to be seen as explicitly French, and thereby examine the influence of French medicine and French culture on British popular culture in the 1860s.

Biography

Isabelle Staniaszek is a PhD researcher at the University of Roehampton and a member of the Surgery and Emotion project. Her thesis, ‘French Medicine in British Popular Literature and Culture of the 1860s’, explores the formation of professional, cultural and national identities in sensation fiction and other popular media.

‘Piracy in the Popular Penny Press’

Kristen Starkowski

In 1838, Charles Dickens—angry that Vice-Chancellor Knight-Bruce failed to prevent the dissemination of *The Penny Pickwick*—published a notice against the “dishonest dullards... [who] impose upon the unwary and credulous by producing...imitations of our delectable works.” Three weeks later, Edward Lloyd responded, attacking those who “are ambitious to rob us of a share of that fame.” This debate highlights the controversy over the authenticity of penny dreadfuls: Dickens labeled these renditions unoriginal, while the publishers involved thought that the redundancy in the serials enabled their very novelty. By analyzing “plagiarisms” of *Oliver Twist*, I argue that attempts to repurpose Dickensian styles in the form of penny serials fueled the creation of a genre of writing that was ultimately quite unique in terms of character position.

My paper reads the two versions of *Oliver Twiss*, one by “Poz” and one by “Bos,” alongside a digital humanities project in order to pinpoint working-class modes of characterological novelty in the popular penny press. I use social network analysis to map the amount of narrative attention afforded to characters in Dickens’s originals and in the spinoffs. I show that the working-class canon celebrates a reversal of character position that allows us to reframe the classic distinction between flat and round. The presentation also cites material from The Frank Pettingell Collection—such as *Martin Guzzlewit* and *Dombey and Daughter*—to argue that working-class serials elevated minor characters in the middle-class canon, like servants and criminals, to major characters in the penny canon. In doing so, I put pressure on terms like “penny plagiarism” that belittle the contributions made by penny publishers and demonstrate via a range of methods of textual and digital analysis—like counting, sorting, mapping, and comparison—the innovations that penny novelists made, primarily in terms of character, but also in terms of style, plot, and language.

Biography

Kristen Starkowski is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of English at Princeton University, where she is working on a dissertation entitled *Doorstep Moments: Close Encounters with Minor Characters in the Victorian Novel*. Her work has appeared in *Latino Studies* and in *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*.

“How I Managed My Baby”: Competitive Infant Care in Victorian Popular Fiction

Tamara S. Wagner

The proposed paper critically parses how nineteenth-century women writers embedded baby care advice in their fiction in order to counter the growing control of medical experts over childrearing. The expanding market of professional instructions reconfigured images of babyhood, codifying the baby as a source of anxiety that required clinical knowledge and intervention. Women writers as different as the sensation novelist Mrs Henry Wood and Eliza Warren, the main rival of the bestselling Isabella Beeton, packaged infant care advice in narratives, at once trading on and endeavouring to reshape this market. Manuals in narrative form, Warren’s “How I Managed” series renegotiates the shifting focus on expert knowledge and personal experience to express anxiety about male professional instructions and thereby imbue mothers with agency. By contrast, Wood capitalises on mothers’ growing sense of uncertainty to produce new sources of sensationalism. Like Warren, she demonstrates the effectiveness of one method of infant care by dramatising the failure of another, yet in Wood’s fiction, babyhood is not only easily mismanaged, but also a target of criminal intervention, and in the process, Wood identifies parenting practices she disagrees with as a crime. Drawing attention to the figure of the literary baby as an understudied topic, competitive infant care advice in popular fiction at once exemplifies how Victorian novelists participated in topical controversies surrounding new expert knowledge on babyhood and shows how genre developments produced as well as traded on changing images of infancy.

Biography

Tamara S. Wagner is Associate Professor at NTU, Singapore. Her books include *Victorian Narratives of Failed Emigration* (2016), *Financial Speculation in Victorian Fiction* (2010), and *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel, 1740-1890* (2004). Wagner currently works on a study of Victorian babyhood.

'The Moonstone and the Imperial Unconscious'

Alisha Walters

The mixed-race figure, who challenged the ostensibly straightforward taxonomic distinction between white and black, English and foreign, often was described in terms of his or her psychological effect – and affect – on the English subject, a truth registered in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*. In this text, the physically startling racial hybrid, the piebald Ezra Jennings, makes “too strong” a psychological impression on the protagonist, Franklin Blake, “to be...dismissed from [Blake's] thoughts,” and it is this connection between hybridity and early theories of thought that I explore in this paper.¹¹ I argue that *The Moonstone* describes the British psychic encounter with the racialized, hybridized ‘Other,’ as a constitutive part of national identity formation. My paper positions *The Moonstone* as a novel that illuminates our understanding of how early Victorian discourses of consciousness, ideals of nationalism, and theories of racial in-betweenness came to co-form one another at this historical moment.

My paper, drawn from my in-progress book manuscript, argues that *The Moonstone* demonstrates Collins' idea of an imperialized unconscious: the affective construction of Britishness, signalled by the racial hybrid, in which the unconscious landscape of British mind is always, in part, populated by the racial Other, who reforms it in the imperial exchange. I explore *The Moonstone's* unique engagement with theories of consciousness, such as those put forth by nineteenth-century science writers William B. Carpenter, John Elliotson, and even the novelist, Thomas De Quincey. My paper situates these discourses of human consciousness in relation to Collins' representation of the racial Other. I show that *The Moonstone's* understanding of the unconscious mind is one that cannot be divorced from imaginings of imperial race and hybridity; this is because in several scenes, the text's depictions of racial mixture become allied intimately to complex understandings of the psyche. In this way, I argue that we must re-examine *The Moonstone* as a text that illuminates our understanding of how early ideas of race, nineteenth-century theories of consciousness, and burgeoning ideals of Britishness influenced each other.

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.

¹¹ Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, ed. John Sutherland (1868; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 320-321.

‘Acropolis Now: Photography and Freud’s Crisis of the Real’

Treena Kay Warren

Although we tend to think of Freud as a twentieth-century thinker, his birth in 1856 made him very much a Victorian, and this is particularly apparent in his predisposition towards the visual. As one of the first generation to be born after the inception of photography, Freud grew up in a culture of what Nancy Armstrong, in *Fiction in the Age of Photography*, terms ‘mass visuality’: a culture that privileged the visible and looking as primary agents of meaning and truth, and in which images became a measure of authenticity equal to the material objects they represented, thus displacing the very grounds of reality itself.

This paper considers Freud’s famously unsettling visit to the ruins of the Acropolis, in Athens – recounted in his 1936 essay, ‘A Disturbance of Memory at the Acropolis’ – as evidence of his emphatically Victorian perception, conditioned by the preeminence of the photographic image. Despite a long-held ambition to experience this monument for himself, when confronted with the celebrated ruins Freud was overwhelmed by feelings of unreality and disbelief – feelings which, I argue, originate in a specifically Victorian tendency to equate knowing with seeing, that blurs the line between original and copy, genuine and fake, and matter and mind.

Biography

Treena Warren received her Ph.D. from the University of Sussex in 2018. She is currently an independent scholar, interested in manifestations of the uncanny and horrific at the intersections of nineteenth-century literature, art and science, with an emphasis on photography. Her work has been published in *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, and she is a board member of the Association for Art History’s Doctoral and Early Career Researcher Network (DECR).

‘Religious Meaning and the Melodramatic Mute: Sand Divination in *The Garden of Allah*’

Leanne Waters

In 1904, English author Robert S. Hichens published his desert-adventure story, *The Garden of Allah*, which follows the brave but bereft Englishwoman, Domini Enfielden. After the death of her father, Domini travels to Beni-Mora, a hinterland town of the Sahara Desert. There, she meets the mysterious, lone traveller Boris Androvsky. The two fall in love and get married, but Domini is unaware that Boris is an escaped Trappist monk from the monastery of El-Largani, and so the novel maps their shared story of intrigue, sin, and redemption. Hichens’ book was a massive bestseller, selling hundreds of thousands of copies internationally. It went on to be adapted for the Century Theatre in New York, which began a tour across North America that would break box-office records, before being adapted for film three times later in the twentieth century. Despite such success, both Hichens and his bestseller are largely forgotten in scholarship today, and when they are remembered it is often as little more than late-Victorian curios. As well as attempting to bring Hichens into literary discourse to a greater degree, this paper evaluates the author’s use of melodramatic aesthetics, as well as how those aesthetics enabled Hichens to tap into *fin-de-siècle* occultism. To this end, I use Peter Brooks’ idea of the melodramatic mute, a sage figure whose exclusion from civilisation is often the very thing that enables him/her to access hidden wisdom. Moreover, I want to suggest that by tapping into occult practices like sand divination, *The Garden of Allah* participated in a more comparative approach to religious belief, one that was open to and which capitalised on non-Christian modes of thought and belief at the end of the nineteenth century.

Biography

Leanne Waters completed her PhD on late-Victorian religious bestsellers in University College Dublin in 2018, and she is currently rewriting my doctoral thesis as a monograph, under the working title: *God in the Marketplace: Christianity, Melodrama, and the Late-Victorian Bestseller*. She has a chapter on representations of Christly children in late-Victorian fiction forthcoming in *The Figure of Christ in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave, 2019), and she is also contributing an entry on Marie Corelli to *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Women Writers* (Palgrave, 2019). This year, she will be joining the editorial board of the peer-reviewed *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*.

‘Sites Set on Crime: Spaces of Justice, Truth and Knowledge in Early Russian Crime Fiction’

Claire Whitehead

This paper examines the role of spatial organization and representation in a work of late-Imperial-era Russian crime fiction: Semyon Panov’s *Tri suda, ili ubiistvo vo vremia bala* (*Three Courts, or Murder During the Ball*) (1876). Nineteenth-century Russian crime fiction is only now beginning to receive the critical attention it deserves, although knowledge of its existence and characteristics is still limited both inside and outside of Russia. Panov himself remains a marginalized figure in the pages of Russian literary history in spite of being one of the most accomplished authors of the genre during this period. *Three Courts* is one of five novels Panov published in the 1870s and describes the investigation into the murder of Elena Ruslanova during her engagement ball at her family’s mansion.

This discussion will argue that the depiction of various spaces in *Three Courts*, and their relationship to one another, functions as an expression of the various matrices of knowledge, truth and justice that are interrogated in the work. The unmistakable Gothic overtones of the early descriptions of the Ruslanov mansion and its labyrinthine rooms effectively mirror the mystery surrounding Elena’s murder. However, these are intriguingly contrasted with more transparent elements, including various windows and a glass roof, perhaps suggesting the prospect of the detective uncovering the truth. The interrelationship of these spaces effectively foreshadows the detective’s difficulties in the case, however. The paper will also examine the detective’s role in the creation of a quasi-theatrical space as he stage-manages a reenactment of characters’ positions in the house at the moment of the murder. In its final section, this paper will analyse the implications of the presentation of the space of the courtroom, a key site in post-judicial-reform Russia. Again juxtaposing more open and closed spaces, the representation of the courtroom eloquently expresses the contested notions of truth and justice as they are embodied in Panov’s novel, which features a fallible investigation, a wrongful conviction and a re-examination of the case.

Biography

Claire Whitehead is Senior Lecturer in Russian at the University of St Andrews. She is the author of the monograph *The Poetics of Early Russian Crime Fiction, 1860-1917: Deciphering Stories of Detection* (Oxford: Legenda, 2018). She has written extensively on various authors of nineteenth-century Russian crime fiction, as well as on the contemporary author, Boris Akunin.

“Science is a match that man has just got alight”: The Fourth Dimension, the “Man of Science” and the unreadable “Book of Nature” in *The Time Machine*
Stephen Whiting

As Jim Baggott contends, towards the end of the Victorian period ‘the mechanical structure of physics was beginning to creak’; the century that ‘began with the certainties of absolute knowledge’ was ending ‘with the knowledge of absolute uncertainty.’ Research on the atom and the electron, as well as the discovery of radio waves and x-rays, added phenomena that were everywhere and yet invisible to the naked eye, opening up a “Fourth Dimension” even before Einstein’s work on special relativity (published in 1905) made it a recognised concept. At the same time, the growth of supernatural and spiritualist ideas over the latter-half of the nineteenth century, moving from amateur mediums to attempts to objectively prove the existence of psychical phenomena had likewise opened up an “other”, paranormal dimension. These liminal spaces resisted the abilities of the (invariably) male scientist to observe, to read, their phenomena and to make determinist statements or predictions. If Victorian science had enshrined a clearer, more discerning vision of Nature, towards the end of the century it had, as Martin Willis argues, revealed something of the ‘historical fragility’ of vision.

H. G. Wells’ *fin-de-siècle* writing can be located against this backdrop of scientific indeterminism. His early science fiction would embody, metatextually, the inherently fragmentary reality of the “book of nature” becoming increasingly more complicated. Glimpses of other dimensions, material or immaterial, spatial or temporal, were metaphorically indicating vast tomes of epistemological and phenomenological “reading” still to be conducted by the *fin-de-siècle* scientist. Grounded in the image of the book and of reading generally, this paper will examine how Wells’ *The Time Machine* subtly codifies disparate contemporaneous anxieties regarding scientific indeterminism and the failing male gaze.

Biography

Stephen Whiting is a fourth year PhD student at the University of Leeds and the recipient of a University of Leeds Anniversary Scholarship. His thesis looks at masculine anxiety in relation to reading and writing from 1890 to 1914.

‘Exorcising the Muse in “A Psychological Invasion”’

Bruce Wyse

In Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton appeals to his “Celestial Patroness, who deigns/ Her nightly visitation unimplor’d,/ And dictates to me slumb’ring, or inspires/ Easy my unpremeditated verse.” In contrast, the writers of popular fiction must typically settle for a subordinate muse: topicality, for example. At the *fin de siècle* many writers found inspiration in the contemporaneous fascination with telepathy, clairvoyance, and mediumship, and this nexus of the psychical, intersubjective, and preternatural infiltrated representations of artistic and literary production, and even the conception of the muse. This is perhaps best exemplified in George du Maurier’s *The Martian* (1897), the fictional biography of the imaginary, best-selling writer, Barty Josselin, known for his satire, genial comedy, and wisdom. He is possessed, it turns out, by the discarnate spirit of an actual Martian named Martia, who loves the superlatively handsome and good humoured protagonist and provides him with his literary material. She is the “muse” in science fiction trappings.

Algernon Blackwood’s “A Psychological Invasion” (1908) offers a darkly re-gothicised and satiric counterpoint to *The Martian*, converting the amiable, maternal, symbiotic, and collaborative alien-“muse” into a diabolical, persecutory, and derisive one. In this, the first of his John Silence stories, Blackwood has the “Psychic Doctor” investigate, diagnose, and treat a case of preternaturally corrupted creativity or imagination. Felix Pender is a “writer of humorous tales” with “a great gift,” whose “talent” suddenly and “utterly fail[s] him.” Silence discovers that Pender has attempted to stimulate his sense of the absurd by taking an “experimental dose” of “*Cannabis indica*” and this has rendered him partially clairvoyant. He thus opens himself to a psychical invasion on the part of a hostile presence which he recognises as “inimical to my soul, or at least to all in me that wished for good.” It is the spirit of a woman who is “appallingly evil” and who manifests “the perversity of the unbalanced mind.” She shatters his equanimity, but, worse, she corrupts his writing so that “all his characters became wrong and terrible . . . they altered, so that he felt like writing tragedies—vile, debased tragedies, the tragedies of broken souls.” The writer of good-natured, wholesome, entertaining, and popular stories is, in essence, involuntarily reduced to a decadent writer whose writings now exhibit the pessimism, depravity, and “curiously poisonous” qualities that Arthur Symons identifies in 1893 as the symptoms of modern art. In what follows, the humane hero, maintaining his sanity and self-control, exorcises the diabolical “muse” of decadence, purging the house of literary creation of a dangerous and perverse elitism which is at once, as Symons says, “so fascinating [and] so repellent.”

Biography

Bruce Wyse is an Instructor in the Department of English at Wilfrid Laurier University. His research interests focus on the representation of mesmerism in nineteenth-century literature, Gothic Fiction, and the *fin de siècle*. He has published articles on Bulwer-Lytton, Conan Doyle, Horace Smith, and George du Maurier, as well as on film, television, contemporary drama, and crime fiction.

‘*Carmilla* and the Matter of “Monsieur Buffon, and his big book”’: Popular Natural History in the Supernatural Tale’

Rae X. Yan

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s novella *Carmilla* (1872) is primarily studied as a supernatural story about the titular vampire’s pursuit of the narrator, Laura. Yet *Carmilla*’s conspicuous attempt to teach Laura about the work of “Monsieur Buffon and his big book” before the vampire’s ultimate destruction reveals Le Fanu’s surprising interest in medicine and comparative anatomy. This essay reads the vampire *Carmilla*’s allegiance to “Monsieur Buffon”—the eighteenth-century French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788)—and “his big book,” the series *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (1749), as a competing model for contemporary nineteenth-century scientific research. When *Carmilla* attempts to teach Laura from Buffon’s “big book,” she encourages Laura to reflect on the resonant sympathies between seemingly dissimilar bodies in order to open up the possibility that different species may truly relate to each other. Indeed, *Carmilla* brings forward Buffon’s concepts of holistic similarity and “unity of type” to argue for the necessity of analyzing structural affinities between organisms. By reading *Carmilla* alongside Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle*, I argue that *Carmilla* attempts to seduce Laura with instruction in popular natural history. Given that much of the success of Buffon’s series on natural history was attributed to its popularity amongst women readers and intellectuals, Le Fanu seems to suggest that the supposedly ancient vampire might, in fact, be a modern woman of science. As such, Le Fanu pits *Carmilla* against a host of male medical authorities who wish to dissect her vampiric body until its corruptive nature is known and who see anatomy as a site to extract knowledge about material differences. *Carmilla*’s arguments for a Buffonian perspective compels readers and protagonist alike to be more skeptical about this kind of anthropocentric scientific wisdom primarily written for and consumed by men.

Biography

Rae X. Yan is an Assistant Professor of British Literature from 1830 to 1900 at the University of Florida. Her published articles include “Dickens’s Wild Child: Nurture and Discipline after Peter the Wild Boy” in *Dickens Studies Annual* and “Robert Louis Stevenson as Philosophical Anatomist: The Body Snatcher” in *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*.

‘On the Precipice: Formal Agency and Temperance in John Harris’s *Caleb Cliff*’ Duncan Yeates

Caleb Cliff is a dramatic fragment by the Cornish poet, John Harris (1820-1884), which warns its intended labouring class audience of the perils of alcoholism. The fragment tells the story of a working man ruined by alcoholism who, after an intervention from an unnamed “traveller”, subsequently repents and achieves commercial success, rising from the role of labourer to the one of a successful businessman.

This paper will explore *Caleb Cliff*’s use of form in conjunction with Victorian notions of the somatic qualities of metre. This is achieved in the poem by its disciplined use of blank verse from a sober narrator juxtaposed with heptasyllabic “songs” from its drunken eponymous character. Victorian ideas about the kinetic effect metre had on the body suggest that Harris’s fragment might have been designed to deter its audience from drinking alcohol in an immediate and physical way.

John Harris was also a tin miner, Methodist preacher and an advocate of temperance. When considered in this context, his metrical choices in *Caleb Cliff* become even more rich, contradictory and worthy of further exploration and discussion.

Biography

Duncan Yeates is a doctoral student in his fifth year of study. He is also a poet and his work can be found in *Wave Hub: New Poetry from Cornwall* (Francis Boutle). Duncan is also working on a collected edition of John Harris’s poetry with Dr. A. M Kent.