



## CFP on “Reappraising Penny Fiction”: Abstracts 30/3/2021

*Victorian Popular Fictions Journal*, an open-access online publication, invites contributions to a special volume titled “Reappraising Penny Fiction,” to be published in Autumn 2022. Over the past few years, the study of Victorian penny fiction, including “bloods,” “dreadfuls,” and American “dime novels,” has undergone a dramatic transformation. The past five years have seen the publication of important scholarship on penny literature, including new books on integral figures Edward Lloyd (1815-90), George W.M. Reynolds (1814-79), and the transcultural evolution of the feuilleton novel, and a new edition of Louis James’s *Fiction for the Working Man*. Independent presses such as Victorian Secrets, Valancourt, and Edwin Everett Root are introducing penny literature to a new generation of readers, while databases such as *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* make many of the primary sources accessible. Meanwhile, the bibliographic database *Price One Penny* has achieved its tenth birthday and is being significantly overhauled and expanded. Clearly, penny fiction is no longer a deeply obscure and contested criticism of the “byways” of literature. Instead, it is now acknowledged as a significant literary phenomenon, not only massively popular throughout the Victorian era but imbued with its own often profound aesthetics, politics, and social culture. Penny fiction’s networks of writers, publishers, and readers overlapped with those of the ‘war of the unstamped’, Chartism, the stage, detective fiction, children’s literature, and middleclass and elite literature. Consequently, now is a good time to dust off old assumptions and reexamine the ontology and culture of penny fiction. We welcome articles that explore questions such as, but not limited to:

- ❖ What do we mean by “penny blood,” “dreadful,” and “awful?”
- ❖ What is the history of those terms?
- ❖ How might we go beyond them to make sense of the multi-generic penny fiction phenomenon?
- ❖ How do illustration, translation and transatlantic (re)publication of penny fiction, *feuilleton* novels, and dime novels illuminate the history of penny fiction?
- ❖ What relationships associate penny fiction with other literary phenomena?
- ❖ What can the collection and/or binding of penny fiction tell us about its readers, individually and collectively?
- ❖ What connections exist between the “cheap” literature phenomenon of the Victorian age and current movements that promise increased access to literature and publishing?
- ❖ How might we reappraise penny fiction in light of its other cultural contexts or of discourses of class, race, gender, religion, and/or sexuality?

Please submit **250-400 word abstract and one-page, research-focused CV** to [nesvetr@uwgb.edu](mailto:nesvetr@uwgb.edu) AND [basdeos@richmond.ac.uk](mailto:basdeos@richmond.ac.uk) , with email subject line **“VPFJ Penny Fiction,”** by **30 March 2021**. Article of 6-8,000 words will be due on 15 December 2021. Questions to the same emails.