

Abstract and Bios Booklet

Religion and Victorian Popular Literature and Culture

Thursday 6 – Saturday 8 May 2021

Thursday 6 May Keynote

Anne-Marie Beller and Kerry Featherstone

“No greater spiritual beauty than fanaticism”: Women Travellers’ Encounters with Islam in the Nineteenth Century

Although there is now considerable scholarly research into Victorian women travelers, relatively little criticism exists about their negotiations with the religious cultures they encountered. Florentia Sale, Amelia B. Edwards, Emily Eden, and Isabelle Eberhardt produced travel accounts of Afghanistan, Egypt, India, and Algeria respectively. We examine their representations of Islam and Islamic culture in the countries through which they travelled, to evaluate the extent to which their own respective religious, political, ideological and social positions shaped the encounters about which they wrote. Each of these women was able to respond in their narratives to Muslims and Islamic culture in a way that was not defined by the specific context in which they found themselves. Both Sale and Eden were in positions of privilege due to marriage, but their responses to Islam were not solely dictated by colonial ideology or gender. Edwards and Eberhardt lived very different lives, but both defined themselves (and were posthumously defined) through their passionate relationships with North Africa and the religions & cultures (both ancient & modern) they encountered there. Both have been celebrated as independent and/or rebellious 19th century women who challenged dominant gender and racial orthodoxies. Yet such readings overlook the complexity of their responses to Islam, to Muslims, and to European colonial ideology.

Anne-Marie Beller is a Senior Lecturer in Victorian Literature at Loughborough University. Her research interests include sensation fiction, New Woman Writing, and Neo-Victorian Studies. She has published widely on the nineteenth century novelist, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and is interested in gender, race, and sexuality. Current research includes projects on the neo-Victorian slave narrative, and lunatic asylums in Victorian and Neo-Victorian fiction. Anne-Marie is also working, with Kerry Featherstone, on a translation of Mary Braddon’s largely unknown novella, *The Pastor of Marston*, published serially in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* and never republished (or translated) since 1881.

Kerry Featherstone is a lecturer in Creative Writing at Loughborough University, UK. He has published on travel writing and has particular research interests in representations of Afghanistan from the nineteenth century onwards in a range of genres. Kerry is also a poet and his creative practice involves writing about landscapes, involving a combination of personal memory and historical research. He is currently working on a translation of a Braddon novella (with Anne-Marie Beller) and an article on globalization and travel writing.

Friday 7 May, Discussion panels for recorded papers

15:00-15:45: Writing for Children

Karen Gardiner

Growing up by growing down: Time, Space and a Theology of Eternity in Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll

The Victorian theologian and Anglican Priest F. D. Maurice enjoyed friendship with three of the era's most popular writers of children's fantasy: Charles Kingsley (Anglican Priest), George MacDonald (Congregationalist Minister), and Lewis Carroll (a Deacon in the Church of England). Kingsley worked closely with Maurice in the Christian Socialist Movement and continued to be a life-long correspondent, whilst MacDonald and Carroll attended Maurice's Church, St Peter's Vere Street, regularly in the 1860s and discussed theology with him in person and by letter.

In 1853 Maurice had published *Theological Essays*, the final chapter of which had led to his dismissal from his role as Professor of Moral Theology at Kings College London. The book had far reaching consequences, forming the centre of an argument that would consume the Church of England in the coming decades. Kingsley, MacDonald and Carroll all penned sermons during their lives which drew heavily on the controversial chapter, "On Eternal Life and Eternal Death".

Maurice's book had challenged the Church of England's position on everlasting punishment on both ethical and Biblical grounds, claiming that the word "eternal" had been misinterpreted by modern theologians. In his attempt to explain how eternity exists entirely outside time and space Maurice claimed that eternity is not something which is intellectually complicated, but rather a state which is understood (and lived) intuitively by the uneducated and by children, claiming "If you have listened with earnestness to the questions of a child, you may often think that it knows more of eternity than of time".

This paper will explore three images of Maurice's timeless, childlike eternity in *The Water Babies*, *At the Back of the North Wind*, and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, and make the argument that through these three writers, Maurice's theology impacted generations of readers, beyond traditionally theological boundaries.

Karen Gardiner has a multi-disciplinary background in theology, psychology, and the arts. She is presently studying for a PhD in Theology and Literature at Nottingham University focussing on the influence of the theologian F. D. Maurice on Lewis Carroll. Karen is also a Parish Priest in the Church of England.

Cath H. Kennedy

Where are the Bible Heroines?: Women and Narrative in an example of the Child Temperance Press

The 1850's saw intense debate around the legitimacy of female activity outside the home. The abolitionist, suffragist, and temperance movements formed an influential subculture at this time, within which the moral and theological discourses which would enable the emancipation of slaves and women were developing. The child temperance movement was a key component of this development, and its publications for children give an insight into the development of proto-feminist thinking. One example of this is the *Band of Hope Journal (Journal)*, of which a few copies from the 1850's survive at the University of Sheffield.

The *Journal's* emphasis on the education and economic emancipation of women co-exists with abundant Bible quotations and religious exhortations to kindness and good

behaviour. However, not a single Bible story featuring a female protagonist is included, an exclusion which seems incongruous with its generally religious tone.

This paper explores the Bible stories used with 19th century children, and their implicit ideology, comparing it to the *Journal's* representation of women and girls. It argues that the *Journal's* editors excluded Biblical material explicitly concerning women in favour of traditions of Christian femininity which were more open to progressive interpretation. This editorial line suggests a deep engagement with the material, and an understanding of narrative as discourse which is often absent from discussions concerning children's biblical reception today. Given that today's children's canon is largely the same as that of the 1850's, perhaps the *Journal's* editorial priorities for its female readers were in advance of our time, as well as its own.

Cath H. Kennedy is a PhD student researching children's biblical reception. She is a member of the "Sacred Texts and Child Readers" project in SIIBS with Hugh Pyper and Jeremy Clines, which aims to provide a platform for research and collaboration. Cath tweets as @carefulkaty, and is on Humanities Commons at <https://hcommons.org/members/cath/>.

Steven Spencer

"Daddy, My Pwayers": Narrative and song in *The Little Soldier of The Salvation Army*

Serial fiction, songs and poetry were key components of The Salvation Army's rapidly growing press in the late nineteenth century. They had a particularly strong presence in their publications for children, even before the heyday of Salvation Army publishing for children in the 1920s, when dozens of novels were produced specifically for young readers.

Prominent among the periodicals aimed at children was *The Little Soldier* (published from 1881 and retitled *The Young Soldier* in 1888). Originally subtitled 'Our Children's War Cry,' this evangelical weekly newspaper carried a wide variety of content including reports from Little Soldier Brigades across the country, life stories of Salvation Army officers, accounts of Little Soldiers who had died (or been 'promoted to Glory'), and updates from the wider Salvation Army world. But alongside these are a range of narrative and fictional content, including didactic stories (such as 'Little Emily's Conversion'), poems ('Essie's Dream'), serial fiction ('Sybil's Friends' and 'Frank's Mistakes'), a multi-part 'Little Soldiers' Life of Christ' and a dedicated page of eight "original songs for the Little Soldier" each week. These narratives were, unsurprisingly, of a religious and evangelical nature, but also returned repeatedly to other concerns, such as promoting temperance, advocating child safety and highlighting slum conditions (all three of which are encapsulated in a macabre poem published in 1887, 'Baby Burnt to Death').

This paper will explore the history, production and circulation of *The Little Soldier* with a specific focus on its poems and stories. In so doing it will highlight a previously neglected source for children's religious literature from an evangelical tradition.

Steven Spencer is Director of The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre. He is an Honorary Fellow in the School of History, Politics & International Relations at the University of Leicester

16:00-16:45: The Shock of the New

Alicia Barnes

Religious Imagery and the Railway: John Herapath's *Railway Magazine*

Railways proved to be a conflicting image for interpreting religion and their presence in the Christian imagination was ambiguous. In an age of increasing secularisation, the new machine ensemble was frequently looked upon as aiding that effort. Not merely through their construction, which revealed pre-historic fossils through large-scale excavations, but the mobility they offered, especially on Sundays, could tempt parishioners away from attending Church in favour of excursions, for example. In contrast, the railway was also seen as a 'civilizing' machine, and was utilised by missionaries throughout Britain and across the wider empire (once they had been constructed) to reach 'barbaric' audiences and preach the word of God. It is this ambiguity that can be found in John Herapath's *Railway Magazine*, the first periodical dedicated to railway news. This paper shall explore the use of religious imagery, references and satire in the early years of *The Railway Magazine's* publication as part of the discussion of where the railway could be situated in the Christian religion. Or, conversely, as a periodical dedicated to the promotion of the railway, and in a society where resistance towards the new technology could be rife, this paper asks how the Christian religion could be used to further the railway's construction in the rhetoric of the *Railway Magazine*. Herapath's *Railway Magazine* could be seen as an evangelizing periodical, educating and converting readers to the wonderful and prosperous life a railway network in Britain could offer.

Alicia Barnes is a PhD candidate at the University of Surrey. Her research looks at the intersections of empire and the railway in nineteenth-century British literature, spanning periodicals, poetry, novels and autobiographies.

Matthew Crofts

'God will aid us up to the end': Religious Protection in Victorian Vampire Fiction

Victorian Popular Fiction contributed towards the rise of vampire. Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* both emerged at the end of the 'paralysed century', exploding in popularity since their debut to fill novels, film and television with offspring. In creating the blueprint for many modern vampires, however, these texts held equal influence over the vampire's weaknesses. Amongst the ways to deter, or even harm, a vampire are a number of religious symbols and rites. This paper will examine the way in which religion is used as a source of support and protection against the vampire in *Dracula* and other Victorian vampire texts.

The two most apparent examples of religious protection within *Dracula* are employed to ward off the Count: the ubiquitous crucifix and the gesturing of crossing oneself 'to guard against the evil eye'. Harker initially seems sceptical of both the aid offered to him. Later, he is surprised to find the crucifix as a source of comfort and strength, having 'been taught to regard with disfavour and as idolatrous'. Those living near Dracula's castle are similarly regarded as superstitious – even being called thus by the heroes even after vampires have become *fact*. Despite sceptical Protestant, Western attitudes, the effectiveness of these religious practices in combatting the Count seemingly endorses their validity. By analysing the employment of religious protection alongside the attitudes of characters this paper seeks to explore the popular conception of religion as a shield against supernatural horrors.

Matthew Crofts conducted his doctoral research at the University of Hull on the importance of tyranny to the Gothic mode, using a range of Gothic novels and historical backgrounds. Matthew has previously published on Macdonald Fraser's *Flashman*, Dracula's multimedia legacy and the Gothic characterisation of rats.

Marie S. Heneghan

The Ecstasy of the Everyday: Idolatry and Ritual in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*

The post-secular framework has propelled and inspired the “religious turn” and refocus in Victorian studies, and I argue that the trope of idolatry in Victorian fiction portrays an attempt to reconnect with the spiritual in a cultural landscape in which faith was constantly contested and conflicted. Encouraged by British revivalism's emphasis on the pre-institutional Church, new religious movements and influences are re-imagined in Victorian fiction through a spiritual experience of the idol grounded in intensity. This paper explores the religious influence of primitive Christianity through a Wildean model of individual worship in his play *Salomé*; Paterian aesthetics intermingles with Roman Catholicism as the material becomes a pathway to spirituality in the performance religious ritual. The significance of paganism in Wilde tends to be considered as a separate topic to his interest in Roman Catholicism, often considered more specifically relevant in considering Wilde as an aestheticist and Decadent figure. These binaries do not exist in *Salomé*, but they intermingle through ritual in the idolatrous experience. Throughout *Salomé*, religious ritual becomes a performance, a repetition of threes in Church-based liturgy, attributing a sacramental weight to idolatrous worship. Idolatry becomes a ritualistic process through which the worshipper must pass before reaching an ecstasy—an ecstasy that climaxes in tasting the blood of a fair body and completing a Bacchic sacrifice. As opposed to a liturgy centred on God, ritualistic worship injects the everyday with spiritual and ecstatic possibilities, with the final aim of experience itself. Sacramental worship focuses the experience of worship itself, locating worship in the body; “fire” becomes the end of the ultimate idolatrous experience. Outside the Church, idolatrous worships can enchant the everyday and offer ecstatic possibilities to the individual not possible in the establishment. In a re-imagining of spiritual experience, fiction offers a new model of spirituality, presenting it not as dormant, but vibrant, imaginative and robust in the wake of modernity.

Marie S. Heneghan recently completed her doctoral thesis at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, entitled “Re-Forming Faith: Idolatry and the Victorian Novel.” She taught English Literature at universities in Spain and Australia. Currently, she is reworking her dissertation for publication. Her publications are “The Post-Romantic Way to God: Personal Agency and Self-Worship in *Wuthering Heights*” in *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* (2018) and “‘I believe in Willie Hughes’: *The Portrait of Mr W.H.*” in *Critical Insights: Oscar Wilde*, edited by Frederick S. Roden (Salem Press, 2019). Her research posits the rise of secularism in nineteenth-century Britain as not a gradual decline of religion but a complex process in which religion and secularism are intermingled.

17:00-17:45: Glancing Forwards and Backwards

Mary Going

“Tarry thou, till I come”: Salathiel, Supersessionism, and George Croly’s Wandering Jew

Since the time of the crucifixion, the Wandering Jew has been compelled to travel the earth, awaiting the prophesied second coming of the Christian Messiah. Or at least, that’s what the legends say. The earliest records of the legend date back to the thirteenth century and include a Latin Chronicle from Italy and two English entries within Roger of Wendover’s *Flores Historiarum* and Matthew Paris’s *Chronica Majora*. The Wandering Jew has since appeared in various European folk traditions, while the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed a rising trend of fictional conjurations as the Wandering Jew began to appear more frequently in popular literature. These include Christian Schubart’s suicidal wanderer in *Der Ewige Jude* (1783), Matthew Lewis’s Gothic exorciser in *The Monk* (1796), William Godwin’s alchemical variant in *St Leon* (1799), Charles Maturin’s Faustian non-Jewish wanderer in *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s many adaptations that appear across his poetical and prose work. Though drawing on the same popular and well-known legend, each version adapts and revises the Wandering Jew figure and narrative within their texts.

This paper aims to explore George Croly’s construction of the Wandering Jew in his 1828 novel *Salathiel*. Primarily set in the period between the crucifixion and the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE), this retelling presents a unique version of the legend. Although critically overlooked today, perhaps because of its overt Christian supersessionism, an edition of *Salathiel* published in 1900 is framed by Lewis Wallace’s identification of *Salathiel* as one of the six greatest English novels. Significantly, like Maturin, Croly was an Irish reverend turned novelist, and also like Maturin Croly incorporated his religious views into his fiction. Engaging with previous depictions of the Wandering Jew, *Salathiel* thus exploits the construction of a supernatural Jewish figure to serve a supersessionist Christian narrative tied to Croly’s own apocalyptic End Times beliefs.

Mary Going is a research associate at the University of Sheffield exploring the ways that Gothic fiction influences discussion of race, and her own research focuses on constructions of Jewishness as well as the intersection of the religion and the Gothic. She is the current web officer for the International Gothic Association and has published on witch-hunts, Zion and anti-Semitism; *Supernatural* as a Gothic police procedural; and Jewish vampires.

Helena Goodwyn

Sex Religion Sells! The Preacher, the Journalist and the Novel

The American minister Charles Monroe Sheldon published *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* in 1896. Since then it has been variously described as ‘the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century’ (Jackson: 2009), ‘a runaway bestseller, second only to the Bible’ (Warner Bowden: 1993) and ‘one of the best-known stories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’ (Gutjahr: 2016). In 1899 *The Outlook* noted its transatlantic cross-over, stating: ‘wherever one went in London, whether on trains or buses, in bookstores or shops, [one] found people talking about *In His Steps*.’ In that same year (1899) W. T. Stead reissued his nonfiction book *If Christ Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer*.

If Christ Came to Chicago had first been published in Chicago in 1894, two years before Sheldon’s novel. In 1899 its title page read:

The Precursor of ‘In His Steps’

If Christ came to Chicago!...
What Would Jesus Do?

Stead's nonfiction book sold well on both sides of the Atlantic, before and after Sheldon's novel was published. So was this simply a marketing stunt designed to attract more readers? Or did Stead's new title allude to deeper concerns about the relationship between fiction, journalism and the social-gospel movement that both writers were a part of?

Exploring the somewhat vexed relationship between these two texts, the legacy of *In His Steps* as a best-seller, and its subsequent influence on the literary marketplace in Britain and America, this paper traces the transatlantic roots of *In His Steps*, connecting the novel with its immediate antecedent, Stead's *If Christ*, and its longer lineage, as a descendent of the mid-nineteenth-century social-problem novel. In doing so it reveals a complex and surprising interplay between emerging modern marketing methods and international networks of literary and religious influence.

Helena Goodwyn is Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow at Northumbria University. She is currently working on her forthcoming monograph *The Americanization of W. T. Stead* (EUP). Her work has featured in *JVC*, *VPR*, *THE* and several edited collections.

Maddalena Ruini

The Popular Reception of Gladstone's Religious Syncretism in the Homeric Thesaurus

William Gladstone, Victorian serial Prime Minister, is also the most prolific Homeric commentator of nineteenth-century Britain. In and out his public mandates, Gladstone composed the most extensive commentary to the Homeric epics. Over five decades, he published seven volumes and over twenty-four articles on Homer and the Homeric World.

Gladstone's Homeric production is characterized by the variety and detail of the themes talked about by the author. Regardless, Bebbington (2004) individuates an overarching objective: Gladstone's Homeric enterprise is meant to corroborate Gladstone's religious theories. Following Bebbington's lead, Gange/Bryant-Davies (2013) move to show how Gladstone's Homeric theories reinforced by the contemporary archaeological discoveries fostered the birth of Universal Epic, a new popular epic genre. The new poems, on the example of Gladstone's studies, combined Homer's and the Christian tradition.

The recent scholarship focuses on Gladstone's major publications; for this paper, I will explore the Victorian public response to one of Gladstone's minor publications: his Homeric lexicon, the *Thesaurus Homerikos*. This paper aims to assess the contemporary, popular reception of Gladstone's thesaurus through a study of the contemporary newspapers and the author's correspondence. The author aims at providing his readers with a dictionary: a reader-friendly format that organizes contents in alphabetical order- of the loci in the Homeric poems where the traces of divine revelation from God to man of the Christian tradition were visible. The principal difficulty of assessing the import of this Homeric work is the fact that Gladstone never completes the project and publishes only three articles between 1875 and 1876, presenting different entries of his lexicon. Nevertheless, the work provides an interesting example of Gladstone's instrumental use of contemporary newspapers to publicise his religious syncretism.

Maddalena Ruini is a PhD candidate in the Department of Classics (Durham University). She graduated Bologna University in History of Science and Technologies (MA). Her doctoral

research reassesses the role of the ancient world in Victorian culture using as a starting point the Homeric studies of William Gladstone.

Saturday 8 May, Discussion panels for recorded papers

15:00-15:45: Sin and Fallenness

Jen Baker

Revisiting limbus infantium and inflicting Purgatorial Punishments: Navigating the Sacro-Secular Afterlife of the Victorian Child

Centuries of theological divisions between Christian denominations on the subject of original sin and those who believed in infant damnation, those who constructed a purgatorial realm for the unbaptised, and those who championed the salvation of the infant soul after death, has manifested in literature and folklores as extreme anxiety for the fate of the child's soul in the afterlife in which the child spirit suffered, but the "perpetrator" of its death would be haunted until the child could be put to rest.

By the early Victorian period, the child was placed at the centre of the "cult of death" and the 'vigorous and influential middle-class and liberal Christian reform movement' (Garton, 2002) sought to reject what they saw as the archaic and cruel theologies of the Catholic and Conformist churches, and to reframe the death and afterlife of the child as a positive event. And yet, as examples by authors such as Frances Trollope, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, and others will show, a great number of literary representations of the Victorian period from dissenting and liberal writers seemed to, firstly, betray traces of the anxieties over child death found in earlier tales and folklores that oppose the mainstream (and sometimes their own) glorification of the child in death, secondly, reflect the current anxieties caused by conflict between dissenting and conformist denominations (particularly in light of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act and the 1846 Religious Disabilities Act), and finally construct purgatorial settings and hellish punishments for the "perpetrators" in scenes and genres often deemed by contemporaries to be too sensational, sentimental, distasteful, and low-brow. As such, this paper will attempt to navigate the complex interweaving of the secular and sacred, of competing denominations, and of the past, the present, and the future in the afterlife.

Jen Baker is Teaching Fellow in C19th and C20th Literature at the University of Warwick, and completed her doctorate at the University of Bristol in May 2017. She is in the process of publishing her first monograph based on haunting manifestations of child death in Anglophone literature and culture in the long nineteenth century.

Laura Fox Gill

Sensation Fiction, Genesis, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*

In Victorian sensation fiction the familiar figures of 'seducer' and 'fallen woman' are often aligned with Milton's Satan and Eve. Milton's Eve is, in Nina Auerbach's words, the 'literary archetype [for] the Victorian myth of the fallen woman'; Victorian depictions of fallen women appeal to the original temptation as a warning against seduction. In this paper I will ask how far mid-century sensation fiction is actively engaging with the details of Milton's text—or, how far the specificities

of Milton's rewriting of Genesis are subsumed in these novels into a more general Victorian angel-of-the-house/fallen-woman (virgin/whore) dichotomy.

My analysis focuses on Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861), alongside Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and paintings such as Richard Redgrave's *The Outcast* (1851). I suggest that Wood's novel goes beyond a broad use of biblical characters to gesture towards the threat of temptation, and instead makes use of the specificities of Milton's epic. I read Wood alongside Victorian critics of Milton—such as David Masson, Edwin Paxton Hood and Stopford A. Brooke—who develop new interpretations of Satan's process of degeneration as self-imposed rather than inflicted by God. In *East Lynne*, we can see how this critical reading of Satan is mirrored in popular fiction: Wood's presentation of the degradation of Captain Levison is comparable with Victorian commentaries on Milton's Satan.

This paper fits into a broader project that re-assesses the importance of Milton in Victorian culture. Previous studies of Milton's influence in the period have tended to focus on his poetic legacy; I am interested in exploring Milton's presence in Victorian visual culture and popular fiction. I argue that an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to understand the complexities of the Victorian idea of Milton, and the reach of his influence throughout Victorian culture.

Laura Fox Gill is a Lecturer in the School of English and Journalism at the University of Lincoln. Gill's research focuses on influence and interdisciplinarity in the nineteenth century; her current book project examines the influence of John Milton on Victorian literature and visual culture.

Isadora Quirarte-Ruvalcaba

My journey through Hell: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* and the spiritual Fall as a path towards Illumination

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* was her most popular work during her lifetime, selling out diverse editions. This work was so loved by audiences, that her author expressed to her sister Arabel: "The extravagant things said about that poem, would make you smile (as they make me)—and there's one sort of compliment which would please you particularly .. people are fond of calling it "a gospel- (December 10-18, 1856, as published in *The Brownings' Correspondence*, 23, 150-155)". It is not only the protagonist Aurora Leigh who has got a prophetic vein, but the whole of the text is plagued with biblical references, most of them from the Book of Revelation. Marian Erle, fundamental character in the narrative has been acknowledged as holy both within the text and by scholars and critics due to the social circumstances she endures and which turn her into a socially fallen character, exposing part of the social evils of Barrett Browning's contemporary society.

What happens with Aurora, spiritually? Does she, during the development of her poetical career, fall victim to Pride? Is *Aurora Leigh* also representative of the Fall of mankind, recreated through contemporary fashion with Miltonic undertones? Is it possible to explain Aurora and Marian's spiritual conditions upon facing sin and the Fall through Thomas of Aquinas' theology? By making Aurora a Fallen character and Marian a holy one, Barrett Browning is not only exploring the nature of the human psyche, but also translating into her contemporary world the Christian message of redemption. It is through the spiritual Fall of Aurora that Barrett Browning explores the emotional and psychological tortures of remorse and regret, which were originally experienced as aspects of shame within the original biblical context of the Fall. Nevertheless, it is Aurora the woman who is able to go through the coming of age experience hand in hand with this spiritual struggle, making her an example of Christian teaching pursued through a different angle which reflected not only the spiritual anxieties of the time, but also Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spiritual and theological vision of the world.

Isadora Quirarte-Ruvalcaba is currently researching on Elizabeth Barrett Browning for her PhD thesis at the University of Sussex. She is interested in Victorian poetry, particularly in the visual aspects of poetry: landscape, portrait as well as the intertextual relationships between visual arts and Literature. One of the subjects she is also interested in is the influence of drugs and illness or disease and how these affected a sensorial perception of the artist, reflecting thus in their work and style, as in the particular case of Barrett Browning.

16:00-16:45: Militarism, Socialism, Pacifism, Anarchism

Flore Janssen

'Life's a Misery, and I'm Such a Big Sinner!': Reforming People and Society through the Salvation Army Press

Social work has been part of the Salvation Army's mission from its beginnings, and this dual focus on religion and practical social aid is still evident today in debates over whether the organisation is primarily a church or a charity. In the late nineteenth century, its aims to reform people through religious 'salvation' as well as better life habits were comparable to those of many contemporary faith organisations; but they also made very clear that individual efforts at self-improvement were not enough to bring about social reform. Under the motto 'Love the sinner, hate the sin' the organisation cast social care as a Christian duty and exposed the larger social problems that drove people to alcoholism, gambling, and prostitution. Its outward-facing popular press was a crucial tool to spread this message.

The *War Cry* was created in 1879 to publicise the rapidly expanding work of the Salvation Army, and its reports regularly included stories of individual redemption, often in a context of social disadvantage. In 1893, the Salvation Army also launched the *Darkest England Gazette*, a periodical devoted to the organisation's social work which the Heritage Centre is in the process of digitising. With a view to inviting public support and funds, it raised awareness of the social conditions that encouraged people to turn to 'sin', as well as of the organisation's initiatives to support people out of these circumstances. Contributions took a variety of forms including reportage, fiction, poetry, and art work.

This paper analyses how representations of social problems in the Salvation Army press worked to drum up support for its social work. Paying particular attention to its use of imagery and the mixing of the religious with the military in its vocabulary, it considers how the Salvation Army's periodicals built on and extended the organisation's popular appeal.

Flore Janssen received her PhD from Birkbeck in 2018. Her research interests centre on women's activist writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and her monograph on the Consumers' League movement is under contract with Edinburgh University Press. She is an Associate Research Fellow at Birkbeck and is currently training as an archivist at UCL.

Lindy Moore

From Christian Socialism to Tolstoyan Christian Anarchism: Isabella Fyvie Mayo in the popular religious press

In 1887 evangelical Christian writer, Isabella Fyvie Mayo, encountered the religious and philosophical writing of Leo Tolstoy. It changed her life and five years later she was describing herself as a Christian anarchist. Becoming a Tolstoyan follower did not diminish her firm belief in Christianity, as experienced through the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ, but it did provide

her with an ideological framework through which to view western Christianity as it was currently being promoted and practised and, increasingly, she began to distinguish between institutional 'churchanity' and true 'Christianity'. Like other evangelicals, her earlier writing, in verse and prose, in popular religious publications, such as the Religious Tract Society's *Leisure Hour*, *Sunday at Home and Girl's Own Paper*, Cassell's *The Quiver* and Strahan's *Sunday Magazine* and *Good Words*, had often included an element of criticism of the Church's failure to incorporate a strong social element of kindness and justice into its Christian message. After 1887 this was strengthened by Tolstoy's teaching that individuals should speak out according to their conscience. Isabella Fyvie Mayo "spoke out" in her writing, in support of her belief that the best expression of vital Christianity was 'the brotherhood of races of men, the cause of international peace, and the recognition of the rights of animals'. But increasingly, and especially in the twentieth century following the widespread support of the Churches for the South African War, she had to publish her criticism of the British religious institutions outside the popular religious press.

Lindy Moore is an Independent Researcher and former librarian. She is researching the life and writing of Isabella Fyvie Mayo, author, Tolstoyan and anti-racism campaigner.

Petros Spanou

The 'God of Battles' and the 'Prince of Peace': Religious Debates in the Crimean War

This paper seeks to examine religious views on war and peace in sermons of ministers of the established churches as well as in sermons of Nonconformists in the context of Britain's involvement in the Crimean War (1854-6). Important new research has illustrated the centrality of the sermon in Victorian religious, intellectual and cultural life. While new research avenues have been opened in the study of Victorian religious sermons, scholarly work on religious attitudes to war and peace found in a large number of surviving sermons remains very limited. This paper will address the gap in the knowledge and understanding of this topic. It will study the language and ideas used in sermons preached (and later published) across Britain during the Crimean War, the first major European war fought by Victorians after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, to analyse religious views on war and peace. In particular, the paper will examine important debates between, on the one hand, pacifist Quakers and ministers of religion who held that war and Christianity were incompatible, and, on the other hand, those who sought to reconcile war with Christianity by invoking the doctrine of just war. Responses by members of congregations, like young Octavia Hill, to views on war and peace expressed, negotiated and contested in religious sermons will also be examined. The paper will also show that widely-held ideas on war and peace found in sermons were reflected in Britain's wartime literary, visual and material culture. For example, various published poems on the war, cartoons found in contemporary periodicals, and commemorative medals captured such ideas. By drawing on recent scholarly literature on religious sermons and their significance in Victorian Britain, this paper aims to shed light on a largely neglected topic, while also situating it in the broader cultural context.

Petros Spanou is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Oxford. His research is on the notion of just war and Britain's involvement in the Crimean War. He is broadly interested in mid-Victorian attitudes to war and peace, as well as in Victorian wartime religious, literary, visual and material culture.

17:00-17:30: Ideological Tensions

Rachel Bryant Davies

Hair-Dye, Transvestism, and Goddess-Figures: Serialising the *Iliad* for *Young Folks*

Young Folks (1871–1897) is the children’s periodical most famous for first publishing *Treasure Island*. However, one of its most successful serialisations was Charles A. Read’s ‘Achilles; or, the Young Hero of Thessaly’ (1876 and 1885): readers clamoured for reprints and it became a baseline in the magazine’s identity. At a penny weekly, *Young Folks* provided a forum for sustained, interactive encounters with Classics for new audiences. As ‘Achilles’ was first serialised, the authorship of the Homeric epics – educational staples—and Troy’s reality was hotly debated; by its reprint, Schliemann’s much-publicised excavations had broadcast the myths to wider audiences.

Read’s ‘Achilles’ exploits this notoriety to convey gendered role-models. This is a comprehensive, 33-part epic serialisation: its extreme innovations—including transvestism and enslavement, as well as a fairy-tale ‘happy ending’—stand out. Inspired by adventure-story conventions, and ostensibly suppressing sexual elements of the myth, this adaptation intersects with Patmore’s *Angel in the House* and contemporary trials for transvestism, even as it perpetuates casual racism and misogyny. I will focus on Read’s almost complete omission of the pagan gods who underpin the ancient myths: his concurrent emphasis on the role of the (divine) mothers, Thetis and Aphrodite, is marked (and well-illustrated).

The combination of its cheap serialised format, child consumers, and controversially canonical source makes ‘Achilles’ a significant test-case of how Victorian popular fiction transforms apparently transgressive elements of ancient myth to display normative behavioural templates for British, Christian, imperial citizens –and in such a way that young readers clamoured for more. It demonstrates the complex didactic ideologies at work in retellings of canonical literature, which blurred boundaries between pedagogy and play to promote traditional classical learning through a distinctively modern mode of cheap, popular leisure consumption. ‘Achilles’ offers important new insights into how Greco-Roman antiquity was first encountered through popular fiction.

Rachel Bryant Davies is a Lecturer in Comparative Literature at QMUL. Her monograph, *Troy Carthage and the Victorians: The Drama of Classical Ruins in the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* (CUP, 2018), and critical edition, *Victorian Epic Burlesque* (Bloomsbury, 2018), trace how classical knowledge is circulated and transformed.

Monika Mazurek

Roman Catholicism in the Tractarian and Anti-Tractarian Victorian Popular Novel

A storm of controversy surrounding the Tractarian movement and its heirs, the Ritualists, was reflected in Victorian popular fiction. The new theological and liturgical approaches introduced by Tractarians such as, among others, changes in church interiors and liturgical vestments, encouraging frequent communion and confession, or supporting clerical celibacy, were often the subject of novels written both by the supporters and detractors of Tractarianism.

The novelists supporting or sympathetic to Tractarianism emphasized the spiritual benefits derived by its followers from the devotional practice; their practice of calling themselves Catholics, as opposed to “Romanists”, implied that they perceived their religions as “Catholicism without Popery”, preserving the best elements of what they believed to be true Christianity while avoiding the corruption of Rome. This approach, however, was strongly

contested by Evangelical writers, in whose novels Tractarian or Ritualist priests often turned out to be Jesuit agents.

In my paper I am going to analyse and contrast the way Tractarian and Ritualist devotional practices were portrayed in the works of a number of popular authors of the period, such as Emma J. Worboise, Mrs Henry Wood, Charlotte Mary Yonge, and others. Of particular interest are to me the works of the siblings William and Elizabeth Sewell, the former combining in his *Hawkstone* (1845) Tractarianism with militant anti-Catholicism, and the latter presenting a more nuanced approach. For writers on both sides of the theological divide Roman Catholicism was the point of reference: while Evangelical writers saw Tractarianism as inevitably sliding towards the Romish morass, Tractarians perceived themselves as the bulwark against this very danger. These varying perspectives on Roman Catholicism, their causes and results, are going to be the main focus of my presentation.

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