



The British Society for LITERATURE and SCIENCE

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REPORTS ON THE 2016 CONFERENCE

As an early modernist attending the BSLS conference for the first time, I must admit to being a little daunted by the strong nineteenth century vein running through the programme. I wondered whether I would find any touch points with my far-more-modern colleagues, or whether all the topics under discussion would be strange and unfamiliar to me. However, I am pleased to report that I needn't have worried! Despite a number of texts and authors being new to me – or perhaps only faintly remembered from schooldays – I was pleasantly surprised to discover that, throughout the conference, a number of themes and ideas emerged that resonated with my own research.

The use of literature as a way of capturing and transmitting scientific performance or experience popped up in a number of panels including 'The Occult' and 'Pedagogies of Science'. So, too, did its use as a tool of persuasion, or way of demonstrating the validity of science and scientific writing, notably in the 'Poetry: Ornament or Experiment?' panel. I am also interested by the fairytale quality of some early modern scientific texts and I was delighted to find this mixture of wonder and truth under discussion by Sarah Hanks in her engaging paper on the works of Robert Stawell Ball and Arabella Buckley.

And, of course, there were some other early modernists lurking at the conference, too! Particular highlights for me included Maria Avxentevskaya's discussion of John Wilkins' use of literary techniques in Friday's 'Narrativizing Science' panel, and Cybèle Arnaud's fasci-

nating paper on the relationship between female roles and the medical profession in early modern French theatre, which she gave as part of Saturday's 'Medicine and Gender' panel.

The thought-provoking plenary sessions were also highly enjoyable, although I was particularly struck by the aptness of Professor Alice Roberts rounding off the conference. Discussion of the popularisation of science in times past featured in a number of the panels I attended, so it seemed like a great opportunity to hear from someone who is actually doing this now. Perhaps, in years to come, her own work will be the subject of a BSLS conference paper!

Finally, I would just like to thank Will and the team at Birmingham again for organising and executing such a great conference in the BSLS's 10th birthday year – well done!

Nicky Atkins
University of Chichester

The BSLS promotes
interdisciplinary research into the
relationships of science and
literature in all periods.

Autumn 2016 Newsletter

Making my way through the rainy Birmingham campus, I was not entirely sure what to expect. The BSLS 2016 conference would be my first time presenting a paper. However, the atmosphere in the Nicholson Rooms was lively and friendly. As Will Tattersdill, this year's organizer, stood up to deliver the welcome address, there were whoops and cheers from the packed audience. Clearly, this was going to be an exciting weekend not just for me, but for the numerous international scholars dedicated to exploring the field of science and literature. After all, this was the conference's 10th Anniversary. There would be commemorative cupcakes and everything.

In the first plenary lecture, Sharon Ruston (Lancaster) delivered a fascinating paper on the invention of the 1815 miner's Safety Lamp as seen through the correspondence of its inventor (or rather, its inventors – as we learned, the dispute around which hands constructed the metal mesh that revolutionised the lamp's design



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raged as strongly as the flame inside it). Ruston finished by describing the gratitude of miners whose lives were saved by the invention. This was an excellent introduction to a prominent theme prevalent across the entire conference – the power of science to be a force for good and to benefit a real-life community in its quest to save lives and broaden minds.

As the conference panned out, I find myself needing to borrow a phrase from the final plenary lecture by Alice Roberts – that is that I found my mind being exploded in all directions. The range of subjects under investigation was astonishing; from medicine, to time travel, to mythology and the occult. Even in texts with which I was familiar, I found my understanding significantly expanded. Take Lewis Carroll: how many of us had previously known the extent of his support for the anti-vivisection movement in Victorian England (Xiao Yizhi, Brown), or considered how *Alice in Wonderland* reinforces the taxonomic classification of species (Harriet Ritvo, MIT)? Darwin too was a dominant figure, from his being a reader of Shelley and the Romantic poets (Jimmy Packham, Birmingham) to his undergoing hydrotherapy in Victorian Spa Towns (Helen

Goodman, Royal Holloway). The image of an elderly Darwin washing himself in a home-installed douche at the bottom of his garden, assisted by a sober-faced butler, is not one I will soon forget.

The panel on Mythology and the Empirical, where I presented my paper on the physics of Ted Hughes, was also extremely invigorating. I particularly enjoyed Kanta Dihal's (Oxford) exploration of quantum mechanics in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, a text and a subject both very close to my heart. Dihal's paper also touched on how even in these fictional worlds, academics must jump through hoops and complete arduous proposals to receive funding, an observation that earned an all-too-understanding laugh from the audience.

In addition to the panels were the roundtable sessions, where many important subjects arose. Among those discussed were the different methodologies of teaching literature and science at academic levels, and also the politics of the field itself: whether the BSLS needs to be decolonized, with a greater emphasis placed on issues such as race in relation to the field.

Over the course of the weekend, I was struck by the sense of community that the BSLS has developed. The post-panel questions and discussions were engaged and thought-provoking, the conference dinner spirited and an excellent catalyst for forging long-lasting academic friendships. All of us present were united by a shared excitement for the possibilities this unique field has to offer, for observing first-hand science and literature's paradigm shifts. When the conference drew to a close I found myself with a list of new texts to read and a strong wish that I actually owned a time machine so as to catch up on those the papers I couldn't attend. I would like to thank the conference organizers, Will Tattersdill in particular, for planning an excellent weekend and to wish the society luck as it enters its second decade.

Felicity Powell
Sheffield University

NEWS AND NOTES

ANALOGY IN LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

Following a wide-ranging and provocative discussion at a roundtable at the 2015 BSLS conference, a group of scholars came together in September 2015 for a two-day workshop on 'Analogy in Literature and Science'. Supported by the British Academy/Leverhulme Small Grants scheme and held at Churchill College, Cambridge, the workshop focused on the ways in which analogy is used in our primary sources, and how we as literature and science specialists use analogy ourselves, both in developing re-

search ideas and in our writing. BSLS President Gillian Beer; BSLS members Daniel Brown, Peter Middleton, Rosalind Powell, Janine Rogers, Sharon Ruston, Will Tattersdill, and Martin Willis; and postgraduates Maria Avxentevskaya and Clare Stainthorp were joined by leading specialist in digital humanities Willard McCarty (KCL), nineteenth-centuryist Andrea Henderson (UC Irvine), science writer Barbara Melville, and literature and mathematics scholar Mark Blacklock (Birkbeck). Papers presented ranged in period from the medieval to the contemporary, and highlighted a very wide range of theoretical and disciplinary approaches to analogy. Analogy is a key element in

the relationship of literature and science, and in the methodology of our field, and we need to know more about its historical workings as well as how we as scholars can use it more effectively. I hope that a collection of essays stemming from the workshop, which I am currently editing, will stimulate further research on this topic.

Alice Jenkins

H.G. WELLS AT 150

In August, Will Abberley (University of Sussex) hosted a BBC Radio 3 discussion on the 150th anniversary of H. G. Wells' birth, with the novelist Stephen Baxter and Science Fiction expert Sarah Dillon. The discussion, which formed part of the BBC's 'Proms Extra' series, included Wells' life story, the scientific studies which inspired his fiction, and his legacy for science fiction writers today. Readers can listen online to the event at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0444kzt>

MEDICINE AND MODERNITY IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY: A CONFERENCE AT ST ANNE'S COLLEGE

On 10th and 11th September 2016, the *Diseases of Modern Life* team held its main conference, 'Medicine and Modernity in the Long Nineteenth Century' at St Anne's College. Throughout the weekend, we explored phenomena of stress and overload, overpressure, and other disorders associated with the problems of modernity in the nineteenth century, as they were expressed and explored in the literature, science, and medicine of the period. A story of the event is available [here](#).

And our keynote lectures by Professor Christopher Hamlin and Professor Laura Otis are now available on our [website](#). Throughout the weekend parallels were continually drawn to present day stresses and strains, and questions were raised about how much has changed and what we might learn from the past. Many of our speakers responded to this challenge by tracing productive discussions across literature, science, and medicine, or by providing comparative perspectives from international viewpoints, drawing on sources from Finland to France, Germany, America, Japan, India, South Africa, and the South Pacific to reveal connections between physiological, psychological and social health, or disease. What emerged was a far more integrative and holistic approach to notions of disease, one that disrupted the frequent compartmentalization of psychiatric, environmental, emotional, and literary histories in present practice in order to offer new ways of contextualising the problems of modernity.

Diseases of Modern Life: Nineteenth-Century Perspectives is funded by the European Research Council within the 7th Framework Programme under Grant Number 340121.

Dr. Melissa Dickson
Postdoctoral Research Assistant
St Anne's College, University of Oxford

BSLS ON TWITTER

Join the conversation between the conferences and follow @TheBSLS on Twitter.

SLSA CONFERENCE ATLANTA 2016 REPORT

This year's Society for Literature, Science and the Arts Conference was hosted by Laura Otis and Carol Colatrella at a vast skyscraper hotel in downtown Atlanta. The theme was Creativity, and the practice of writing about science was very clearly to the fore in defining that theme. Indeed, the two plenaries I attended were both lectures from creative writers – the cartoonist Darryl Cunningham, whose graphic works *Psychiatric Tales* and *Science Tales* offer a funny, debunking and celebrating perspective on illness and scientific practice, and Margaret Edson, the writer of well-known (within medical humanities communities) cancer drama *Wit*. As is generally the case with SLSA the conference was four times the size of the BSLS – Laura Otis told me that 460 delegates were in attendance. There were, for example, almost always 10 parallel sessions to choose from. This means, of course, that my view of the conference is actually a view of one tenth of the conference. For me, this is an issue that BSLS has done well to avoid: I like to get a sense of a conference as a whole and see themes and ideas emerge and work through the participants as a group. With the numbers at SLSA this is simply not possible. In addition, because the conference has very few moments where all delegates are present (only one lunch is offered to everyone across the four days and the plenaries are quite sparsely attended) you can very easily hold a conversation with someone you will never see again.

Thematically, SLSA differs from BSLS in one key way: there are very many panels that deal with present concerns rather than historical periods. The panel I found most stimulating focussed, for example, on distributed cognition: the three papers considered US military drones, contemporary science fiction, and neurological studies of “non-conscious thought”. This last paper was brilliantly presented by Katherine Hayles, who was revealing research from her forthcoming book *Unthought* (out in early 2017). This was not the kind of panel you often hear at BSLS – oriented on technology, focussed through critical theory via science studies, and avowedly political. Whether a paper that speaks only about drone technology and the military-industrial complex can even be considered “literature and science” was very much a question in my mind, but it seemed less problematic to many in the audience. Other panels hit now classic SLSA interests: there were numerous

papers on biopolitics (and even a panel on the history of biopolitics, which I much enjoyed) and an almost equally high number that emerge from engagements with computer science. Again, this is a science that BSLs members seems less inclined towards.

There were panels that explored historical subject, too, and several BSLs members gave excellent papers as part of panels on scientific performance (Jenni Halpin), metaphors of science (Maria Avxentevskaya) and on health and place (my Cardiff colleague, Keir Waddington). While there was a lot to be gained from these panels, they were quite often attended by familiar faces already sympathetic to engagements with history and historicist practice – my own panel was a good example of that, too. This is perhaps not a problem – but the excitement among delegates certainly lay with the biopolitical, the cognitive and neurological, intelligences artificial, and those research topics centred around science studies. This was reflected, as well, in the winner of the Book Prize, which went to Stefan Helmreich for *Sounding the Limits of Life: Essays in the Anthropology of Biology and Beyond*. This work looks at the contemporary life sciences from the perspective of anthropol-

ogists and employs history, literature and cultural theory to do so.

SLSA is a huge and bewildering conference in many ways, but I found myself stimulated by being outside the comfort zone of my own practice. Delegates were engaging, interested, and enthusiastic and across the four days I had numerous fascinating conversations with academics who had extraordinary ranges of research expertise. I would, though, have liked to have seen them more than once. I guess I shall have to go back – next year its Tempe, Arizona and the theme is Out of Time.

Martin Willis

BSLS NEWSLETTER

Starting with this Autumn's *Newsletter*, we are shifting to quarterly (rather than annual) publication. To that end, please submit items for publication as they occur to you (rather than waiting for an annual call). Requests will continue to be announced through the website.

SMALL GRANTS REPORTS

THE BODY AND PSEUDOSCIENCE IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

CONFERENCE HELD ON 18 JUNE 2016 AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

The conference was launched by Dr. James Mussell, Leeds University, who gave the keynote presentation on 'Print Presence in the Electrical Age: Oliver Lodge and the Pseudoscience of Media and Mediation'. This focused on the way Lodge negotiated the pseudoscientific spaces of late nineteenth and early twentieth century culture, looking at the complementary relationship between body and spirit, form and content. Although Lodge believed in the uniting potential of spirit, this rested on the properties of matter as exemplified in his publication, *Raymond* (1916), which was his way of keeping his dead son alive. This stimulating presentation set the scene for a day that considered the different ways that the scientific and pseudoscientific were negotiated through the body.

The interdisciplinary nature of the conference was evident by the mix of papers from English Literature, Art History, History of Science, Philosophy and the Wellcome Library. The first panel of the day, 'Scientific Credibility and the Human Body', included papers on the pseudoscientific treatment of 'milk leg', Victorian fad diets, and the literary representation of ways in which phrenology and physiognomy were used to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor. These papers addressed issues of how the body was read in the nineteenth century and the different ways in which scientific 'truths' emerged. The panel, 'Affective Responses to the Visual', considered

the intellectual exchanges of the worlds of art and fiction with science, highlighting the problem of ascribing meaning to visual changes in the body as well as the dynamic of the visual and the verbal in the pursuit of sympathy. '(In) Corporeality and Nineteenth-Century Forces' was a panel comprising papers on the representation of mesmerism in periodicals and in fiction and William James's experiments with anaesthesia. These papers emphasised the slippery nature of what was deemed 'scientific' or 'pseudoscientific' and how the latter contributed to knowledge about the human mind and body. The final panel, 'Medical (Pseudo)Science: Mind and Body' explored the hinterlands of chemistry and medical science in Edith Nesbit's short stories and the 'science' of phrenology as a tool for self-improvement, raising questions about the role of the mind and body in the construction of scientific knowledge.

The plenary session was led by Dr. Edmund Richardson, Durham University, with a case study of the famous nineteenth-century medium, Daniel Dunglas Home. This generated lively discussion on the distinction between the scientific and the pseudoscientific, and why so many eminent scientists were prepared to risk their reputations in the search for knowledge and truth. That nineteenth-century pseudoscience remains a fruitful area of research suggests that it can still contribute to discourses on knowledge of the self through reading the body.

Pat Beesley

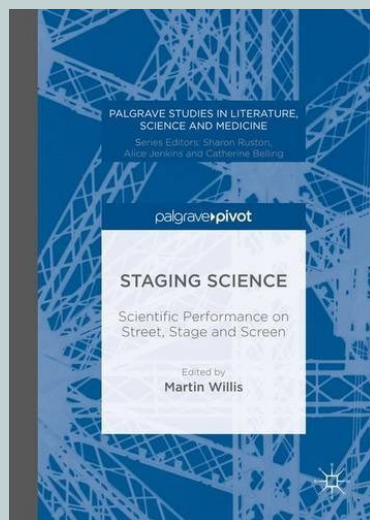
RECENT BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND CHAPTERS

Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr. “The Diagnostic Gaze: Nineteenth-Century Contexts for Medicine and Performance,” in *Performance and the Medical Body*, ed. Alex Mermikides and Gianna Bouchard (Bloomsbury, 2016), pp. 37-49

Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian into Modern, ed. Laura Marcus, Michele Mendelssohn, and **Kirsten Shepherd-Barr** (Oxford, 2016).

This volume places a strong emphasis on science, including several chapters dealing with scientific topics and ideas: Tiffany Watt-Smith’s “Theatre and the Sciences of Mind,” Marcus Waithe’s “Moon Voyaging, Selenography, and the Scientific Romance,” Rachel Crossland’s “Scientific Formations and Transformations,” Stefano Evangelista’s “Death Drives: Biology, Decadence, and Psychoanalysis,” and William Greenslade’s “Race and Biology.”

Martin Willis, ed. *Staging Science: Scientific Performances on Street, Stage and Screen*. (Palgrave/Pivot, 2016).



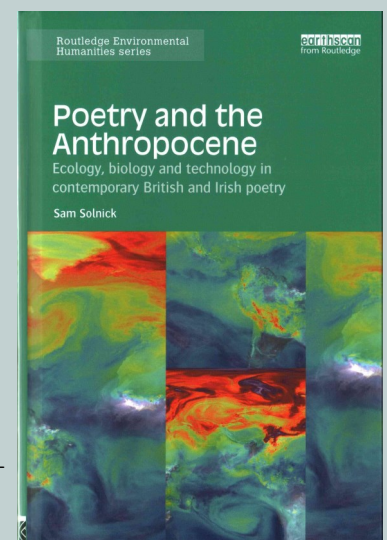
Staging Science considers scientific performances across two centuries, from the early nineteenth century to the present day. Performances include demonstrations of technologies, experiments that look like theatre, theatre that looks like science, tourist representations, and natural history film-making. Its key aim is to open debate on how scientific activity, both historical and contemporary, might be understood in the context of performance studies and the imaginative acts required to stage engaging performances. Scientific performances have become increasingly of interest to historians of science, to literature and science scholars, and in the field of science studies. As yet, however, no work has sought to examine a range of scientific performances with the aim of interrogating and illuminating the kinds of critical and theoretical practices that might be employed to engage with them. With scientific performance likely to become ever more central to scholarly study in the next few years this volume offers a timely, and early, intervention in the existing debates, and aims, too, to be a touchstone for future work.

Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr. “‘Unmediated’ Science Plays: Seeing What Sticks,” in *Staging Science: Scientific Performance on Street, Stage and Screen*, ed. Martin Willis (Palgrave/Pivot, 2016), pp. 105-23

Sam Solnick, *Poetry and the Anthropocene: Ecology, biology and technology in contemporary British and Irish poetry* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

This book asks what it means to write poetry in and about the Anthropocene, the name given to a geological epoch where humans have a global ecological impact. Combining critical approaches such as ecocriticism and posthumanism with close reading and archival research, it argues that the Anthropocene requires poetry and the humanities to find new ways of thinking about unfamiliar spatial and temporal scales, about how we approach the metaphors and discourses of the sciences, and about the role of those processes and materials that confound humans’ attempts to control or even conceptualise them.

Poetry and the Anthropocene draws on the work of a series of poets from across the political and poetic spectrum, analysing how understandings of technology shape literature about place, evolution and the tradition of writing about what still gets called Nature. The book explores how writers’ understanding of sciences such as climatology or biochemistry might shape their poetry’s form, and how literature can respond to environmental crises without descending into agitprop, self-righteousness or apocalyptic cynicism. In the face of the Anthropocene’s radical challenges to ethics, aesthetics and politics, the book shows how poetry offers significant ways of interrogating and rendering the complex relationships between organisms and their environments in a world increasingly marked by technology.



Mathieu Donner. “Thinking Like a Virus: Contagion, Postmodernist Epistemology, and the Ethics of Belief.” in *Endemic: Essays in Contagion Theory*, eds. Kari Nixon and Lorenzo Servitje. (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

How can postmodernism and its rejection of grand narratives inform current epistemological theory, the study of truth, grand narrative *par excellence*? Such is the question this chapter proposes to explore. Emerging from the study of contagion as a fluid and transgressive phenomenon, this paper proposes a drastic re-centring of epistemology around the notion of belief as well as the altogether abandonment of truth and knowledge as possible objects of enquiry. By embracing the idea that the foundations of every belief cannot but themselves be the unjustified and unjustifiable products of an epistemic act, the result of an arbitrary cultural or individual decision, this chapter suggests a new approach to epistemology. Re-framing belief as the product of an epistemic subject, this new theory signals the invariably performative dimension of every epistemic decision and, ultimately, the necessary ethical responsibility involved in every single one of its re-iteration—that is, a potential postmodernist theory of epistemology.

UPCOMING TALKS, CONFERENCES, AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

‘THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE’

**BSLS WINTER SYMPOSIUM,
3 DECEMBER 2016**

**QUEEN’S BUILDING,
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER**

ORGANISERS:

CORINNA WAGNER AND JAMES GREEN

This BSLS Winter Symposium will explore relationships between politics, science, medicine, literature and visual culture. We will take ‘politics’ in both its broadest sense—considering for example, the politics of the body, the politics of scientific institutions, and how scientific and political discourse has shaped imaginative forms of expression (and vice versa). We will also take ‘politics’ in a more specific sense, to address how literary writers and artists actively intervened in specific medico-political debates, or how their novels, poems and plays acted as ‘mediums’ of scientific and political cross-pollination.

We have also invited papers that focus on the current field. What are the politics of researching and teaching in the field of literature and science? Contributors might want to reflect on engagement and collaboration, for example. The BSLS Winter Symposium will provide an opportunity for practitioners—artists, poets and novelists—and academics and theorists to share their methods and findings.

In terms of topics, contributors might consider how literary writers and artists raised and addressed scientific questions about, for instance:

- medical treatments
- the design of medical and scientific institutions
- the collaborative or conflicting goals of scientists and governments

- environmental policies and climate change issues
- urban reform
- social health reform policy
- the uses of statistics and data
- the scientific and political goals of empire
- the application of science to issues of race
- tropical medicine

One of the emphases of this one-day symposium will be the idea of transhistorical and transdisciplinary inheritance and exchange. For instance, how did eighteenth- or nineteenth-century ideas about contagion, excess, monstrosity, materialism, rationality, waste, dirt, geography or geology migrate between scientific, political and literary realms? And, what are the legacies of this migration? What historical continuities exist between past and present?

Lastly, we have particularly invited graduate students to participate in a ‘policy show & tell’: these are 10 minute slots in which each presenter suggests ways their own humanities research could address or attempt to solve a current medical/scientific/health problem.

VISIONS OF NATURE DECEMBER OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

This year the Oxford University Museum of Natural History has been hosting a series of exhibitions, events and residencies under the theme ‘Visions of Nature’ (<https://visionsofnature.net>). In December, BSLS members John Holmes and Janine Rogers will be taking part in three public events (<https://visionsofnature.net/events/>) as part of this celebration of art and poetry inspired by the natural world. On December 1st, John and

Janine will be giving a joint talk entitled 'Building the Book of Nature', drawing on their research for their SSHRC-funded project of the same name (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/english/research/projects/building-the-book-of-nature.aspx>) in exploring the architecture and art of the museum itself. This talk will include a guided tour of the museum and be accompanied by a pop-up exhibition of designs by John Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelites and others. On 7th December, they will be joined by Stephen Wild-

man, Director of the Ruskin Library and Research Centre, together with researchers and teachers from Oxford University, to discuss how science and art have worked together in visualising nature throughout the ages. Finally, on 12th December, John will be joining the museum's three poets-in-residence, John Barnie, Steven Matthews and Kelley Swain, to launch a new anthology of poems inspired by and connected with the museum, entitled *Guests of Time*.

John Holmes

INCS 2017—ODD BODIES

MARCH 16-19

SHERATON SOCIETY HILL, PHILADELPHIA

Nineteenth-century bodies were poked and prodded, characterized, caricatured, corseted and cosseted, disciplined, displayed, naturalized, normalized, medicalized, mapped and mechanized. Sciences and pseudosciences brought the body under scrutiny to an unprecedented degree—phrenology, psychology, physiology, anatomy, paleontology, microbiology, germ theory, principles of population, zoology, and sexology, all contributing to the proliferation of bodily discourses. Improvements in medicine and sanitation coexisted with poor sewage, and the ever-present fear of disease, and bodies were variously protected and regulated through Factory Acts, Public Health Acts, and the Contagious Diseases Act. Hospitals, workhouses and freakshows corralled and categorized. Pre-raphaelite painters preferred strong and sexualized women, while overpopulated novels featured the blind and deaf, fragile children and disabled adults, and all worried whether such outward signs accurately attested to the content of a character. Meanwhile, changes wrought in understanding one kind of body reverberated through its analogs; the human body was taken as model for corporate bodies, the body politic, bodies of knowledge—and vice versa. And where there is a model, a norm, there is also that which defies and defines that norm. INCS 2017 will pay special attention to the problematic, marginalized and metaphoric—to odd bodies.

Queer bodies; raced bodies; busy bodies; body markings; disabled bodies; prosthetics; bodies behaving badly; the body as spectacle; fragmented bodies; disciplined bodies; animal bodies; circus & freak show bodies; bodies at work or play; bodies in contact; unlikely friendships/romances; sexy bodies; naked bodies; diseased bodies; vivisection; the anatomized body; dead bodies; body snatchers; embodiment/disembodiment; spirit bodies; mythical bodies; angels, monsters, and ghosts; the gendered body; intellectual women; odd women, blue stockings, New Women; the body of the insane, the eccentric; characters & caricatures; ugly bodies; corporate bodies; bodies of knowledge; bodies of evidence; bodies of work; colonial bodies; traveling bodies; and the body politic.

Abstracts and proposals for panels due November 1, 2016 at <http://muhlenberg.edu/incs2017/>.

Inquiries: INCS2017@gmail.com. BSLs members may inquire for a possible extension to this deadline

Barri Gold

Image courtesy of the Victorian Web
<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/leech/92.html>



CALL FOR PAPERS

BSLS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

6-8 APRIL 2017

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

The twelfth annual conference of the British Society for Literature and Science will take place at the University of Bristol, from Thursday 6 April until Saturday 8 April 2017.

Keynote talks will be given by Professor Havi Carel (University of Bristol), Professor Robert Mitchell (Duke University), and Professor Ralph O'Connor (University of Aberdeen).

The BSLS invites proposals for twenty-minute papers, or panels of three papers, on any subjects within the field of literature and science.

In addition, we are hoping to put together sessions with looser, non-traditional formats, and would welcome proposals from any person or persons interested in making presentations of approximately ten minutes from notes rather than completed papers. Our hope is that the latter format will encourage longer Q&A sessions with more discussion. If you have a topic or research area which would suit such a discussion, we would also like to hear from you. Other innovative formats are also welcomed, but please email your suggestion to the organisers for consideration well in advance of the submission deadline.

Please send an abstract (c.200 words) and short biographical note to the conference organiser by no later than 5pm GMT, Friday 9 December 2016. Please include the abstract and biographical note in the body of the email and not in an attachment. All proposers of a paper or panel will receive notification of the results by the end of January 2017. Proposals and all enquiries should be sent to Ros Powell (bsls-2017@bristol.ac.uk).

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.

Please note that those attending the conference will need to make their own arrangements for accommodation. Information on local hotels will be made available soon.

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.

