

Victorian Transfictions and Transmedia Storytelling, special issue of Victorian Popular Fictions Journal (Autumn 2024)

The study of Victorian popular fiction has long been a space in which researchers utilise innovative and interdisciplinary methodologies and theories. Media Studies has, for some time, been one of those fields on which Victorianists draw and scholars have, in the last few years, thought through concepts of transfictionality and transmediality to offer new frameworks for reading popular fiction, its re-writings and adaptations, and its relationship to its readers and fans. Both Erica Haugtvedt and Beth Palmer have published recently on inter or transmedia popular fictions and are well-placed to act as guest editors on this theme. As Henry Jenkins has argued, ‘new insights form at the intersection between different media extensions’ and with this special issue we seek to bring together scholars working in this burgeoning area of popular fiction studies and suggest stimulating pathways for future research.¹

Call for Papers

Henry Jenkins used the term ‘transmedia’ in 2006 to explore the ways in which stories, characters, and entire fictional worlds are created across different media platforms such as comic books, films, television, computer games, printed books, internet fan fiction and many other platforms. While this concept has primarily been used to analyse twenty-first century storyworlds such as the *Star Wars* series or the *Marvel* universe, scholars have begun to investigate the ways in which Victorian storyworlds were similarly mobile, capacious and flexible. Transfictionality, defined in 2001 by Richard Saint-Gelais, occurs when ‘two (or more) texts share elements such as characters, imaginary locations or fictional worlds.’² Transfictions may occur within the same medium, whereas transmedia describes narrative across media platforms. We might think of Anthony Trollope’s *Barsetshire* as a storyworld setting activated, modified and extended across several popular novels. Or we might consider the letters written to authors and published in periodicals suggesting alternative endings to popular novels as a form of fan fiction that renegotiates priorities and prejudices. We might consider *Sweeney Todd*, Jack Sheppard, or *Lady Audley* as criminal characters deployed in differing ways across narrative, visual and dramatic media. We invite papers on transfictional and transmedia practices at work across the British nineteenth century, and will consider contributions which address Victorian popular transfictions across 20th and 21st-century media. We would like authors to join us in utilising the constellation of ideas around tranfictionality and/or transmediality to re-think notions of originality and fidelity and to widen the networks of connections we make across and between popular fictions.

Articles could address, but are not limited to, the following:

- Transfictions across the periodical press
- Transfictions and seriality
- Audience consumption or audience participation

¹ Henry Jenkins, ‘Adaptation, Extension, Transmedia’ in *Literature/Film Quarterly* (2017) 45:2 https://lfq.salisbury.edu/issues/first/adaptation_extension_transmedia.html

² Saint-Gelais, Richard. ‘Transfictionality’ in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Eds. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 612. Routledge: 2008.

- Transmedia characters
- Transfictions and commercialisation
- Global transfictions
- Visual and dramatic storyworlds

Abstracts of up to 500 words for proposed articles due September 1, 2023

Full articles of about 7-8,000 words due February 28, 2024

Email proposals to erica.haugtvedt@sdsmt.edu and b.palmer@surrey.ac.uk

Guest Editor bios

Erica Haugtvedt

Assistant Professor of English and Humanities, South Dakota Mines

Erica Haugtvedt works on Victorian popular fiction, transfictionality, seriality, and media history. Her book, *Transfictional Character and Transmedia Storyworlds in the British Nineteenth Century*, was published by Palgrave in 2022. Her other publications include “Class and Complex Transmedia Character in *Jack Sheppard* (1839-1840)” in *Victorian Popular Fictions Journal* (3.2: 2021); “The Victorian Serial Novel and Transfictional Character” (*Victorian Studies* (59.3: 2017)); “*Sweeney Todd* as Victorian Transmedial Storyworld” and “The Sympathy of Suspense: Gaskell and Braddon’s Slow and Fast Sensation Fiction in Family Magazines” (both in *Victorian Periodicals Review* (49.1: 2016, 49.3: 2016)).

Beth Palmer

Senior Lecturer in English Literature, University of Surrey

Beth Palmer has published widely on Victorian popular literature and culture. Her publications include *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), *A Return to the Common Reader: Print Culture and the Novel, 1850-1900* (co-ed with Adelene Buckland, Ashgate, 2011), *Sensation Drama, 1860-1880: An Anthology* (co-ed with Johanna Hofer-Robinson, Edinburgh University Press, 2019) and *Picturing the Reader: Reading and Representation in the Long Nineteenth Century* (co-ed with Amelia Yeates, Peter Lang, 2022). She has also published numerous articles on aspects of nineteenth-century print culture, including a piece on intermediality in Wilkie Collins in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* (2020) and transmedia adaptation in Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Dion Boucicault in *Victoriographies* (2022). Her current book project uses concepts of trans and intermediality to explore relationships between sensational stories across serial novels and popular drama.