Abstracts and Biographies
‘Meeting a Feminist Friend: The Egyptian Priestess’
Jessica Albrecht

Florence Farr, actress and writer, member of the Order of the Golden Dawn and the Theosophical Society, as well as friend of W.B. Yeats and Bernard Shaw, spent hours of her free time in the early 1890s in the Egypt rooms of the British Museum. Whilst reading books on “ancient Egypt”, she established spiritual contact with an Egyptian priestess, a mummy who was displayed in these reading rooms, as well as with a female Egyptian statue. For the following five years, the priestess became Florence’s “Egyptian adept” in the Order of the Golden Dawn and part of an inner group which focussed solely on the study of Ancient Egypt. Florence Farr, who had previously acted as an Egyptian priestess in various plays in Bedford Park and elsewhere, also communicated with the goddess Isis through occult rituals in the Order. These encounters highly shaped Florence’s own writings and plays. In particular, the connection to these female religious forces empowered Florence’s women characters such as in her autobiographical novel The Dancing Faun (1896) and her plays The Beloved of Hathor and The Shrine of the Golden Hawk (1901). This paper examines how Farr created a space for feminist interpretations of “ancient Egypt” within her writings which enabled empowerment for female characters to transgress the boundaries of Victorian gender norms. Florence’s spiritual encounter with these women shaped her feminism which influenced the conceptions of gender and sexuality within Florence’s esoteric circles which can still be seen in feminist esotericism today.

Biography
Jessica Albrecht, Department of the Study of Religion (Religionswissenschaft), University of Heidelberg. MSc in Gender History, currently finishing a M.A. in Modern South Asian Languages, about to start her PhD in the Study of Religion on theosophical feminists and Buddhist and Hindu girls’ education in Ceylon.
‘The City as Corpse: Urban Vulnerabilities in Late-Victorian Disaster Fiction’
Steve Asselin

The urbanization of England over the course of the nineteenth century made cities both immediately familiar to readers of periodical fiction but also relatively novel from a historical perspective. Cities tended to be viewed in opposition to nature, environment being something that one left the city to enjoy in the countryside or by the sea. But in the emergent genre of disaster fiction that found a niche in the illustrated periodicals of the late Victorian period, typical narratives of urban encroachment into the surrounding environment are reversed. In stories by regular periodical contributors such as Grant Allen, Robert Barr, Cutcliffe Hyne, Richard Jefferies, Morley Roberts, and Fred M. White, catastrophic environmental phenomena like fogs, blizzards, volcanic eruptions, and more esoteric calamities still, enter and usually overwhelm British cities like London.

These cataclysms throw stark light into the vulnerabilities of such unprecedented agglomerations of people, both at the physical and social level. Physically, the infrastructure of urban environments is insufficient to the task of dealing with added environmental stress, and the physical environment of the city becomes susceptible to literal and metaphorical collapse. The city is shown to be unsustainable when its links to the exterior environment, which it relies upon for food, are severed. Socially, the catastrophe highlights many of the author’s key critiques of contemporary culture and urban living, including catastrophes exacerbated by class divisions, by pollution and the apathy towards it, by commercialism and hedonism, or simply by the reversion of humanity to animalistic behaviour in times of crisis. The most extreme versions of such stories—mass casualty events—repopulate the city with corpses instead of living citizens, and alter even the physical aspect of the city in an uncanny, Gothic ways; their authors suggests that, as unliving environments, the very concept of cities are doomed to collapse.

Biography
Steve Asselin is a visiting assistant professor at Brandon University, Manitoba, whose research interests include ecocriticism and speculative fiction. He is currently working on a monograph about the origins of disaster fiction in the 19th century. His work has appeared in Gender and Environment in Science Fiction, The New Centennial Review, and Science-Fiction Studies.
"My knowledge gives me a safeguard": Science and Doubt in Three Late Victorian Vampire Stories’
Tereza Bambušková

The last three decades of the nineteenth century saw interesting developments in the genre of vampire fiction and produced its arguably most famous example in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. This paper examines how the state of Victorian science and psychology informs the depiction of the encounters with the vampiric in three texts: Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* (1872), Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) and F.G. Loring’s “The Tomb of Sarah” (1900).

On the one hand, the scientific approach works well as a framework for dealing with the unknown. Instead of re-evaluating their world view in order to bring the supernatural into it, the characters bring the supernatural into their own world, identify and catalogue it, and ultimately dispatch it. The vampires are truly defeated when they become part of the known, much like a disease that, when diagnosed, can be treated.

On the other hand, scientific progress also acts as an impediment to certainty, since many occurrences which in the past would be without a doubt attributed to the supernatural have scientifically explainable counterparts. This leads to doubt and inaction on the part of the characters while they attempt to gather evidence and apply conventional methods. The reluctance to upset the status quo by something that does not fit into the enlightened, rational world inhibits sharing crucial information and leads to unnecessary casualties in each case.

Both the positive and the negative aspects of the characters’ methods of dealing with the supernatural provide valuable insight into the Victorian approach to new scientific theories and discoveries, and in a broader sense illustrate how the notions of objectivity and authority, tradition and innovation were entangled in the Victorian culture, fostering a unique set of reactions to the unknown.

Biography
Tereza Bambušková is a Ph.D. candidate in English literature at Charles University, Prague. Her research focuses on the genre of Victorian ghost story and attempts to solidify the definition of the genre and establish a corpus of relevant stories.
“Have you tried talking to him?”: Encountering the Victorian ‘Mad Doctor’ in BBC’s Quacks’
Anne-Marie Beller (and Claire O’Callaghan)

In neo-Victorian period drama, the representation of nineteenth-century psychiatry and the Victorian asylum tends to be presented in relation to the Gothic, meaning that audiences often encounter medicine of the period as sensation. Productions like Penny Dreadful and Ripper Street typically present unsavoury tales of nineteenth-century medical practice, whereas films like Stonehearst Asylum and Hysteria dramatise psychiatric spectacle. The BBC’s comedy drama, Quacks, however, represents a departure from such approaches. The show, which ran for only one series in 2017, centred on a group of pioneering medics in the 1840s, attempting to lead the way in surgery, dentistry, and mental health care, respectively. Unlike other neo-Victorian period dramas, Quacks used satire and absurdist, slapstick comedy to represent medical practice. While the show portrays the dangers of nineteenth-century dentistry and surgery, showing, for instance, the surgeon, Dr William Lessing, inadvertently excising a patient’s testicle in episode one, the representation of ‘Mad Doctor’ William Agar is rendered more sensitively. Focusing largely – though not exclusively – on Agar’s endeavours with ‘moral medicine’, this paper will look at how Quacks narrates the challenge of integrating medical innovation into psychiatric practice in the 1840s. While Agar adopts both progressive and pseudoscientific approaches to mental health practice (such as phrenology), his insistence on care and commitment to the alleviation of suffering functions, we suggest, to present an alternate image of Victorian psychiatry to that typically offered in period drama. Quacks’ use of comedy to explore mental health onscreen deconstructs the taboos around mental health through laughter and empathy, while also (paradoxically) exploring a crucial period in the development of modern psychiatry with respect and a measure of historical accuracy.

Biography
Anne-Marie Beller is Senior Lecturer in English at Loughborough University, UK. Her research interests include Victorian literature and culture, the Sensation Novel, New Woman Writing, and Neo-Victorianism. Recent work includes research on the Victorian male body, psychopathy in Victorian culture, the Victorian lunatic asylum, and Neo-Victorian representations of Elizabeth Siddal.
“Who in the World am I?”: Encountering Lewis Carroll in Neo-Victorian Biofiction
Charlotte Boyce

Long before he achieved fame as the author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (better known by his literary pseudonym, Lewis Carroll) exhibited a fascination with Victorian celebrity, lionising the best-known authors, artists and actors of his day. Yet he was also fiercely protective of his own privacy and generally refused to indulge fan requests for autographs or photographs; as he explained to one enquirer, ‘my constant aim is to remain, personally, unknown’. Given this reticence, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that Carroll’s biography is peppered with lacunae, the result of missing or destroyed documents. These gaps in the historical record have served to heighten post-Victorian interest in Carroll as a literary celebrity and, in particular, to increase speculation regarding the ‘truth’ of his relationship to his child-muse, Alice Liddell. This paper examines the ways in which two neo-Victorian biofictions – Katie Roiphe’s *Still She Haunts Me* (2001) and Gaynor Arnold’s *After Such Kindness* (2012) – respond to the ongoing readerly desire to encounter the ‘real’ Lewis Carroll/Charles Dodgson. It argues that, although the novels’ confessional narrative structures, fictionalised diary entries and first-person monologues create a quasi-autobiographic impression of intimacy and authenticity, the texts ultimately subvert the reader’s wish for epistemological certainty. In doing so, they work ironically to bolster Carroll’s celebrity status in the twenty-first century, adding to the enigmatic aura that has historically surrounded his persona.

Biography
Charlotte Boyce is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Portsmouth whose research focuses on Victorian and neo-Victorian literature and culture. She is the lead researcher on ‘Celebrity, Citizenship and Status’, an interdisciplinary project that examines the intersections between celebrity and civic cultures in historical and contemporary contexts, and co-editor of the forthcoming volume *Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (to be published by Routledge in 2022).
‘Natural and Environmental Catastrophe in Late Victorian Popular Fiction: Environmental Ambivalence in Richard Jefferies After London (1885)’
Ailise Bulfin

This paper explores late Victorian fictions of natural and environmental catastrophe and their relationship to contemporary developments in the natural and ecological sciences. While the majority of popular catastrophe texts at this time turn on disasters of a man-made, military nature, including global wars, nationalist uprisings, manufactured plagues and domestic revolutions, a significant subset employ seemingly natural disasters as the means of catastrophe – including H.G. Wells and George Griffith’s tales of comet strike, M.P. Shiel and Grant Allen’s volcano tales, William Delisle Hay, Robert Barr and Fred M. White’s accounts of deadly fog, and even a number of tales which imagine forms of climate change – including Richard Jefferies’ After London (1885). This article relates this little-known body of texts to developing Victorian concerns about the sustainability of human life on earth, arguing that by focusing on determining the causes of the catastrophes depicted it is possible to see links emerging between ‘natural’ catastrophe and human activity in Victorian thinking and hence the development of an environmentalist awareness. The paper will focus on Jefferies’ After London, elucidating the strand of anti-industrial environmentalism that runs through it, but also an opposing tendency in which the reinstatement of imperial capitalist practices is valourised within the text.

Biography
Dr Ailise Bulfin is a literary and cultural scholar whose research ranges from nineteenth-century to contemporary literature, with a particular focus on representations of invasion, war, catastrophe and trauma. She has published a number of critical essays on topics such as xenophobia, invasion scares, child abuse, natural catastrophe and climate change, as well as the 2018 monograph, Gothic Invasions: Imperialism, War and Fin-de-Siècle Popular Fiction. She lectures in Victorian and Modern Literature in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin and is an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin.
‘Sartorial Encounters in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*’
Emma Butler-Way

This paper will use Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1859) to consider the significance of the multiple and multifaceted encounters between fashion and sensation fiction in the nineteenth century. Casey Sloan has recently argued that fashion in *The Woman in White* provides space for a distinctly female subculture, where women dress in order to create and partake in a closed female community. While also acknowledging the more subliminal values of fashion throughout the text as a whole, Sloan uses fashion to consider how the scholarly debate around the novel has over-emphasised the “battle of the sexes” aspect of the plot at the expense of the interpersonal relationships between the female characters, which have been somewhat neglected. Yet, as I shall demonstrate in this paper, men are also members of this subculture, and are not necessarily excluded from reading the signs encountered through female dress. As a story of male perseverance and success, Hartright’s experience and reading of women’s dress choices in *The Woman in White* is vital to our understanding of the text: fashion and dress are predominantly described in ways that further his story.

I will therefore discuss how *The Woman in White* uses dress not just to highlight the interpersonal relationships between the female characters, but as a tool to foreground elements of these characters which are not explicitly stated in the narrative. Female dress aids in the more mysterious and sensational aspects of the plot; certain characteristics are also revealed which may have been apparent to the contemporary reader, but are lost on the casual twenty-first century reader of the novel. Thus, the goal of this paper is to show that fashion is as important to the plot of sensation fiction – with *The Woman in White* as a case study – as the characters and the setting. (300)

**Biography**

Emma Butler-Way is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University. Her research is centred around representations of fashion and the female form in British sensation fiction as it pertains to the culturally perpetuated subjugation of women.
“You do look rather… drained”: Body Horror and Brexit in *Dracula* (BBC, 2020)
Katherine Byrne

The BBC’s much-discussed recent adaptation of Bram Stoker’s novel was embraced by critics even as it divided viewers. It described itself as “both faithful and faithless” to its source text, and while full of intertextual references to its many filmic predecessors, took certain liberties with traditional vampire mythology, in particular. Most intriguing was its rejection of the idea that vampirism itself represents renewal, rebirth and increased strength and vitality, an idea everywhere in gothic fiction, from Stoker’s novel to *Twilight*. In this version, however, only the James-Bond-like Count himself gets to experience youth and immortality: all his would-be offspring are doomed, physically (and indeed mentally) decomposing before our eyes. With syphilitic references that recall that other recent rewriting of a classic C19th text, *The Frankenstein Chronicles*, this adaptation displays a preoccupation with disease, and also with sterility and the failure to reproduce. Dracula constantly experiments on new victims, but they cannot or will not survive to become his children. As a result this adaptation has a darkness quite at odds with its self-professed identity as a humorous, campy romp. In fact, this is an adaptation about contagion, immigration, paranoia about American motives, and isolation (its lonely heroine contrasting notably with the united solidarity of Stoker’s “band of brothers”). In this way, then, this feels like a kind of “Brexit” *Dracula*, an examination of a defamiliarised modern Britain with a decaying body politic, motivated mostly by greed and fear. And, unlike the professional, legal and medical structures which battle Dracula in Stoker’s novel, no-one else is there to help. Van Helsing alone is only able to finally contain the Count by learning from the past: our pathological present, in contrast, seems designed to enable him to flourish.

**Biography**

Katherine Byrne is a lecturer in English at the Ulster University, UK. She is the author of *Tuberculosis and the Victorian Literary Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and *Edwardians on Screen: From Downton Abbey to Parade’s End* (Palgrave, 2015). She is one of the editors (with Julie Anne Taddeo) of *Conflicting Masculinities: Men in Television Period Drama* (IB Tauris, 2018).
‘Her Name was Lola: Scandalous Encounters in the Victorian Press and Beyond’
Mollie Clarke

In her autobiography, Mary Seacole recollects some of the ‘distinguished passengers’ she encountered on her journeys. In particular, she recalls a ‘good-looking, bold woman, with fine, bad eyes, and a determined bearing; dressed ostentatiously in perfect male attire, with shirt-collar turned over a velvet lapelled coat, richly worked shirt-front, black hat, French unmentionables, and natty, polished boots with spurs, [carrying in] her hand a handsome riding-whip’.

This woman, ‘in the full zenith of her evil fame’ in the 1850s, was Lola Montez. An Irish-born show-girl bound for California, before having even crossed Seacole’s path, ‘performer’ Lola Montez had already secured herself a damning reputation with mid-century newspaper proprietors and journalists across the globe, as a ‘feminine devil devoid of shame’, ‘a tigress’ and ‘a comet of her sex’. And such opinions of her were not entirely unjustified, for the newspaper reports documenting her scandalous behaviour on and off-stage followed her across the globe, and to this day she is still remembered for her romantic affairs and outrageous actions.

And whilst Mrs. Seacole was far from enthusiastic about Lola, international audiences were enthralled by her. In fact, before she had debuted in the US, she was already considered by Americans to be a celebrity. Thus, despite the unfavourable depictions and reviews that preceded her, Lola had captivated audiences all over the world. Journalists, audiences, and members of the public couldn’t get enough of her, and female characters with a similar penchant for cross-dressing and carrying a riding whip (just like Lola) began to appear in popular fiction and theatre alike.

This paper explores these stories - in both the popular press and fiction of the time - that defined Lola Montez, examining both her prominence in mid-century popular culture, as well as her ability to control and manipulate her public image.

Biography
Mollie Clarke is a third-year TECHNE PhD candidate at Roehampton University. Her thesis entitled; ‘Female Cross Dressing, Genre, and Popular Literary Forms from 1840 to 1870’, considers the extent to which ‘gender drag’, evidenced by female to male cross-dressers, was also underpinned by a generic type of crossing, exposing a porosity of boundaries both within and around Victorian popular forms.
‘Gender Fraud in the City: Cross-dressing and Stockbroking in Olive Malvery’s The Speculator (1908)’
Silvana Colella

Olive Malvery’s investigative journalism – the series of articles written for Pearson’s Magazine and later collected in The Soul Market (1906) – has attracted some critical attention in recent years (Walkowitz 1998; Vorachek 2016; Winter 1993). Not so the financial novel she published in 1908. Yet the transition from the ‘kingdom of poverty’, perceptively explored in The Soul Market, to the ‘kingdom of wealth’, the City of London, which provides the setting for The Speculator, merits consideration. What prompted Malvery’s sudden interest in the City of global finance? What strategies did she pursue when turning her ethnographic gaze towards the Stock Exchange? This paper examines the many encounters – cross-cultural, cross-class, cross-genre – that mark Malvery’s understanding of the early Edwardian City as a work environment. Unlike the City novels of the 1890s, obstinately concerned with company promotion and the joint-stock economy (Michie 2009), The Speculator traces the career of a female broker who turns to cross-dressing to gain admittance to the protected enclave of the Stock Exchange. Capitalising on the popularity of several subgenres (the City novel, the spy thriller, the imperial adventure romance, the New Woman novel), Malvery imagines a story of resilience, in which the female protagonist (Helen/Otto) adapts to the financial work environment by donning a masculine costume, and emerges unscathed from a series of improbable adventures that eventually lead to her return within the folds of domesticity. The paper focuses on two aspects: the question of ‘women and the money market’, which Malvery had already partially explored in an article of the same title (1906), and the issue of ‘deception’, habitually associated with shady financial schemes doomed to fail, which is rehabilitated in this novel as a shrewd tactic to overcome professional limitations.

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Biography
Silvana Colella is professor of English at the University of Macerata. Her research interests and publications lie in the fields of Victorian fiction, new economic criticism and cultural heritage. Her most recent book is Charlotte Riddell’s City Novels and Victorian Buisiness: Narrating Capitalism (Routledge, 2016).
The Victorian age witnessed a significant increase in women’s travels. Even though they lived in a society that limited their freedom outside the home, rising numbers of women ventured into foreign lands previously explored by men. Their travel experiences increased in the Edwardian era, a transitory period in which the seeds of women’s rights sown in the previous century started to bear fruit.

Quite surprisingly, Albania became an important destination for female travellers during the nineteenth century. A land of cultural crossings, dramatically suspended between West and East, Christianity and Islam, Albania was inhabited by a variety of populations whose conflicts and ‘primitive’ customs were insistently racialized by Northern Europeans. Still, many British women dared to visit this tensions-ridden land and wrote fascinating reports of their travel encounters. If some accompanied their husbands and downplayed the subversiveness of their experiences by posing as conjugal companions, others challenged gender stereotypes by visiting Albania with female mates or by travelling solo. The accounts written by the latter group of women are quite interesting to examine as they unveil their authors’ questioning of dominant gender roles. Edith Durham, in particular, offers compelling descriptions of the gender challenges she experienced during her Albanian explorations. An observer and reporter of unusual local practices (i.e. the practice of the “sworn virgins” who could acquire masculine rights), Durham also comments on the autonomy she gained among Albanian tribes (i.e. by sharing food and space with native men) which was unthinkable for a British lady at home.

Besides investigating such cross-cultural and cross-gender encounters, my paper examines the specific nature of these women’s travelogues to Albania. Rarely commissioned by publishers or scientific societies, their writings were composed for different purposes and they varied significantly in style and genre from men-authored texts. While ascertaining the distinctive gender elements of these writings, I intend to explore their cross-generic quality and to reflect on the contribution their authors gave to popularizing travel literature in their age.

Biography
Mariaconcetta Costantini is professor of English literature at G. d’Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara. She has published monographs, articles and books chapters on Victorian and neo-Victorian literature and culture. Her publications include the books *Venturing into Unknown Waters: Wilkie Collins and the Challenge of Modernity* (2008), *Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel* (2015), and *Mrs Henry Wood* (2020).
Disaster loomed large in the Victorian popular imagination, reflected in scientific romances and disaster fiction of the period in a mode that we might now term ecohorror. A key question that needs to be asked is where did this anxiety stem from. This paper will draw on an initial inquiry into a source of environmental hazard that resurfaced throughout the nineteenth century: the struggling sewage system. As with contemporary environmental discourse this does not focus on perceived threat alone, but the costs, location and necessity of further sewage improvements all formed vital aspects. Through performing an initial discourse analysis on a late-Victorian Parliamentary debate, as well as looking at examples of how this debate was reported in the popular press, the benefits of these aspects of environmental fiction will be discussed, as well as identifying the overall narrative they form.

Biography
Matthew Crofts was awarded his doctorate at the University of Hull, England, UK, for his research on the importance of tyranny to the Gothic mode, utilising a range of Gothic novels and historical eras. His previous publications include an article on MacDonald Fraser’s Flashman for Peer English (10, 2015), an article in the special ‘Alternative Dickens’ issue of Victoriographies (8:1, 2018), a chapter on Dracula’s multimedia legacy in the edited collection Gothic Afterlives (Lexington Books, 2019), and a joint-authored chapter on Gothic rats in the edited collection Gothic Animals (Palgrave, 2020).
‘Writing for the Victorian stage: Dickens and Shakespeare in Nicholas Nickleby’
Maria Luisa De Rinaldis

Dickens’s engagement with Shakespeare was vast and informed his life, his whole narrative and expressive power, as we know. This paper focuses on the Dickens-Shakespeare discourse in a specific novel, Nicholas Nickleby, a theatrical text in itself, published in 1839 and dedicated to William Charles Macready, manager of Covent Garden Theatre in the years 1837-39. The aim is to explore the use of Shakespeare in the context of Victorian images and appropriations of the playwright, with specific reference to Macready’s Shakespearean theatrical revival, in order to focus on the fertile encounter between fiction and theatrical ‘theory and practice’ as well as on the encounter between the Victorians and their literary past. Intersections between different fictional languages and media will be explored in order to look at how these intersections affect notions of popular vs high culture and at how they are in turn staged and performed in the film adaptation of the novel made by director D. McGrath in 2002.

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Biography
Maria Luisa De Rinaldis is an Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Salento (Italy). Her research includes work on Shakespeare and Shakespearean criticism and interpretation in the late nineteenth century, on Walter Pater, on Anglo-Italian relations and translation in the early modern period. She is a member of the editorial board of Lingue e Linguaggi and a member of the current board of Iasems (Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies).
‘Encounters with the Other Side: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Emma Hardinge Britten, and the Fiction of the Occult’
Anne Delgado

In late December of 1875 a fantastic account of mesmerism and mystical vengeance appeared in the pages of *The Sun*, a popular New York City broadsheet. The tale, “A Story of the Mystical: Told by a Member of the Theosophical Society,” was addressed to the editor and featured an aging Serbian matron named Gospoja P--- who, according to the narrator, “looked like the Cumaean Sybil in her days of calm repose” and was known among the villagers for her “Occult knowledge” (Collected Writings I: 165). Early in the story, the narrator notes that Gospoja had recently routed a “wandering vampire,” a feat quite beyond the abilities of the local clergy, by simply “shaking her fist at him and shaming him in his own language” (166). The purportedly true story gave late 19th-century American readers a unique encounter with the Old World. It also promised them access to secret knowledge in the New World.

According to the story’s subtitle, the events recounted in the tale had been witnessed by its author, Hadji Mora, a member of the Theosophical Society, a fledgling mystical organization that had taken form in New York one month prior to the story’s appearance in *The Sun*. In reality, the tale had been penned by the Russian émigré, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the spiritual leader of the society and a woman well-acquainted with the haunted Old World. In this paper, I discuss how late 19th-century alternative spiritualities utilized—and were sometimes inspired by—popular fiction. Stories of mesmerists, vampires, and strange magicians allowed skilled writers like Blavatsky and her Theosophical colleague Emma Hardinge Britten a means of articulating novel spiritual philosophies as they established their own epistemological and spiritual authority.

**Biography**
Anne Delgado is a lecturer in the English Department at Indiana University-Bloomington. She has written about late-Victorian occultism, psychical research, and Spiritualism. She is currently working on a book about physical mediums and the production of ectoplasm.
‘Strange Tastes: Encountering British Aestheticism in Elizabeth Robins Pennell’s 
*Delights of Delicate Eating*’

Abigail Dennis

“What folly to boast of modern progress when, at table, the Englishman of to-day is but a 
brute savage compared with his ancestors of a hundred years and more ago!”—Elizabeth 
Robins Pennell

By the 1890s, British and European aestheticism had become increasingly associated with 
decadence, and the idealization of taste at the expense of all else—“*le goût pour le goût,*” as 
it were. Into this environment of decline, in 1896, the Philadelphian art critic, gastronome, 
and food writer Elizabeth Robins Pennell lobbed a satirical hand grenade. This paper argues 
that Pennell’s collection of gastronomic writings, *The Delights of Delicate Eating* didn’t, as 
has previously been claimed, merely poke fun at the affectation of much European 
Aestheticism. In fact, it inaugurated a new understanding of the classical distinction between 
aesthetic and physiological taste. 

Pennell commanded significant audiences in both America and Britain. While she is 
increasingly recognised as a pioneer of the twentieth-century genre of literary food writing, 
in *Delights* Pennell also deconstructs the idea of “taste” (both aesthetic and physiological) as 
exclusively attributed to a set of conditions—Eurocentric, metropolitan, masculine, elite—
that also happened to align with a dominant strain of British intellectual aestheticism, a 
clique that Pennell strove both to infiltrate and critique. As a self-described “greedy woman” 
and “female aesthete” (Schaffer), deeply concerned with the nature of pleasure, she 
convincingly performed the role of vulgar, amateurish American in her critical encounters 
with the rarefied, masculine world of British Aestheticism. Simultaneously, her success, 
reputation, and commercial influence on both sides of the Atlantic gave her a unique 
authority. In *Delights*, she upends the distinction between a vulgar, embodied and 
Americanized gustatory taste and a Kantian, idealized aesthetic taste, as an instance of what 
Dennis Denisoff identifies as a key proto-modernist element of late aestheticism: the 
“attention to the constructed quality of sociopolitical and biological idealizations” 
(*Aestheticism and Sexual Parody 1840-1940*).

**Biography**

Abigail Dennis is a PhD Candidate at the University of Queensland. Her thesis examines 
representations of eating and/as aesthetic taste in Victorian fiction. She was a recipient of 
the UQ University Medal, and a Chancellor Jackman Graduate Fellowship at the University 
of Toronto. Her research has been published in *The Journal of Modern Literature, The 
Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* and *The Oxford Companion to Sweets.*
‘The Rise of the Popular Woman Writer: Insights from the W. & R. Chambers’s Archive’
Alexis Easley

Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal, founded in 1832, was instrumental in constructing the idea of the ‘popular woman writer’ during the early decades of the nineteenth century. As a journal associated with technological and literary innovation, Chambers’s defined ‘modernity’ in exciting new ways – and women had an important role to play in this project both as readers and as writers. The W. & R. Chambers archive at the National Library of Scotland provides a rare glimpse into the working lives and literary output of the 136 women who contributed to the journal from 1839 to 1855. In this presentation, I share insights gleaned from an analysis of this data – e.g., where these women contributors lived, how much they were paid, and what sort of writing they published in the journal. I also conduct a comparative analysis of male and female contributors with special attention to the genres of writing they contributed and the remuneration they received. By mapping the addresses of women contributors, I identify their social and literary networks in Dublin, Cork, London, and Edinburgh. The Chambers archive also includes correspondence from many of the women contributors whose names appear in the ledger. In the second part of this presentation, I analyze their interactions with the Chambers firm – from submitting their work to negotiating payment, working with editors, and adapting to specific editorial requirements such as article length. I also explore the role of celebrity women authors such as Anna Maria Hall and Dinah Mulock Craik in establishing the journal’s brand and examine the contributions of a much larger group of women who chose to publish anonymously. I reveal some intriguing stories behind these anonymous publications – e.g., how Agnes Loudon (daughter of the famous botanist) published her first story in the journal at age thirteen and how Janet Wills used publication in the journal to spoof her own experience as the wife of a newspaper editor (W.H. Wills).

Biography
‘Across the Pond and Over the Color Line: Ouida in America’s Black Press’
Jesse R. Erickson

As a celebrity novelist, Ouida (1839-1908) shows up in the fiction of such notable African American writers as Charles W. Chesnutt (d. 1932) and Katherine D. Tillman (d. 1922). However, questions remain as to the specific conduits by which this author had been able to achieve this level of literary recognition in the black community. What can Ouida’s coverage in America’s black press tell us about how the author’s public persona was constructed among a racialized population? This paper sets out to advance a fresh approach to the growing fields of periodical studies and reader reception in the study of Victorian popular fiction. Looking at dozens of examples from more than twenty different African American newspapers of the period, it offers an in-depth analysis of the various articles and references to Ouida found therein. Literary scholars like Daniel Hack and Elizabeth McHenry have elucidated the close transatlantic ties that middle and upper class African Americans maintained with Victorian literature in the post-Reconstruction United States. This paper will continue along such lines by detailing a granular examination of Ouida’s representation as documented in the black press. To date, studies on Victorian authors in African American journalism are extremely scarce; moreover, the existing scholarship has tended to focus on more well-known figures like Charles Dickens and his connection to the black Atlantic. This study will be among the first of its kind. In exploring this cross-cultural encounter between black readership and celebrity authorship, introduced is the notion that black readers exhibited a nuanced understanding of Ouida and her work—one created in part through the circulation of well-traveled gossip and also from conservations with America’s mainstream press that played out on the printed page. Challenged, then, are long-held assumptions about African American readers, allowing new perspectives on Ouida’s global legacy to emerge.

Biography
Jesse R. Erickson is Coordinator of Special Collections and Digital Humanities, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, and Associate Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Center at the University of Delaware. His research specializations are in ethnobibliography, African American print culture, and the transnational publishing history of Ouida.
‘Re-Claiming the Retrofuture? Feminist Victorians between Ouida and Steampunk - and Back’
Helena Esser

Ouida is credited with coining the term ‘New Woman’ in her 1894 response to Sarah Grand, yet it was her critique of this type which would later, in the eyes of second-wave feminist, earn her a reputation for being ‘anti-feminist’ and disqualify her from the revised Victorian canon. Since then, Talia Schaffer and Andrew King have shown that Ouida’s rejection of the New Woman stemmed from individualistic concerns about the type’s monolithic character - which qualified the New Woman as a collective symbol for female emancipation from which later feminists would trace their genealogy of foremothers. How do our feminist politics inform canonicity and our perception of the Victorians?

In my paper, I want to interrogate different encounters between feminisms through the ages by examining how Victorian heroines are re-presented and re-imagined in neo-Victorian and steampunk fiction. In keeping with post-feminist ideas about empowerment through lifestyle choices, neo-Victorian popular media can be tempted to ‘sex-up’ the allegedly prudish Victorians, but by ‘updating’ them for present-day audiences, they often fail to enact real agency. Likewise, steampunk fiction, in re-imagining the New Woman as modern action heroine, can be hampered by a patriarchal narrative logic. However, steampunk, I argue, has the tools to re-imagine feminist Victorians who enact the ideals of fourth-wave feminism - and in so doing also help us productively re-evaluate Ouida’s fiction and its commitment to female agency.

Biography
Helena Esser is a third-year 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.
‘Encountering the Past, Foreshadowing the future: Vernon Lee’s *Louis Norbert* (1914)’

Mengxing Fu

*Louis Norbert: A Two-Fold Romance* (1914) was the aesthetic critic and art historian Vernon Lee’s (Violet Paget, 1856–1935) second and last novel. Although it was better received by contemporary readers than her first novel *Miss Brown* (1884), which had scandalized the London literary circle, the outbreak of WWI later that year and Lee’s unpopular pacifistic stance quickly banished the novel and its author to the relics of the Victorian past. However, the novel’s two-fold plot involving a pair of contemporary researchers falling in love when working together to uncover the secret love affair of two historical figures through textual fragments uncannily foreshadows the by now canonical Neo-Victorian novel: A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* (1990). Like Byatt’s novel, *Louis Norbert* discusses the inaccessibility of the reality of the past, the indispensable part played by imagination and affect in the production of historical knowledge while at the same time appreciates the impossible possibility of love in a disillusioned age. In a sense, *Louis Norbert* is practicing new historicism before the concept, yet it is also clearly a continuation of Lee’s own method of historiography influenced by Walter Pater’s aestheticism, reminding us of the continuity rather than disruption between the Victorian and the postmodern.

**Biography**

Mengxing Fu teaches English and comparative literature at the School of English Studies, Shanghai International Studies University. She specializes in late nineteenth-century Chinese and British Gothic fiction and fantastic literature. Her current project is on the poetics of spectrality in contemporary historiographic metafiction in Britain, China and the U.S.
‘When Beef Tea and Pasta Met: Nutrition Discourses in British and Italian Children's Periodicals’
Anna Gasperini

Between the late 19th and the early 20th century, Italy, a newly-unified nation looking to develop an industrial middle-class and compete with its European neighbours in terms of economic and social prosperity, developed its own children's literature, which reached its "golden age" around the 1910s. Scholars such as Vagliani (1998) and Tosi (2018) noted that early Italian children's literature stemmed mainly from translations of children's literature in English, which had experienced its “golden age” about twenty years before. The first Italian children's periodicals featured translations from Kingsley, Wilde, Barrie, and Nesbit, alongside translations of nursery rhymes in English.

This paper explores the encounter between British and Italian children’s literature and culture through children’s periodicals, focusing on how food and nutrition discourses figured in the exchange. It presents some preliminary results of the Marie Curie research project FED (Feeding Educating Dieting) that I am currently developing at Ca’ Foscari University (Venezia) to compare how nineteenth-century British and Italian children's literature circulated discourses about child nutrition. Discussions of British food, recipes and eating habits in Italian cookery books aimed at child carers (e.g. Dubini 1882, and Pettini 1910), and the presence of Italian ingredients in British nutrition books and sickroom management handbooks, which can be traced as early as the 1840s (e.g. Thomson 1841, and Pereira 1843), suggest the existence of such a conversation between the two nations on this topic. My paper looks at how children's periodicals absorbed and participated into the two countries' dialogue about child nutrition as a clinical concern. Reading the periodicals alongside cookery books and other non-fiction material, I will outline the development of the discussion on how to grow a healthy, strong bourgeois nation in, and between, the two countries.

Biography
Dr Anna Gasperini is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. She received her PhD in 2017 from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and she is the author of Nineteenth Century Popular Fiction, Medicine and Anatomy - The Victorian Penny Blood and the 1832 Anatomy Act (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). From 2015 to 2019, she was the Membership Secretary of the Victorian Popular Fiction Association (VPFA).
‘Intellectual Encounters in Dinah Mulock Craik’s *John Halifax, Gentleman*’
Helena Goodwyn

From its publication in 1856 to the present-day Dinah Mulock Craik’s *John Halifax, Gentleman* has intrigued readers in its representation of masculinity and potential to be read ‘aslant’, offering a divergent model of manliness, or even the ‘split consciousness’ of the woman writer’s self-image refracted through her depiction of a cast of male characters (Showalter, 1975). Most recently Karen Bourrier has discussed the novel’s exploration of industry and invalidism as told through the narrative framework of an ‘intense homoerotic friendship between a strong man and his disabled friend’ (Bourrier, 2015), and in a 2007 article Silvana Colella uses gift theory to demonstrate the intrinsic codes of gentlemanliness inherent in capitalist economics faithfully embodied in the text.

This paper considers Craik’s representation of men in the novel as a lens through which Craik could stage encounters with, and question, some of the largest theoretical areas of nineteenth-century, male-dominated intellectual life: economics, science, and politics. The paper begins with an examination of the novel in relation to Malthus’s economic theories of population and the tensions between Lamarckian and Malthusian ideology in the field of evolutionary theory in the works of Robert Chambers, George Drysdale, and others. I will then explore the effect of Malthusian theory on discourses that emphasised masculine self-control as articulated in the symbiotic relationship of the two male protagonists, before concluding with Craik’s intervention in the history of the woman writer as woman writer. I will demonstrate how this enormously popular novel interrogated and intervened in the assumptions of sentimental fiction by contextualising Craik’s construction of a male narrative voice and an interdependent male relationship in terms of nineteenth-century economic, scientific and political theoretical debates.

**Biography**
Dr Helena Goodwyn is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Her work has appeared in the *Times Higher Education (THE)*, *Journal of Victorian Culture* and *Victorian Periodicals Review*. Her forthcoming book *The Americanization of W. T. Stead* will be published with Edinburgh University Press.
My paper discusses Richard Jefferies’s *Nature near London*, a series of articles published in *The Standard* (August 1880 – December 1882) and then collected in 1883. In this text, Jefferies — one of the most popular nature writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, hailed by contemporaries as a successor of Gilbert White — describes the observations made during his long walks around Surbiton (then a semi-rural area), where he lived from 1877 to 1882.

Although each essay is devoted to a different topic, they all centre on the encounter – at times tense, at times surprising – between the city and the country. For Jefferies, this does neither entail a simple opposition between nature and culture, nor a nostalgic regret for times gone by. In fact, his appreciation of London, its atmosphere, even its ‘fog’, sits alongside vibrant accounts of the animals and plants that inhabited the liminal space between the city and the fields around it. Their mutual interaction is articulated through categories such as local and foreign, present and past, and human and animal (as in the account of his meeting with the beautiful trout that – to his great relief – repeatedly managed to escape local anglers). These categories, however, are never used to create simplistic, binary oppositions: they are rather mobilised to make sense of a complex context, characterised by a constant change that involved both human and non-human agents. Most importantly, with its emphasis on interconnectedness, *Nature near London* forcibly asserts that nature should not be seen as separated from the human world, its values and history. In Jefferies’s text, nature is truly a system, of which humans are part.

**Biography**
Silvia Granata is lecturer in English Literature at the University of Pavia. Her research interests focus on literary and visual representations of animals during the Victorian era. She is currently working on a book project on Victorian home aquaria.
As Evgenii Bershtein notes in “‘Next to Christ’: Oscar Wilde in Russian Modernism,” at the dawn of the twentieth century, Wilde served as the symbol of both queerness and early Western modernism for the Russian writers and poets of the so-called “Silver Age.” In the post-1917 Russia, and especially in the post-1930s Soviet Union, he remained, fascinatingly, an accepted, almost mainstream, Western literary figure. In “‘No More Delightful Spirit’: Unlikely Connections with Oscar Wilde,” Anastasia G. Pease reminisces about the omnipresence of Oscar Wilde in the popular culture of her Soviet childhood.

This paper looks at the 1968 adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s novel. The made-for-TV two-part film, written and directed by Victor Turbin at the start of the so-called stagnation period, was likely commissioned by the state-run educational Channel 3. It therefore targets adolescent audiences and has the following distinguishing characteristics: 1) close attention to the youthful Bildungsroman at the expense of adult sexuality; 2) a special emphasis on the gothic and horror elements of the novel (several commenters on the YouTube recording describe the film as “the favorite horror film” of their childhood and adolescence); 3) close attention to the original language and plot of the novel, with few or no deviations; 4) a circumvention of the prohibition on any mention or depiction of relations between men (per the Soviet sodomy laws) by creating strategically an artistic space and language in which such love is legitimized, at least in its platonic iteration. This strategy is similar to the rhetoric that Wilde famously deployed to defend same-sex love during his trials.

I examine the paradox of an adaptation that remains closer than some contemporary ones to the spirit and letter of Wilde, particularly in relation to the link between art and sexuality, despite, or, perhaps because of, the repressive circumstances.

**Works Cited**


**Biography**

Helena Gurfinkel is Professor of English at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and editor of PLL: Papers on Language and Literature. This paper is part of her current book project, *The Green Carnation behind the Iron Curtain: Soviet-Era Oscar Wilde*. 
‘Thomas Wallace Knox and the Boy Travellers’

Betty Hagglund

During the second half of the nineteenth century, one of the most popular American writers of travel books aimed at children was Thomas W. Knox. A well-known traveller and successful author of travel books for adults, Knox eventually published fifteen books in his ‘Boy Traveller’ series and a number of single juvenile volumes between 1879 and 1894, each book taking a fictional group of teenagers through what Knox claimed was an accurate portrayal of a foreign country. The books were expensively produced with copious pictures and maps.

In 1886 he received a letter from the explorer Henry M. Stanley, inviting him to turn *Through the Dark Continent* into a book ‘for young folks ... taking your boys, who have followed you through so many lands, on the journey that I made from Zanzibar to the mouth of the Congo’. Knox duly did so, and the resulting book, *Boy Travellers on the Congo: Adventures of Two Youths in a Journey with Henry M. Stanley* was published in 1887.

This paper will look at Knox’s writings both for children and for adults, focussing on the ways in which he turns adult material into quasi-fictional children's books and the boundaries between fact and fiction in his writings. Particular attention will be paid to Knox’s use of illustrations, and his representation of the ‘other’.

**Biography**

Betty Hagglund is librarian and learning resources manager at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England; she also supervises MPhil and PhD students within the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies. She has published widely on travel writing, women’s writing and Quaker literature and history. Her publications include *Tourists and Travellers: Women’s Non-fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* and seven edited volumes of nineteenth-century women’s travel writing.
‘The Curious Case of Jack Sheppard and Victorian Transmedia’
Erica Haugtvedt

Jack Sheppard’s reception crossed media and class boundaries in ways that elucidate intertwined middle-class Victorian anxieties about what agents should have the authority to spread stories, and the influence of the wrong kind of stories on the wrong kinds of audiences. The Jack Sheppard mania of the early 1840s resembles transmedia hits of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in that the story and characters are represented simultaneously in different media, and as such poses thought-provoking challenge to scholarly accounts of transmedia origins so far. Typically, the cross-media popular culture of the Victorian period has been categorized as adaptation, in which one version of a story is translated into another version of the same story in a different medium, but primary sources from the period routinely push against this classification. Several dramatizations of Jack Sheppard were undertaken before the novel finished serialization, so these could not be considered “straight” adaptations that translate the medium of prose to the medium of drama. Instead, the dramatizations had to anticipate plot that had not been written. Transmedia contrasts with adaptation in that transmedia implies the extension, elaboration, or accretion of new information across media, not merely the appearance of versions across media. As Karin Fast and Henrik Ornebring (2015) have argued, recent scholarship on transmedia has turned toward transmedia as an emergent process (rather than a coordinated, planned system) in which elements of the storyworld are accretively described by different agents across media. In this paper, I argue that Jack Sheppard is an example of Victorian transmedia that uniquely elucidates middle-class anxieties about fiction’s influence on the working classes, highlighting that who has the authority to spread (transmedia) stories was an issue of great contention for Victorian popular culture.

Biography
Erica Haugtvedt is an Assistant Professor of English and Humanities at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. She received her PhD in English from Ohio State University in 2015. Haugtvedt specializes in nineteenth-century British literature, media and advertising history, and popular culture.
“The Isles of Scilly beckoned like Syrens from their dangerous shores:”
Re-reading a Lexis of Consumption in the Island-based Writings of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, and Exploring Their Ventures into New Literary Ground¹
Beth Howell

In March 1857, the amateur zoologist and prolific writer George Henry Lewes had completed three “Sea-Side Studies” for the popular Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, and his publisher, quickly perceiving the market value in a series about marine-hunting, urged the writer to convert his articles into a printed volume. Instead of agreeing to consolidate his existing “Studies”, however, Lewes suggested journeying to a new location: “the Scilly Isles,” promising “if my researches there are reasonably successful,” to “make a volume which incorporating a great part of “Sea Side Studies” would be of some permanent interest.” Scilly therefore seemed to form a significant space for Lewes as he began to reimagine his self-called “deliberate ephemera.”² His subsequent account detailed the literature he read as he rested, and was filled with “syrens” as well as shorelines, painting his endeavour as an epic adventure and a zoological mission. Accordingly, this paper will provide a close reading of Lewes’ surprisingly literary island adventure, and reappraise the role of his fellow traveller, Mary Ann Evans, who was analogously beginning to assert her own authorial identity as George Eliot, the celebrated Condition of England novelist. By reconsidering the relationship between Eliot’s and Lewes’ writings, this paper will therefore recover this trip as a formative creative experience for both writers, which both hindered and enhanced their original ideas. An examination of the works Lewes and Eliot created on Scilly displays a shared lexis about evolution, observation, and consumption in relation to real and fictional landscapes, animals, and peoples. Concurrently, the paper will recover the Isles of Scilly, a previously “almost unwritten about” site, as a place which allowed for a dissolution of traditional Victorian boundaries.³

Biography
Beth Howell is a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter, where she is writing her thesis on literary representations of the Isles of Scilly in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her research is funded by an Eden Phillpotts Memorial Scholarship, an award for projects with a South-Western focus.

³ ibid.
‘Office Gothic’
David A. Ibitson

This paper establishes a form of Gothic fiction called ‘Office Gothic’ by looking at representations of office work in popular fiction by Arthur Conan Doyle, Jerome K. Jerome, Bram Stoker, M. R. James, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Charles Lamb and John Kendrick Bangs. In these texts the work environment of the office is depicted as an inherently harmful place, where the pressures of bureaucracy and deadlines are represented by encounters with doppelgangers, vampires, and ghosts.

I show that the nineteenth century saw the tropes and trappings of the Gothic transposed onto ideas of clerk work and bureaucracy that reveal concerns about the damaging stresses of such an existence, and that this literary mode can be traced globally. With themes of containment and entrapment always having been a part of the Gothic genre, here we find an imprisonment defined by the bureaucratic structures of society. It is also combined with the idea of repetition as a form of horrifying punishment. The protagonists of the tales that this paper looks at are compelled against their wills by powerful administrative forces, and Office Gothic is shown to engage with important nineteenth-century changes in tertiary industry and the working environments that constitute it.

I conclude that these Gothic imaginings of office work are preoccupied with personal autonomy; a variation of the classic Gothic trope of the captive heroine, the office robs its workers of their freedom. The protagonists are not in control, they are either oddities or commodities. The work of administration is a Gothic environment from which its clerks cannot escape.

Biography
David Ibitson is a Teaching Fellow in Arts and Humanities at the Lifelong Learning Centre, at the University of Leeds. His research interests are fin de siècle humour and the works of Jerome K. Jerome, Gothic literature, the ghost stories of M. R. James, and Newgate narratives.
‘Wilkie Collins’s Suburbs’
Helena Ifill

Abstract
Wilkie Collins’ 1852 novel, Basil (rev. 1862), perpetuates, for sensational purposes, notions of the city as a place where individuals may experience chance encounters, but fail to make positive connections. Collins’s characters manipulate time in order to impart meaning to otherwise ephemeral moments. The result is a portrayal of opportunities that are not missed, but perhaps should have been, and this contributes to a cynical depiction of class types and cross-class relations. By depicting instances of pause and stillness, particularly within the rapidly-growing environment of the suburbs, and by using them to create and reveal false and empty relationships, Collins questions the possibility of ever making a meaningful connection, particularly outside of one’s own class, in the Victorian city.

Biography
Helena Ifill is a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen where she specialises in Victorian popular fiction, especially sensation fiction and the Gothic. Her monograph, Creating Character: Theories of Nature and Nurture in Victorian Sensation Fiction, was published by MUP in 2018.
Lucas Malet (Mary St Leger Harrison, 1852-1931) was a popular novelist of the late-nineteenth century, now largely forgotten. This paper examines the spaces of illness and death that appear as sites of medical anxiety and trauma in Lucas Malet’s Victorian fiction. These are invariably Gothic spaces, haunted by the spectre of sickness, containing the graphic ‘bloody horror’ of death, or scenes of macabre disfigurement. *Colonel Enderby’s Wife* (1885) depicts a phobia of infirmity and the sick room. *The Wages of Sin* (1891) describes the final, fatal utterances of a blood-soaked consumptive from her death-bed. *The History of Sir Richard Calmady* (1901) details a pre-anaesthetic surgical amputation in the drawing room of a stately home. The rooms are often characterised by their red furnishings, ‘red rooms’ which transcend *Jane Eyre*’s symbolic site of hysteria to become locations of crisis in which physical threats are both generated and realised.

The body, too, is rendered an unstable site whose subjectivity is called into question by the presence of uncontrollable symptoms or bodily rupture. These medical events are visually described or imagined, overheard from beyond a door, or implied through aposiopesis in the dialogue. The medical, surgical, and narrative fragmentation of the human subject within these spaces articulates the iatrogenic anxieties of the nineteenth century. With a moral-medical rhetoric typical of *fin-de-siècle* writing, pathology and malaise are presented as likewise blighting the national body; mass muteness, collective convulsions, and widespread atavism are perceived to affect hordes of ‘waste humanity’. Malet was fond of insisting that she wrote ‘like the man of science’. Her novels themselves are ‘moral dissecting rooms’, sites of vivisection, in which she scrutinises the search for wholeness by the human subject.

**Biography**

Dr Louise Benson James is based at the University of Bristol. She recently passed her viva for her thesis project: ‘Hysterical Bodies and Narratives: Medical Gothic and Women’s Fiction, Victorian to Contemporary’.
'Unequal Encounters: Beasts of Burden in Victorian Fiction and Periodicals'
Joanne Knowles

This paper builds on previous work of mine examining the presence of donkeys in Victorian fiction by Braddon, Dickens, Eliot and others and in periodicals such as The Animal World and The British Workman, which has explored the paradox of donkeys as mistreated and marginalised animals, yet ones of social and material significance. It examines the role of donkeys in popular texts to discuss their narrative and visual positioning as indicative of how texts deal with crises of agency and moments of realisation around social barriers for their characters. The paper will consider work on animal-human relationships by Tess Coslett, Gina Dorre and Harriet Ritvo in order to develop a sense of how these relationships, but also the comparisons made across animal species, occupy a particular kind of fleeting but reflective narrative space where power dynamics shift.

Biography
Joanne Knowles is a Senior Lecturer in Media, Culture, Communication at Liverpool John Moores University. Her doctoral research at Liverpool University was on Henry James and she has published on James, Dickens’s travel writings, and gender and national culture in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s fiction. Current research projects encompass popular women’s writing and narrative from the nineteenth century to the present day and work in progress includes research on gardens, piers and animals (not all at once) in Victorian popular fiction and culture.
‘Both Architectural and Fashion Encounters as Educational Patterns in the Victorian Era’
Despoina Kotsi

There is an always beautiful blend of architecture, fashion and educational patterns from the Victorian era that happens to be distinguished today in a too meaningful way. For example, Gothic Revival architecture lied considerably in its faithfulness to both the ornamental style and basic principles of construction. Pugin who has been the creator of the so-styled Houses of Parliament in London, expressed his admiration for the whole medieval ethos, claiming that Gothic architecture is the product of a purer society and “the pointed arch was produced by the Catholic faith”. He provided for the Palace of Westminster the external decoration and the interiors, while Barry designed the symmetrical layout of the building, causing Pugin to remark, “All Grecian, Sir; Tudor details on a classic body”, expressing his disapproval for the more plain - less rigid or apocalyptic result. Ruskin proposed that Gothic buildings excelled above all other architecture because of the “sacrifice” of the stone-carvers in intricately decorating every stone. These all reveal the cosmotheory about a refined tendency to ascend at all religious or at least moral levels. Even the fashion of the time epitomizes the expression of a wholly and holy sought magnitude. Brilliant waistcoats and cummerbunds provided a touch of color, and smoking jackets and dressing gowns. Also, women had the enormous wide-brimmed hats were covered with elaborate creations of silk flowers, ribbons, and above all, exotic plumes; included entire exotic birds that had been stuffed. Corsets stressed a woman's sexuality, exaggerating hips and bust by contrast with a tiny waist. Their clothes may have covered the body, but the stretchy novel fabric fit the body like a glove as long as elegance remains the ultimate lesson to be learned in order to stand in life as an aesthetic candlestick of self - integrity.

Biography:
Despoina Kotsi practices law in Athens, Greece, with a focus in public procurement law. She is currently a PhD candidate in public law – specializing in the right to education in relation to the system of Government. She has been an eight times nationwide distinguished poet.
‘Genre Encounters: The Poetic Place where George Eliot’s Travel Writing meets her Novels’
Julia Kuehn

Eliot was certainly not a popular writer – but she was, as Q. D. Leavis wrote, the last Victorian writer with a homogeneous readership before the public (allegedly) split into ‘elite’ and ‘popular’. Hence her representations of cross-cultural encounters as well as her work across genres would have been reference points for many readers and writers.

This paper is about Eliot’s travels and travel writing and how the narrative strategies for an encounter employed in her travel accounts reappear in her novels. It is part of a new monograph that will look at Victorian novelists who were also travel writers.

Travelling and the foreign experience are important features in Eliot’s fiction – although she never made much of the fact that she journeyed too. When Dorothea and Casaubon cross the Alps on their honeymoon, for example, Eliot avoids a lengthy landscape description – while Dickens, put in the same situation, would flaunt an informed description of the Dorrits’ journey to Italy.

In Italy, though, Dorothea finds herself overwhelmed by a place she cannot access because of her personal and marital crisis – while Will absorbs, learns and grows through the foreign experience. Similar examples of travelling and crisis or travelling as self-growth feature throughout Eliot’s work, from Hetty Sorrell’s pregnant flight via Silas Marner’s journey from Lantern Yard to Raveloe to Maggie Tulliver’s fateful river journey. And Eliot’s final novel, Daniel Deronda, contains probably the most complex theorisation of a person’s journey within time and space.

This conference paper offers some groundwork, providing an overview of Eliot’s texts of cross-cultural encounters (reviews, diaries, travel memoirs, essays) to, then, formulate preliminary questions about the connection between Eliot’s travel pieces and her novels. Are the two genres as opposite as current scholarship seems to suggest, where scholars belong to either the one or the other academic camp, or are there poetic family resemblances and transgeneric overlaps that link cross-cultural encounters in travel writing and the novel?

Biography
Julia Kuehn is Professor of English at the University of Hong Kong. Her research is in nineteenth-century English literature and culture, with particular focus on the realist novel and women’s, popular and travel writing. She is currently completing a comparative study of selected English and German realist novels.
“A steam-hammer of logic”: Literary Defences of Moderate Drunking against the ‘Impertinent’ Advances of the Temperance Movement on Middle-class Drinking Habits in the Mid-nineteenth Century

Pam Lock

In his review of W. B. Carpenter’s *The Physiology of Temperance and Total Abstinence* (1853), G. H. Lewes wrote: ‘So long as the Temperance advocates confine themselves to effecting a reform among the poorer classes, […] they are doing righteous work, and may be pardoned their outbreaks of zeal, their passionate foolishness, their bitter animosity, and all the “wild and whirling words” with which they rival Methodists and Emancipationists’ opining that ‘very few of [his middle-class readers] are likely to be among the intemperate; to them the Teetotal arguments are impertinent’. As anti-drink campaigning gained traction in the 1850s and 1860s, it was supported by the forceful fiction of upcoming (often female) writers such as Ellen Wood and Clara Lucas Balfour. In reaction, significant established forces in contemporary fiction like Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins began to write against these temperance messages. Although these writers generally acknowledged the dangers of heavy or chronic drinking, they advocated moderation for the greater population in a bid to protect the right to drink for relaxation and conviviality. This paper will explore the encounters between these public and private discourses on what constitutes acceptable levels of drinking in the mid-nineteenth century with particular attention to gender and class differences in these attempts to establish or protect cultural ‘norms’. I will demonstrate the reciprocal influence between these fictions and contemporary periodicals and newspapers by charting their interrelated representations of drinking and drunkenness. In doing so, this research also reveals the rarely acknowledged influence of temperance and temperance fiction on what we would now refer to as popular or canonical fiction.

Biography

Pam Lock is a Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Bristol. She completed her PhD in 2019. Her thesis, entitled ‘Low Spirits: The Habitual Drunkard in Victorian Fiction and Culture’ examines a range of authors and texts including Braddon, the Brontës, Collins, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, Trollope, and Ellen Wood. Pam is particularly interested in the historical context of these novels as a part of a wider public and professional discourse around alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness. This focus on contextualisation means her research includes a wide range of; contemporary newspapers; scientific and medical writings on alcohol, alcoholism and suicide; and radical and political movements focussed on issues such as temperance and women’s rights. She has published on the Brontës and Robert Louis Stevenson and has a forthcoming articles on Dickens and Eliot. She is also the Communications Officer for the Drinking Studies Network.
‘John Gibson Lockhart’s Artistic Dichotomy’
Marie Michlova

The paper will focus on John Gibson Lockhart’s art and fiction. Lockhart (1794-1854) used to be a famous Scottish man of letters. He proved to be multi-talented. Lockhart published several novels, biographies, translations, hundreds of various articles concerning literature, and in his free time, he used to write poetry and draw pictures (mostly caricatures).

Nowadays he's best known as Walter Scott's first biographer and as a prominent Victorian literature critic. Lockhart's caricatures have been gaining more popularity in recent years, and several more were rediscovered recently. Surprisingly, he abandoned both novel writing and drawing abruptly when he was appointed as an editor of the Quarterly Review in 1825, and the reasons behind this sudden change of habits are not entirely clear. All his novels and his drawings were created between 1810 and 1824, between his 16th and 30th year. The paper will compare and analyze Lockhart as a novelist and as a caricaturist. His fiction and his drawings are remarkably different and reveal dissimilar aspects of his complex personality.

Biography
I'm a PhD student of history at Charles University in Prague, Czech republic (since 2014). My thesis is on the phenomenon of death in early Victorian Britain. I have published 3 books on the history of everyday life and one novel (in Czech). I currently teach humanities at the Czech technical university. I have a long-term interest in Scottish romanticism, I wrote John Gibson Lockhart's biography in 2014.
‘Encounters between Science and Fiction in Grant Allen’s Strange Stories (1884)’
Beth Mills

When the author of popular literature and science, Grant Allen, died in 1899, Edward Clodd said that Strange Stories (1884) showed the way in which Allen ‘made fiction the channel of philosophy and science, while not obtruding either to the detriment of interest in the story’ (Grant Allen 95). This paper explores encounters between science and fiction in relation to Allen’s first collection of tales, Strange Stories (1884). It aims to enrich understanding of Allen’s contributions to certain genres of late nineteenth-century popular literature, and particularly to the short story, which have generally been acknowledged as minor. As the paper argues, his effort to negotiate scientific content and literary form was an important factor in certain innovations with which he has been credited, and, therefore, one that invites closer examination. Allen’s reflections both on science as a resource in fiction-writing, and on the story as a vehicle for arguments, are analysed alongside previously unstudied contemporary reviews, to suggest that he experimented with fictional forms to diversify his participation in scientific discourse, as the boundaries of professional science were coming into focus.

Biography
Beth Mills is a South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership-funded PhD researcher, co-supervised at the Universities of Exeter and Reading. She explores scientific identity and the ‘expert’ with respect to Grant Allen, aiming to present new readings of the relationship between science and Allen’s short stories and detective fiction.
‘Encountering Catholicism and Catholic Europe in Popular Fiction and Periodicals of 1850’

John Morton

September 1850 saw the issuing of a Papal bull ordering the re-establishment of a Catholic diocese in England, which had not existed since the reign of Elizabeth I. This paper will examine the immediate response – and extremely widespread and at times extreme anti-Catholic hostility – in a wide range of periodicals including the Family Herald, Household Narrative, and Reynolds’s Miscellany, looking at their leaders, historical accounts, and correspondence columns. It will then consider several serials in these periodicals, and will examine the ways in which Catholic Europe was presented in popular historical fiction of the same year, especially their discussion of ‘idolatry’, and the position of virtuous English characters – Catholic or otherwise – in the narratives. Texts considered will include The Golden Statue and Pope Joan from Reynolds’s Miscellany, which was more sympathetic in its leaders than other periodicals to Catholics; this is betrayed, to an extent, in these stories, though they can easily be read as potentially more anti-Catholic than Reynolds might have liked. It will compare this with the much more overtly anti-Catholic Family Herald and its stories ‘The Brothers’ and ‘Gertrude’, which are rather more in line with its editorials. Most of these stories are either set in Europe or have European Catholics as central characters.

The paper will demonstrate that readers of both periodicals could find the editorial line reflected in the fiction therein, but will also show that the nature of these fictions meant that these encounters with a fictional Catholic Europe could see readers at times question the authority of the editors’ claims elsewhere in their periodicals, in this pivotal year for British Catholicism.

Biography

John Morton is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Greenwich. He is Deputy Editor of the Tennyson Research Bulletin and the co-editor of the Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers (2016) and Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Case Studies (2017), both of which won the Colby Prize. He is currently working on a single-year study of literature and periodicals in 1850.
‘Lady Clara Cavendish: Reynolds and Rymer’s Revolutionary Creature’
Rebecca Nesvet

In 1858, Reynolds’s Miscellany introduced a new author, Lady Clara Cavendish. Her name, reminiscent of the aristocratic family into which the scandalous eighteenth-century Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire was unhappily married, connoted status, privilege, corruption, and tyranny. Reynolds bragged that her novels, including The Court Page, The Woman of the World, and The Fallen Star, would reveal Hanoverian court corruption. Like the Duchess of Devonshire and Lord Byron, Cavendish markets herself as class rebel and became a cultural phenomenon, though not to the same degree as those predecessors. Her work remained in print in Britain and across the Atlantic for over three decades and in 2009, Broadway World reported on the revival of one of her plays.

However, as some Victorian critics assumed, Cavendish was herself a fiction. One London book reviewer guessed she is a “mythical personage” invented by “a formidable rival to Mr. J. F. Smith,” one of the top writers of cheap fiction serials. This was spot on: Lady Clara and her novels are the inventions of Reynolds’s regular employee James Malcolm Rymer (1814-84), who in the 1840s created ‘Sweeney Todd’ and ‘Varney, the Vampire’ for the penny blood publisher Edward Lloyd.

My paper will show how Rymer’s “Cavendish” oeuvre combines key elements of his and Reynolds’s aesthetics, dramaturgy, and politics, creating a consistent personality that spans several novels and copious paratext. In creating “Lady Clara” and her works, Reynolds and Rymer extend their previous, individual reinventions of Byron and his myth for a Victorian popular audience and in service of recognizably Chartist aims. The combination of Reynolds’s Chartism and French-derived “Court Mysteries” formula and Rymer’s facility in creating self-assured, active heroines produces a literary creature that is more than the sum of its parts.

Biography
Rebecca Nesvet is an Associate Professor of English at University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. Her research on Rymer appears in journals including Victorian Popular Fictions Journal (“Sweeney Todd’s Indian Empire…” 2020), Nineteenth Century Studies, Victorian Network, Notes and Queries, and Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing. She also studies Romanticism and is editing Rymer’s A Mystery in Scarlet.
“Bark[ing] Vaguely”: Female Voices, Canines and Realism
Rachel Newman

In Eliot’s Adam Bede, Dinah remarks about Adam’s dog Gyp, “Poor dog…I’ve a strange
feeling about the dumb things as if they wanted to speak, and it was a trouble to ‘em because
they couldn’t… they may well have more in them than they know how to make us
understand, for we can’t say half what we feel, with all our words” (Eliot, 101). Here Dinah
is pointing to her own difficulty in conveying “half what [she] feel[s],” particularly regarding
her status as an unmarried, working woman who stands on the margins of Victorian society.
The nineteenth-century realist novel is, among other things, concerned with representing the
everyday as well as articulating oppressed, subjugated subject positions. Dogs in Adam Bede
operate as both markers of the everyday, but also as doubles for female characters and
representations of Victorian female oppression. Similarly, during the middle portion of Adam
Bede during Dinah Morris’ absence, some of Adam’s own views on marriage and women are
made clearer. Though he appears to admit an equality between men and women, he clearly
understands a separation between their spheres of work and influence which is consistent
with his socio-historical contexts. He tells his friend Bartle Massey that “a working-man ‘ud
be badly off without a wife to see to th’ house and the victual, and make things clean and
comfortable” (Eliot, 206). He does not view this domesticity as a limitation on women’s
freedom and choices, but rather an essential component of a successful marriage to him.
Bartle Massey objects to this characterization of a woman’s role, arguing,
‘It’s the silliest lie a sensible man like you ever believed, to say a woman makes a
house comfortable. It’s a story got up because women are there and something
must be found for ‘em to do. I tell you there isn’t a thing under the sun that needs
to be done at all, but what a man can do better than a woman, unless it’s bearing
children, and they do that in a poor make-shift way; it had better ha’ been left to
the men—it had better ha’ been left to the men.’ (Eliot, 207)
This speech advocates an obliteration of separate spheres, but by way confiscating the
woman’s sphere and delegating that to the men as well. What good are women for, one has to
ask, in Bartle’s estimation; similarly, what good are women for narratively in Eliot’s novel?
The narrator notes that Bartle’s female dog, Vixen, “felt it incumbent on her to jump out of
the hamper and bark vaguely” in objection to this misogynistic speech, to which he responds,
“Quiet, Vixen!…You’re like the rest o’ the women—always putting in your word before you
know why” (Eliot, 208). Vixen is one of several voices of female rebellion, “bark[ing]
vaguely” but resonantly, in objection to her master’s misogyny. In my paper, I intend to
explore the nature of such “vague” but unambiguous and definitive “bark[s]” and the ways in
which such protestations can be seen as substitutes for the largely silenced voices of female
discontent throughout the novel. I also would like to parse what I see as the triangular
relationship between the discontent female, canines, and representations of the real or
everyday, relying on narrative theory by Barthes, Levine, Flint, and Bakhtin.

Biography
Rachel Newman is a first-year Ph.D. student studying English literature at the University of
Southern California in Los Angeles, California. After completing her joint honors degree in
English literature and history from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec in 2016, Rachel
moved to Charlottesville, Virginia to work on a master’s degree in nineteenth-century British
literature at the University of Virginia, where she graduated in 2018 with a master’s thesis
looking at female vocation in the novels of Oliphant and Eliot. At the University of Southern
California, Rachel is working again primarily on nineteenth-century novels written by
women.
“Have you tried talking to him?”: Encountering the Victorian ‘Mad Doctor’ in BBC’s *Quacks*
Claire O’Callaghan (and Anne-Marie Beller)

In neo-Victorian period drama, the representation of nineteenth-century psychiatry and the Victorian asylum tends to be presented in relation to the Gothic, meaning that audiences often encounter medicine of the period as sensation. Productions like *Penny Dreadful* and *Ripper Street* typically present unsavoury tales of nineteenth-century medical practice, whereas films like *Stonehearst Asylum* and *Hysteria* dramatise psychiatric spectacle. The BBC’s comedy drama, *Quacks*, however, represents a departure from such approaches. The show, which ran for only one series in 2017, centred on a group of pioneering medics in the 1840s, attempting to lead the way in surgery, dentistry, and mental health care, respectively. Unlike other neo-Victorian period dramas, *Quacks* used satire and absurdist, slapstick comedy to represent medical practice. While the show portrays the dangers of nineteenth-century dentistry and surgery, showing, for instance, the surgeon, Dr William Lessing, inadvertently excising a patient’s testicle in episode one, the representation of ‘Mad Doctor’ William Agar is rendered more sensitively. Focusing largely – though not exclusively – on Agar’s endeavours with ‘moral medicine’, this paper will look at how *Quacks* narrates the challenge of integrating medical innovation into psychiatric practice in the 1840s. While Agar adopts both progressive and pseudoscientific approaches to mental health practice (such as phrenology), his insistence on care and commitment to the alleviation of suffering functions, we suggest, to present an alternate image of Victorian psychiatry to that typically offered in period drama. *Quacks’* use of comedy to explore mental health onscreen deconstructs the taboos around mental health through laughter and empathy, while also (paradoxically) exploring a crucial period in the development of modern psychiatry with respect and a measure of historical accuracy.

**Biography**
Claire O’Callaghan is a Lecturer in English at Loughborough University, UK. Her research focuses on Victorian and neo-Victorian literature and culture, with an emphasis on gender, the body, and violence. She is the author of *Sarah Waters: Gender and Sexual Politics* (2017) and *Emily Brontë Reappraised: A View from the Twenty-First Century* (2018).
“He took the wolf and locked him up in a cage”: Otherness and Zoos in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*

Maria Parrino

Among the multiple documents mentioned in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* there is an article from *The Pall Mall Gazette* reporting the interview with the keeper of the Zoological Gardens in London soon after the escape of a Norwegian wolf. The lengthy story of the zookeeper includes the encounter with a strange visitor (a man with a mouth “full of white, sharp teeth” who fearlessly stroked the wolf in the cage the day before the escape), and the wild animal’s unexpected return to the zoo, a surprisingly docile wolf with a cut on his head.

Established in 1828 as a collection for scientific study and opened to the public in 1847, the London Zoo was an emblem of Britain’s imperial victories, with animals from every corner of the world. (Schneer; Davies). By the end of the century, visiting the zoo was a common form of popular recreation and more than half a million people attended annually. To place Dracula in the zoo not only provides the reader with the vampire’s animalistic and dangerous traits (the vampire can transform into a rat, a bat, a dog and a wolf), but also points out his threat and relates him to a popular signifier of imperialism (Senf). Moreover, Dracula’s presence in Regent’s Park literally and metaphorically occupies the space of a central area of London, enabling the shapeshifter and the foreigner to penetrate an allegedly protected environment.

Stoker’s *Dracula* examines not only the sense of fear caused by a supposed escape from the zoo, but also shows what happens when the zoo fails to control a foreign presence, both visitor and animal: chaotic forces start to threaten the British sense of authority and security.

The paper aims to analyse the zoo as a symbol of the successful rule over the Other, and at the same time, as the *locus* of the potential risk of reverse colonization (Arata).

**Biography**

Maria Parrino is a full time teacher of English Language and Literature in a Secondary School in Vicenza, Italy. She is also a Subject Expert at the University of Venice. She has written articles on Italian-American immigrant autobiographies and Gothic literature. In 2014 she defended her PhD dissertation on Nineteenth-century Gothic Literature at the University of Bristol, UK.
‘Beacons of the Future! Sherlock Holmes and Pedagogical Environments’
Christopher Pittard

In ‘The Naval Treaty’ (1893), Holmes describes the Board Schools established by the 1870 Education Act as ‘lighthouses’ securing the future of the country, echoing Arthur Conan Doyle’s comments on the 1870 Act in earlier works such as The Narrative of John Smith (published 2011). Yet Doyle does not turn extensively to education and schooling in the Holmes canon until The Return of Sherlock Holmes (1904), with no fewer than four stories set in or around schools or universities. Holmes’ relationship with the police is likewise reconceptualised as one of mentorship rather than rivalry. Watson, too, shows signs of enhanced abilities as a result of Holmesian pedagogy (perceiving the length of a client’s travels from the condition of his collar, and challenging Holmes’ opinions on character and evolution).

This paper therefore addresses Return’s relation to later Victorian educative discourse, and in particular the stories’ intervention in Victorian and Edwardian debates over utilitarian and classical modes of education. Despite their pedagogical settings, the stories never reach the classroom itself, remaining in what Elizabeth Gargano (in Reading Victorian Schoolrooms (2008)) identifies as alternative semi-domesticated educational spaces that offer a critique of the utilitarian values embodied in the disciplinary arrangement of the classroom. A story such as the ‘The Three Students,’ set almost entirely within academics’ and students’ college rooms and concerned with the security surrounding a prestigious scholarship examination, satirises the late Victorian university examination system and the cultural connection of gentlemanliness to classical education. In Doyle’s detective fiction, a more physical and material education is required to maintain the health of the nation. Doyle’s middlebrow critique of higher education is thus of a piece with the educational ethos of the Strand Magazine itself, focused more on popular science than classical cultures.

Biography
Christopher Pittard is Senior Lecturer in English Literature and course leader for the MA Victorian Gothic at the University of Portsmouth. His publications include Purity and Contamination in Late Victorian Detective Fiction (2011), the co-edited Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes (2019), and Literary Illusions: Performance Magic and Victorian Literature (forthcoming 2021).
“Encounters with Pictures in Popular Fiction, 1840-1860”
Jonathan Potter

“Picture” stories, a whole genre of short fiction denoted by the central role of a picture, were common in the 1840s and 1850s. They featured in a range of periodicals that published popular fiction, such as Ainsworth's Magazine, Chamber's Edinburgh Journal, Bentley's Miscellany, and Sharpe's London magazine of entertainment and instruction for general reading. Titles usually made the genre obvious: e.g. “The Story of a Picture” (1842), “The Fatal Picture” (Elder, 1843), “The Adventures of a Picture” (Medwin, 1843), “The Unfinished Picture: A Reverie” (Kenney, 1845), “The Lost Picture” (1853), “The Unowned Picture” (1856), and “Memoirs of an Old Picture” (1859). Many of the “pictures” in the picture stories of the 1840s and 1850s are paintings, but not all. A sub-section of picture stories forms its plot around technologically produced images – primarily photographs and stereographs. Whereas paintings tend to feature in gothic, supernatural stories, photographs often appear in more contemporary, urban tales which focus more on how characters react to the image than the image itself. This paper will examine how and why paintings and photographs work differently within this genre of short fiction. In essence, it explores the meanings and values attributed to encounters with pictures in popular fiction of the 1840s and 1850s.

Biography
Jonathan Potter researches Victorian literature and teaches academic skills at Birmingham City University. His first book, Discourses of Vision in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Seeing, Thinking, was recently published by Palgrave Macmillan.
The music world was a gendered environment for the Victorians, with complex and contradictory ideas governing practices of performance, promotion, publishing, and authorship. This paper will look at various texts addressing women’s engagement with this simultaneously hostile and welcoming environment, from ideas early in the period about the social value of teaching girls to play instruments, especially the piano, to late-nineteenth-century debates, influenced by the New Woman movement, as to how far women may make a career out of music. The musical profession changed drastically throughout the course of the Victorian era, and for women this meant the increasing viability of a stage career or making a living as a music teacher. As interpreters, performers, and educators, women dominated the music world, and they were repeatedly identified with such an environment in scientific discourse about women’s bodies. Music was characterized as feminine, because it was emotional, irreducible to rationality, intuitive, and bodily. However, music also fell prey to the demands of a marketplace, which compromised the scope of women’s engagement with it and access to it: witness the growing trend for impresarios backing female singers, or the case of Caroline Norton, whose songwriting royalties all went to her estranged husband, prompting her activism and leading to the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act and 1870 Married Women’s Property Act. Late-nineteenth-century writings by Edith Brower, Mona Caird, and Marie Corelli display a tension between creation and re-creation, interpretation and authorship, as Victorians tried to delineate the limits and scope of an environment traditionally seen as feminine, but not wholly suitable for women. This paper will demonstrate the growing complexity of the Victorian music world as a cultural environment in which women could find fulfilment, both financially and creatively.

**Biography**
Victoria C. Roskams is a first-year DPhil student at the University of Oxford. After studying for a BA at the University of Bristol, she gained her MA from the University of York. Her DPhil thesis is a study of the representation of composers in late-nineteenth-century literature.
‘Painter’s Corner: Paying Respect to Departed Genius’
Cherry Sandover

In 1773 the artist Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy of Arts, wrote to his patron and friend, Lord Grantham, that he hoped “St Paul’s would lead the fashion in Pictures as St James does for dress.” He went on to say that, he foresaw that the scheme could be extended to include, “future monuments erected there instead of Westminster Abbey.” On his death, in 1792, Reynolds became the first artist to be interred close to the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in the crypt.

The notion that this particular part of the crypt of St Paul’s became known as the ‘painter’s corner’ since the burial of Reynolds gained weight during the 19th century, and many other Academicians, or their families, chose burial in the crypt alongside Reynolds. Among these were Joseph William Mallord Turner whose determination to be honoured in St Paul’s led him to leaving a sum of money for a statue to be erected. Charles Robert Cockerell, who had been Surveyor of the cathedral works and Professor of Architecture (1860-1865); Sir Edwin Landseer, who had been offered the position of President on the death of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake but declined; the Royal sculptor Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm who died in 1890; and also Frederic Lord Leighton, the 7th President of the Academy. Even when burials took place elsewhere the friends, admirers and family of Academicians often paid for the erection of commemorative memorials for the walls of the crypt. This paper will examine the relationship between St Paul’s Cathedral and the Royal Academy of Arts as a ‘Painter’s Pantheon’.

Biography
Lecturer: Contextual Studies in Art & Design at University Centre Southend; and self-supporting Anglo-Catholic Priest since 2015. My PhD thesis was entitled the Triumph of Fame over Death: The Commemorative Funerary Monument of the Artist in 19th century Britain as Signifier of Identity.
'The Cities of Mars: Urban Planning and Alien Architecture in Late-Victorian Interplanetary Romances'
Fiona Schroeder

This paper will examine depictions of extraterrestrial urban environments in late-Victorian interplanetary romances, focusing on Gustavus W. Pope’s *Journey to Mars* (1894). Reading the novel against contemporary innovations in architecture and city planning, it will consider how popular imaginings of alien metropoles engaged with spatial anxieties arising from the diminishing frontiers and accelerated urbanization that marked the end of the nineteenth century.

Rosalind Williams (2013) argues that the *fin de siècle* was characterised by a growing awareness that “henceforth the world would be both closed and full” (x). Lack of space, not only at the geographical periphery, but in the increasingly-urbanized imperial centre, became a key concern for Anglophone writers. In Britain, for example, the issue was famously highlighted by Charles Booth’s influential studies on the London poor (1889-1903). The Martian cities of Pope’s novel evince similar anxieties arising in the United States: here, as New York’s population rose above a million, settler-migration led to increasing urbanization on the Western frontier (James Belich, 2009). Pope’s conurbations, which combine “the charms and beauties of rural scenery” with “the works of man’s industry”, allowing citizens to “enjoy plenty of air, light and elbow room” (192-193), present an alternative model to the increasingly overcrowded and polluted cities of both the old and new world.

In *Journey to Mars*, the red planet provides a space in which to explore innovative methods for countering the potentially degenerative effects of cities on their inhabitants’ mental and physical health and – as some feared – their genetic integrity. As such, Pope’s alien metropolis may be read as a utopian blueprint for the terrestrial cities of the future. Significantly, the architectural reforms described in the novel are symptomatic of the ideological superiority of Martian civilization, which has advanced beyond the confines of imperial capitalism, privileging sustainability over expansion. Therefore, the novel explores not only alternative ways of shaping urban environments, but also interrogates contemporary norms by presenting different modes of thinking and being.

**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.
‘Me Too @LucyVictim#1: Vampires in Neo-Victorian Feminist Horror’
Shannon Scott

My essay, “Me Too @LucyVictim#1: Vampires in Neo-Victorian Feminist Horror” explores twenty-first century popular fiction and film adaptations of Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1897), specifically focused on the character of Lucy Westenra. While scholars have often categorized Lucy as either a symbol of innocence or a threatening representation of the New Woman, some contemporary adaptations, particularly those written by women, embrace Lucy’s seemingly disparate identities as innocent victim and self-possessed perpetrator. The result is horror that does not simply play into male sexual fantasy or even female revenge fantasy, but instead creates a complex, character-driven narrative fuelled by larger issues of social justice. In Gwendolyn Kiste’s “The Eight People Who Murdered Me (Excerpt from Lucy Westenra’s Diary),” published in November 2019 in Nightmare Magazine, Lucy encounters Count Dracula after leaving a party where her three suitors—Arthur, John, and Quincey—compete for her hand in marriage. Dracula, instead of offering Lucy a ring, offers her “another way,” sensing her desire for “something more.” Kiste engages with popular tropes in Neo-Victorian horror—Lucy’s fantasies of escaping marital expectation, victimization through medical experiment and/or alleged gallantry, female agency through female monstrosity—yet Kiste ultimately finds it essential for Lucy to retain/regain her innocence to be of use to others, particularly women. In the end, a resurrected Lucy takes a train destined for the Carpathian Mountains, traveling where the surviving men will not in order to find Dracula. She thinks, “It could be that nobody murdered me after all, because maybe I’m still here.” And it becomes clear that Lucy hasn’t given up anything—not her innocence, not her life. Kiste’s reimagining stands in sharp contrast to Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat’s Dracula miniseries (Netflix 2020), where Lucy (Lydia West) is rebooted as a psychopathic sexpot. Kiste’s Neo-Victorian portrait of Lucy not only offers a more fully dimensional female character but it reflects the collective voice of the #MeToo era.

Biography
Shannon Scott is an adjunct Professor of English at the University of St. Thomas. Her academic essays were recently published in collections by Routledge (2019) and Manchester University Press (2020). Her story, “American House Spider,” was published in Nightscript in 2019 and her horror novelette, “Swing a Dead Cat,” will be published in March by Crone Girls Press.
‘Tactile Encounters with the Terra Incognita: Feeling for George Egerton’s feminism in Keynotes (1893)’
Isobel Sigley

My paper will investigate how George Egerton’s unique brand of naturalist feminism is articulated through intimate encounters between female heroines and their male partners. I will look particularly at instances where her female characters restrict tactility, compared to encounters in which they instigate or condone intimate sensations, with the suggestion that this policing of their own corporeal space is evidence of their empowered rejection of, as Egerton sees it, the unnatural patriarchal hierarchy. Her successful collection Keynotes, written in ten days and selling over 6000 copies, repeatedly uses objects to bridge space between her male and female characters, while still limiting direct contact with the terra incognita – the truth of Womanhood. In ‘A Little Grey Glove’, the fetishized glove symbolises a lack in the open-ended romance; there is a limp deficiency in his inability to reach the divorcee woman. Likewise, in ‘An Empty Frame’, clothing prevents bodies from colliding. Concurrently, objects are used as substitutes for contact as Egerton insinuates emotional or spiritual encounters between characters. In ‘Now Spring Has Come’, a book initially connects Egerton’s heroine to her lover – a fishing rod is used to the same end, albeit less figuratively, in ‘A Little Grey Glove’. Such objects mediate these heterosocial (if not heterosexual) encounters, taking on significance as Egerton’s characters negotiate the battle of the sexes. Contrastingly, objects shared by two women reveal a feminist solidarity and a mutuality which transcends artificial divides enforced by society, with objects imbued with maternal meaning (baby clothes in ‘A Cross Line’ and the medallion in ‘The Spell of the White Elf’) used to communicate a deeper, eternal connection which overrides class differences. As such, Egerton uses tactile encounters to garner an understanding of one’s inherent nature, an understanding which is more readily achieved in a homosocial, rather than heterosocial, direction.

Biography
Isobel Sigley is a Doctoral Researcher at Loughborough University, researching haptic feeling in women’s short fiction from the late-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century. Her research traces the influence of the late-Victorian New Woman movement on Modernist and suffragist writing, tracking continuities across first-wave feminist fiction through the tactile sense.
At the turn of the 20th century there were many writers, male and female (Croker, Cross, Diver, Penny, Perrin, Savi, Bray, Bruce, Greenhow, to name a few), who, like Kipling, put their experience of living (as children and adults) and working in British India into novels and short stories. The work of many of these writers was favourably compared to that of Kipling by contemporary British reviewers and enjoyed bestseller status (e.g. Perrin, Steel, Cross). Their work, like Kipling’s, shaped opinion of the Raj in Britain. Edmund Candler, before he went to India, believed he understood the country as he had read all about it from ‘the viewpoint of authors like Kipling’ [my italics].

The work of these writers, unlike Kipling’s, is, however, no longer in print. The female novelists have been described as ‘lady romancers’ who produced ‘meretricious account(s) of cultures they could not comprehend.’ Later critics have been less dismissive but, in general, little critical attention has been paid to Kipling’s contemporaries.

In this paper I will argue that the marginalisation of Kipling’s contemporaries, male and female, needs to be remedied. Their work has been dismissed as mediocre in literary terms, as popular fiction. Yet popular fiction, highly responsive to the temporal and geographical conditions of its production, can be a source for the study of contemporary discursive formations. In addition, the female Anglo-Indian writers, all of them ‘married to the Empire’, in Procida’s phrase, need to be studied for their differing responses to British India. The work of the Anglo-Indians complements that of Kipling and opens up a wider perspective on British India.

**Biography**

My doctoral thesis at the University of Sussex (‘Heat and Lust: Desire and Intimacy across the (post)-colonial divide’) examined novels on interracial marriage by a number of Anglo-Indian writers from the turn of the 20th century. I am currently working on a study of the life and works of some of Kipling’s female Anglo-Indian contemporaries.

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“Here he comes, out of the rock-shadow into the light!”: Romantic Encounters in Foreign Lands in Rhoda Broughton’s “Good-bye, Sweetheart!” (1872) and Belinda (1883)

Graziella Stringos

During the nineteenth century travelling abroad became a widespread experience, and novelists, often travellers themselves, started exploiting this reality in their fiction. Travel became more conspicuously a metaphor for personal development, sometimes with scenes representing a moment of catharsis in the protagonist’s life. Rhoda Broughton set most of her fiction in England but some of her novels include crucial episodes in foreign lands, mainly European ones. This strategic choice of setting is most fundamental in “Good-bye, Sweetheart!” and Belinda. Essentially love stories, these novels are partially set in countries as diverse as Brittany, Germany and Switzerland, and present two young women, Lenore Herrick and Belinda Churchill, who fall in love with Paul Le Mesurier and David Rivers respectively during a chance encounter in a foreign city. The paper addresses the notion of ‘spatial articulation’ where the rendering of space and place is closely linked to the individual’s state of mind and heart. Broughton’s description of these foreign places is highly evocative as these loci assume great figurative value in the narrative. The detail given to the architecture, the landscape and celestial bodies is never superfluous but imperative to the understanding of the protagonist’s predicament: due to the author’s prioritisation of consciousness it is always a matter of how the outside mirrors or jars with the inside. The paper also links the choice of setting to Broughton’s skilful deployment of sensation elements, such as sensuality, obsession, illness and madness. Finally, the paper also engages in a close juxtaposition of Belinda and its source of inspiration, George Eliot’s Middlemarch, highlighting the import of Broughton’s intentional relocation of the setting.

Biography

Dr. Graziella Stringos is a lecturer within the University of Malta Junior College, Msida, Malta. Her research area is Victorian, Edwardian and early twentieth-century literature, particularly lesser-known women writers. She is also interested in Neo-Victorian fiction and films. She is currently working on a monograph on Rhoda Broughton’s novels and a study on the representation of masculinity in Victorian popular women writers’ fiction.
“Render me with the mind of an obliging child”: Medicine and Gender in Showtime’s *Penny Dreadful*
Julie Anne Taddeo

The TV series *Penny Dreadful* (Showtime, 2014-16) is not explicitly a medical period drama, and yet, while it plays with historical realities and chronologies (situating Victor Frankenstein at the tail end of the nineteenth century for starters), it engages extensively with Victorian surgery, psychiatry, and medical research. In the process, it restores the voices and agency of female patients who were silenced in medical records of the past. This paper will focus on two story lines: Victor’s attempt to transform the prostitute Brona Croft into “Lily”, the ideal Angel in the House, through surgery and behavioral modification (as Brona/Lily says, “to render me with mind of an obliging child”), and Vanessa Ives’s treatment for mental illness at the Banning clinic (an illness she equates with the male expert’s view of her failure to “counterfeit normality well enough.”) This neo-Victorian televisual representation interrogates the relationship between medicine, gender, and power—past and present; *Penny Dreadful* specifically showcases how the female patient was both subjugated by and subverted Victorian medical theory and practice as well as the larger cultural norms that dictated appropriate feminine behavior. The medical plots around these two female characters have thus sealed this series’ reputation as “feminist TV” with its fan base although, as Marie-Luise Kohlke argues, these particular storylines sometimes fall short of their professed feminist agenda. Finally, *Penny Dreadful*, when compared to earlier British TV series set during the same period (*Bramwell* (ITV 1995-98) and *The Yellow Wallpaper* (BBC 1989), for example) underscores the enduring legacy of Elaine Showalter’s now contested study, *The Female Malady* (1985), in popular representations of Victorian medicine.

**Biography**

Julie Anne Taddeo is Associate Research Professor of History at University of Maryland, College Park, USA. She has published on British modernism, sexuality and the Bloomsbury group, Steampunk, popular authors Anne Perry and Catherine Cookson, and British period TV since the 1960s. She currently is co-writing a book with Katherine Byrne on rape in period television.
‘Conquering the Progressive Past?’
Fatima Taha

Nineteenth century Urdu novels’ fictional women share similarities with their British counterparts. I examine 21st century Urdu translators’ influence on the female characters and feminist moments present in three 19th century British English works: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Dracula*. Contemporary Urdu translations of these works suppress burgeoning female independence and feminist viewpoints inhabiting the originals. Christopher Larkosh states that “acts of translation continually reshape the understanding of ‘our’ identities and limits with what is perceived as other” (*Re-engendering Translations* 5). The difficulty of creating a translation that engages readers without subverting Islamic and Pakistani cultural mores is nearly transparent in these three works. I propose that these tensions underscore the degree of agency 19th century Indian Muslim female characters possessed in texts such as *Fasana-e-Azad* and *Umrao Jan Ada*. This semi-erasure of feminist moments in 21st century Urdu translations reveals the translators’ anxieties concerning the loss or disruption of traditional female roles. Partha Chatterjee states, “what made the ridicule stronger was the constant suggestion that the westernized woman was fond of idle luxury and cared little for the well-being of the home” (*The Black Hole of Empire* 124). As in England, in India, some women were staunch supporters of the accepted gender roles where the women remained bound to the domestic sphere. Yet, 19th century Urdu novels sought to show female characters embracing modernity, sometimes within the realm of the traditional domestic sphere or as widows or courtesans. This experimentation and attempt at social reform has all but disappeared in 21st century Urdu translations of British novels, while colonial Urdu novels portrayed new societal roles for women. This contrast, I argue, illustrates the modernity and progressiveness 19th century female characters possessed and that 21st century Urdu translations are erasing.

**Biography**
A University of Maryland’s fourth year comparative literature PhD student, I investigate 19th century Urdu, British, and French literature. I focus on subaltern Indian, colonized female voices, positing that they ruptured stagnant Indian gender roles and societal constructs, creating a space for women's writing and agency in 20th century India.
‘Screening Collins in (and out of) Italy: From The Woman in White to La donna in bianco’
Saverio Tomaiuolo

_The Woman in White_ is an intrinsically visual narrative, in which images are as excessive as its themes. In light of the impact and influence of theatricality and of melodrama on Collins’s novel, visuality and sensation are thus constantly aligned in this story, which addresses its audience through a constant reference to the powerful appeal on the mind (and imagination) of the sensorial organ of sight. The first-rate value attributed by Collins to optical perception may be reputed one of the reasons why many of his texts, and in particular _The Woman in White_, have had a fruitful visual afterlife on TV and cinema. After introducing a selection of movies and of TV renditions of Collins’s most famous novel, my essay will focus in particular on its Italian adaptation, broadcast with the title _La donna in bianco_ on the National Public Broadcasting Company RAI in 1980. A common denominator in almost all screen translations of Collins’s story, including the Italian one, is their focusing on marital brutality, women’s legal imbalance, and female assertiveness. In this sense, my analysis aims at showing that Collins’s visual narrative succeeded to address its Italian audience in a specific historical, political and cultural phase of the nation’s history, during which divorce as well as social and domestic violence (including the treatment of insane) were still cogent issues.

**Biography**
Saverio Tomaiuolo is Associate Professor at Cassino University, Italy. He has published _In Lady Audley’s Shadow. Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres_ (Edinburgh University Press, 2010) and _Victorian Unfinished Novels. The Imperfect Page_ (Palgrave, 2012). His latest book is entitled _Deviance in neo-Victorian Culture: Transgression, Canon, Innovation_ (Palgrave, 2018).
‘Traveller’s Tales: Gothic Encounters and Environments in Rudyard Kipling’s Short Fiction’
Minna Vuohelainen

Between 1884 and 1936, Rudyard Kipling wrote well over 300 short stories, most of which were shaped by their initial publication in the periodical press. These stories, which, as Andrew Rutherford notes, develop from ‘sophisticated simplicity’ to a ‘complex, closely organized, elliptical and symbolic mode’, reveal Kipling not only as an ‘innovator and a virtuoso in the art of the short story’ but also as an ‘unexpected contributor to modernism’.6 Kipling’s corpus of short fiction contains a number of very fine Gothic tales that have received relatively little critical attention. These include colonial ghost stories (‘The Phantom Rickshaw’, Civil and Military Gazette, 1885; ‘The Lost Legion’, Strand, 1892); representations of the colonial encounter through Gothic tropes of horror and the uncanny (‘The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes’, Civil and Military Gazette, 1885; ‘At the End of the Passage’, Lippincott’s, 1890; ‘The Mark of the Beast’, Pioneer, 1890); and late stories that develop an elegiac and elliptical Gothic modernism (‘“They”’, Scribner’s, 1904; ‘Mrs Bathurst’, Windsor, 1904). This paper evaluates Kipling’s contribution to the critically neglected genre of the Gothic short story, with a focus on the stories’ persistent representation of the encounter with the Gothic Other through spatial tropes of travel, disorientation, displacement and absence. The stories’ overlapping spatialities – generic, formal, periodical, national, colonial – are characteristic, I argue, not only of Kipling’s Gothic ‘traveller’s tale[s]’ but more broadly of the Gothic short story during the seminal period of transition from the Victorian to the modernist.7

Biography

'How to Mismanage Your Home: Domestic Accidents and Mrs Henry Wood’s Household Advice'
Tamara S. Wagner

The proposed paper explores the representation of household hazards and domestic accidents in popular Victorian fiction. Taking Mrs Henry Wood’s *Mrs Halliburton’s Troubles* (1862) as a case study, I discuss how accidents involving household tasks and routines may work as a symptom of domestic mismanagement, while signalling larger anxieties about the instability of the domestic ideal. Victorian popular fiction articulates shifting reactions to risk and risk-management as much as to the work of managing a household. Women’s writing especially is more likely to depict the home as the site of domestic labour, as a place of worry even, rather than as a stable space that stands apart or in opposition to work. Influential Victorian thinkers such as John Ruskin may have engendered the notorious bifurcation of the public versus the domestic sphere that presented the latter as a rest from strife, yet women writers often sought to demonstrate that the households they were running really were no such thing, or at least not intrinsically. Wood went further in turning household management into a sensational topic, expanding on a growing tendency in Victorian print to expose the various hazards of everyday life. Throughout her fiction, domestic accidents, often with life-long repercussions, are variously interwoven with murder mysteries. As the mismanagement of everyday domestic tasks becomes connected to crime, Wood thereby identifies such mismanagement as criminal. Prompting us critically to parse how women’s writing resists simplistic sentimentalisations of homemaking, her fictionalised advice material also urges us to pay more attention to domestic accidents in nineteenth-century print culture.

Biography