

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

(compiled by *Marie-Luise Kohlke, Elizabeth Ho,  
Susanne Gruss, and Nadine Boehm-Schnitker*)

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**CFPs: Journals, Special Issues & Collections**

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

*Neo-Victorian Deviance*

**Special Issue of *RSV - Rivista di Studi Vittoriani***

*(Journal of Victorian Studies)*

Since its early expressions, Neo-Victorianism has always manifested a tendency to explore and interrogate various forms of transgression from Victorian 'norms'. This tendency is manifest in the works of many contemporary novelists, whose rewriting of the nineteenth-century canon bears witness to a renewed interest in various kinds of deviance (narrative, textual, sexual, ethical, ideological). Well-known examples are Sarah Waters's re-interpretation of female homosexuality and transvestitism in *Tipping the Velvet*, Jean Rhys's narrative rediscovery of the 'madwoman in the attic' in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Dan Simmons's unreliable Gothic narrative of Dickens's last years in *Drood*, William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's alternative history novel *The Difference Engine*, and Angela Carter's baroque depiction of freakery in *Nights at the Circus*. In particular, the neo-Victorian inclination to re-imagine deviance is evidenced by the appeal of two sub-genres – the sensation novel and the Gothic novel. Both characterized by thematic and cultural excess, these sub-genres have had an enormous impact on the way the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have (re)discovered and (re)figured Victorian deviance. As recently claimed by Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, editors of *Neo-Victorian Gothic. Horror Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth*

*Neo-Victorian Studies*

**6:2 (2013)**

**pp. 223-247**

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*Century* (2013), neo-Victorianism is “a quintessentially Gothic movement”. This special issue of *RSV* addresses the idea of “neo-Victorian deviance” from various angles. Contributors are invited to deal with cultural forms of Victorian deviation re-invented by contemporary authors, as well as with literary and meta-literary issues. The aim is to delineate an up-to-date, albeit far from exhaustive, cartography of transgression and alteration of normativity as a contemporary “mirror up to (Victorian) nature”. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Bodily deviance and freakery
- Sexual and gender deviance
- Infraction of behavioural rules
- Crime and breaking of law
- Ethical and deontological deviance
- Narrative deviance
- Deviance from literary norms
- Neo-Sensation novels
- Neo-Gothic novels
- Steampunk historically deviant narratives

**Abstracts due:** Potential contributors are invited to address enquiries and abstracts (between 300 and 500 words) to the guest editors Mariaconcetta Costantini ([m.costantini@unich.it](mailto:m.costantini@unich.it)) and Saverio Tomaiuolo ([tomaiul@hotmail.com](mailto:tomaiul@hotmail.com)) by the extended deadline of **18 February 2014**.

**Submissions due:** 5000-6000 word articles by **1 June 2014**.

*Neo-Victorian Humour:*

*The Rhetorics and Politics of Comedy, Irony and Parody*

(Edited Collection, Neo-Victorian Series, Rodopi)

**Abstracts due: 28 February 2014** (300-500 word proposals for 8,000-10,000 word chapters, plus short bio. note) to the series editors, Marie-Luise Kohlke at [m.l.kohlke@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:m.l.kohlke@swansea.ac.uk) and Christian Gutleben at [Christian.GUTLEBEN@unice.fr](mailto:Christian.GUTLEBEN@unice.fr).

**Submissions due: 1 September 2014.**

**Full CFP:** <http://www.neovictorianstudies.com/issues/NVS%206-1-14%20Announcements.pdf>

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***Romancing the Long British 19th Century*****Special Issue of *Journal of Popular Romance Studies***

The long British nineteenth century (1789-1914) appears to have the long global twentieth century (including the first decades of the twenty-first) in its thrall. Regency and Victorian settings proliferate in popular romance fiction, ranging from scenes of domestic life within the United Kingdom to British espionage in Europe and British colonial settlements. Retellings and “sequels” of Jane Austen’s novels line our (digital) bookshelves and fill fan-fiction websites, spilling over most recently into the YouTube sensation *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Such adaptations of Austen’s novels, along with film and TV versions of the Brontë sisters’ *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*, suggest that modern audiences cannot get enough of stories about Georgians, Victorians, and Edwardians in love. *The Journal of Popular Romance Studies* seeks papers on this enduring love affair with 19th-century Britain. Why does a period that is historically associated with the establishment of the Industrial Revolution, the consolidation of the Empire, and the coalescing of middle-class mores now strike us as a particularly “romantic” era? How do popular and middlebrow media from around the world construct, interpret, and recast the world of 19th c. Britain, broadly construed? What do these interpretations say about our current moment and our modern (or postmodern) thoughts and feelings about romance? We welcome submissions that explore these and related questions from any disciplinary or theoretical angle. We invite papers that cover different media, including (paper and digital) literature, film, TV, online content, and marketing.

**Submissions due:** Please submit scholarly papers of no more than 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography, by 1 **March, 2014**, to An Gorisat [managing.editor@jprstudies.org](mailto:managing.editor@jprstudies.org).

**Full CFP & submission guidelines:** <http://jprstudies.org/submissions/>

***Paranormal Romance*****Special Issue of *Journal of Popular Romance Studies***

*Romance Writers of America* (RWA) defines a paranormal romance as a “romance novel in which the future, a fantasy world, or paranormal elements are an integral part of the plot.” Sherrilyn Kenyon’s Dark Hunter series, Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight Saga, and J.R. Ward’s Black Dagger Brotherhood novels are just a few examples of the proliferation of this

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subgenre in the early 21st century. Paranormal romance is also flourishing in a broader sense – in the urban and dark fantasy novels of authors like Ilona Andrews (Kate Daniels, *The Edge*) and Charlaine Harris (Southern Vampires); in feature films (*Warm Bodies*, *Let the Right One In*, *Beautiful Creatures*); in television (*The Vampire Diaries*, *True Blood*, *Supernatural*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Walking Dead*), and in digital media forms from graphic novels to video games. Why does the paranormal, in its myriad representations, resonate so strongly with pop culture consumers, particularly in its juxtaposition with romance? What can the paranormal romance teach us about contemporary understandings of gender, sexuality, race, the body, hybridity, genre, and the market? We welcome submissions on the following topics, although all papers engaging with the subject of paranormal romance will be considered. Possible topics include:

- How do paranormal settings, characterisations, attributes, etc. facilitate interrogations and re-imaginings of gender, sexuality, and/or intimacy?
- How are paranormal characterisations informed by existing cultural narratives about race, ethnicity, and national identity?
- How do paranormal romances use characters' non-human or not-fully-human status to represent beyond-normative bodies, sex and/or violence?
- What assumptions or anxieties play out in contentions over the generic boundaries of paranormal romance and its relationship to other (sub-)genres?
- How does the generic hybridity of paranormal romance affect dynamics within texts, between texts and readers, and/or in the marketing of texts?
- Who are the consumers of paranormal romance? How do blogs and online communities of paranormal romance writers and fans reflect and shape the genre?

**Submissions due:** Please submit scholarly articles between 5,000 and 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography, by **1 July 2014**, to An Gorisat, [managing.editor@jprstudies.org](mailto:managing.editor@jprstudies.org).

**Full CFP & submission guidelines:** <http://jprstudies.org/submissions/>

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***Queering Popular Romance*****Special Issue of *Journal of Popular Romance Studies***

In 1997, Kay Mussell called upon scholars of popular romance “to incorporate analysis of lesbian and gay romances into our mostly heterosexual models.” Today, closing in on two decades later, that challenge has yet to be met. Although print and digital venues for LGBTQ romance have proliferated, meeting a growing demand for such work among readers (especially for male / male romances), and although there is a burgeoning interest in writing LGBTQ romance on the part of both LGBTQ and straight authors, queer romance fiction remains peripheral to most academic accounts of the genre. Likewise, with a handful of exceptions, scholarship on popular romance fiction has scarcely begun to engage the theoretical paradigms that have become central to gay and lesbian studies, to queer theory, and to the study of queer love in other media (film, TV, pop music, etc.). The *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* therefore calls for papers on “Queering the Romance,” in the broadest possible sense of the phrase. Recognising that there are both similarities and tensions between “queer theory” and “lesbian and gay criticism,” we call not only for papers that consider the importance of identity politics to popular romance fiction – that is, papers on romance novels with LGBTQ protagonists – but also for papers which give “queer” readings of ostensibly heterosexual romances, as well as for those which are theoretically engaged with the fluid concept of “queerness,” no matter the bodies and/or sexualities of the protagonists involved. We think here of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s famous assertion that “one of the things that ‘queer’ can refer to” is “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically.” Topics to be addressed might include:

- Continuity and Change in LGBT romance (including publishing, circulation, and readership), from gay and lesbian pulps to digital platforms
- Rereading the Romance, Queerly: queer re-readings of older romance scholarship, of canonical romance texts, and of the text / reader relationship
- Queering the romance genre across different media (film, television, graphic novels, video games, etc.)

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- Queering subgenres and romance conventions / tropes (virginity, sexuality, attraction, betrothal, the Happily Ever After ending)
  - Questions of Authorship / Authority / Appropriation: who writes, reads, and gets to judge LGBTQ romance, and why?
  - Intersectional texts and readings: queerness and disability, race, ethnicity, illness, religion, etc.
  - Beyond m/m and f/f: bringing bisexual, transgender, asexual, and other genderqueer romance into the discourse

**Submissions due:** Please submit scholarly papers no more than 10,000 words, including notes and bibliography, by **1 September 2014** to An Gorisat, [managing.editor@jprstudies.org](mailto:managing.editor@jprstudies.org).

**Full CFP & submission guidelines:** <http://jprstudies.org/submissions/>

**Inaugural Issue of *Revenant*:**

***Critical and Creative Studies of the Supernatural***

**Submissions:** no date specified (4000-7000 words for articles; 5000 words for stories) to <http://www.revenantjournal.com/make-a-submission/>.

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**CFPs: Upcoming Symposia & Conferences**

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

**12 June 2014**

***Detecting Objects: The Material Item and Detective Fiction***

**University of Portsmouth, England, UK**

Pioneering works in the field of ‘thing theory’ such as Bill Brown’s *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (2003) and Elaine Freedgood’s *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (2006) have sought to reconceptualise the roles of objects in fiction, moving beyond Marxist conceptions of the commodity and seeing material items not as weak metonymies, but as tellers of obscured histories. Yet the focus of such explorations has tended towards a focus on canonical realism and the ways in which such texts invite us to concentrate on subjects at the

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expense of objects. This symposium considers the ways in which objects have *always* been of crucial importance to the popular genre of detective fiction, as either clues, weapons, or as other embodiments of history. We welcome proposals on any aspect of the reading of objects in detective fiction (and related genres such as the sensation novel and crime fiction) from the nineteenth century onwards. Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- The material object as clue or detective
- The material object as weapon or victim
- Deconstructions of the animate/inanimate in detective fiction
- Detective fiction as material object: book and publication history
- Detective fiction and materialism
- The material manifestations of detective/crime fiction fan cultures

**Abstracts due:** Please send proposals of no more than 300 words and a brief CV to Christopher Pittard at [Christopher.pittard@port.ac.uk](mailto:Christopher.pittard@port.ac.uk), by **28 March 2014**.

**Full CFP:** <http://www.port.ac.uk/centre-for-studies-in-literature/literature-events/symposium-2014-detecting-objects/>

**12-14 June 2014**

*Victorian 'Structures of Feeling' in Late 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Cultural Products*

**University of Paderborn, Germany**

At the moment British (cultural) politics seem to be relapsing into a conservatism informed by 19<sup>th</sup>-century structures and ideologies. The continuities between the Victorian era and contemporary society, however, are not restricted to the political level, and this is why the conference aims at exploring manifestations of this 'Victorian Renaissance' on the level of cultural representation(s).

Neo-Victorianism, the formal level of these recurrences, has already been studied quite often, so rather than focusing on the conscious imitation of Victorian styles, we are interested in the subtle operation of Victorian 'structures of feeling' in late 20<sup>th</sup>- and early 21<sup>st</sup>-century Britain and the ways in which they shape contemporary discourses and society. More particularly, we wish to elucidate how these structural and ideological connections manifest themselves in cultural 'texts' of the two eras.

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Despite their temporal distance, the two time periods offer striking points of comparison when it comes to population development, mobility, gender relations as well as economic practices. We would like to make these similarities palpable by analysing their cultural and literary representations during the Victorian era as well as the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Examples of recurring social, cultural and representational patterns abound. A growing tendency toward moving from the country to the bigger cities, for instance, characterises both eras. Challenges to patriarchy began with the New Women at the 19<sup>th</sup>-century fin de siècle and nowadays express themselves in debates about quota for getting more women into leadership positions. Together with these social trends, typical Victorian plot structures such as the romance are taken up, adapted or subverted. We invite papers that analyse the links between these developments from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as well as their ideological functions now and then, using cultural texts of all kinds.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- the connection between gender, spaces and consumer practices
- the comparison of media formats such as newspapers, serialised fiction etc.
- publishing processes and industries
- the development of advertising practices
- Victorian plot structures in contemporary (popular) fiction and film
- melodramatic tendencies in late 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century drama

**Abstracts due:** Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to the organisers Christina Flotmann ([christina.flotmann@upb.de](mailto:christina.flotmann@upb.de)) and Anna Lienen ([anna.lienen@upb.de](mailto:anna.lienen@upb.de)) by **31 January 2014**.

**8-10 July 2014**

**Dickensian Landscapes: 19th Annual Dickens Society Symposium  
Domaine de Sagnes, Béziers (Languedoc-Roussillon), France**

Proposals on any aspect of Dickens and his works are invited, especially those engaging ideas on the proposed theme, 'Dickensian Landscapes', a timely topic given the distinctive setting of this year's venue, but also because the very notion of landscape is not only still prevalent today, but seems to have morphed into multiple new derivatives such as ideoscapes, ethnoscapas, technoscapes, financescapes or mediascapes. How powerful a tool the notion of landscapes and its declensions could be to understand the

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self and the world is precisely what Dickens had already realized and shown in his work. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Literal or figurative landscapes
- Actual or imaginary landscapes
- Domestic or exotic landscapes
- Cityscapes, seascapes
- Soundscapes
- The landscapes of Dickens's mind
- Dickens as a landscape artist and the pictorial tradition of his time
- Dickens's influence on other centuries, authors and art forms.

**Abstracts due:** Please send one-page proposals for 20-minute papers (in English) by e-mail, as an attachment, no later than **31 March 2014**, to: [marie-amelie.coste@hotmail.com](mailto:marie-amelie.coste@hotmail.com), [christine.huguet-meriaux@univ-lille3.fr](mailto:christine.huguet-meriaux@univ-lille3.fr), or [nathalie.vanfasse@univ-amu.fr](mailto:nathalie.vanfasse@univ-amu.fr)

**Full CFP:** <http://dickensquarterly.org/events-2/>

**10-11 July 2014**

*Victorian and Edwardian Lives and Letters*

**University of Hertfordshire and Knebworth House, England, UK**

Submissions are invited for this two-day conference to be held at the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield and at Knebworth House, the country home of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-73). The conference will focus broadly on the topic of life-writing in its different manifestations and the challenges posed by Victorian and Edwardian figures from across the literary, theatrical, political and social scenes. How, for example, were Victorian lives recorded by Victorian contemporaries? How did a Victorian subject go about writing an autobiography or memoir? What was/is the relationship between life-writing and creative writing? Given that the fields of biography and autobiography regularly undergo re-evaluation as notions of identity, selfhood and 'suitable' subjects shift, how do those working on nineteenth century topics in the twenty-first century approach them. Where is the field going? Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Beyond m/m and f/f
- Challenges in recovering both well-known and forgotten subjects
- Celebrity and infamy
- Working with letters and diaries

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- Creative writing's use of Victorian and Edwardian lives
  - Shifting reputations
  - The legacies of earlier biographers (e.g. Froude, Strachey)
  - New developments in the field
  - Teaching life-writing

**Abstracts due:** Please email 300 word abstracts or enquiries to the conference organisers, Rowland Hughes, Andrew Maunder and Janice Norwood at [VictorianLives@gmail.com](mailto:VictorianLives@gmail.com) by **31 January 2014**.

#### **10-12 July 2014**

*New Horizons; Reassessing Women's Travel Writing 1660-1900*

**Chawton House Library, Hampshire, UK**

**Abstracts due: 1 March 2014** to Carl Thompson at [carl.thompson@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:carl.thompson@ntu.ac.uk). (For any other queries, or to register for the event, please contact either Carl or Gillian Dow, Director of Research at Chawton House Library, at [g.dow@soton.ac.uk](mailto:g.dow@soton.ac.uk).)

#### **11-12 July 2014**

*Cultures of Commemoration*

**International Conference hosted by the Centre for Studies in Literature University of Portsmouth, UK**

Taking as a starting point the range of events which will mark the commemoration of WWI in 2014, this conference considers the place occupied by commemorative practices in contemporary literature and culture. We welcome contributions which examine how different 'pasts' and key historical moments – including, but not exclusively, the First World War – are memorialised, fictionalised, and at times commercialised, in the present.

Possible areas of interest include:

- Remembering/consuming the past in contemporary literature and culture
- The presentation of past military conflicts in contemporary literature and culture
- Memory, memorialisation, and the function of loss in contemporary literature and culture

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- Neo-historical returns to the past in contemporary literature and culture
  - ‘Dark tourism’ and the fascination with past traumas in contemporary literature and culture
  - Exhausting the past: commemoration fatigue and forgetting in contemporary literature and culture

Confirmed Keynote Speakers: Dr Victoria Stewart (University of Leicester, UK), Dr Rosario Arias (University of Málaga, Spain), plus a storytelling event with acclaimed storyteller and author Dr Simon Heywood (University of Derby, UK)

**Abstracts due:** Please send an abstract (300 words max) for a 20 minute paper and a brief biographical note to Christine Berberich ([Christine.Berberich@port.ac.uk](mailto:Christine.Berberich@port.ac.uk)) and Elodie Rousselot ([Elodie.Rousselot@port.ac.uk](mailto:Elodie.Rousselot@port.ac.uk)) by **14 February 2014**. Contributions from the fields of literary studies, cultural studies, film and visual arts very welcome.

**13 September 2014**

*Rethinking Sisterhood: The Affective Politics of Women’s Relationships*

**FWSA Interim Event**

**University of Bristol, UK**

The emergence of intersectionality and the politics of difference within feminist theory have long critiqued the notion of a shared political ‘sisterhood’, yet the affective and ethical dimension of relationships between women requires further exploration. Whereas the trope of the mother-daughter relationship dominates feminist theory, comparatively little work has conceptualized the significance of horizontal relationships between women. Much feminist research has shown how central female ties have been to sustaining feminism within and beyond activism. Yet the depth of the (dis)affections between women does not necessarily translate into feminist transformation. This forthcoming conference asks how the much-contested notion of sisterhood requires redefinition for 21<sup>st</sup>-century feminist politics and how the contemporary ethics and aesthetics of sisterhood could be re-imagined. If the valorisation and re-signification of women’s relationships is an important task of the feminist project, we need to consider:

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- How does sorority feature as a metaphor in contemporary feminist theory and practice?
  - How is this ideal lost and reconstructed?
  - Do we need new tropes to represent and practice female attachments?
  - How do we account for men's presences and absences, as well as transgender perspectives, when rethinking sisterhood?
  - The conference seeks to engage with the conceptual resources generated by the affective turn, questioning the emotional politics of feminist solidarity and conflicts:
  - How do female attachments sustain feminism as a politics of feeling?
  - How have closeness, care, anger and envy between women been seen to either support or threaten the feminist project?
  - How does feminism and feminists represent issues of authority, power and hierarchy between women?

We are seeking contributions for papers, panels, exhibitions and performances that explore the experience and/or representation of horizontal relationships between women across different geographical sites and from interdisciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to activist ties, filial bonds, sexual relationships, friendships and professional relationships.

**Abstracts due:** Please send abstracts and panel proposals of 250 words plus a biography of 100 words by **31** January 2014 to [rethinkingsisterhoodconference@gmail.com](mailto:rethinkingsisterhoodconference@gmail.com). For further information contact the organisers Maud Perrier ([maud.perrier@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:maud.perrier@bristol.ac.uk)) or Emily Falconer ([falconee@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:falconee@lsbu.ac.uk)).

**Full CFP:** <http://fwsablog.org.uk/2014-conference/call-for-papers/>

### **20 September 2014**

*The Mystery of Edwin Drood: Solutions and Resolutions*

**The Victorian Popular Fiction Association & The Drood Inquiry**

**Senate House, London, UK**

Charles Dickens's last novel, unfinished as it is, has become a call to arms to a legion of fans, academics and authors to solve the mystery and complete the uncompleted. In the early years after Dickens's death, passionate discussions of *Drood* formed the vast bulk of criticism of his

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works, while later scholars have looked back upon this formative period with a mixture of bemusement and embarrassment. In 2014 *The Drood Inquiry* will investigate and celebrate the many weird and wonderful responses to Dickens's story, exploring the ways in which these solutions reflect upon the authors' attitudes to Dickens and his legacy, and how Dickens's story and characters exist both within the boundaries of the original text and without in the numerous spin-offs that have arisen. We welcome proposals that explore the themes of the book or the insights its subsequent treatment can provide on Dickens's reputation, as well of course as any discussion of theories on how the story ends! Topics could include, but are not restricted to:

- Characters, themes and topography of *Edwin Drood*
- The legacy and afterlife of Dickens and *Drood*
- Dickens in 1870
- Incomplete stories of the nineteenth century
- Victorian fan-fiction and neo-Victorianism
- Early detective fiction and the mystery genre
- Clues and red herrings
- Adaptations of *Drood* for stage and screen
- Dickens and the fanatics
- Ownership and authorship
- The role of the ending in plot and structure

**Abstracts due:** Proposals (up to 500 words) and a brief biographical note should be sent by **31 May 2014** to [peter.orford@buckingham.ac.uk](mailto:peter.orford@buckingham.ac.uk). For further details and updates you can follow us on Twitter @Drood\_Inquiry or visit <http://cloisterhamtales.wordpress.com/>.

**Full CFP:** <http://cloisterhamtales.wordpress.com/>

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**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

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

**19-22 February 2014**

**The 35th Annual Conference of the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA): Neo-Victorianism and Steampunk**

**Hyatt Regency Hotel and Conference Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

The event aims is to press against the boundaries of the accepted discourse in the hopes of finding new texts, images, sub-cultures, etc. that can expand or further define this new and exciting genre and culture. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Neo-Victorian/Steampunk Literature
- Neo-Victorian/Steampunk film and television series
- The importance of the web to Neo-Victorianism/Steampunk
- Periodising Steampunk
- Steampunk as part of the Neo-Victorian cultural discourse
- The outsider/amateur and the cultural production of Steampunk
- Maker culture in Steampunk
- Steampunk community formation
- The politics of Neo-Victorianism/Steampunk
- Consumption and Consumerism
- Gender and Sexuality
- Race and postcoloniality in Neo-Victorianism/Steampunk

**Enquiries to:** Gordon Marshall, Area Chair, Neo-Victorianism and Steampunk, [gordmarshall@gmail.com](mailto:gordmarshall@gmail.com).

**27-30 March 2014**

**Nineteenth-Century Energies**

*Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association (INCS) Annual Conference*

**Houston, Texas, USA**

**Full CFP:** <http://incs2014.org/cfp/>.

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**24-27 May 2014****Neo-Victorian Uses and Abuses of History (joint NAVSA/ACCUTE panel)****Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada**

In the relatively new field of Neo-Victorian studies the status of history is the focus of much debate. Is the recourse to the Victorian period necessarily nostalgic? Can the Victorian period be used to critique racism, violence and homophobia? And what of imaginative reconstructions of the Victorian period in genres such as Steampunk: are novels that reconfigure the Victorian period with contemporary technology and issues “historical” or do they call into question totalizing historical narratives? Possible topics include but are by no means limited to:

- History, collective memory and nostalgia
- The commodification of the Victorian period
- Retro-futurism and the status of history
- Refiguring colonialism in Neo-Victorian texts
- Ecohistory and Neo-Victorianism
- Play and history in Neo-Victorian texts
- The Victorian period as utopia/dystopia
- Race, history and Neo-Victorianism
- Subverting the “Victorian” in Neo-Victorianism

**Enquiries to:** Martin Danahay, [mdanahay@brocku.ca](mailto:mdanahay@brocku.ca).

**11-13 April 2014*****Victorian Violence*****University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA**

Presentations at the Midwest Victorian Studies Association will focus on the theme ‘Victorian Violence’. This includes conflict or resistance and its representations in art, music, history, or literature: violence in the army, the colonies, the prisons, the streets, the workplace, the family, the home, and even the animal kingdom. This year MVSA will also feature three seminars on the topics ‘Sensational Violence’, ‘Political Violence’, and ‘Colonial Violence’. We are planning a collection of essays based on the conference. MVSA’s 2014 Jane Stedman Lecture, given by Lara Kriegel on ‘Graceful Exits: War Cemeteries, Violent Legacies, and the Afterlife of the Crimean War’. The conference will also host a plenary panel featuring talks on

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‘Visual Afterlives of Victorian Violence’, ‘The Ruins of Violence: The Aftermath of the 1857 Rebellion in the Photographs of Robert and Harriet Tytler’, ‘Concealing Violence and Decay in Ancient Egypt at the Sydenham Crystal Palace’; and ‘Anti-Colonial Violence, Imperial Retribution, and the Aura of the Art Object in the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897’.

**Preliminary Conference Schedule:**

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/45831323/MVSA/MVSA%202014%20Schedule%20of%20Events.pdf>

**19 June 2014**

***Sights and Frights: Interdisciplinary Conference on Victorian Visual Culture, Horror and the Supernatural***

**University of Sussex, England, UK**

This one-day interdisciplinary conference will explore and interrogate cultural cross-currents between nineteenth-century visual culture, science and social practice, particularly where these concern attitudes to, and instances of, the supernatural and horrific. The image of Victorian Britain in popular culture is synonymous with discipline, propriety and sentimentality, yet there was also a dark, subversive undercurrent to these mainstream ideals, manifest in such cultural phenomena as Gothic and ghost literature, freak shows, drugs cults and quasi-religious movements such as spiritualism and theosophy. At the same time, the Victorians were engaged, more than ever before, in attempting to make the invisible world visible to the eye. Improvements in the manufacture of lenses led to the increased circulation of microscopes and telescopes, which, along with the invention of photography, led to a growth in empirical discovery and scientific innovation. The new visual technology of the panorama, diorama and magic lantern also proved to be highly popular forms of entertainment, enabling large numbers of Victorians to witness images, both real and imaginary, never seen before. In particular, the public demonstrated a voracious appetite for visual entertainment relating to ghouls, ghosts and Gothic horrors. Whilst the new ‘magic’ of optical technology appeared to promote scientific claims, it also served to stimulate a belief in the existence of invisible and occult forces. Possible topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Spiritualism and spirit photography
- Images of demonology and witchcraft

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- Parapsychology, the paranormal and the occult (i.e. mesmerism, hypnotism, alchemy, astronomy)
  - Death and mourning practices, memento mori, and death masks
  - The iconography of ghosts, hauntings and ghost stories
  - The Gothic in literature, art, photography, visual and wider culture
  - Imaging of supernatural beings such as fairies, vampires etc.
  - Visual entertainment (magic lanterns, phantasmagoria, panorama/diorama) focusing on supernatural subjects
  - The visual presentation of horrific aspects of science and medicine  
Images (photographs, illustrations, art) of opium dens and the drugs underworld
  - Violent crime, crime scene photography and the figure of the serial killer.

**Conference website:** <http://sightsandfrights.com/>

**10-12 July 2014**

*Victorian Transport (Australasian Victorian Studies Association Annual Conference)*

**Hong Kong**

The Victorian Age is one of mobility and of transportation: goods, people and money were transported within Great Britain, across Europe, and to the far reaches of Empire. Ideas – whether economic, political, educational, religious or philosophical – were imported and exported. And far from being unemotional, the Victorians were also regularly ‘transported’ by emotions which doctors, scientists and psychologists tried to theorise. This conference seeks to redefine the parameters of transport through interdisciplinary approaches to material, metaphorical and metaphysical journeys during the Victorian era. Papers on global crossings are particularly welcome. Topics might include but are not limited to:

- Transporting people, transporting goods
- Modes of Transportation
- Intellectual transport
- Trade and trafficking
- Penal colonies
- Theorising ‘transport’
- Theories of the emotions

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- Women and transport
  - Transport, its politics and policies
  - Transatlantic and Transpacific transportation
  - Transference and the subconscious
  - Dreams and Telepathy
  - Transporting and translating literature abroad
  - Transport hubs/ urban development
  - Speed
  - Transportive music
  - Landscape and environment
  - Immobility
  - Time Travel
  - Neo-Victorian Transport

A special section of the conference calls for papers on Victorian Transport related to China and the ‘China-West’ axis. Please signal in your application whether you would like your paper to be considered for inclusion in any of these ‘China’ or ‘China-West’ panels.

**Full CFP:** <http://www.english.hku.hk/events/victoriantransport/>

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

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

***Longitude Punk'd***

**Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London, UK**

**Opening Easter 2014**

Although concerned more with eighteenth-century science, *Longitude Punk'd* may be of interest to neo-Victorianists due to the steampunk angle, the exhibition’s objective being to take “Steampunk back to the 18th century, the age of the Board of Longitude”. Billed as “The steampunks are taking over the Royal Observatory, Greenwich!”, *Longitude Punk'd* will celebrate the creations of wacky inventors, star-gazing scientists and

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extremely elegant explorers of the eighteenth century. Royal Museums Greenwich has commissioned eight UK steampunk artists to create works inspired by the technical inventions that were presented to the Board of Longitude between 1714 and 1828. The exhibition has an accompanying *Longitude Punk'd Competition for the Encouragement of the Arts of Longitudinal Steampunking* (deadline now closed). Winning entries, assessed on the criteria of inspiration by historical inventions and drawings submitted to the Board of Longitude between 1714 and 1828, aesthetics of eighteenth-century inventions, craftsmanship, and the spirit of steampunk, will be exhibited alongside the work of leading UK steampunk artists and practitioners. Full details at: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/whatson/exhibitions/longitude-punkd/>.

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### **Recent and Forthcoming Critical Publications on Neo-Victorianism**

**Nadine Boehm-Schnitker and Susanne Gruss (eds.), *Neo-Victorian Literature and Culture: Immersions and Revisitations*** (Routledge, forthcoming April 2014): This collection explores the pleasures and unpleasures of consuming neo-Victorianism in its various cultural forms, reiterations and instantiations, ranging from the nostalgic to the traumatic, and investigates the extent to which current identities continue to be constructed through the Victorians as our fabricated self-reflecting Others.

**Kym Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Diaries and Letters*** (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): This monograph explores the role of epistolary tropes and strategies as a defining element of neo-Victorian literature, underlining the genre's concern with fragmentation and incompleteness as regards how the past is recorded and re-imagined for posterity, as well as thematising writers' and readers' desires in discovering the Victorians' secrets and secret lives.

**Kate Mitchell and Nicola Parsons (eds.), *Reading Historical Fiction: the Revenant and Remembered Past*** (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): Discussing historical fiction from the eighteenth century to the present, this collection

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debates the genre's origins, its form(s), various critical ways of defining and accessing the past (such as mythologies and visual representations), and particularly the reader's role in negotiating the differences and commonalities between past, present and future; includes a chapter on neo-Victorian poethics and spectrality.

**Michelle J. Smith (guest ed.), *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*, 18:3, Special Issue: *Neo-Victorianism* (2013):** This special issue contains articles exploring neo-Victorianism through the lenses of biofiction, non-hermeneutics, ethics, steampunk, fashion, dramatic dialogue, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic.

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### **Recent and Forthcoming Neo-Victorian Fiction, Poetry, and Drama**

**Robert Antoni, *As Flies to Whatless Boys* (Akashic, 2013):** Aboard ship in Trinidad, 1881, "Willy" Tucker reminisces about his voyage to the Caribbean in 1845 with his family from England as part of the Tropical Emigration Society, the ill-conceived idea of Etzler, a charlatan and "inventor" of a perpetual-motion machine for farming. As "Willy" recounts his childhood in Trinidadian vernacular, the narrative is also interrupted by contemporary voices, the director of the archive where the 'novelist' is researching the original voyage.

**Lenny Bartulin, *Infamy* (Allen & Unwin, 2013):** In 1830, while recovering from injuries sustained chasing mahogany pirates in South America, William Burr receives a request from a friend in Hobart Town to aid in the capture of notorious convict, Brown George Coyne. Upon arrival in Van Diemen's Land, Burr befriends an aboriginal tracker and finds himself caught up in a world of crime, romance and the violence of empire.

**Robert J. Begiebing, *The Turner Erotica* (Ilium Press, 2013):** Inspired by the discovery of JMW Turner's erotica, Begiebing fictionalises the role that the American diplomat and artist, William Stillman, plays in saving them from being burned by prudish librarians. A novel of theft and quest,

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Stillman spends decades traveling across Europe and America searching for the erotic sketches he once stole and then had stolen from him.

**Perle Besserman, *Kabuki Boy*** (Aqueous Books, 2013): Consisting of journals, memoirs, monastic documents and letters, Besserman immerses readers into the world of Myo, a kabuki actor who plays women's roles, the daily life of kabuki theater and the social landscape of nineteenth-century Japan. Told from the point of view of a twentieth-century narrator, a cultural historian and abbot of a Zen monastery, the novel explores a feudal world in transition.

**Jennifer, Chiaverini, *The Spymistress*** (Dutton, 2013): Using her social influence and considerable wealth, all the while maintaining the appearance of gentility, Elizabeth Van Lew, a Union spy living in Confederate Virginia during the American Civil War, aids wounded Union soldiers, smuggles messages to the North, and frees her slaves as far as she legally can.

**Stephen F. Clegg, *Maria's Papers*** (Austin & Macauley, 2012): In the 1850s, Maria Chance takes up ownership of the Whitewall Estate, unearthing a history of danger and deception, while in the present-day, Naomi Draper, head of the local historical research department, uncovers lost documents that expose the rivalries that still dog the tenancy of Whitewall Farm.

**Duncan Craig, *5Cav*** (Matador, 2013): The novel covers five days in the lives of the Fifth Calvary Regiment army officers Coster and Jenness at Fort Glen, 1887, when a train stranded in bad weather brings unexpected visitors to the winter garrison precipitating tensions between officers, passengers and native Americans pushing for change.

**Lynn Cullen, *Mrs. Poe*** (Gallery, 2013): In this biofiction of struggling poet Frances Osgood and her affair with Edgar Allan Poe set in New York in the 1840s, the poets' fledgling relationship is complicated when frail Mrs Virginia Poe seeks to befriend her husband's protégée.

**Sandra Dallas, *Fallen Women*** (St. Martin's 2013): Beret Osmundsen, a wealthy New York socialite, discovers that her estranged sister, Lillie, has

been murdered in a Denver brothel and joins forces with Detective Mick McCauley, delving into the twinned worlds of prostitution and Denver's high society life.

**Charles Egan, *The Killing Snows*** (Silverwood Books, 2013): A couple falls in love in the midst of the Irish famine, in a novel drawing on the convention of recovered manuscripts.

**Raff Ellis, *The Bishop's Curse*** (Prolix Press, 2013): Chronicling the arrival of child immigrant, Richard Gallagher, to the US in the 1800s, the novel is simultaneously a history of the early Catholic Church in America and a depiction of the parishioners' revolt against their religious leaders in Carthage, New York.

**Kate Forsyth, *The Wild Girl*** (Allison & Busby, 2013): Biofiction of Dortchen Wild, the girl next door, who fell in love with Wilhelm Grimm, which blends fairytales with the saga of their relationship and their struggle to be together through the Napoleonic wars.

**Elizabeth Gilbert, *The Signature of All Things*** (Bloomsbury/Viking, 2013): In nineteenth-century Philadelphia, independent Alma Whittaker has to balance her an intellectual life and romance in a novel moving between Britain, the US, and Tahiti to exploring the impacts of nineteenth-century science through a vast array of characters.

**Colleen Gleeson, *The Clockwork Scarab*** (Chronicle, 2013): In this alternate reality/steampunk fiction set in 1889 London, Mina Holmes (Sherlock's sister) and Evaline Stoker (Bram's sister) commence an investigation of a series of suicides that turn out to be murders committed by an elusive secret society.

**Matthew Guinn, *The Resurrectionist*** (Norton, 2013): Contemporary US-American academic Jacob Thacker researches his medical college's history of the acquisition of bodies for anatomical training in the nineteenth century and uncovers the history of Nemo, a former slave and resurrectionist, and his struggle for education and independence.

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**Catherine Jinks, *How to Catch a Bogle*** (Harcourt Children's, 2013): This Children's fiction finds Heroine Birdie posing as bait for the monsters that her employer Alfred Bogle catches for a living, but when more and more orphans disappear, resourceful Birdie has to become a heroine in her own right.

**Jasper Kent, *The People's Will*** (Bantam, 2013): Fourth installment of Kent's Danilov-series; Kent's vampire fiction, set in 1880s Russia, mixes historical events with stock elements/clichés of vampire fiction.

**Larry C. Kerr, *The Hunley: The Civil War's Secret Weapon*** (Melange Books, 2013): In this fictional account of the construction of the Confederate submarine, the H.L. Hunley, the Hunley's tragic history is interwoven with the love story of Lt. George Dixon and his fiancée, Queenie Bennett.

**Joe R. Lansdale, *The Ticket*** (Mulholland, 2013): Selected as one of the best books in the category historical fiction by the *Library Journal*, this Western tells the story of Jack Parker, recently orphaned, on his troubled journey through East Texas at the turn of the century, accompanied by a curious bunch of sidekicks on his quest to save his sister.

**Elisabeth M. Lee, *Young PRB: A Novel of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*** (April Books 2013): Biofiction of the artists that formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The novel focuses on the personal, artistic and financial struggles of these young artists as they oppose the art critics and intelligentsia of mid-Victorian England.

**Julia Lee, *The Mysterious Misadventures of Clemency Wrigglesworth*** (Oxford, 2013): Lee's Young Adult novel tells the story of eleven-year-old orphan Clemency travelling from India to England, who finds herself in dire need of rescue in Victorian Portsmouth after being abducted and forced to work as a scullery maid at her deceased parents' home.

**George Mann, *The Executioner's Heart*** (Tor, 2013): Fourth novel in Mann's acclaimed fantasy/steampunk series; in an alternate Victorian

London, Detective Sir Maurice Newbury and his sidekick Veronica Hobbes investigate the case of a hired serial murderer who tears out her victims hearts.

**Dennis McFarland, *Nostalgia*** (Pantheon, 2013): Part-biofiction of Walt Whitman set during the American Civil War; muted by his experiences on the battlefield, the traumatised soldier Summerfield Hayes befriends the eminent poet, who tries to help him come to terms with the crippling effects of war.

**Jim Pinnells, *Saturn's Daughters: The Birth of Terrorism*** (Matador, 2013): Set against the backdrop of late-nineteenth-century Russia, this novel follows young Evgenya Grishina and her membership in "the Movement", a terrorist organisation plotting to assassinate Tsar Alexander II.

**Oliver Pötzsch, *The Ludwig Conspiracy*** (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013): This mystery novel promises to unravel the truth about Bavaria's Fairy-Tale King; as the rare book collector turned sleuth Steven Lukas is dealt a coded diary of one of Ludwig's close associates and, aided by the attractive art detective Sara Lengfeld, begins to spell out what happened in the king's last days, he also begins to uncover his own family secrets.

**Ray Robertson, *David*** (Biblioasis, 2013): In a novel inspired by the actual Elgin Settlement, David King, born a slave in 1847 but freed and raised by the white Reverend William King as he founds a utopian settlement for emancipated slaves in nineteenth-century, eventually rebels against the strict religious upbringing and his mentor's values, instead seeking his intellectual freedom.

**Dianne K. Salerni, *The Caged Graves*** (Clarion, 2013): This Young Adult fiction sees 17-year-old Verity Boone return to her Pennsylvania hometown in 1867 to be confronted with her mother's death and burial in a caged grave. Determined to lift the mystery, she uncovers well-hidden family secrets.

**Diane Setterfield, *Bellman and Black: A Ghost Story*** (Atria, Orion, 2013): William Bellman accidentally kills a rook as a child, creating a mysterious

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debt that haunts his successes in the mill and later in the retail empire of Bellman and Black.

**Lynn Shepherd, *A Fatal Likeness*** (Corsair/Delacorte, 2013): Follow-up to Shepherd's *Tom-All-Along's* (2012), a *Bleak House* spin-off; the private investigator Charles Maddox is hired by the Shelley family to inquire into a dark secret that continues to haunt the life of Mary Shelley and overshadows the legacy of Percy B. Shelley.

**David J. Sloat, John W. Sloat, *The Calm and the Strife*** (CCB Publishing 2012): Biofiction set during the American Civil War; in Gettysburg, Wes Culp and Jack Skully – a runt and a bully – grow up and fall in love with the same girl, Ginnie Wade, who is torn between the two men when they find themselves on opposite sides of the Civil War.

**Richard Smoley, *In Praise of Angels*** (Academy Chicago 2013): Set during Reconstruction, the novel follows the journalist Benjamin Wright as he becomes embroiled in the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson and the scandal of Horace Greeley's presidential campaign: the misappropriation of funds in the building of the transcontinental railroad.

**Linda Stratmann, *A Case of Doubtful Death*** (The Mystery Press, 2013): Third installment of the Francis Dougherty series; a female private investigator, Frances is hired to find Henry Palmer who has gone missing after the sudden death of mortuary director, Dr Mackenzie. With the help of her suffragette friend, Sarah, Frances gets drawn into the mysteries of The Life House, a place where wealthy corpses are left to decompose so as to prevent being accidentally buried alive.