



The British Society for Literature and Science

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Autumn Newsletter 2013



Main Building, Cardiff University, venue for the 2013 conference reception (photo: Stan Zurek)

Cardiff Conference

The eighth BSLS conference took place on 11-13 April 2013, hosted by Cardiff University. Two winners of this year's postgraduate bursaries, Susie Christensen and Romén Reyes-Peschl, offer personal perspectives on the conference.

After last year's conference in Oxford I was looking forward to the delights which awaited me in Cardiff at the conference organised by Martin Willis and Keir Waddington. I did not leave disappointed. One of the wonderful things about the BSLS conference is the way it brings together researchers from all stages of their careers, from MA students to senior professors, and helps shape our academic community, which spans multiple literary periods and different methodological approaches. This creates a vibrant, exciting and inspiring conference atmosphere which is, above all, friendly and fun. However, alongside the fun there was also, of course, plenty of serious and groundbreaking academic endeavour, too much to mention here.

(continued)

Welcome

Welcome to this year's British Society for Literature and Science Newsletter, which offers a roundup of news from the Society and its membership over the last twelve months.

The BSLS promotes interdisciplinary research into the relationships of science and literature in all periods. This issue includes reports of conferences and events over the past year, announcements of members' recently published books, completed PhDs, results of the small grants bids, and details of the book prize and the essay prize.

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In brief

Members are entitled to a 20% discount on academic titles from Ashgate and Oxford University Press. See the website for more details, www.bsls.ac.uk.

Memberships can be renewed through the website, or by contacting the Membership Secretary, Jessica Evans (j.roberts@edu.salford.ac.uk). Please note that the standard annual membership fee is £25 and that the fee for unwaged members is £10.

The website's arts and science blog is open for all for members to leave posts about related cultural events: www.bsls.ac.uk/category/arts_blog/ and can be viewed by all visitors to the BSLS site.

www.bsls.ac.uk

The first panel I attended was on 'Neurology' as I was one of the speakers, delivering a paper on Virginia Woolf and the neurologist Henry Head. Neurology and literature is a growing sub-field of literature and science and it was particularly exciting to have it chaired by Anne Stiles, whose recent monograph *Brain Science and Popular Fiction in the Late Nineteenth Century* (2012) was shortlisted for this year's BSLS book prize. The other speakers on this panel were Romén Reyes-Peschl who spoke about science as a quest in relation to neuroscience and *Don Quijote*, and Peter Garratt who gave what he described as a sequel to his paper from last year which extended his critique of literary Darwinism to a consideration of 'critical neuroscience'.

The other panels I attended were on 'Reading the Forms of Physics', 'Science Fictions', 'Science and Medicine for the Masses', 'Transformations of the Field', 'Systems and Technologies', 'Unspeakable Diseases', 'Narratives of Disability' and 'Contested Knowledges: Phrenology'. This list describes just a third of the conference and attests to the variety and breadth of work being undertaken by BSLS members. The topics spoken about ranged from the atomism of Beckett and Lucretius to the challenge posed

'the conference brings together researchers from all career stages, from MA students to professors'

to the literature/science divide by the layout of the *Strand Magazine*; from ideas of good health to what scientists read; from railway technology and space/time to the representation of AIDS in Malawi; from Victorian prosthetic limbs in literature to materialism and pre-Raphaelite poetry—to name only a few examples of the papers I heard.

The two plenary lectures, given by Thomas Dixon and Alice Jenkins, were both excellent, engaging and thought provoking. Dixon spoke on 'Reading Lavinia's Tears: Early Modern Weeping Through the Eyes of Titus Andronicus', which considered how weeping operated as a signifier in the early modern period through a reading of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Alice Jenkins spoke on 'Spooky Historicist Action at a Distance' in which she used metaphors from physics to help explore and illuminate the historicist methods of the field of literature and science, expanding upon the roundtable on historicism at last year's conference. I'm looking forward to the 2014 conference already!

Susie Christensen



With 3 parallel panels in each session, there were many highly intriguing papers that I sadly missed, but this only speaks of the high number of high quality submissions this year. Following the first panel on 'Neurology' I attended a session on 'Reading Forms of Physics' in which Marie Banfield spoke of 'Heracleitean fire' in the work of Werner Heisenberg and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Christopher Norris then charmingly elucidated the effects of the New Physics on William Empson in the light of his Cambridge days. Julia Jordan (Cardiff) rounded off the panel with an intriguing Lucretian reading of atoms in the work of Samuel



Lavinia's suffering in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus, the subject of Thomas Dixon's plenary lecture, in an engraving of 1793.

Beckett. In the final panel of the day, 'Science Fictions', Mauro Spicci gave us a tour of inner space, from the 17th to the 20th century, while Michelle Yost tried to penetrate the hollow earth theory via various 19th century American writing. Thomas Dixon's keynote lecture offered a lively interpretation of tears and weeping in Shakespearean drama and early modern culture more generally.

An extended session on day 2 allowed four panellists to discuss 'Transformations in the Field'. Jeff Wallace critiqued the notion of 'wonder' in relation to science and the 'posthuman', followed by a further elucidation of literature/science by Erica Moore. Meegan Kennedy presented a more taxonomic analysis of the issue, asking precisely what 'literature and science' is and how it might be categorised and subdivided, while Sarah Dillon introduced her project *What Scientists Read*, which traces specific literary influences on scientists. After lunch, I attended 'Medicine and Detection', a panel opened by Anne Stapleton with a take on Conan Doyle's non-Holmesian medical characters and followed by Alison Adam and her intriguing discussion of the almost narrative-like rise of the superstar forensic scientist in the 20th century. Hannah Tweed brought this panel to a close with a paper on the savant detective in contemporary fiction, focusing on autism.

Prior to the conference reception (hosted by the *Journal of Literature and Science*) and dinner, the final plenary lecture by Alice Jenkins made a fascinating borrowing of Einstein's comment about his difficulty with non-locality, as a way to elucidate future directions for 'literature and science' – and maybe the less immediately visible 'literature and maths' too? Jenkins's erudite, warm and funny talk shed valuable light on how the gaps between 'Two Cultures' might actually be what's interesting about them, and in this respect how a leaf might be taken from fields such as History of Science when talking about Literature. Two further sessions and the AGM brought the conference to a stimulating close on day 3, and the Cardiff organisers were duly thanked for their hard work.

Romén Reyes-Peschl

With thanks to Susie and Romén for preparing their conference reports

BBC New Generation Thinkers

Every year BBC Radio 3 joins forces with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to find ten early career researchers who look set to become the academic broadcasters of tomorrow. This year, three of the ten successful applicants were members of the BSLS. To mark this achievement, Sarah Dillon and Gregory Tate offer their thoughts on being chosen.

British universities and funding councils are all about impact and public engagement at the moment. The AHRC is no different, and in an enterprising move a few years ago it teamed up with BBC Radio 3 to launch the New Generation Thinkers scheme. This year, three BSLS members made the ten strong final list – Gregory Tate (University of Surrey), Alice Hall (University of York) and me (University of St Andrews). And it's left me feeling somewhat like Worzel Gummidge. For those of you too young or international to understand that reference, Worzel was a British children's character – a scarecrow who had an interchangeable range of heads each suited to a particular occasion and which would endow him with a specific skill. It's a good analogy – and analogy was in fact the topic of my first BBC broadcast on literature and science in June (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01bcq5g>).

Academic scholarship and media broadcasting are radically different: the former requires solitude, time, depth of focus, precision of reference and seriousness of argument and expression; the latter requires a lightness of touch, a responsiveness to the fashions of the moment, and a careful balance of insight and entertainment. What the New Generation Thinkers scheme has taught me is that each can mutually enhance the other, but the trick is not to try to do both at the very same time.

Like Worzel, you must be able to switch to the most appropriate head when needed, make each head the best it can be, and get used to the fact that in trying meet the demands of both, you're going to spend a lot of time feeling like a headless chicken.

The BSLS New Generation Thinkers will be taking part in the BBC Radio 3 Free Thinking Festival at The Sage, Gateshead, 25th-27th October. The full programme can be found at <http://www.sagegateshead.com/tour-dates/bbc-radio-3-free-thinking-festival-2013> and our literature and science related contributions are being broadcast on Radio 3's Night Waves in the weeks thereafter.



This year's New Generation Thinkers (photo courtesy of the BBC). On the back row are BSLS members Greg Tate (second from left), Alice Hall (second from right) and Sarah Dillon (far right)

BSLS members Sarah Dillon, Alice Hall and I have been named as three of the ten BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers for 2013. The New Generation Thinkers scheme, co-organised by the BBC and the AHRC, offers early career academics in the humanities the chance to broadcast programmes based on their research on Radio 3 and across the BBC.

As well as appearing on Radio 3 programmes such as Night Waves and The Essay, Sarah, Alice, and I also spoke at the BBC's annual Free Thinking Festival at Sage Gateshead on 25-27 October.

So far, we have broadcast items on a range of literature-and-science topics, including the role of analogy in science, nineteenth-century debates about the relative merits of literary and scientific education, and representations of disability.

We are currently working with the BBC to develop ideas for further programmes. Our success in being chosen as New Generation Thinkers represents a valuable opportunity to contribute to public interest in and understanding of the links between science and literature.

Gregory Tate

Sarah Dillon



Exhibiting Human Remains

'Exhibiting Human Remains', a one-day conference funded by a BSLS Small Grant, was held at London's Hunterian Museum on 4th June 2013. Its organiser and grant winner, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas of the Centre Alexandre Koyré (Paris) and the University of Toulouse (UTM), reports on the conference.

The one-day conference, 'Exhibiting Human Remains', was the last part of a research project aimed at providing a comprehensive study of the history of the exhibition of human remains and their cultural representations. The three-part project dealt with the crossings between medical knowledge and the constitution of medical museums on the one hand, and literary and artistic representations on the other, and had a view to developing interdisciplinary approaches to literature and the arts. The three interdisciplinary conferences were held alternatively in the Natural History Museum of Toulouse, at the National Academy of Medicine in Paris and at the Royal College of Surgeons in London (Hunterian Museum), gathering scholars working at the interface of medical science and the wider humanities so as to offer an overview of the cultural reception of the exhibition of human remains.

The last event, hosted by the Hunterian Museum in London, started with a keynote presentation by the director of the Hunterian Museum, Dr Sam Alberti, who took the audience straight into the world of medical museums. Alberti not only presented the collections and the objects on display in the museum, but introduced as well the people behind the stage. This presentation was followed by 8 papers. Two of the papers focused on very particular medical specimens (such as the Taunt Child (Adrian Young) or a pair of preserved conjoined twins (Fiona Pettit)), and analysed medical professionals' rhetoric of display, by contrasting, for example, medical journals with popular publications. Other papers examined tattooed human skins, like those included in Sir Henry Wellcome's Museum in 1929 (Gemma Angel). The meaning of the corpse in Navajo culture was the object of Nausica Zaballos's paper; the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch anatomist Frederik Ruysch, famous for his wet preparations, was presented by David Mazierski, while three papers focused more particularly on literary representations of human remains (David Punter on Gothic fiction, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas on Victorian fiction and Peter M. McIsaac on Gottfried Benn).

The conference was coupled with another event: a performance of poems from Kelley Swain's award-winning verse drama *Opera di Cera*, followed by a discussion with historical experts and a wax modelling demonstration with waxworker Eleanor Crook at the Gordon Museum of Pathology. The organising committee would like to thank BSLS for supporting this highly stimulating and very successful day. The conference was fully booked weeks before the event, with many people coming from France, the Netherlands and North America especially to attend. We would also like to thank the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, especially Dr Sam Alberti, who welcomed this project enthusiastically, as well as the whole staff of the Museum for their kindness and professionalism.



17th century ivory
anatomical model ©
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New science and literature commission

A new Commission for Science and Literature has been approved by the General Assembly of the Division of History of Science and Technology of the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science, after the submission of a relevant proposal by an international group of scholars, which included the BSLS. The Society actively supported the move to initiate the Commission, and we welcome its arrival and look forward to working with it in future. Anyone with an interest in science and literature may become a member, by sending an email including affiliation and specific interests to George N. Vlahakis (gvlahakis@yahoo.com). No membership fees are required. A first conference will be held in Athens next summer (see call for papers below).

Small grants winners

BSLS small grants are awarded for events that increase the understanding of literature and science, and may fund visiting speakers, seminar series, debates, or other suitable kinds of events. In the spring round of awards, Joanne Ella Parsons (Bath Spa University) and Sarah Chaney (UCL) were awarded a small grant to organise a public symposium, 'Body and Mind: Mesmerism in Nineteenth-Century Culture and Literature' on 17 October 2013. In the summer round, Farah Mendelsohn (Anglia Ruskin University) was successful in applying for support to host a talk by Sarah Dillon on 'What Scientists Read: How Does Literature Influence Scientific Thought and Practice' as part of the Loncon 3 (World Science Fiction) convention in London next year. Congratulations to all, and we look forward to including reports on their activities in a future Newsletter.

Funding awards

Norbett Schaffeld (University of Bremen) has received 3-year funding from the Volkswagen Foundation for his project 'Fiction Meets Science'.

The project 'Fiction Meets Science: The World of Science under the Literary Microscope (FMS)' has been awarded a 'Key Issues for Research and Society' grant from the Volkswagen Foundation (VWF). Based at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study) and the Universities of Bremen and Oldenburg in northwest Germany, it brings together literary scholars, novelists, sociologists, and scientists to examine and participate in the discourse on science that has emerged in literary and mainstream fiction in the past thirty years. The focus is on contemporary works that engage directly with the sciences in theme, character, and plot: what are the social and literary implications of the new literary engagement with the sciences and how is it related to comparable developments in theatre and film? How do the fictional representations of science and its place in society compare to sociologists' empirical observations and to scientists' own reflections? What special narrative devices are used to represent scientific concepts? Do we see the emergence of a new kind of fiction, and what are its implications for the forms of literacy expected of a reading public and required by reviewers and critics? And, finally, how might this new literary discourse on science affect public perceptions of science and discourses within the scientific community?

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Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford University) and Gowan Dawson (University of Leicester) have been awarded one of the AHRC's Science in Culture large themed grants for 'Constructing Scientific Communities: Citizen Science in the 19th and 21st Centuries'. They will shortly be advertising for two postdoctoral positions in the field of nineteenth-century science periodicals. The project brings together historical and literary research in the nineteenth century with contemporary scientific practice, looking at the ways in which patterns of popular communication and engagement in nineteenth-century science can offer models for current practice. Three major scientific institutions are partners in the project: the Natural History Museum, London; the Royal Society; and the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons.

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Sally Shuttleworth has also been awarded a European Research Council Advanced Investigator grant for 'Diseases of Modern Life: Nineteenth-Century Perspectives'. This research will explore the medical, literary and cultural responses in the Victorian age to the perceived problems of stress and overwork, anticipating many of the preoccupations of our own era. She will be shortly advertising for 3 postdoctoral positions in the field of nineteenth-century history of science, medicine and literature.

Completed PhDs

Russell Jones, 'Broken Wor(l)ds: Edwin Morgan's Science Fiction Poems' (University of Edinburgh).

Victoria MacKenzie, 'Contemporary Poets' Responses to Science' (University of St Andrews)

Will Tattersdill, 'Science, Fiction, and the Monthly Magazines 1891-1905' (King's College London).

Completed PhDs

- **Russell Jones** (University of Edinburgh): 'Broken Wor(l)ds: Edwin Morgan's Science Fiction Poems'.
- **Victoria Mackenzie** (University of St Andrews): 'Contemporary Poets' Responses to Science'.
- **Will Tattersdill** (King's College, London): 'Science, Fiction, and the Monthly Magazines 1891-1905'.

New overseas representatives

The BSLS executive has decided to co-opt two new international officers onto the executive committee. We are delighted to announce that Janine Rogers (Mount Allison University) and Folkert Degenring (Universität Kassel) have agreed to take up these new posts.



Janine Rogers



Folkert Degenring

Their role will be to promote the work of the BSLS in fostering research in the field of literature and science in North America and Europe respectively, and to help the BSLS to serve the needs of North American and European scholars in this field. Their contact details are:

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Germany

BSLS book reviews

We continue to provide online reviews of new academic books in the field, including studies of literature, medicine and technology, often covering the latest and most important titles well before print and electronic journals have published their own reviews. Visit www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews. If you would like to become a reviewer, or have written a book and wish it to be reviewed, please contact the Reviews Editor, Peter Garratt, by email (peter.garratt@durham.ac.uk).

BSLS at ICHSTM

In July 2013 the BSLS hosted a three-panel symposium on the subject of the Literary History and the History of Science at the International Congress for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine. This symposium considered the implications of intersecting literary history and the history of science from methodological, theoretical and interpretive perspectives. The papers in the symposium considered, as the symposium abstract phrased it, 'how knowledge-making and practice in the fields of literary and scientific history work, or don't work, together'. The three sessions – Scientific Institutions and Literary Culture; Literary Knowledge, Scientific Knowledge, and Literary Form; Historicism in Literature and Science – were categorized according to topics that addressed the institutional, the verbal and the formal intersections between literary history and science. Sharon Ruston, Katherine Ford, Charlotte Sleight, Janine Rogers, Renata Schellenberg, Michael Whitworth, Peter Middleton, and John Holmes all presented papers that explored various dimensions of the topic.

These discussions picked up from the discussions of the Roundtable on Historicism in Literature and Science at the Annual Conference of the BSLS in Oxford in 2011 (published in *The Journal of Literature and Science* 5.2, 2012: <http://www.literatureandscience.org/volume-5-issue-2/>) that articulated the concerns of literary scholars working alongside the history of science and its related subjects. Presenting these discussions in the context of a Congress on the history of science was intended to extend the discussion beyond literary community to a much broader community of historians, sociologists, and others. The three panels were all very well attended – it was standing room only – which indicates to us that these questions are highly pertinent to communities beyond our own literary context. Clearly the issues raised in the symposium have relevance to other scholars working at the intersection of the sciences and the humanities, and we are pleased that we could make such a substantial contribution to the Congress.

Conference bursary winners

Three bursaries were awarded to postgraduate students to support their attendance of the annual BSLS conference that took place Cardiff in April 2013.

Cassandra Gorman (Cambridge University) was awarded £150 thanks to a special donation from Martin Willis, who generously asked for his prize money from the 2011 BSLS Book Prize to be used for supporting postgraduate participants at this year's conference.

Two further conference fee-waivers were awarded to Susie Christensen (King's College London), Romén Reyes-Peschl (University of Kent) in return for conference reports, which are included in this Newsletter.

Poetry and ecology workshop

On May 8th, 2013 the Centre for Modern and Contemporary Writing at the University of Southampton held a day-long workshop on Poetry and Ecology organised by Ros Ambler-Alderman (Southampton), Mandy Bloomfield (Bedford), and Peter Middleton (Southampton). The participants were an invited group of poets and critics with avowed interests in the theme. We were interested to hear about the significance of ecological science to our participants, and more generally about their current ideas on the scope, methodologies, and relevance of the rapidly growing literature of ecocriticism, ecopoetics, and nature writing. Harriet Tarlo (Sheffield Hallam) and Jonathan Skinner (Warwick) led the discussions.

From the start it was clear that recognising the interdisciplinarity of ecological writing was crucial. Several speakers argued that proper interdisciplinarity might simply involve placing discourses alongside one another, rather than a search for common ground. Harriet Tarlo expanded on a comment she made on the workshop blog that her work always starts from a specific place. Ecological attention enables her to move from micro to macro while keeping the work rooted in the actual and

*'some felt poetry could be a means
of critiquing restrictive ideas of
what constitutes "nature"'*

scientific specificity of the place. She also tries to 'destabilise that endlessly arrogant poet that claims to know' by a practice of 'being outside' the place and contextualising her poetic practice. Jonathan Skinner presented 'compass points for an ecopoetics', a map of the many different types of literary ecological writing. In this context, he suggested that the concept of the ecotone or border zone between different ecologies could provide a helpful principle for exploring the edges between divergent practices of writing about ecology.

Other themes emerged during the day. We discussed how the concept of ecology contains internal tensions between science, activism, the trope of interrelatedness, the founding idea of an oikos and more recently the idea of new forms of global imaginary. In what ways can poetry engage with these many faces of ecology? Greg Garrard talked about the 'obdurate, irreducible differences' between model-based, quantitative scientific ecology and the practice of poetry. He speculated that the philosophy of science might operate as a mediating discourse between these two.

Harriet Tarlo spoke about poets paying attention to the bridge between poetry and science. Several participants were dubious that poetry itself, as the organisers suggested, could act as a 'cultural broker' for science, or even properly critique it. Instead several participants suggested that poetry could be a means of critiquing the dominance of restrictive ideas of what constitutes 'nature', and what forms environmental activism might take.

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Several participants called for clearer distinctions between ecopoetry (seen as activist writing), and ecopoetics, which implies a stance towards interrelations between world and texts. Poets in particular stressed that poetic form can have a close relation to embodiment. There were extensive discussions of the differences between different types of poetry, and their capacity to represent embodiment and sensitivity, mammalian bodies, and the intersections between the human and non-human.

By the end of the day it was clear that this is a rich field of inquiry and practice, and that there is plenty of interest in extending the discussions to other institutions and practitioners. The workshop was deliberately open-ended, and there were no formal papers. We hope to produce an edited collection of writings based around several questions that emerged at the event. These include: What are the political and ethical stakes of aesthetic engagements with ecology?; and Can the use of innovative form in poetry result in new ways of understanding environments and ecosystems? Anyone interested in contributing to such a collection should contact Ros Ambler-Alderman (rsaa1e09@soton.ac.uk) or Mandy Bloomfield (mandybloomfield@virginmedia.com).

With thanks to Ros Ambler-Alderman, Mandy Bloomfield and Peter Middleton

New books

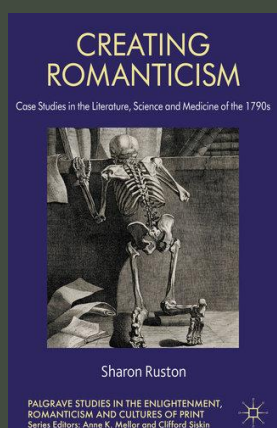
The following scholarly titles in the area of literature and science have been published by members of the Society in the past year:

Holmes, John. *Darwin's Bards: British and American Poetry in the Age of Evolution*, new in paperback (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

Mangham, Andrew (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

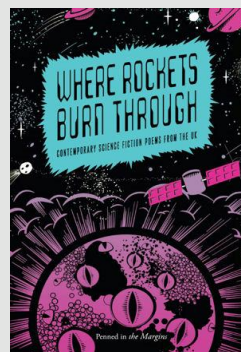
Miller, Sean. *Strung Together: The Cultural Currency of String Theory as a Scientific Imaginary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

Ruston, Sharon. *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).



New creative work

In addition to the usual round up of scholarly publications, it is notable that several new creative works written by members have been published in the last year. Russell Jones's anthology of science fiction poems, *Where Rockets Burn Through* (with a preface by Alisdair Gray) appeared in 2012 from Penned in the Margins Press. His own collection of science fiction poems, *Spaces of their Own*, has been published by Stewed Rhubarb Press, 2013.



Kelley Swain, a former secretary of BSLS, has edited *Pocket Horizon*, a small anthology of poetry by seven UK poets based on objects from the history of science and medicine in the Wellcome Collection, London, and the Whipple Museum of the History of Science, Cambridge. The collection, edited by Kelley Swain, grew out of a Masterclass with Don

Paterson. It is being published by Valley Press (2013). Next year Kelley will publish a full-length verse drama *Opera di Cera* based on the anatomical wax models of La Specola, Florence, also with Valley Press.

Hilda Reilly's *Guises of Desire* (Dicatur Press, 2013) is a biographical novel based on the life of Bertha Pappenheim, aka Anna O, the 'founding patient' of psychoanalysis, whose case was the first featured in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895). The novel explores neurology, mesmerism and modernist sciences of mind.

Calls for papers

The following CFPs and conference notices have been received:

- The Common Denominator: An Interdisciplinary Postgraduate conference, University of Leipzig, 20-22 March 2014. (denominator@uni-leipzig.de)
- Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies Association (INCS) conference, March 27-30, 2014, in Houston, Texas. Theme: 'Nineteenth-Century Energies'. (info@incs2014.org)
- Cognitive Futures in the Humanities, AHRC-sponsored network conference, Durham University, 24-26 April 2014. (peter.garratt@durham.ac.uk)
- Commission on Science and Literature DHST/IUHPST, 1st International Conference, 10-11 July 2014, Athens, Greece. (gvlahakis@yahoo.com)
- Postgraduate Medical Humanities Conference, University of Exeter, 24-25 July 2014. (pgmedhums@exeter.ac.uk)
- John Thelwall at 250: Medicine, Literature, and Reform in London, c. 1764-1834, University of Notre Dame London Centre, 25-27 July 2014. (conference2014@jts.org)

Announcements

2013 essay prize winner

We are delighted to announce that the first joint British Society for Literature and Science and *Journal of Literature and Science* prize for an essay by an early-career scholar has been won by **Rachel Crossland** for her essay "'Multitudinous and minute': Early Twentieth-Century Scientific, Literary and Psychological Representations of the Mass'. The judges commented that her essay was 'a very impressive piece of scholarship and criticism... elegantly written and consistently interesting'. Out of a strong field, it was their unanimous first choice. The essay will be published in the next available issue of *JLS*, and its author will also receive a prize of £100.

The judges were also especially impressed by Josie Gill's essay 'Science and Fiction in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*', to which they would like to give an honourable mention. The author will be invited to submit this essay too for publication in *JLS*.

Essay prize

The prize for the best new essay by an early career scholar on a topic within the field of literature and science will run again in 2014. Jointly organised by the BSLS and the *Journal for Literature and Science*, the prize is open to members who are postgraduate students or have completed a doctorate within three years of the submission date. (To join BSLS, go to www.bsls.ac.uk/join-us/). The prize will be judged jointly by representatives of the BSLS and *JLS*.

Essays should be currently unpublished and not under consideration by another journal. They should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words long, inclusive of references, and should be sent by email to both Dr John Holmes, Chair of the BSLS (j.r.holmes@reading.ac.uk), and Professor Martin Willis, Editor of *JLS* (m.willis@westminster.ac.uk), by 12 noon on Tuesday, 1 April 2014.

The winning essay will be announced on the BSLS website and published in *JLS*. The winner will also receive a prize of £100. The judges reserve the right not to award the prize should no essay of a high enough standard be submitted.

Book prize winner

Congratulations to Theresa Kelley for winning the 2012 BSLS Book Prize, with *Clandestine Marriage: Botany and Romantic Culture* (Johns Hopkins University Press). Meticulous in its research, the book combines erudite analyses of botanical discourse with sensitive appreciations of literary and visual culture, high theory, and philosophical perspectives, uncovering a vast web of connections across British and European Romanticism. Ranging from Goethe to Charles Darwin, Mary Wollstonecraft to John Clare, *Clandestine Marriage* pays welcome attention to plants as poetic figures and cultural tropes, beautifully enriched by a series of colour plates of Romantic-era botanical illustrations.

Nominations for this year's book prize are now being accepted. To be eligible, titles must be dated 2013. Members may nominate their own books. For more details contact Peter Garratt (peter.garratt@durham.ac.uk) before 14 January 2014.

2014 BSLS conference

The Society is pleased to announce that the ninth annual conference of the British Society for Literature and Science will take place at the University of Surrey, Guildford, on 10-12 April 2014. Keynote talks will be given by:

- **Professor Jim Al-Khalili** (University of Surrey)
- **Professor Bernard Lightman** (York University, Toronto)
- **Professor Mary Orr** (University of Southampton).

The conference will finish with an opportunity to visit Down House, the home of Charles Darwin, on the afternoon of Saturday 12 April.

The BSLS invites proposals for twenty-minute papers, or panels of three papers, on any subjects within the field of literature and science. This year the organisers would particularly welcome proposals addressing links between science and European and world literatures, and proposals for papers or panels on teaching literature and science. However, the BSLS remains committed to supporting and showcasing work on all aspects of literature and science.

Proposals of no more than 250 words, together with the name and institutional affiliation of the speaker, should be sent in the body of messages (not in attachments) to g.tate@surrey.ac.uk. Proposals for panels should include a separate proposal for each paper. The closing date for submissions is **Friday 6 December 2013**.

The conference fee will be waived for two graduate students in exchange for written reports on the conference, to be published in the BSLS Newsletter. If you are interested in being selected for one of these awards, please mention this when sending in your proposal. To qualify you will need to be registered for a postgraduate degree at the time of the conference.

Accommodation: please note that those attending the conference will need to make their own arrangements for accommodation. Information on local hotels will shortly be made available on the conference website.

Membership: conference delegates will need to register as members of the BSLS (annual membership: £25 waged / £10 unwaged). It will be possible to join the BSLS when registering for the conference online.

For further information and updates about the conference, please contact Gregory Tate (g.tate@surrey.ac.uk) or visit the conference website at <http://tinyurl.com/pp6ubz5>.

The BSLS Executive Committee would like to express its sincere thanks to all those members who contributed information, updates and reports to the Newsletter.