

## **Victorian Popular Fiction Association Study Day**

---

**Room G37, Institute of English Studies, Senate House,  
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU  
Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2011, 1-4pm**

### **Sensational Reading in Amelia B. Edwards's *Hand and Glove* and *Barbara's History***

**Tara MacDonald, University of Amsterdam**

Amelia B. Edwards was a difficult novelist for Victorian reviewers to classify: they both remarked on her sensationalism and elevated her above other sensation writers of the day. In this paper, I argue that Edwards herself reflected on her novels' hybrid status by emphasizing the risks of sensational reading, even as she penned sensation plotlines. Her novels *Hand and Glove* (1858) and *Barbara's History* (1863) focus on the dangers, for female readers, of applying melodramatic scripts to real life scenarios. I will compare Edwards' depictions of female reading with related examples, such as Braddon's representation of Isabel Gilbert in *The Doctor's Wife* (1864).

### **“She knows much that ladies are not accustomed to know”: The Gendering of Knowledge and Experience in the Fiction of Amelia B. Edwards and M. E. Braddon’**

**Anne-Marie Beller, Loughborough University**

Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Amelia B. Edwards were both successful and popular Victorian novelists. The contemporary critical reception of these two writers differed in important ways, but an interesting point of similarity is the perception on the part of a number of critics that Braddon and Edwards exhibited in their novels knowledge and experiences conventionally believed to be the preserve of men. Both were positioned problematically as women writers who betrayed ‘masculine’ qualities, which provoked both praise and censure, depending on the specific nature and extent of the perceived trespass into male realms of knowledge and experience. This paper will explore the gendering of knowledge in their work through readings of Edwards's *My Brother's Wife* (1855) and Braddon's *Eleanor's Victory* (1863).

This event is free but if you wish to be kept informed of events organized by the VPFA then a membership form for our association can be downloaded from our website.

For further information about VPFA Study Days and Conferences:

<http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/research/victorian/>