

**Announcements:
CFPs, conference notices, & current & forthcoming projects
& publications of interest to neo-Victorian scholars**

(compiled by *Marie-Luise Kohlke*)

CFPs: Journals, Special Issues & Collections

(Entries that are only listed, without full details, were highlighted in a previous issue of *NVS*.)

Charlotte Brontë's Bicentenary

Special Issue of *Victorians Journal of Culture and Literature* (2016)

Submissions of new work on Charlotte Brontë are invited in honour of the bicentenary of her birth, to be co-edited by Deborah Logan and Deborah Denenholz Morse.

Submissions due: 31 March 2016. Length: 5,000-6,000 words. Please address enquiries to D. Logan @ Deborah.logan@wku.edu.

The Romance of Science Fiction / Fantasy

Special Issue of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (2016)

Whether we consider romance novels incorporating elements of the fantastic, the future, or the alien, or works of Science Fiction/Fantasy exploring love, desire, and other aspects of romantic culture, the relationship between these genres has been enduring and productive. Papers are invited for a special issue, co-edited by Gillian I. Leitch, PCA co-chair for SF/Fantasy, and Erin Young, on the intersections between romance and science fiction/fantasy in fiction (including fan fic), film, TV, and other media, now and in the past, from anywhere in the world. Contributions might consider questions like the following, either in terms of particular texts (novels, films, TV shows, etc.) or in terms of genre, audience, and media history:

- How has the intersection of these two popular genres opened up new possibilities in conceptualising gender, desire, sexuality, love,

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courtship, or relationship structure, not just recently, but since the earliest years of SF/Fantasy?

- How has their intersection allowed us to see existing concepts of gender, desire, sexuality, love, courtship, and relationship structure in fresh or critical ways?
- How have authors, filmmakers, producers, and fans played these genres against one another, for example by using romance to critique traditions in SF/F, or SF/F to critique the tropes of romance? How has this counterpoint been explored by authors, filmmakers, producers, and fans of color, or by LBGTQIA creators and audiences?
- How might reading classics of SF/F as romance change our perception of them?
- What happens to works of paranormal, futuristic, or time-travel romance when we read them through the lenses provided by SF/Fantasy Studies?
- What happens when teaching works of SF/Fantasy and popular romance? How do these genres co-exist or compete in pedagogical experience or classroom practice?

Abstracts due: 30 Sept. 2016. Please submit papers of between 5,000 and 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography in MLA format, to Erin Young (managing.editor@jprstudies.org).

Full CFP: <http://jprstudies.org/submissions/special-issue-call-for-papers/>.

Masculinity Studies Meets Popular Romance

Special Issue of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (2017)

In her canonical and contested study *Reading the Romance*, Janice Radway describes the romance hero as characterised by an “exemplary” and “spectacular” masculinity. Romantic films, TV, and popular music likewise offer what Eva Illouz calls “ideal-typical” representations of men and masculinity, even as popular culture often insists that ‘real men’ have no interest in romance media. What, then, can critical and historical studies of men and masculinities offer to the study of popular romance media? And what can attention to popular romance teach us about blind-spots and other lacunae in the study of men and masculinities? Papers are solicited for a special issue on masculinity and popular romance media, now and in the past, from anywhere in the world. The guest editors Jonathan A. Allan,

Canada Research Chair in Queer Theory, and Eric Murphy Selinger, are interested in how masculinities are and have been represented in the texts of both heterosexual and queer popular romance media, including fan-produced media. Papers are sought on masculinity in the marketing of such media (e.g., movie trailers and romance novel covers), and in the discourse of the global romance communities that produce, enjoy, and discuss such media (editorial guidelines, recaps and reviews, blog posts, Tumblrs, etc.). Also welcome are papers that explore the intersection of masculinity with other cultural phenomena, including race, religion, and class, are also welcome. For this issue, “romance” and “masculinities” are broadly defined. The editors are open to submissions about texts from the margins of love and romance culture (e.g., “bromances”) as well as those which focus on texts which participate wholeheartedly in the popular culture of romantic love. We also recognize that masculinity does not belong exclusively to cisgendered men’s bodies, and we encourage the submission of papers that follow Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s call for scholars of gender “to drive a wedge in, early and often, and if possible conclusively, between the two topics, masculinity and men, whose relation to one another it is so difficult not to presume.”

Abstracts due: 6 January 2017. Please submit papers of between 5,000 and 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography in MLA format, to Erin Young (managing.editor@jprstudies.org).

Full CFP: <http://jprstudies.org/submissions/special-issue-call-for-papers/>.

CFPs: Upcoming Symposia & Conferences

(Entries that are only listed, without explanatory notes, were highlighted in the previous issue of NVS.)

23 May 2016

Fantasies of Contemporary Culture

Cardiff University, Wales, UK

From the record-breaking sales of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, both in print and on film, to the phenomenal success of various forms of hyperreal ‘reality television’, contemporary Western culture seems

singularly obsessed by the spectacular and the fantastic. This desire to experience other(ed) realities is also evidenced by the continued popularity of neo-historical literature and period drama, the domination of Hollywood cinema by superhero movies, and by the apocalyptic and dystopian imagery that abounds across genres and target audiences. With a long critical and cultural history, conceptualised by scholars as diverse as Tzvetan Todorov, Farah Mendlesohn, John Clute, Brian Attebery, Fredric Jameson, Lucie Armitt, and Darko Suvin, fantasy has arguably become the dominant mode of popular storytelling, supplanting the narrative realism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather than attempting to define fantasy, horror, weird, or science fiction as distinct genres, the organisers wish to take up Katheryn Hume's expansive definition of fantasy as anti-mimetic, or as 'any departure from consensus reality' (*Fantasy and Mimesis*, 1984, p. 21), in order to explore the political and cultural functions of such fantasies. To what extent does the impulse to create fantasy art comment back upon this 'consensus reality', and to what extent does it represent a separate reality? How might the fantastical characters and environments that populate our contemporary cultural landscape be informed by the experience of twenty-first-century metropolitan life, and how do such texts (in)form that experience in return? Submissions are invited to address the relationship between current cultural, social and political dialogues and fantasy texts – specifically ones that interrogate dominant structures of power, normativity and ideology. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Theories of fantasy
- Ideology and world building
- Ecological fantasies
- Escapism
- Utopian/dystopian vision
- Categories of monstrosity and perfection
- The humanities (fantasies, futures)
- Genre studies/border crossings
- Age studies (childhood fantasy versus adult fantasy)
- Alternate histories and retrofuturism
- Postcolonial fantasy

Abstracts due: 21 March 2016. Please send paper proposals of 200-300 words or panel proposals between 400-500 words and a short biography (100 words), to Tom Harman (HarmanTL@cardiff.ac.uk) and Megen de Bruin-Molé (DeBruinMJ@cardiff.ac.uk).

Full CFP: <http://culturalfantasies.wordpress.com>.

26-29 May 2016

**International Vampire Film and Arts Festival
Sighisoara, Transylvania, Romania**

From Stoker to Rice; from Nosferatu to classic Hammer onto *Twilight*, *The Strain* and beyond – the vampire genre is the world’s most enduring and influential horror genre straddling film, television, literature, theatre, games and new media. IVFAF brings together vampire media-makers from across the World in one cross-industry event – an exciting four-day programme of film screenings, book launches, readings, theatre, seminars, workshops, tours, networking events, a trade fair and parties. The Festival will take place within the walls of the dramatic medieval citadel that was the birthplace to the real Vlad Dracula and will involve industry, artists, fans and academics. The academic symposium runs alongside the Festival (in association with the University of South Wales. Possible topics include the vampire in relation to literature, film and TV studies, Gothic studies, media and Cultural studies, art, fashion, audience and fan studies, theatre studies, and music.

Abstracts due: 9 March 2016 [organisers may be prepared to accept late proposals.] Please submit 250-word paper or panel abstracts to Rebecca Williams at rebecca.williams@southwales.ac.uk.

Full CFP: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/66125>.

Festival website: <http://ivfaf.com/>.

Twitter: @VampireFestival.

11 June 2016

**Representations of Romantic Relationships and the Romance Genre in
Contemporary Women’s Writing
Sheffield Hallam University**

“It would be at best grossly incurious and at worst sadly limited for literary critics to ignore a genre that millions and millions of women read voraciously” (*Pornography for Women is Different*, Ann Snitow, 1979).

Almost forty years have passed since Snitow's ardent defence of the importance of recognising and examining the romance genre, however critical consideration of the romance remains limited. Some have suggested that this could be a result of a snobbery associated with romantic fiction, or perhaps even more startlingly due to a general lack of interest in the literature women write and read (Light [1984], Philips [2006] and Radway [1984]). Although there remains an overall absence of criticism the importance of women writers' relationship with the romance and the effect it has on women readers has been acknowledged, particularly in relation to feminism. In 'Returning to Manderley' – Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class', Alison Light acknowledges that romances are "often seen as coercive and stereotyping narratives which invite the reader to identify with a passive heroine who only finds true happiness in submitting to a masterful male." In contrast the most well-known and acclaimed critic on the genre, Janice A. Radway, stresses that "Romance *is* being changed and struggled over by the women who write them." Indeed, contemporary women writers from the Booker Prize winning Margaret Atwood to the self-proclaimed 'chick-lit' writer Sophie Kinsella have written novels which use the romance genre and/or focus on romantic relationships and could be seen to be part of a re-writing of the genre. Given the significant links between the romance, women writers and women readers, conversation around the presence of the genre in contemporary fiction is crucial. This symposium, co-hosted with the Postgraduate Contemporary Women's Writing Network (PG CWWN), seeks to encourage this discussion. Topics may include:

- The presence of romantic relationships and the use of the romance genre in contemporary women's writing
- The relationship between the romance genre and feminism
- The perception of romance as a low-brow genre, and the extent to which this perception offers critical and intellectual insights into debates about how we define women's writing and cultural contribution
- The future of the romance genre within contemporary women's literature

Abstracts due: 8 April 2016. Please submit 250-work abstracts, including a brief biographical note to symposium@pgcwwn.org.

Full CFP: <http://pgcwwn.org/events/>.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/cwwromance16>

6-8 July 2016**Literary London: 'London and the Globe'****University of London, England, UK**

While papers on all areas of literary London are welcomed, to acknowledge this year of Shakespearean celebrations, the conference theme in 2016 will be 'London and the Globe'. This event will follow the trace of London's transnational connections through novelistic, dramatic, poetic and other modes of expression. Topics that might be addressed include:

- Geographies of migration, mobility and citizenship in an unsettled city
- London's landscapes of slavery, expenditure and transportation
- Imagining London apart from its 'mother tongue' and the Anglophone canon
- Writing back against metropolitan cultural hegemony and the Imperial *mythos*
- Émigrés, foreign correspondents and the passage of global information
- Romances of adventure, paradisaic islands, itinerancy and exoticism
- Exploring otherness through utopian 'elsewhere' and spiritual *terra incognitae*
- The Neo-colonial refashioning and memorialisation of London's colonial past
- Foreign conflicts, skirmishes, rebellions and fictions of domestic in/security

Abstracts due: 31 March 2016 (extended deadline). Please submit proposals for 20-minute papers, comprised panels, and roundtable sessions through the Literary London Society: <http://www.literarylondon.org/conference>.

Full CFP: <http://www.literarylondon.org/conference/cfp2016.pdf>.

7-8 July 2016**Fantastic Materials: Things and the Workings of the Non-Real****University of Silesia, Sosnowiec, Poland**

The conference aims to address the use of materiality by the fantastic in its aesthetic, narrative and world building strategies. The conference will investigate the contribution of things to the achievement of the non-real and

the production of its estranging appeal, which, at the same time, frequently bears responsibility for its immersive qualities. Through the use of defamiliarization and (en)wonderment as well as through the evocation of fear or longing, the non-real engages with the real in both dialogic and subversive manners, often achieving a powerful critique of the domestic, social, political and geographical environments. Or, conversely, despite its representational otherness, the fantastic may reinforce the ideological conditions of those environments, embracing their values and bestowing them with mythologizing meaningfulness. Scholars working on the non-real in culture (literature, art, film, TV, video games), and also in transmedial environments are invited to engage in readings of the entanglement of the material and the fantastic through, for example, such perspectives as the poetics of matter, material culture studies, the material engagement theory, affect theory, or object-oriented ontology.

Abstracts due: 31 March 2016. Please submit proposals (of ca. 500 words) and a short bio note to fantastic.materials@gmail.com. For further queries, please contact the conference organisers: Karolina Lebek (karolina.lebek@us.edu.pl), Ania Malinowska (anna.malinowska@us.edu.pl) and Agnieszka Podruczna (prodruczna@gmail.com)

Full CFP: <https://fantasticmaterial.wordpress.com/>.

12-15 July 2016

**British Comparative Literature Association XIV Triennial Conference
'Salvage'**

University of Wolverhampton (City Campus), England, UK

The theme of the conference is 'Salvage', a concept at the very heart of much literary and cultural activity. Translation, reception, re-reading – the vital substance of comparative literary research – all refer to processes by which literature's significance is activated or released in acts of salvage, acts of saving and, indeed, salvation. *BCLA2016: Salvage* considers the international and transnational circulation of textuality in the broadest comparative and historical terms, not merely as a process that involves the perceived colossi of literature, but one that also charts the byways and alleyways of literary production, the sometimes hidden or obscured debts to individuals, coteries, and literary movements that might have formed (or will one day inform) other or new literary histories.

Abstracts due: 30 April 2016 (extended deadline). Please submit paper or panel proposals of 250 words, accompanied by a brief ‘bio-note’ of 50 words, to bcla2016@wlv.ac.uk.

Full CFP & Conference website: <http://bcla2016.org/>.

23-30 July 2016

**The 22nd International Thomas Hardy Conference & Festival
United Reform Church, Dorchester, England, UK**

2016 is the 130-year anniversary of the publication of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; the 140-year anniversary of *The Hand of Ethelberta* and the 125-year anniversary of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Last year saw the release of Thomas Vinterberg's much anticipated film adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd* summarised on the BBC Film website as telling the “timeless story of Bathsheba's choices and passions”. Radio Four's ‘The Archers’ has recently borrowed plots from Hardy's novels, and Mackenzie Crook, writer and star of the BBC Radio 4 comedy drama ‘The Detectorists’, declared: “We *aspire* to be the sitcom that Thomas Hardy would have written.” At the same time Rosemarie Morgan, Richard Nemesvari and Paul J Niemeyer wonder if Hardy is still too challenging for modern viewers and whether the more disturbing aspects of his work tend to be toned down in favour of romance. We welcome proposals which address the themes of Hardy's legacy, the anniversaries of his works, adaptations of Hardy's novels, and his relevance for the modern world. Proposals are also welcome on any other aspect of Thomas Hardy's life and work.

Abstracts due: 22 April 2016. Please submit proposals of ca. 200 words to j.e.thomas@hull.ac.uk.

Full CFP: <http://www.hardysociety.org/society-conference>.

8-9 Sept. 2016

**(Dis)Connected Forms: Narratives on the Fractured Self
University of Hull, England, UK**

Discourses concerning the concept of (dis)connection are especially prevalent in contemporary society. The relationship between the mind and the body – whether fractured or in flux – feeds into notions of identity, the self, and the ‘other’. Contemporary scholarship focusing upon borders, transformations and creations considers the manifold ways in which the body can be (re)organised and (dis)assembled. The notion of

(dis)connection and the fragility of form is of central focus within a range of studies and genres. From the uncanniness of being in gothic and horror studies to the cerebral and corporeal fragmentation prevalent in science and speculative fictions, narratives on the fractured self continue to raise questions about the fundamentals of the lived experience. Possible questions for consideration include the following: What does it mean to be (dis)connected, fractured, transformed, metamorphosed? How are identities formed, managed, processed, controlled? Are corporeal boundaries distinct, or fluid and open to alteration? How are beings created, crafted, constructed? When/how can the 'other' be achieved? What threat does an 'other' pose? Can the human be defined in relation to the cyborg, the lifeless, and the animal? How does/will technology alter the body? Possible focuses might include:

- (Dis)Embodiment
- Identity
- Human, cyborg, lifeless, animal
- Transformation
- Metamorphosis
- Crisis of self
- The 'other'
- Borders and boundaries
- (Re)creations
- The living and the dead
- Deviance
- Revision/alteration

Abstracts due: 3 April 2016. Please send abstracts of 250 words with a brief biographical note to disconnectedforms@gmail.com. Please address enquiries to Gul Dag and Sandra Mills at the same email address.

Full CFP: <https://disconnectedforms.wordpress.com/>.

Twitter: @DisConnectForms.

29 Sept. – 1 Oct. 2016

Transgressions

Austin, Texas, USA

The Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies of the Western United States invites papers on transgressions of established boundaries, ways of seeing transgression, those who transgressed and those behaviours or beliefs that

were seen as transgressive in the 19th century. [Note: The topics suggested by the organisers include scope for neo-Victorian engagements with Victorian transgressions.] Graduate students presenting at the conference are eligible for consideration for the William H. Scheuerle Graduate Student Paper Award. Papers may address the following or other topics:

- Aesthetic transgressions
- Social class transgressions
- Socio-political transgressions
- Cross-dressing
- Criminality
- Degeneracy
- Fallenness
- Deportation to the colonies
- Greed
- Cruelty
- Pornography
- Minority religions
- Gambling/drinking/drugs
- Exhibitionism

Abstracts due: 15 March 2016. Please submit a 300-word abstract and 1- page CV to visawus2016@gmail.com.

Full CFP: http://www.visawus.org/?page_id=12.

14-15 October 2016

Victorian STEAM (STEM + Arts)

North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Since its widespread adoption in the 1990s, the acronym “STEM” has focused political and public attention on investments in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. In response, numerous commenters as well as arts and humanities advocacy organisations have urged the necessary inclusion of the “arts” in educational priorities with the hybrid acronym “STEAM.” In this context, we devote the theme of this conference to “Victorian STEAM” with two related goals. First, to explore the nineteenth century’s creative intermingling of pursuits across the arts and sciences when, in so many cases, disciplines had yet to separate into their discrete domains. With a nod to the “steam” which so transformed historical industry, this Victorians Institute conference investigates the

interdisciplinary, extradisciplinary, or even predisciplinary alliances which powered new knowledge and critique in the Victorian era. Second, Victorian STEAM underscores the continuing relevance of such humanities-based work today, not only to stress the vital importance of arts and humanities training in education, but even to propose how Victorian studies – so attuned to the potentials for disciplinary crossings – may uniquely help reimagine such work in the present. Topics may include:

- science and literature
- representations of technology
- disciplines and professions
- history of education
- media history
- art and politics
- liberalism and culture
- uses of Victorian contexts in the present (e.g. steampunk)
- teaching across Victorian contexts

Abstracts due: 29 April 2016. Please submit 300-word paper abstracts or 500-word panel proposals, along with a 1-page CV per author/panellist, to victoriansinstitute2016@gmail.com.

Full CFP: <https://vi2016.wordpress.ncsu.edu/>.

28-30 November 2016

International Conference on Space and Cinema University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal

The Conference will focus on Space and Cinema in order to examine the ways through which cinema deals with spatiality, in its bodily and geographical materiality, as well as in its symbolic and theoretical frameworks. Heterotopic as it is, screen space juxtaposes several different spaces pertaining to different dimensions (Michael Chanan, *The Documentary Chronotope*, 2000): both *mise en scène* and cinematic dispositifs spatialise the gaze, the vanishing point where the filmic and the pro-filmic intersect. Space is therefore represented, conveyed and appropriated by the cinematic apparatus, calling into question the historical, political and philosophical aspects of an aesthetics of spatiality in a broad sense. All of these distinct categories point to a fundamental idea: by

definition, the moving image dynamises space and spatialises time, thus contributing to the changing perceptions of space and time. The conference organisers are interested in the concept of space as an inherently cinematic feature that led to specific developments in film language in early cinema, and which is still an on-going subject of debate. Rather than papers looking into the object-film itself, the organisers invite papers that enrol in creative and critical excursions or visual essays that somehow promote the discussion of space and cinema (and other moving image practices). Potential topics might include:

- Cinematic space, place and time
- Space and film genres
- Body, gender and space
- Film and landscape
- Space and ruin
- Space and national filmographies
- Colonial and postcolonial spaces
- Exile, shifting borders and displacement
- Cartographies, maps and archive
- Mental spaces: dream, hallucination, and virtual reality

Abstracts due: 31 May 2016. Please submit 500-word abstracts, together with a brief biographical note, to the Organising Committee at spaceandcinemalisbon2016@gmail.com. (The Conference's working languages are Portuguese and English.)

Full CFP: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/66650>.

Conference website: <http://spaceandcinema.wix.com/lisbon2016>.

1-3 December 2016

Technicity, Temporality, Embodiment:

Byron Bay, NSW, Australia

The 10th International Somatechnics Conference will be co-hosted by the University of Queensland and Southern Cross University, with the support of the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions. The term "somatechnics" was coined in 2003, as a means by which to rethink the relationship between technologies and embodiment. As Nikki Sullivan argues: "*techné* is not something we add or apply to the already constituted body (as object), nor is it a tool

that the embodied self employs to its own ends. Rather, *technés* are the dynamic means in and through which corporealities are crafted” (*TSQ* 1.1-2 2014). This conference is intended to extend this focus on bodily techniques and embodied technologies to engage with recent theories of time and temporalities, as well as feminist, queer and trans historiography. Philosophies of time and critical investigations of past, present and future technologies have long been important concerns in studies of embodiment. Studies of the historical construction of gender and embodied memory, as well as various durational approaches to materiality, have revealed the important role played by technicity and temporality in the construction of corporealities. Points of intersection and divergence between such critical conceptions of time and technology, and recent science studies open up a further set of directions. The organisers welcome a broad range of papers and presentations on the technologies and temporalities of the body. These might include, but are not restricted to, the following perspectives:

- Gender, queer and/or trans studies
- Histories of gender and/or sexuality
- New Materialisms
- Biopolitics
- The Anthropocene
- Science studies
- Critical race studies
- Disability and/or crip theory
- Digital cultures
- Visual and literary cultures
- Art history and theory

Abstracts due: 15 April 2016. Please send proposals to technotemporalities@gmail.com.

Full CFP: <https://technotemporalities.wordpress.com>.

5-8 January 2017**Straddling the Dividing Line: Reconsidering the Civil War
(2017 MLA Session)****Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA**

In Quentin Tarantino's neo-Western, *The Hateful Eight* (2015), a British hangman [Tim Roth] settles a dispute between Union and Confederate veterans stranded together in a remote tavern during a Wyoming blizzard by drawing a line down the middle of the room: one side is the South and the other is the North. The ploy fails, as regional schema often do. For all of the insistence on boundaries, the movie and its characters find themselves straddling the dividing line. This MLA session commits itself to new readings of the Civil War that dwell on the negotiations and paradoxes that emerge when we straddle the dividing lines of periods, regions, and disciplines. We are interested in contemporary representations such as the neo-Southern approach of Quentin Tarantino, but also in fresh perspectives on nineteenth-century cultural workers as various as William Gilmore Simms and Matthew Brady.

Abstracts due: 15 March 2016. Please submit 250-word abstracts along with a 2-page CV to Katie Burnett (kburnett@fisk.edu), Jennie Lightweis-Goff (jlightwe@tulane.edu); and Monica Miller (monica.miller@lmc.gatech.edu).

Full CFP: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/66140>.

29 June – 2 Aug. 2017**Possible & Impossible Children: Intersections of Children's Literature
& Childhood Studies****York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

At least since Jacqueline Rose's provocative argument about the "impossibility" of children's fiction in 1984, children's literature scholars have been profoundly anxious about "the child" and "children" in relation to children's literature. Richard Flynn (1997), Mary Galbraith and Karen Coats (2001), Perry Nodelman (2008), David Rudd (2013), and Marah Gubar (2013) have variously noted the dangers, difficulties, necessities, and desirability of approaching children's texts through conceptions of 'children', 'childhood', and 'adulthood'. The 23rd Biennial Congress of the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL) is grounded in these ongoing debates in children's literature scholarship.

Childhood and youth studies, constantly negotiating intersections between actual young people and sociocultural constructions and representations of childhood and youth, offer compelling, if problematic, points of inquiry into the study of children's literature, just as children's and young adult literatures continue to challenge and inform childhood and youth studies. Possible topics include:

- Production & Reception (e.g. crossover literature and intergenerational reception; child and youth authorship, including juvenilia; children's and YA literatures and "affect")
- Ethics & Rights (ethical issues in the production and reception of children's and YA literatures; children's literature, social justice, and child and youth activism; children's rights & the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Representation & Ideology (gaps between lived experience and literary representations of children's and youths' lives; representations of children's work and child labour; representations of child soldiers and children's and youths' experiences of war and violent conflicts)
- Genres & Media (picture books, comic books, graphic novels, film, television, video games and children's cultures; manipulable and interactive children's literature; children, youth, and new media)

Abstracts due: 15 November 2016. Please submit anonymous 250-500 word paper or panel proposals (in English or French), with a 50-100 word biography as a separate email attachment, to irscl17@yorku.ca.

Website: <http://www.yorku.ca/irscl17/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/irscl17>

NOTE: Although the deadlines for abstracts for the following edited collections, special issues, symposia and/or conferences/conference sessions have already passed, they may be of interest to scholars working on the neo-Victorian in relation to the specified topics. (Entries that are only listed, without explanatory notes, were highlighted in a previous issue of NVS.)

17-20 March**ACLA Panel: Monsters: Theory, Translation, Transbiology
Harvard University, Massachusetts, USA**

This panel of the American Comparative Literature Association's annual conference will explore the enduring popularity of narratives such as *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and our culture's apparent obsession with bodies and psyches deemed 'monstrous'. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, editor of the collection of essays *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, proposes that the monster's body is a cultural body, a body that cannot be categorically confined, but exists to problematise and to escape any categories we may create. In their 2012 text *Speaking of Monsters: A Teratological Anthology*, editors Caroline Joan (Kay) S. Picart and John Edgar Browning contend that the monstrous is "always already global", because it can and does escape national borders and notions of universality. Jack Halberstam, in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and Technology of Monsters*, similarly posits that monsters' bodies are "mobile, permeable and infinitely interpretable" and that the monster is an "economic form in that it condenses various racial and sexual threats to nation, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie in one body." Elsewhere, Halberstam asserts that monsters of contemporary fiction and film could be productively read as "transbiological" due to their assemblage of human, animal, and machine. This panel welcome interdisciplinary papers that explore facets, elements, and assemblages of the "monstrous," from B.C.E. texts and art to works in the twenty-first century.

Full details: <http://navsa.org/2015/09/20/cfp-acla-2016-panel-monsters-theory-translation-transbiology-9232015-317-202016/>.

17-20 March**47th Annual NeMLA Convention****Hartford, Connecticut, USA****Full details:** <http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla.html>**NeMLA Panel: Neo-Victorian? Pop Culture, Lowbrow, and Genre Victoriana**

In the rapidly expanding field of neo-Victorian studies, the million-dollar question remains: what qualifies as neo-Victorian? For guidance, many scholars have relied on Ann Heilmann and Mark

Llewellyn's definition, which specifies that to be called neo-Victorian, a text "*must in some respect be self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and revision concerning Victorians.*" The implication is that this is a subgenre for respectable texts, of clear intellectual pedigree. Yet, just as the Victorian era had its penny dreadfuls, musical halls, and melodramas, so contemporary acts of re-engaging the Victorian may come in less elevated packages. Alongside sleek heritage films and postmodern literary novels, Victorian tales and times have been adapted or newly imagined in horror movies, pulp romances, Japanese manga, scripted web series, and a variety of other media. All raise significant questions about how a subgenre is to be defined: by project, content, or some aesthetic standard? This panel invites readings that explore the broader question of whether/how the field of neo-Victorian studies might benefit from considering "lowbrow" or pop culture Victoriana. It seeks to shed light on how contemporary culture at large imagines, stereotypes, (mis)remembers, and manipulates the Victorian era, while continuing to celebrate it.

Full details: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/64070>.

NeMLA Panel: Victorian Popular Fiction in the 21st Century

An ever increasing interest in Victorian popular fiction prompts us to ask why have we in Victorian Studies become so invested in the popular in recent years? How have certain theoretical fields such as gender studies, material culture/thing theory, post-colonial theory, etc. contributed to this rapid increase in interest? What does the popular do for us as scholars that the 'canon' does not, or can we still think in terms of canonical and non-canonical texts in Victorian Studies? Is it still possible to think of a standard Victorian canon in a post-Google age when so many previously unavailable texts are now available at the tips of our fingers? How is the inclusion of the popular in the classroom changing Victorian Studies for our students?

Full details: <https://www.cfplist.com/nemla/Home/S/15788>

19 March 2016

**All Things Victorian: Exploring Materiality and the Material Object
University of Portsmouth, UK**

This BAVS funded postgraduate conference will include a paper on Brontë relics and a neo-Victorian panel featuring talks on cinematic steampunk machinery, the neo-Victorian novel in the digital age, and visual recomposition.

Full details: <http://www.port.ac.uk/centre-for-studies-in-literature/literature-events/postgraduate-conference-2016/>.

13-16 April 2016

**The New and the Novel in the 19th Century/New Directions in
19th-Century Studies
Lincoln, Nebraska, USA**

The 2016 Nineteenth Century Studies Association conference will investigate aspects of the new and the novel in the long nineteenth century. Topics include new forms and genres, new fashions and roles, new professions, new aesthetics, the old made new, new crimes, vices, and dangers, new faiths, new geographies, new models of heroism, new epistemologies, new psychologies, new attractions, and new anxieties. The conference also features papers and panels which analyze theoretical conceptions of novelty, epistemologies of the new, and new methodological directions in nineteenth-century scholarship (digital humanist approaches, ‘surface’, ‘suspicious’, and ‘deep’ reading), and new techniques in digital editing and archiving.

Full details: <http://www.ncsaweb.net/Current-Conference>.

16 April 2016

**Queer Death, De(con)struction, and Contagion: Affective Rhythms in
Interdisciplinary Studies
University of California, Merced, California, USA**

When we consider ‘death’ and ‘contagion’, we operate with a negative affect, indicative of the queer. According to Halberstam, in the *Queer Art of Failure*, “In order to inhabit the bleak territory of failure we sometimes have to write and acknowledge dark histories” (23). This inaugural Interdisciplinary Queer Studies Symposium questions and problematises how ‘contagion’ operates in dominant society as a reductive concept,

against the living and for the dead; we find this an incomplete conclusion. Contagion carries with it a particular resistance, pushing against pathologised bodies, creating quite the cacophony – queer, as a resistive carrier, absorbing all sickness, illness, and discrimination, while de(con)structing as a viralised contagion [we are queerly ok with this]. We believe a rhythmic affect entails the enactment of the queer, “prevented from emerging in the first place, often by techniques that intimately involved the body” (Freeman 11). We consider deaths’ pluralisms, accepting its sonorous memory, phenomenological and somatised haps, through bodies, both liminal and transitive – our interrogations are always already borderlands de(con)structing. This symposium seeks explorations of modalities and spatialities of death and contagion, and a de(con)structing of realities – “because concrete reality is socially constructed and, arguably, because the social construction of reality finds its template in the construction of what might be called the physical or the flesh as body.” (Scott 57). How do variously defined bodies embrace death worlds? How do they (re)pulse? What are the limitations of a politics that employs death, de(con)struction, and contagion? How do bodies look toward or into death? If death could make a sound what would its rhythms and re(verb)erations be? And how does this effect affect? So, what of this affect is hegemonically interpretable as contagion of defective realities?

Full details: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/66314>.

30 April 2016

**Vicarious Victorians: Transmitting Experience
in the Nineteenth-Century
Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

The 2016 Victorian Studies Association of Ontario (VSAO) conference organisers will interpret the theme of vicariousness – across spaces, eras, bodies, genres, and media – in broad, interdisciplinary, and imaginative ways. Papers will address topics that may include virtual tourism and armchair imperialism; simulations, dioramas, panoramas, and maps; translation, adaptation, and re-enactment; identification, sympathy, and empathy; embodiment, psychosomatic phenomena, hypnotism and mesmerism; and photography, telegraphic realism, sound and film technologies.

Full details: http://vsao.apps01.yorku.ca/?page_id=451.

3-4 May 2016**Comedy and Critical Thought: Laughter as Resistance?****University of Kent, Canterbury, England, UK**

This interdisciplinary conference invites delegates to reflect on the possible role of comedy as critique. Critique, which finds its expression in both theory and practice, has a long and turbulent history. Yet the issue of what it means to be critical and voice alternatives to the political and economic status quo now seems to be more important than ever. Several sites of resistance have recently developed in globalised society. It should come as no surprise that alongside Occupy, Anonymous and worldwide student protests, laughter is also part of the global emancipatory cry for alternatives. Throughout history, comedians and clowns have enjoyed a certain freedom to speak frankly often denied to others in hegemonic systems. Think only of King Lear's "all-licensed Fool" or Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque. More recently, professional comedians like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert have developed platforms of comic license from which to critique the traditional political establishment and have managed to play an important role in interrogating and mediating the processes of politics in contemporary society. However, as it always has been in the past, these comic truth-speakers face the problem of co-option: are these comic voices genuinely effective in their critique or do they function as a mere safety valve tolerated to vent off dangerous steam? In this respect, comedy is not always necessarily critical but can also reinforce the status quo and function as a conservative tool or even as an exclusionary mechanism in the service of hierarchical power relations. The conference will reflect on these and other issues related to comedy and critique.

Full details: <https://criticalcomedy.wordpress.com/2016/01/26/comedy-and-critical-thought-laughter-as-resistance/>.

12 May 2016**Alice in Cableland****Senate House Court Room, London, England, UK**

The London Nineteenth Century Studies seminar & the Media History seminar are pleased to be holding a special joint session on 'Alice in Cableland'. 2016 sees the 150th anniversaries of the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable and the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. The team on the AHRC-funded project 'Scrambled Messages: The

Telegraphic Imaginary 1857-1900' will be thinking about the issues involved in coding, cabling and communications technologies through the medium of John Tenniel's illustrations of Carroll's classic.

Full details: <https://mediahistoryseminar.wordpress.com/>.

19 May 2016

Scheherazade in Classical, Modern and Postmodern Worlds

University of Sheffield, England, UK

“The centuries go by, and we are still hearing the voice of Scheherazade” (Jorge Luis Borges). Scheherazade is the legendary female storyteller of *Alf layla wa Layla* or *The Thousand and One Nights* or what is often known in English as the *Arabian Nights*. She uses narrative to preserve her life and the lives of other women victims of her tyrannical ruler-husband, Shahryar. She can be seen as a multicultural emblem since the origin of the tales themselves comes from a multiplicity of sources, including Indian, Persian, Baghdadi and Cairene, later translated into European and numerous other languages. Over the years, Scheherazade has been analysed from a very great range of academic perspectives due to the variety of interpretations of her character and role. Immediately, after the advent of interdisciplinary criticism in the late twentieth century, she began to be studied and analysed by scholars from various fields including Anthropology, Linguistics, Psychology and Literary Theory. As a result of the various studies she was hailed as a literary and mythical figure who is a brilliant narrator and an artist who has created a profound work of art. The modern psychological analysis of Scheherazade demonstrates that her stories speak to the unconscious of the individual to help him or her to transform destructive impulses into harmless fantasies. Other twentieth-century analyses of the *Arabian Nights* have focused on the manuscript history of the stories, their structure and narrative techniques as well as their influence on Western literature and culture. This conference will address the question of the history of Scheherazade, how she is analysed in the fields of Anthropology, Linguistics, Psychology, Literary Theory, how feminist, deconstructionist, and poststructuralist scholars view her, her adaptation and influence on Western literature and culture. It will reassess her history from a twenty-first century perspective, viewed in the light of contemporary relations between the Arabic world and the West, following Jorge Luis Borges' insight that in

many ways Scheherazade and the Arabian Nights constitute “a vast dream of Islam, that invaded the West”.

Full details: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/english/scheherazade>.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/scheherazade016?lang=en-gb>.

6-7 July 2016

The Oak and The Acorns: Recovering the Hidden Carlyle Oxford University, England, UK

Several generations read the works of Thomas Carlyle with surprise, awe, inspiration, fervor, excitement, and occasionally anger – and they went on to shape the rest of the 19th century and much of the 20th century with the words and prophecies of Carlyle embedded in their politics, philosophy, art, literature, history, and ideals for a better world. Some of these impacts would have pleased Carlyle; others would have greatly surprised him, and a few, perhaps, would have dismayed him. But for good and ill, Carlyle left an impact that in some ways is hard to see because it is so deeply pervasive. This conference aims to retrieve that hidden Carlyle, and to recognise how he served, and continues to serve, as a bedrock of far-ranging ideals for several generations of readers and admirers. This conference by The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) will explore the rich diversity of where Carlyle lies hidden in the vision and hopes of eminent Victorians, Edwardians, and Modernists throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Europe, and across the ocean in America and beyond. Because Jane Welsh Carlyle had a similar effect on the readers of her letters, both in her lifetime and afterwards, her continuing influence will also be considered.

Full details: <http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/cfp-recovering-hidden-carlyle>.

10-12 July 2016

Madness

Mansfield College, Oxford, England, UK

Inter-Disciplinary.Net’s 8th Global Meeting of The Making Sense Of: Madness Project will explore what madness is, why it exists, and where, when, and how it happens and to whom. Like the relation between otherness and identity, madness might have always been used to define its opposite, or defined by what it is not. Madness and its absence may even be intrinsically linked to everything we do and do not, to all we aspire and escape from; it could be part of our origins and fate. But how can it be identified, described,

studied and/or treated? The conference proposes to take an interdisciplinary approach, so as to allow the development of a dialogues about the subject from different points of view, from and between different disciplines and experiences. This will partly allow us to answer the questions above, in direct relation to the specific contexts in which madness is observed, studied and/or experienced and, it is desirable, it might also allow us all to understand that, just by being humans, none of us is actually immune to it.

Full details: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/making-sense-of/madness/call-for-papers/>

w/c 11 July 2016

IGNCC Comics Conference - Graphic Gothic

Manchester Metropolitan University, England, UK

The Seventh International Conference of Graphic Novels and Comics, in association with Studies in Comics (Intellect Books), the Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics (Routledge), and the Gothic Studies Network will focus on topics including: Gothic icons and archetypes in comics (vampires, zombies, witches, monsters, ghosts); Gothic symbols and structures in comics (the crypt, the Other, etc.); psychoanalytic readings and themes of comics (the uncanny, the abject, fragmented identity, etc.); horror and violence; censorship, sensation and outrage; monstrosity and the grotesque; caricature and subversion; the Grand Guignol, the theatrical and the Romantic; absorption, inversion, subversion, authenticity; classic Gothic texts, adaptation and rewriting; and Gothic and underground subcultures and music.

Full details: <http://internationalgraphicnovelandcomicsconference.com/>.

11-13 July 2016

Adapting Dickens

Iceland University, Reykjavik, Iceland

No sooner had Dickens made a name for himself by writing novels than the London theatres began to adapt them to the stage. Indeed, both *The Pickwick Papers* (April 1836-November 1837) and *Oliver Twist* (February 1837- March 1838) underwent such adaptations before the serial run of either had come to an end, and the latter was staged in one form or another no fewer than forty times before 1850! Just over half a century later, 'The Death of Poor Joe', a silent film from 1901 initiated a long series of

adaptations of his works for cinema, and in 1959, BBC television broadcast adaptations of *Great Expectations* and *Bleak House* that proved how well suited his works were to either type of screen. Over four hundred adaptations later, there is no sign that the public's enthusiasm for adapting Dickens is on the wane. Quite the contrary, audio versions of his works, a mode that can be traced directly to Dickens's own dramatisations and his celebrated (and much imitated) readings can now be downloaded in a matter of minutes in MP3 format from a large number of internet sources. By the 1840s, his novels had been translated in Dutch, French, German, Italian and Russian, influencing a host of European writers over the following three decades. If we add the visual arts, musicals, graphic novels, video games, and a multitude of objects from Christmas decorations to cigarette cards and figurines, there seems to be no limits to the adaptability of Dickens's works, which the Dickens Society 21st Annual Symposium will explore.

Full details: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/63883>.

15 July 2016

**Victorian Periodicals through Glass: Reflections on the Theory and Practice of Digitising Nineteenth-Century Newspapers and Magazines
The Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall, London, England, UK**

When the flagship *Journal of Victorian Culture* announced its intention in 2008 to 'act as a forum for digital research on the nineteenth century and for discussion of its relationship with traditional scholarship,' it was an acknowledgement that a wide range of nineteenth-century research communities had become actively engaged with the imaginative and critical possibilities opened up by the digital world. Since then, its 'Digital Forum' section has included challenging work from a wide range of perspectives and chronicled the growth of this discipline over the past eight years. Similarly, since *Dickens Journals Online* was launched publicly in 2012, the digital reception and exploration of Victorian periodicals and Dickens's work has enjoyed an exponential growth; last year's *Being Human* festival offered a showcase for some of the most interesting and innovative digital Dickens projects happening today, including *The Drood Inquiry* and the *Our Mutual Friend* reading project and Twitter group. Most recently, Birkbeck's online academic journal *19* (itself an innovation in digital studies of the long nineteenth century) devoted its entire 10th anniversary edition for Winter 2015 to lengthier meditations on an array of exciting endeavours within the

burgeoning nineteenth-century digital archive, including the digitisation of Blake's work and the cultivation of new research networks and discourses through digital projects. Organised by the University of Buckingham & Royal Holloway, University of London, the event is run in conjunction with the Sally Ledger Memorial lecture.

Full details: <https://victorianist.wordpress.com/2016/02/10/cfp-victorian-periodicals-through-glass-reflections-on-the-theory-and-practice-of-digitising-nineteenth-century-newspapers-and-magazines-london-15th-july/>

19-21 August

The 2016 Brontë Bicentenary Conference

Manchester, England, UK

In 1837 Charlotte Brontë wrote to the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, for advice on a literary career. He replied that "literature cannot be the business of a woman's life: & it ought not to be". This conference, the first of the three Brontë bicentenaries, takes up the challenge of what might be the "proper business of a woman's life". It aims to explore women's position in English culture and society in the nineteenth century, Charlotte Brontë's own writings on 'The Woman Question' and those of her contemporaries, as well as her literary reputation and her influence on later feminist movements.

Full details: <http://www.bronte.org.uk/whats-on/216/bronte-society-bicentenary-conference-2016/220>.

22 -26 August 2016

ESSE Conference

Galway, Ireland

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/>.

ESSE Seminar 40: The Neo-Victorian Antipodes

From arguably the earliest example of Neo-Victorian fiction (Patrick White's *Voss*, 1957) to recent Man-Booker winner *The Luminaries* (2013) by Peter Carey and Kate Grenville, the antipodes are a favoured setting for Neo-Victorian novels. This seminar explores how neo-Victorian fiction constructs Australia, New Zealand and the Southern Pacific as, variously, the site of uncanny domesticity, an Other to Britain, a landscape to be

colonised or scientifically appropriated, a frontier for the testing of masculinity, and an occasion for re-writing of canonical texts. The seminar aims to investigate the intersection of neo-Victorian preoccupations with nineteenth-century discourses with post-colonial theorising of settler colonialism.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 41: Tracing the Victorians: Material Uses of the Past in Neo-Victorianism

This seminar addresses the notion of the 'trace', delineated by Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur, to engage with the tangibility of the Victorian past in contemporary culture. The 'trace' has attracted renewed critical interest in the last few years, particularly in connection with the interplay of past and present in today's cultural production. However, the potential of the material object (the trace) to reanimate the past has received scant attention in neo-Victorianism. The seminar will address the presence and (in)visibility of the Victorian past in contemporary literature and culture, materiality and 'the sensory turn', as well as museum studies and thing theory in relation to the Victorian 'trace'.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 42: Reinterpreting Victorian Serial Murderers in Literature, Film, TV Series and Graphic Novel

Serial murder came to the fore in the Victorian era and constituted a specific phenomenon within a growing attraction for deviance. It drew attention to the pathologies of the human mind and to morbid impulses which might drive 'normal' citizens to secretly behave like primitive or insane people. Today, serial murder has become an object of constant representation in different media. If many stories of serial killing are set in today's world, others re-imagine the Victorian past in various ways, bringing to the fore the significant links existing between the nineteenth-century and the postmodern curiosity about the phenomenon. This seminar intends to explore various ways in which contemporary culture re-imagines Victorian serial killers and their deeds in relation to our postmodern fascination with deviance and perverse behaviour. Aesthetic

reflections on the Victorian and neo-Victorian interest in a topic pertaining to low-brow literature and associated with unrefined ideas (i.e., ugliness, violence, sensationalism) are also welcome.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 43: Victorian and Neo-Victorian Screen Adaptations

Even before Sergei Eisenstein credited Charles Dickens with inventing the cinematic technique of montage, film's debt to the Victorians has been considerable. Canonical Victorian literature was among the first to be adapted to the silver screen; it has historically been – and continues to be – one of its most popular and profitable forays, from the endless variations on the myth of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to the prevalence of period dramas and Dickens, Brontë or Gaskell adaptations on the small or the large screen. Recent neo-Victorian novels have also often been adapted to the screen. Though initially Victorian adaptations distinguished themselves from their neo-Victorian counterparts in their scrupulous attention to historical detail and respect for the source material, while neo-Victorian adaptations took greater liberties with conventional attitudes towards the period and its narratives, increasingly even adaptations of the most well-known Victorian texts have begun questioning these assumptions. Inversely, classical Victorian adaptations may be seen as source texts for neo-Victorian literature, where the tropes of Victoriana originate as often on the television or the movie screen as in the pages of a book. To what extent can certain works of neo-Victorian literature be seen as adaptations of screen versions of Victorian texts, and thus mediated by the particularities of period drama?

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 47: The Paradoxical Quest of the Wounded Hero in Contemporary Narrative Fiction

[Note: This topic may be of relevance to critics working on neo-Victorian masculinities.] Our traumatised post-WWII age has witnessed the emergence of a new type of wounded hero immersed in a paradoxical life quest that involves the embracing of suffering,

alienation and marginalisation as a form of self-definition. Is this radical shift the result of a move from a (neo-)humanist ethics based on the centrality of the subject to a (post-)Levinasian ethics of alterity that draws the emphasis on attentiveness to the other's suffering, vulnerability and trauma? Or is this evidence of the resurgence of a Romantic conception of the self? The seminar will explore narrative fictions in English from the 1980s onwards that cast new light on the wounded hero and related issues.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 64: Life-Writing and Celebrity: Exploring Intersections

[Note: This topic may be of relevance to critics working on neo-Victorian celebrity biofiction.] In recent years, life-writing and celebrity studies have separately evolved into vibrant and innovative areas of Humanities research, but the connections between these fields have, so far, been insufficiently addressed. This seminar will focus on the intersections of life-writing and celebrity in a historical as well as a contemporary English-language literary and cultural context, exploring, among others, ideas of image, persona, self-fashioning, myth, mediatisation and commodification.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

ESSE Seminar 83: Literary and Cinematographic Prequels, Sequels, and Coquels

[Note: This topic may be of relevance to critics working on neo-Victorian adaptation.] Prequels, sequels and coquels (a coquel takes place simultaneously with another story) have always been part and parcel of the literary and, more recently, filmic landscapes. These three elements can of course also be combined to produce a more complex structure. The aim of this seminar will be to analyse the narrative strategies implemented by their authors and the reasons why, apart from the obvious marketing ploy, they are so popular.

Full details: <http://www.esse2016.org/seminars.html>.

29 October 2016

Backward Glances: History, Time, Memory

National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan

The 24th annual conference of the English and American Literature Association in Taiwan will explore the ‘backward glance’, a recurring motif in Western literature: Lot’s wife becomes a pillar of salt because she disobeys God’s command and looks back at Sodom. Orpheus looks back at his wife Eurydice on their way back to the upper world, thus losing her to the underworld again – this time forever. These stories seem to warn people against backward glances. But looking backwards is not always punitive. William Shakespeare’s history plays, Horace Walpole’s Gothic novel, Sir Walter Scott’s historical fiction, and Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* all glance backwards. Among these texts, some redefine the past, others escape the present, and still others take an anti-modern stance. In English and American literature, authors or characters may also return to a place. In ‘Tintern Abbey’, for example, William Wordsworth finds a saving grace in memories of nature. In Henry James’s *The Ambassadors*, Lewis Lambert Strether returns to Paris after decades, so that memories mingle with fresh reflections. In 20th/21st-century English and American literature, diaspora and historical fictions also abound with backward glances, as characters and readers pass through splendour and ruin across times and places. Such texts not only explore issues of travel, immigration, nation, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, trauma, geopolitics, and globalisation, but they also emphasise the malleability and multiplicity of time. On the other hand, Walter Benjamin’s “angel of history”, Jacques Derrida’s “hauntology”, the memory studies animated by the Holocaust or postcolonial literature, and recent developments in discourses of affects and queer temporalities all attest to the import of backward glances.

Full details: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/64881>.

**Recent, Current & Forthcoming Projects, Events & Exhibitions
of Possible Interest to Neo-Victorianists**

9 January – 12 March 2016

**Anthony Rhys, *Notorious / Drwg-Enwog* art exhibition
Oriol Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen, Wales, UK**

The Welsh artist's current exhibition focuses on Victorians who enjoyed local notoriety in Carmarthenshire due to a variety of transgressions, including criminal offences. The artist's signature, black-and-white, biofictional portraiture of Victorians is based on actual nineteenth-century photographs, including those in the Carmarthen Jail Felons Register, and period newspaper accounts of scandalous events. (Also see the full review of the exhibition in this NVS issue.)

**Recent and Forthcoming Critical Publications on Neo-Victorianism
or of Neo-Victorian Interest**

Sarah A. Chrisman, *This Victorian Life: Modern Adventures in Nineteenth-Century Culture, Cooking, Fashion, and Technology* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2015): Chrisman takes an autobiographical and micro-historical approach, immersing herself in the Victorian past through the period's material objects from cosmetics to bicycles, from recipes to taxidermists' exhibits, tracing the nineteenth-century's lasting legacies in the present (by the author of *Victorian Secrets: What a Corset Taught Me about the Past, the Present, and Myself*).

Hamish Dalley, *The Postcolonial Historical Novel: Realism, Allegory, and the Representation of Contested Pasts* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): Focusing on postcolonial writing's appropriative transformation of the historical novel to explore the traumatic history of colonialism and its global legacies in Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, this monograph reaffirms the importance of notions of realism, veracity, and plausibility and explores the ideological tensions within three distinct modes: 'settler allegory', 'transnational realism', and 'melancholy realism'.

Simonetta Falchi, Greta Perletti , and Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz (eds.), *Victorianomania: Reimagining, Refashioning, and Rewriting Victorian Literature and Culture* (FrancoAngeli, 2015): with a strong gender focus, this edited collection analyses the varied re-imaginings of Victorian literature and culture; the volume includes essays on the neo-Victorian work of Margaret Atwood, John Fowles, Ahdaf Soueif and Sarah Waters, as well as on steampunk, ‘magic’ films, film musicals, and Dickens, Brontë, and Stevenson adaptations.

Yvonne Griggs, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Adaptation Studies: Adapting the Canon in Film, TV, Novels and Popular Culture* (Bloomsbury, 2016): covering the history, theory, and practice of literary adaptation, together with key concepts and debates within adaptation studies, this volume presents case studies of adapted Victorian classics – *Jane Eyre*; *Great Expectations*; *The Turn of the Screw* – as well as later texts; considering adaptation in terms of various formats and media (including graphic novels, opera and Young Adult fiction), the volume is supplemented with questions and creative exercises.

Mary Hammond, *Charles Dickens’s Great Expectations: A Cultural Life, 1860-2012* (Ashgate, 2015): Hammond explores the publishing and versatile reception history of Dickens’s classic, the global reach of the novel’s cultural afterlife via translation and adaptation, and its on-going critical and creative re-assessment in and across various media.

Renée Hulan, *Canadian Historical Writing: Reading the Remains* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): emphasising writers’ evidentiary use of textual and oral traces, Hulan analyses the historical turn in Canadian fiction and poetry through the work of Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood and Armand Garnet Ruffo.

Ewa Kujawska-Lis and Anna Krawczyk-Laskarzewska (eds.), *Reflections on / of Dickens* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014): the collection explores critical and artistic responses to Dickens through the ages and his works’ after-life through intertextuality and translation, as well as their appropriations by later writers, dramatists and filmmakers and by popular culture.

Recent and Forthcoming Neo-Victorian Fiction, Poetry, Drama, etc.

Leila Aboulela, *The Kindness of Enemies* (Grove, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2015): dual-period part-biofiction about cultural conflict and accommodation and mixed identities; Natasha, a twenty-first-century history professor of mixed Russian and Sudanese background living in Scotland, traces the life-story of the mid-nineteenth-century Muslim resistance leader in Dagostan, Imam Shamil, whose efforts to end the Caucasus War lead to the tragic loss of his son, who is subsequently estranged from his own people and raised as a Russian.

Fedora Amis, *Mayhem at Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (Five Star, 2016): mystery cum Western, in which a female reporter, covering Buffalo Bill Cody's 1898 Wild West show in Sedalia, Missouri, witnesses a foiled train robbery and becomes investigates a possible murder plot against Annie Oakley.

Stephanie Barron, *Jane and the Waterloo Map: Being a Jane Austen Mystery* (Soho, 2016): regency murder mystery incorporating biofictional elements from Austen's life, wherein the writer turns sleuth when a man suffers a suspicious death during her visit to the Prince Regent's residence.

Antonio Benítez-Rojo (trans. Jessica Powell), *Woman in Battle Dress* (City Lights, 2015): gender-bending biofiction of Henriette/Enriqueta Faber, deported from Havana in 1827 to be confined in a convent, who escapes to write her memoirs in a New York hotel, chronicling her cross-dressing enrolment at medical school in Paris and service as a surgeon in Napoleon's Army, eventually making her way to Cuba to continue her medical practice.

David Barnett, *Gideon Smith and the Mask of the Ripper* (Tor, 2015): second in the Gideon Smith steampunk series: in an alternative 1890s Britain, the titular hero of the empire and his various sidekicks, including an automaton, pursue Jack the Ripper through London's streets – and airways – encountering Thuggee assassins, a suspicious hypnotist, and even a dinosaur intended as a secret weapon.

Diana Bretherick, *The Devil's Daughters* (Orion, 2015): second Gothic thriller featuring James Murray, a young Scottish doctor working in Turin alongside Cesare Lombroso; the serial disappearance of young girls, one of them the sister of a former flame, precipitates a new investigation, complicated by the presence of James' younger sister Lucy, a writer also keen on detecting.

J.C. Briggs, *Death at Hungerford Stairs* (The Mystery Press, 2015): in 1849, Charles Dickens turns to detective, investigating the serial killings of boys alongside a Superintendent of the Bow Street Runners in a story interwoven with the great writer's works.

Carrie Brown, *The Stargazer's Sister* (Pantheon, 2016): biofiction of Caroline Lucretia ('Lina') Hershel, sister to the famous astronomer William Hershel and a scientist in her own right, eventually becoming an Honorary Member of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1828; Brown traces Lina's life from her tormented childhood in mid-eighteenth-century Germany to her rescue by her favourite brother William, who takes her to England as housekeeper, cook and dogsbody, not foreseeing how Lina's intellect and passion will come to match his own as they strive together to complete building his huge telescope.

Taylor Brown, *Fallen Land* (St. Martin's, 2016): Civil War fiction; an Irish orphan incurs the wrath of his former Confederate comrades, when he deserts to rescue the young Ava, inadvertently precipitating his commanding officer's death at the hands of Union soldiers and a revengeful pursuit through the devastated South.

Gail Carriger, *Manners & Mutiny: Finishing School, Book the Fourth* (Little Brown, 2015): YA comic fantasy adventure set in Carriger's alternative Victorian London, run by a deathless Queen Victoria and her Shadow Council of werewolves and vampires; at a training school for young female intelligence operatives based aboard an airship, the antics of Sophronia Temminnick and her classmates take a darker turn when they uncover a plot against school and country planned by the nefarious Picklemen.

Alison Case, *Nelly Dean: A Return to Wuthering Heights* (Pegasus, 2015; The Borough Press, 2016): the story of the housekeeper-narrator of Brontë's classic novel, told in the form of a letter to Lockwood, revealing aspects of the tragic tale which she had hitherto withheld.

Mary Chaippe and Sam Benady, *The Dead Can't Paint* (Two Pillars, 2015): final instalment in Giovanni Bresciano mystery series, in 1817 Gibraltar, a French painter is murdered and the protagonist's investigations coincide with a reunion of his now widowed first love, Bianca.

Maia Chance, *Cinderella Six Feet Under: A Fairy Tale Fatal Mystery* (Berkley Prime Crime, 2015): second instalment of the steampunk mystery series; a murder case eerily resembles the Paris Opera's production of *Cendrillon*, causing Ophelia Flax and Professor Gabriel Penrose to investigate, suspecting the killing may be linked to a fairy tale relic.

Megan Chance, *The Visitant: A Venetian Ghost Story* (Lake Union, 2015): Gothic tale of romance with echoes of *The Turn of the Screw*; in 1884, the disgraced Elena Spira travels to Venice to act as companion nurse to the ailing Samuel Farber, only to find herself in danger, from Farber's increasingly violent temper and apparent mad hallucinations (as well as a possible supernatural forces at work in the decaying palazzo), and by her increasing attraction to Nero Basilio, the owner of the property and Farber's closest friend.

Alexander Chee, *The Queen of the Night* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016): invited to star in a new opera, a celebrity soprano in nineteenth-century Paris finds that the work uncannily resembles her life and sets out to discover which figure from her secret past has betrayed her story to the public; includes vignette appearances by George Sand, Verdi, and other prominent figures of the period.

Tracy Chevalier, *At the Edge of the Orchard* (The Borough Press, Viking, 2016): frontier family saga of Ohio fruit tree growers in the late 1830s, where the five surviving Goodenoughs siblings become caught up in their parents' feud, eventually leading the young Robert to flee to California,

where having grown to manhood, he becomes apprentice to an eccentric Cornish plant collector.

Jennifer Chiaverini, *Christmas Bells* (Dutton, 2015): part Civil War biofiction providing the backstory to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous 1863 'Christmas Bells' poem; a parallel present-day plotline involves four characters facing varied struggles, who find Longfellow's poem speaks to them across history.

Stephen Childs, *On Track for Murder* (Clink Street, 2015): emigrating to Australia, to avoid her brother being committed to an institution, Abigail Sergeant becomes embroiled in a murder mystery when her brother Bertrand is wrongly implicated in a killing; her quest to prove his innocence, chaperoned by a reluctant Constable Dunning, precipitates her into further criminal conspiracies ranging from kidnap to arson.

Paul Fraser Collard, *The Devil's Assassin* (Headline, 2015): high octane adventure story; in 1857 Bombay, Jack Lark masquerades as a fallen fellow officer, but when his deception is discovered, he is compelled to work as a British spy to discover a traitor conspiring with the Persians.

Paul Fraser Collard, *The Lone Warrior* (Headline, 2015): in 1857, the ex-soldier Jack Lark assists Amira's escape from a gaming house, but the two become caught up in the Indian Mutiny on their way to Delhi and Jack finds himself re-enlisted to retake the city; in part based on historical figures and narratives.

Carol M. Cram, *A Woman of Note* (Lake Union, 2015): partly inspired by Clara Schumann, the story follows the efforts of the fictional concert pianist, Isabette Grüber, trying to make a name for herself in 1820s Vienna, while secretly pursuing ambitions as a composer, but having to resort to improving her husband's weak compositions or publishing her own under a male pseudonym.

Lynn Cullen, *Twain's End* (Gallery, 2015): biofiction of the final years of Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain's life, his personal demons, and his abrupt

turning against and vilification of his one-time beloved secretary Isabel Lyon.

Judith Cutler, *Cheating the Hangman* (Alison & Busby, 2015): when the country rector Tobias Campion is instructed to take over an impoverished nearby parish, where disease and starvation are rife, a gruesome murder, rumours of upper-class orgies and witchcraft, and a desperate vengeful populace means he has his work cut out for him; assisted by Mrs Trent, his housekeeper, and medical friends he sets out to deliver justice and alleviate the suffering of the country poor.

Dixie Distler, *The Life and Times of Bob Crachit* (Create Space, 2015): pastiche providing Bob Crachit's backstory, from his humble rural beginning to Dickens's mean-spirited London and his employment with Marley and Scrooge, as the protagonist strives to retain his humanity in the face of heartless greed.

Jennifer Donnelly, *These Shallow Graves* (Delacorte, 2015): YA mystery set in New York, where the privileged Jo Montfort breaks with class and gender expectations to pursue her love of journalism; the tragedy of her father's suspected suicide, has her team up with the reporter Eddie Gallagher to uncover dark secrets in her search for the truth of her parent's death.

Gerald Duff, *Playing Custer* (TCU Press, 2015): dual time-frame Western and part biofiction in monologue form, shifting between twenty-first-century participants in the historical re-enactment of Custer's Last Stand and fictional and historical actors in the 1876 lead-up to the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Paul Duthie, *A Servant of the Governor* (Ylolf, 2015): biofiction based on the historical papers of one of the ringleaders of the Swing Riots in 1830s Hampshire, incorporating vignettes from diaries, correspondence, and newspapers to chronicle the agricultural workers' fight against the introduction of threshing machines and depressed wages.

Charles Egan, *The Exile Breed* (SilverWood, 2015): family saga of the Ryans caught up in the Irish Famine of 1847; while some family members remain in Mayo, Luke travels to America, while his cousin Danny tries to build a new life for himself in Liverpool.

Charles Finch, *Home by Nightfall* (Minotaur, 2015): although already investigating the mysterious disappearance of the concert pianist in 1876 London, the MP Charles Lenox, onetime gentleman detective turned professional sleuth, still gets caught up in a local murder while visiting his ancestral home in Surrey.

Eva Flynn, *The Renegade Queen* (Omega, 2015): first book in the biofictional *Rebellious Times* series, focused on the multi-talented Victoria Woodhull, suffragette, stockbroker, publisher, and political activist for women's rights and labour reform, who ran for the American presidency in 1872 with Frederick Douglass as her running mate.

David W. Frank, *Vienna In Violet* (Blank Slate, 2015): in 1822 Amsterdam, the singer Johann Michael Vogl and the composer Franz Schubert become entangled in a murder plot, as an especially commissioned song appears to hold the key to a woman's death, which threatens the eruption of public and private scandals.

Shelley Freydon, *A Gilded Grave* (Berkley Prime Crime, 2015): in fin-de-siècle Newport, Rhode Island, the wealthy Deanna Randolph, assisted by a former suitor and her maid Elspeth, finally gets the chance to rebel against gender restrictions by turning detective when several servants are murdered.

Daniel Friedman, *Riot Most Uncouth* (Minotaur, 2015): while a dissolute student at Trinity College, Cambridge, Lord Byron offers to investigate the brutal murder of a young woman at a boarding house, only to find himself under suspicion when his efforts impede the professional investigators and further killings follow, with the victims not only connected to the poet but vampirically drained of blood.

Patrick Gabridge, *Steering to Freedom* (Penmore, 2015): Civil War drama chronicling the African-American contribution to the conflict and the 1862

daring escape by the riverboat pilot Robert Smalls who steals the Confederate riverboat *Planter* to flee with his crew and their families to the North.

Francois Garde, *What Became of the White Savage* (trans. Aneesa Abbas Higgins; Dedalus, 2015): a young French sailor, Narcisse Pelletier, returning from the search for water, finds his ship has vanished, leaving him stranded on the coast of 1840s Australia; nearly two decades later, he is discovered wholly assimilated into an Aboriginal tribe and a fellow Frenchman, the geographer Octave de Vallombrun, is charged with re-civilising Narcisse for his eventual return to Western society.

Lorna Gibb, *A Ghost's Story* (Granta, 2015): a tale of nineteenth- and twentieth-century spiritualism, told from an original angle, namely that of the celebrity spirit John/Katie King, associated with various real-life mediums of the period; as her power grows, she travels from America to Britain, mainland Europe and Russia among those who can channel her voice and spirit writing.

David L. Golemon, *The Mountain* (St. Martin's, 2015): alternative history fantasy and 10th volume in the Event Group thriller series, involving a present-day secret agency researching supernatural events from US history – this time centring on an expedition to ‘rescue’ the archaeological remnants of Noah’s Ark from the heart of the Ottoman Empire, which gives President Lincoln a way to unite Union and Confederate opponents in a common cause.

Alison Goodman, *The Dark Days Club* (Viking, 2016): YA steampunk mystery; during her first Season in London, Lady Helen Wrexhall is offered the choice of a life less ordinary, when she develops supernatural abilities as a Reclaimer, affording her potential entry to the titular club that guards Britain from the Deceivers, who kill by draining people’s life-force.

Kate Griffin, *Kitty Peck and the Child of Ill Fortune* (Faber & Faber, 2015): second Gothic crime thriller featuring the music hall and trapeze artiste Kitty, who struggles when forced to take over her opium-addicted grandmother’s real estate and criminal empire, and finds herself a target of

violence, when she gets drawn into her brother Joey's scheme to smuggle a mysterious baby from Paris to Limehouse.

Susan Grossey, *Worm in the Blossom* (Create Space, 2015): third instalment in the Regency mystery series: in 1820s London, the constable Sam Plank, assisted by his wife and a young colleague, investigates a series of crime centring on child prostitution and blackmail.

Frances Hardinge, *The Lie Tree* (Macmillan, 2015): winner of the Costa Book of the Year Award; post-Darwin, the natural scientist and Reverend Sunderly, flees threatening scandal by removing his family to the isolated island of Vale, where an excavation of a prehistoric site is taking place; when the scandal breaks nonetheless and the Reverend dies under mysterious circumstances, his young daughter, herself an aspiring scientist, decides to investigate, while becoming increasingly obsessed with her father's hidden specimen of an exotic tree with seemingly supernatural powers.

Stephen R. Harrigan, *A Friend of Mr. Lincoln* (Knopf, 2016): biofiction of Lincoln's life as a young lawyer in 1830s Springfield, Illinois, told from the perspective of his fictional friend and local poet, Cage Weatherby, as Lincoln is drawn into romance, politics, duelling, and courtroom drama, including the defence of a runaway slave.

C.S. Harris, *When Falcons Fall: A Sebastian St. Cyr Mystery* (NAL, 2016): further adventure in the crime series, as Devlin St. Cyr's private visit to the Shropshire village of Ayleswick sees him dragged into a murder investigation centred on a dead widow, who turns out not to be the first young woman to die under unexplained circumstances, with the mystery further complicated by the presence of Napoleon's estranged brother, Lucien Bonaparte.

Thomas Hauser, *The Baker's Tale: Ruby Spriggs and the Legacy of Charles Dickens* (Counterpoint, 2015): story based on 'Ruby', the purported poor infant Charles Dickens recalled holding in his arms "[i]n the winter of 1836", after which he "often wondered what happened to the child"; a fittingly Dickensian mix of destitute orphans made good, their

generous benefactors and devious opponents, as romance vies with greedy capitalist machinations.

Nancy Herriman, *No Comfort for the Lost: A Mystery of Old San Francisco* (Obsidian, 2015): in 1867 San Francisco, the abandoned wife and nurse Celia Davies works in a poor women's clinic but turns detective, when her Chinese friend and former prostitute, Li Sha, turns up dead and Celia's brother-in-law is falsely jailed for her murder, assisted in her efforts by Detective Nicholas Greaves.

Susan Higginbotham, *Hanging Mary* (Sourcebooks Landmark, 2016): biofiction of the devout boarding-house keeper Mary Surratt, who in 1865 becomes implicated in her son Johnny's involvement in the Southern cause and Lincoln's assassination, leading to her trial and execution as the first woman put to death by the new US government.

Judith Hooper, *Alice in Bed* (Counterpoint, 2015): biofiction Henry James's invalid sister, Alice as, bed-ridden, her mind ranges back over her family relationships and her youthful life and happier times in Boston, New York, and Europe.

Oscar Hijuelos, *Twain and Stanley Enter Paradise* (Grand Central, 2015): posthumously published biofiction, tracing the long-term friendship between Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain and the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, Stanley's African exploits and his widow's efforts to complete his final work.

Lucy Inglis, *Crow Mountain* (Chicken House, 2015): YA fiction with parallel plotlines in the 1880s and present-day, involving the privileged Emily, due to marry a railroad heir she has never met, and Hope, who accompanies her ecologist mother on a research trip Crow Mountain, Montana, discovering Emily's diary on the way.

Regina Jeffers, *The Prosecution of Mr. Darcy's Cousin* (Pegasus, 2015): Austen pastiche focusing on Darcy's efforts to clear his cousin and brother-in-law, Major General Edward Fitzwilliam's name, when the errant absentee

husband of Georgina is implicated in several murders in London's demimonde.

Maggie Joel, *Half the World in Winter* (Allen & Unwin, 2015): following an 1880 train accident, the lives of the bereaved families, the Brinklows and the Jarmyns, owners of the line, become intertwined in an exploration of business ethics and safety concerns in the early days of the railway.

Victoria Kelly, *Mrs. Houdini* (Atria, 2016): biofiction of Houdini's wife, Bess Rahner, looking back on her married life after her husband's death, as she desperately awaits his promised final feat – a message from the otherworld.

Brian Kindall, *Delivering Virtue* (Diving Boy, 2015): literary Western set in 1854, when the down-at-heels poet, Didier Rain takes on a commission from a Mormon splinter group to deliver the child bride Virtue to their prophet Nehi in the wilderness he has to face down Native Americans, fanatics and lunatic killers to accomplish his increasingly questionable mission.

Lawrence H. Levy, *Brooklyn on Fire: A Mary Handley Mystery* (Broadway, 2016): enlisted to investigate a killing in turn of the century New York, the feisty Mary has to face down the city's business and political elite's intrigue and corruption but finds an unexpected ally in the wealthy George Vanderbilt.

Jonathan Maberry, *Deadlands: Ghostwalkers* (Tor, 2015): steampunk Western based on a role-playing game; a tormented hired gun joins forces with an Exeter educated Sioux scientist to scupper the plans of an evil alchemist in the ironically named Paradise Falls, intent on using the mysterious "ghost rock" to build an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, assisted by an army of zombies; dinosaurs and vampire witches also make an appearance.

Gregory Maguire, *After Alice* (William Morrow, 2015): fantasy sequel to Lewis Carroll's classic combined with shades of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Alice's friend Ada and a runaway American slave are

precipitated down the rabbit hole and through the looking-glass respectively, before joining forces to search for Alice in Wonderland, while the adults, including a visiting Charles Darwin, search for the missing children.

Antoinette May, *The Determined Heart* (Lake Union, 2015): biofiction about Mary Shelley's early family life, her relationship with an unsympathetically rendered Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the gestation of her classic novel *Frankenstein*, which supposedly draw in part scenes and experiences from Mary's childhood.

Elizabeth McKague, *The Paper Boat* (Booklocker, 2015): biofiction of Percy Bysshe Shelley, chronicling his literary triumphs and his complex relationships with Mary Shelley and Lord Byron, threaded through with Shelley's own poetry.

Jamie Michele, *Mount of Hope* (Vintage Volumes, 2015): loose pastiche adaptation of Frances Trollope's *Young Lovem* (1844); Julia Drummond, friend to Alfred, the Dermonts' son and heir to The Mount country estate, does her utmost to dissuade him from an advantageous match with a viscount's niece.

Rod Miller, *Rawhide Robinson Rides the Tabby Trail: The True Tale of a Wild West CATastrophe* (Five Star, 2015): newspaper coverage of a rat infestation at Tombstone, Arizona, leads the enterprising titular protagonist to concoct a scheme to herd a thousand cats down the Santa Fe Trail to the mining town; on the trek, he regales his companions with nightly tall tales at the campfire and meets up with various colourful and dastardly characters (including a cat rustling trapper).

Judith Austin Mills, *Those Bones at Goliad* (Plain View, 2015): YA Western following Shelby Whitmire, who has to grow up fast during the Texas Revolution as he witnesses death, destruction, and loss, including experiencing the iconic tragedies of the Alamo and Goliad.

David Morrell, *Inspector of the Dead* (Mulholland, 2015), second instalment in the Thomas de Quincy Mysteries; while guests at Lord

Palmerston's Piccadilly residence, De Quincey and his daughter Emily, along with Inspector Ryan, are caught up in another murder investigation, this time involving a serial killer who may be targeting the queen.

Sarah Moss, *Signs for Lost Children* (Granta, 2015): continuation of the family saga begun in *Bodies of Light*; in 1880s England, shortly after their marriage, Ally's engineer husband Tom departs to work in Japan. Newly qualified as a doctor, Ally volunteers at an asylum to help better the treatment of female inmates only to have to battle prejudice, and self-doubt discrimination, while Tom feels estranged in the alien non-Western culture.

Vasudev Murthy, *Sherlock Holmes, the Missing Years: Japan* (Poisoned Pen, 2015): in 1893, still mourning the death of his friend, a strange letter from Japan in what appears to be Holmes handwriting, has Watson sets out for Yokohama via Bombay; a locked room murder aboard ship is just the beginning of the reunited friends' heroic efforts to foil a conspiracy that has Moriarty, in league with the Yakuza and Chinese Triads, vie for world dominion over the global economies of Asia and the West.

John D. Nesbitt, *Death in Cantera* (Five Star, 2016): mystery Western set in 1896 Cantera, a small town in Wyoming; the arrival of a stranger at Owen Gregor's lodging-house leads to a joint investigation, when strange events in the town turn out to be linked to historical killings centred on two disused local quarries.

Nicholas Nicastro, *Hell's Half-Acre* (Witness Impulse, 2015): biofictional crime drama of the 'Bloody Benders', held to be America's first serial killers; in 1870 Kate, lost as a six-year-old by her father in a card game, and the prostitute Almira, with whom she lives in a mining camp, encounter the Benders father and son; the newly formed 'family' opens a joint grocery store and lodging house in south-eastern Kansas, soon to become the scene of their gruesome murders of travellers passing through, discovered three years later after the family fled the area.

Thom Nicholson, *Custer's Cavalier* (Five Star, 2016): prequel to *Trouble in Texas*, this novel chronicles the adventures of a disgraced English lord, Lt. Colonel John Whyte, who together with his Sikh companion, Sergeant

Khan Singh, serves under Custer at Gettysburg; Whyte's involvement in the 1864 Valley Campaign, leads to unforeseen romance with a plantation owner and capture by the enemy.

Chris Nickson, *Skin Like Silver* (Severn House, 2016): part of the Tom Harper Mystery series; following an 1890s fire at a railway station, a woman's corpse is discovered covered in molten metal; when Inspector Harper's investigations disclose that she had been murdered beforehand, he teams up with his former partner, Billy Reed, now working for the Fire Service, in order to expose the culprit.

Nuala O'Connor, *Miss Emily* (Penguin; Sandstone, 2015): dual-voiced biofiction of Emily Dickinson at Amherst in her thirties, as she and her sister Vinnie befriend their new Irish immigrant maid, the (fictional) Ada Concannon.

Allison Pataki, *Sisi: Empress on Her Own* (Dial, 2016): biofictional follow-up to *The Accidental Empress*; following the breakdown of her marriage, the Austro-Hungarian Empress becomes an absentee wife and self-imposed exile, travelling across Europe.

Matthew Pearl, *The Last Bookaneer* (Harvill Secker; Penguin, 2015): another clever adventure in fin-de-siècle literature, focused on the pirating of popular Victorian works – and sometimes even the unpublished works of famous authors – at the time of the introduction of the first copyright laws; Pen Davenport, an especially crafty bookaneer seeks to obtain the manuscript of a new, nearly completed novel by the dying Robert Louis Stevenson, but encounters fierce competition from others in his 'profession'.

Anne Perry, *Corridors of the Night* (Ballantine; Headline, 2015): 21st volume in the William Monk series; this time the Thames River policeman and his wife Hester investigate secret blood-draining experiments on poor children, conducted in the hospital where his Hester is standing in as a nurse for a friend.

Linda Lee Peterson, *The Spy on the Tennessee Walker* (Prospect Park, 2015): third in the Maggie Fiori Mysteries series; after receiving an

intriguing daguerreotype that appears to picture her own double, present-day magazine editor Maggie conducts ancestral research into the life of a her Mississippi great-grandmother and Civil War nurse, Victoria Cardworthy, unearthing her foremother's seeming connection to a Confederate spy ring in the process; the present-day narrative is interspersed with extracts from Victoria's journal.

Tom Piazza, *A Free State* (Harper, 2015): prior to the Civil War, the escaped slave and musician Joseph, who re-names himself Henry Sims, joins the Virginia Harmonists, a Philadelphia minstrel show run by the performer/manager James, who hopes Sims will revive the troupe's failing fortunes, but the arrival of the vicious slave hunter Tull Burton threatens to scupper their plans.

Amanda Quick, *Garden of Lies* (Piatkus; Putnam, 2015): Ursula Kern, the owner of a London secretarial agency with a dubious personal past turns investigator when one of her employees, Anne, dies in the employ of the aristocratic Fulbrooks, teaming up with one of her clients, the rogue Slater Roxton, to discover the truth.

J.I. Radke, *Rooks and Romanticide* (DSP, 2015): fantasy novel transposing Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to an alternative Victorian London, torn by rival gang warfare between two powerful families, the male heirs of which fall perilously in love.

Deanna Raybourn, *A Curious Beginning* (NAL, 2015): first in a new mystery series; following the death of her aunt and foster mother, the intrepid Veronica Speedwell's plans to return to her natural history expeditions are scuppered when she and a reclusive fellow naturalist, Stoker, are caught up in nefarious plots following the sudden death of a German baron, who had promised to reveal secrets about Veronica's mysterious past.

Ian Reid, *The Mind's Own Place* (UWA, 2015): lyrical exploration of the intertwined lives of two transported convicts, Thomas, an architect and engineer who trained under Robert Stephenson, and the fraudster Alfred, as the men and their wives struggle to build a new life in the Swan River

Colony, while a related storyline focused on the undercover policeman Runty, sent to investigate Fenian activism in Western Australia, who becomes the territory's first detective.

Nina Romano, *The Secret Language of Women* (Turner, 2015): in late nineteenth-century China, the half-Swiss Lian is given medical training by her father, Dr. Gianluca Brasolin, who attends the infirm Italian ambassador at the embassy; here Lian meets the passion of her life, Giacomo Scimenti, which she records in the secret women's language of Nushu, but the lovers are torn apart by the death of her father, followed by Lian's forced marriage to the abusive Lu and the violent upheaval of the Boxer Rebellion.

Mike Short and Rebecca Goldfield, *Captive of Friendly Cove: Based on the Secret Journals of John Jewitt* (Fulcrum, 2015): YA biofictional graphic novel about the 1803 capture of *The Boston* and the subsequent enslavement of the John Jewitt by the Mowachaht people off Vancouver Island; though his blacksmithing skills save him from massacre, John struggles with the alien culture of his new First Nation masters.

Dan Simmons, *The Fifth Heart* (Little Brown; Sphere, 2015): a meeting between Henry James and Sherlock Holmes in 1890s Paris leads to a joint investigation of the murder of a member of the Fifth Heart Club; as their sleuthing takes them from Paris to New York, Washington D.C., and the Chicago World Fair, encountering various other biofictional celebrities and characters from the Holmes canon along the way, Holmes is haunted by the suspicion he may owe his whole existence to a writer's imagination.

Jane Petrlik Smolik, *Currents* (Charlesbridge, 2015): YA fiction, interconnecting the stories of three girls from different peoples and backgrounds; 'Bones', a Virginia slave girl, who has illicitly learned to read and write, sends a message in a bottle across the Atlantic, for it to be found by Lady Bess on the Isle of Wight, who eventually sends the bottle, together with a family bracelet, back across the ocean, to be found by Margaret Mary in 1850s Boston.

Linda Stratmann, *Mr Scarletti's Ghost* (The Mystery Press, 2015): spiritualist fiction set in Victorian Brighton, where the intrepid Mina

Scarletti, her body twisted from scoliosis, is sceptic about Miss Eustace's mediumistic abilities, which have seduced her widowed mother, and sets out to expose her as a fraud.

Vanessa Tait, *The Looking Glass House* (Corvus, 2015): biofiction of Alice Liddell (the author's great-grandmother) and Charles Dodgson/Lewis Carroll, told through the eyes of Mary Prickett, Alice's governess, who becomes increasingly jealous of the Reverend's attention to her charge.

Edward Taylor, *Terror by Gaslight* (Robert Hale, 2015): seemingly random, monthly slayings on Hampstead Heath by a knife-wielding killer force Major Henry Steele and ex-Sergeant Mason, former agents of Military Intelligence, to give up their retirement and take up the hunt for the 'Heath Maniac' to end his reign of terror.

Lucy Treloar, *Salt Creek* (Picador Australia, 2015): absorbing family saga set in a remote ramshackle cattle station in the Coorong, told through the memories of Hester Finch, recalling her youth in Australia, her parents' and siblings' struggles, and her family's interaction with the local Aboriginal tribe from the safe distance of a comfortable life in England in the 1870s.

Daniel D. Victor, *Sherlock Holmes and the Baron of Brede Place* (MX Publishing, 2015): Book II in the Sherlock Holmes and the American Literati series): Watson encounters Stephen Crane and suspects him of being blackmailed; when the writer vanishes mysteriously, Holmes takes on the case and the men are catapulted into a twisting and entertaining misadventure of murderous haunting and bombing.

Anne-Marie Vukelic, *Caged Angel* (Hale, 2015): biofiction about Angela Burdett, who in 1837, aged only twenty-three, inherits a share in Coutts Bank; overnight becoming one of England's richest women, Angela commits her life and fortune to philanthropic causes, working alongside Charles Dickens and other social reformers and eventually becoming known as the 'Queen of the Poor'.

Michael Wallace, *The Crescent Spy* (Lake Union, 2015): a female reporter, wrongly suspected of being a Confederate spy, is coerced by President

Lincoln to spy for the Union in her rebel-held hometown of New Orleans; reluctantly, she returns to face the ghosts of her past, accompanied by a Pinkerton agent, who also becomes her love interest.

Anna Waterhouse and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *Mycroft Holmes* (Titan 2015): while Sherlock is still in school, his multi-talented elder brother follows his Trinidadian fiancée Georgina back to her island home and finds himself plunged into a murderous plot involving child-killings and conspiracies to return slavery to the Caribbean.

Beatriz Williams, Karen White and Lauren Willig, *The Forgotten Room* (NAL, 2016): multi-period family saga; a WWII female doctor at a private New York hospital becomes fascinated with a miniature portrait owned by one of her patients, which uncannily resembles her, precipitating an exploration of her family's secret history through three stories set in the same house, one of them during the Gilded Age.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Michael January, *Frankenstein Diaries: The Romantics* (Winged Lion, 2015): mix of mash-up, biofiction, and imagined 'collaboration', re-creating Shelley's private diary kept during her travels with her husband and step-sister, and chronicling the inception of her classic novel.