



The British Society for
LITERATURE
and SCIENCE

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BSLS WINTER SYMPOSIUM 2018: 'ENVIRONMENTS OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE'

This year's BSLS Winter Symposium focussed on the relationship between the fields of Literature and Science and Environmental Humanities. 'Environments of Literature and Science' was hosted on Saturday 24 November at Cardiff University, and included a range of panels, a roundtable discussion, workshops with an ECA focus, a poster presentation, and a keynote address from John Parham.

The day began with parallel panels, with papers considering topics ranging from conceptions of miasma and epidemic in Classical Greece to film adaptations of Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*. In the 'Ecocritical Readings' panel, Sarah Coakley drew out John Steinbeck's environmentalism in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Djouher Benyoucef followed with her work on the nuances of Hardy's ecological awareness, an aspect of his writing often lost in subsequent movie adaptations. Anna Burton concluded the panel with a fascinating reading of Victorian greenbelts in Elizabeth Gaskell's mid-century novels, focussing on how the

representation of trees in *North and South* probes nineteenth-century theories of human and environmental health.

James Cross began the 'Immaterialities' panel with a reading of miasma in Classical texts, focussing on the ideas of 'hostile air' in Hippocrates and 'enemy air' in Lucretius. Next up, Deborah Lam read Coleridge and Newton on optical phenomena to consider the differences between empirical and veridical science. Finally, Greg Lynall spoke about some of the methodological issues he has encountered while working on a cultural history of solar power, paying especial attention to the field of Energy Humanities.

Following the first round of parallel panels came the ScienceHumanities roundtable discussion, chaired by Keir Waddington. The Cardiff ScienceHumanities Initiative advocates transdisciplinarity as a way of working across and between the sciences and the humanities while retaining the distinct methodologies and epistemologies of different disciplines. Keir was joined by Jamie Castell (English), Anne Harrington (Law), Des Fitzgerald (Social Science), and Rhiannon Lane (Healthcare) for a truly transdisciplinary discussion. Des called for more experimental work where approaches from the humanities might be used generatively with traditional scientific methods, rather than simply to talk about those methods. Jamie echoed these thoughts, arguing that there are both important types of thinking that poetry can do, and that when considering topics such as climate change, scientists can help humanities scholars think about the politics and aesthetics of these issues in turn.

The roundtable provoked a lot of discussion in the room, with Josie Gill pointing out how problems with authority and hierarchy within the academy can make

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

Winter 2019 Newsletter

transdisciplinary work between the humanities and sciences acutely challenging. Josie's words spoke to an important concern of the symposium – the environments that academics, and particularly early-career academics, negotiate in their work. Discussion during the roundtable often centred on the peculiar challenges of working across disciplines. Anne Harrington shared her experiences of working with physicists who can be dismissive of sociological data, and how this show of authority offers a route to critiquing the methods of the physical sciences and their relation to the wider structures of nuclear power. Rhiannon Lane discussed her interviews with those working on collaborative projects across disciplines, leading to broader considerations about how to communicate the different expertise that humanities scholars bring to transdisciplinary collaborations while not appearing defensive.

After lunch, and a poster presentation from Olivia Krauze, the workshops continued the focus on some of the notable challenges literature and science scholarship can present. Rebecca Brennan, editor on Routledge's Environmental Humanities series, outlined the considerations to be taken and steps to be followed when publishing an interdisciplinary work of criticism. In the second parallel workshop, Ann Heilmann, Deputy Chair of REF2021 sub-panel 27, gave expert insight into the REF process, with an especial focus on outputs for PGRs and ECRs.

Another parallel-panel session followed. Mat Paskins began 'Sites of Production of Science and Literature' by acknowledging that the history of chemistry remains relatively neglected. Chemistry's effects are pervasive across the modern world and, as a science, it has a fundamental enabling role for other sciences – Mat's paper considered the implications of this via the writing of Primo Levi and Adam Dickinson. Philip Palios then gave an account of his work with the literary community of Dumfries and Galloway, a case-study in how regional literature shapes and is shaped by local customs and geography. Saira Fatima Dogar closed the panel by discussing Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Geometry of God*. The novel offers a fictional account of an actual discovery of a whale fossil, found in Pakistan's Salt Range in 1981. Saira, focussing on a period in Pakistan's modern history when geology and evolutionary science were banned, drew out how Khan offers a potential reconciliation between scientific inquiry and Islam.

The 'Twentieth-Century Conflicts' panel opened with Rob Mayo, who employed J. G. Ballard's conceptualisation of 'inner space' to analyse depictions of psychiatric patients in novels by Doris Lessing and Pat Cadigan. Next, Rachel Jones tracked the implicit environmentalism in Arthur Conan Doyle's apocalyptic science fiction, demonstrating his awareness of concerns about plundering the earth's resources. Finally, Rachel Murray discussed the 'tactile language' of bees in Joyce's *Ulysses*, showing how the 'beelines', or references to bees, can be mapped in the text as indications of change, movement, and transformation.

The final event of the symposium was John Parham's keynote, 'Bigish Data: Fredrich Engels, Material Ecology, and Victorian Data'. John focussed on *Condition of the Working Class in England*, drawing out the various methods Engels used to conceptualize and communicate the realities of life in 1840s Manchester. John argued that, by melding qualitative survey research, vivid descriptive prose, statistical data and embryonic theories of political economy, Engels offers a blueprint for the humanities in how to convey complex ecological information. This is especially necessary at a time when historical and vital materialism are often seen to be at odds; as John persuasively demonstrated, with its multifaceted depiction of metabolic rift and social metabolism acting on and through the lives of the very poorest inhabitants of Victorian Manchester, Engels's text suggests a potential rapprochement between the vital and historical material turns of today.

If anybody is interested in hearing more about the symposium, please search #bslsevenvironments on Twitter for a Twitter-story of the day. The conference organisers would like to thank all those who contributed to and attended 'Environments of Literature and Science' for making this year's Winter Symposium such an enjoyable and stimulating day!

Louise Benson James, Joan Passey and Jim Scown

BSLS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POSITIONS

Four positions on the BSLS Executive Committee will be vacant in April:

- Secretary,
- Communications Officer,
- International Officer (Europe), and
- Early Career Member at Large.

Any member of BSLS is eligible for these posts and can propose themselves or someone else. Each proposed candidate will also need two nominations from members of BSLS, and these proposals and nominations should be sent to the Chair, Greg Lynall (gilynnall@liverpool.ac.uk), and to the Acting Secretary and Membership Secretary, Emily Alder (Em.Alder@napier.ac.uk). Expressions of interest and proposals should be received by 22 March at the very latest.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENTS

‘CHANGE OF AIR: ATMOSPHERE, HEALTH, AND LOCALITY IN THE ROMANTIC ERA, 1760-1840’

The conference ‘Change of Air: Atmosphere, Health, and Locality in the Romantic Era, 1760–1840’ took place at The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) on 14 September 2018, and was organised by Rhys Kaminski-Jones and Erin Lafford. Responding to recent and diverse critical discussions of the significance of air in Romantic-period writing, the conference sought to consider the explicit connections between how air, health, and notions of locality were being explored in the long eighteenth century. Given that a ‘change of air’, and its supposed effects on mental and physical health, was one of the most recognisable forms of environmental awareness in this period, the organisers considered how this has yet to be incorporated fully into our understanding of place and locality in Romantic-era culture. In order to address this critical gap, speakers from a range of universities in the UK were invited to reconsider both the local and medical implications of a ‘change of air’. Papers addressed topics as various as sea airs, mountain airs, air and national identity, urban smells and nuisance laws, the significance of air in picturesque travel writing, and the role of air in the Romantic ‘experiment narrative’.

The conference was organised into three panels, followed by a keynote address delivered by Rowan Boyson (KCL). The first panel on ‘Unhealthy, Urban, and Experimental Airs’ included a discussion by Erin Lafford (University of Derby) of how William Gilpin grappled with the medical, emotional, and aesthetic effects of ‘atmosphere’ on the picturesque tourist in the *Observations* tours; a paper by William Tullett (University of Derby) on how nuisance laws concerning the burning of tallow candles in eighteenth-century urban England uncovered and challenged the association of ‘bad’ smells with unhealthy and dangerous air; and an exploration by Tim Fulford (DMU) of how Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poems such as ‘The Aeolian Harp’ and ‘Frost at Midnight’ demonstrated the relationship between poetic form and the new science of airs emerging in 1790s Bristol.

The second panel on ‘National and Mountain Airs’ offered some fascinating discussions of how concerns about healthy or unhealthy air fed into debates about local and national identity. Mary-Ann Constantine (University of Wales) delivered a paper on ‘Ecologies of Air in Romantic-Period Tours of Wales’, which uncovered intriguing socio-political and ecological anxieties about ‘contamination’ in early discussions of Welsh industrial sites. Rhys Kaminski-Jones (University of Wales) then offered an illuminating exploration of the medicalised thinking that sat behind Romantic conceptions of Celtic ‘mistiness’; his paper on ‘Celtic Atmospheres and Cultural Health’ explored the foundational text in this tradition, Macpherson’s *Ossian*, arguing that his omnipresent vapours – often dismissed as impressionistic window-dressing – were in fact used to explore a complex imagined relationship between atmospheric and cultural well-being. The next paper, Christine Kenyon-Jones (KCL) on ‘Byron’s European Meteorology’, considered Byron’s poetic responses to alpine weather in particular, asking how his work speaks to meteorological notions of prognostication and prophecy, and how Romantic poetry might engage with (or undermine) the human impulse to predict the weather.

The third panel on ‘Sea Airs’ provided an opportunity for three of the speakers to revisit the construction of the Romantic-era ‘seaside resort’, as well as the frequent recommendation of sea air as curative in the long eighteenth century. Harriet Guest (York), in her paper on ‘The Salubrious Air of Bognor’, offered an insightful discussion of the dynamics of seaside isolation and circulation that can be read into medical and cultural assessments of a resort’s air; her question of how to consider the ‘social stagnation of the resort’ in relation to claims for its salubrity was particularly compelling. Jane Darcy’s paper on ‘Keats, Dr. John Clarke, and the Air of the Isle of Wight’ was a lively discussion of how we can read Keats’s descriptions of the air of this region in relation to Clarke’s medical treatises on the effects of climate on health. Jennifer Wallis (Imperial College, London) then delivered a paper on ‘Sea Air, Sea Water, and “Exporting” the Seaside in the Early Nineteenth Century’. Her discussion of ‘mimic seas’ and other technologies by which the supposedly healthy effects of the coast could be exported into the city was fascinating, as was her proposal that it was perhaps the ‘change’ in the notion of a ‘change of air’ that was more fundamental to health and restoration in this period, and that this might be a more helpful way to interpret the prevalence of health tourism than the meticulous classification of air itself.

Throughout the panels, a key idea that recurred during questions and discussion was how thinking about the relationship between air, health, and locality in this period necessitates a consideration of the relationship between air quality and social inequality. How do we define what ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ air consists of? What kinds of values do these terms carry? Who has access to ‘healthy’ air and who doesn’t, and why? How can we think about access to clean air as a human right in this period? These questions were threaded through Rowan Boyson’s keynote paper, entitled ‘Pure and Mixed: The Politics of Shared Air in the Long Eighteenth Century’. Boyson’s keynote was an invigorating and wide-ranging discussion of the eighteenth-century intellectual history of air, focussing especially on the implications of the emergence of ‘pure air’ as an idea by the 1770s, thanks to Joseph Priestley’s experiments concerning ‘dephlogisticated air’, and Robert Boyle’s earlier insistence that air was a ‘mixture’. These notions of ‘pure’ and ‘mixed’ were discussed for how they

imply an “eco-problematic of contamination versus purity”, a fascinating idea that seems to sum up well the intention of the conference to probe how the divisions of locality and place are aligned with boundaries of health and illness. Boyson’s paper was also an important reminder that air has a political as well as a scientific and medical history in this period, as she considered how air functions as a metaphor for liberty in the context of slavery and colonialism. The conference as a whole was a highly enjoyable and stimulating event, demonstrating the richness of air as a site of critical enquiry in Romantic and eighteenth-century studies, and the ongoing conversations to be had in this area as they relate to the medical and the environmental humanities.

The organisers would like to thank The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), the Oxford Environmental Humanities Research Network, the British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS), the British Society for Literature and Science (BSLS), the British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (BSECS), and Romanticism and Eighteenth-Century Studies Oxford for their generous sponsorship and conference support.

Erin Lafford and Rhys Kaminski-Jones

‘VICTORIAN SPEED: THE LONG HISTORY OF FAST LIVING’

Stressed out by modern life? So were the Victorians! Visitors to the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford, entered the world of Victorian England in this museum ‘late’ for a fun evening of games, interactive exhibits, and short talks on 18 October 2018. Members of the public explored with researchers from the ERC-funded Diseases of Modern Life project the new technologies and sometimes bizarre medical treatments of the Victorian age. From telegraphic tweeting to ‘gastric time’, members of the public of all ages had riotous good fun engaging with postdoctoral research. Read more about it on our [blog](#).

Sally Shuttleworth

‘BEING HUMAN FESTIVAL 2018: VICTORIAN LIGHT NIGHT’

‘Victorian Light Night’ on 16 November 2018 was part of both the national [Being Human Festival](#) and Oxford’s own [Christmas Light Festival](#). The three-storey Radcliffe Humanities building (known by many as the former Radcliffe Infirmary) became the canvas for a unique light and sound spectacular created by Ross Ashton and Karen Monid (aka the [Projection Studio](#)) in conjunction with the Diseases of Modern Life project and [TORCH](#). The looped five-minute show transported audiences from the rolling green countryside to the mad dash of Victorian mechanisation with its attendant steam, symptoms, and stresses. You can watch video footage of the projection [here](#).

Across the evening, over 2,500 visitors enjoyed the projection, flash talks given by our researchers, a range of hands-on activities, a display of work by the schoolchildren from Cheney School, a research-inspired song-and-Lindy-Hop routine, a Victorian photo booth and mulled wine to keep away the cold! Read more about the evening on our [blog](#).

Sally Shuttleworth

AGE OF FRANKENSTEIN

‘STAGING FRANKENSTEIN: NICK DEAR IN CONVERSATION’

‘Staging Frankenstein: Nick Dear in Conversation’ was the final event of our Age of Frankenstein project commemorating the bicentenary of the first publication of Mary Shelley’s novel in 1818. We invited playwright Nick Dear, who adapted *Frankenstein* for the National Theatre’s acclaimed 2011 stage production directed by Danny Boyle, to Edinburgh on a suitably dreary night in November (Monday 26 November 2018 to be precise) to speak to a public audience about adapting *Frankenstein* for the stage. Surgeons’ Hall Museums gave us use of a fabulous room and access to the adjacent Wohl Pathology Museum; everyone’s route in and out of the talk took them past some suitably fascinating and surprising anatomical specimens and exhibits.

We began with an informal interview between Mr Dear and our chair, director and educator Dr Donna Soto-Morettini, before opening out the conversation to the audience. Of course, everyone wanted to know what it was like to work with stars like Benedict Cumberbatch, Johnny Lee Miller, and Danny Boyle, and Mr Dear’s descriptions of the creative process of adapting, casting, rehearsing, and staging *Frankenstein* were illuminating. The creature’s story (rather than Frankenstein’s or



Photo credit: Emily Alder

Walton's) formed the heart and skeleton of this adaptation, and the idea of the two actors playing both parts and swapping each night emerged as an almost natural logical consequence of discussion between writer and director.

Thanks to the BSLS, Surgeons' Hall Museums, and Dr Donna Soto-Morettini for supporting this event.

*Dr Emily Alder and Dr Sarah Artt
Edinburgh Napier University*

'SLEEP AND STRESS, PAST AND PRESENT'

This one-day interdisciplinary symposium on 7 December 2018 co-organised by the Diseases of Modern Life project at the University of Oxford and the Royal Society, brought together expert scientists, medical practitioners, historians and literary critics to discuss the intersections between sleep and stress, both historically and in contemporary society. Prof Russell Foster (Head of the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute, University of Oxford) gave the keynote lecture.

Audio recordings of many of the papers are available on the project's [YouTube playlist](#) and a forthcoming issue of the Royal Society journal *Interface Focus* will be based on the symposium's proceedings.

Sally Shuttleworth

'FRANKENSTEIN'S LEGACY: 200 YEARS OF MYTHS, MONSTERS AND MYSTERIES'

In December 2018, Dr. Jennifer Henke (University of Bremen) and Kati Voigt (University of Leipzig) welcomed passionate scholars to a workshop in Bremen in honour of the bicentennial of Mary Shelley's masterpiece *Frankenstein - The Modern Prometheus* (1818). The aim of the event titled 'Frankenstein's Legacy: 200 Years of Myths, Monsters and Mysteries' was to jointly evaluate the worldwide activities, conferences and publications of the anniversary year 2018 while also identifying dominant themes that currently loom large in *Frankenstein* studies. Talks and impulse papers ranged from hypertextuality, artificial humans, science and ethics, and *Frankenstein* on stage to disinterestedness and queerness. The final discussion centered on the boundaries that the *Frankenstein* material pushes in the twenty-first century: the 'traditional' AI question, ecocriticism, queerness and especially the slave narrative. The workshop was complimented by a detailed report from Bournemouth University on last year's overall activities as well as student projects including video and audio material. The Bremen workshop was further supported by the Mary Shelley Trust in Bournemouth.

*Dr. Jennifer Henke
University of Bremen*

BSLS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Applications are now invited for the BSLS Small Grants Scheme and the BSLS Postgraduate and Early Career Conference Fund, each with a deadline of **1 March 2019**.

The BSLS Small Grants Scheme offers grants of up to £400 to promote the study of literature and science. We are open to all sorts of proposals with the exception of those that request support for individual personal conference expenses. Examples of activities for which the awards might be used are expenses for a visiting speaker, a seminar series, or a symposium. Applications for support to stage special BSLS panels at appropriate conferences (other than the BSLS 2019 conference) will be considered.

The BSLS Postgraduate and Early Career Conference Fund offers bursaries of up to £200 for BSLS postgraduate student members and early career researchers who are not in permanent posts and are ineligible for institutional funding. Bursaries may be used towards the cost of presenting research papers at conferences.

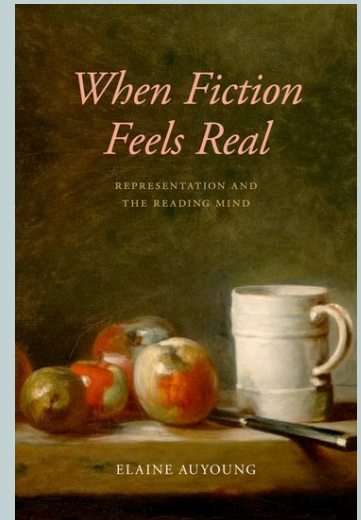
For details of eligibility and how to apply for either of these funds, please see the Funding page on the website. For queries on the Small Grants Scheme, please contact Rosalind Powell (Rosalind.powell@bristol.ac.uk) and for more information on the Postgraduate and Early Career Conference Fund please contact Ros Ambler-Alderman (rsaa1v17@soton.ac.uk).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

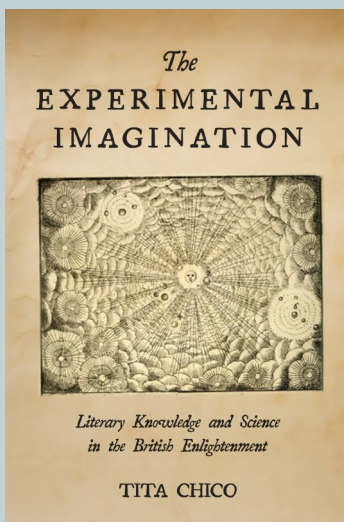
Elaine Auyoung. *When Fiction Feels Real: Representation and the Reading Mind*. Oxford UP. November 2018.

This book provides literary critics with new tools for thinking about fundamental aspects of reading fiction that have long been taken for granted, such as how the words of a novel can seem to evoke immediate sensory experiences and how fictional persons can endure in a reader's mind long after a story has faded. By bringing empirical research on reading and cognition into conversation with the work of Leo Tolstoy, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, *When Fiction Feels Real* models a new approach to the phenomenology of reading. It reveals how perspectives from the mind sciences can change the way we think about fictionality, mimesis, and literary language, opening up a new area of study centered on the relationship between narrative technique and comprehension. (<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/when-fiction-feels-real-9780190845476?cc=us&lang=en&>).

Elaine Auyoung is McKnight Land-Grant Professor at the University of Minnesota, Assistant Professor of English, and Affiliate Faculty of the Center for Cognitive Sciences



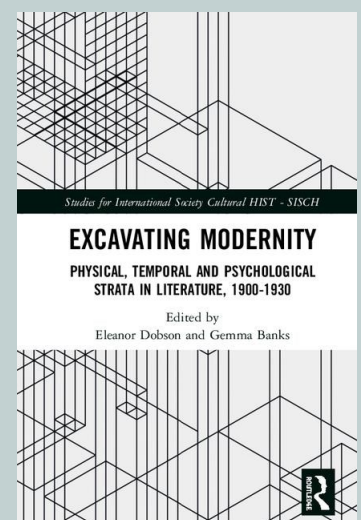
Tita Chico. *The Experimental Imagination: Literary Knowledge and Science in the British Enlightenment*. Stanford UP. June 2018.



Challenging the "two cultures" debate, *The Experimental Imagination* tells the story of how literariness came to be distinguished from its epistemological sibling, science, as a source of truth about the natural and social worlds in the British Enlightenment. Tita Chico shows that early science relied on what she calls literary knowledge to present its experimental findings. More radically, she contends that science was made intellectually possible because its main discoveries and technologies could be articulated in literary terms. While early scientists deployed metaphor to describe the phenomena they defined and imagination to cast themselves as experimentalists, literary writers used scientific metaphors to make the case for the epistemological superiority of literary knowledge. Drawing on literature as well as literary language, tropes, and interpretive methods, literary knowledge challenges our dominant narrative of the scientific revolution as the *sine qua non* of epistemological innovation in the British Enlightenment. With its recourse to imagination as a more reliable source of truth than any empirical account, literary knowledge facilitates a redefinition of authority and evidence, as well as of the self and society, implicitly articulating the difference that would come to distinguish the arts and sciences.

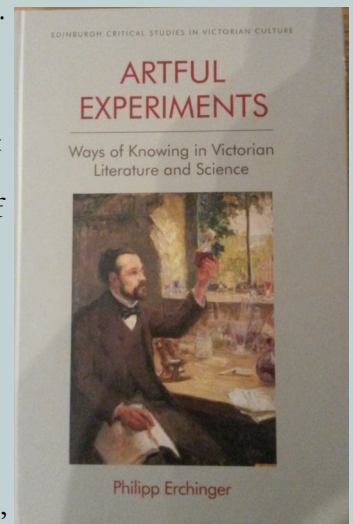
Eleanor Dobson and Gemma Banks, editors. *Excavating Modernity: Physical, Temporal and Psychological Strata in Literature, 1900-1930*. Routledge. July 2018. (ISBN: 9781138317765)

This edited collection scrutinizes physical, temporal and psychological strata across early twentieth-century literature, focusing on geological and archaeological tropes and conceptions of the stratified psyche. The essays explore psychological perceptions, from practices of envisioning that mimic looking at a painting, photograph or projected light, to the comprehension of the palimpsestic complexities of language, memory and time. This collection is the first to see early twentieth-century physical, temporal and psychological strata interact across a range of canonical and popular authors, working in a variety of genres, from theatre to ghost stories, children's literature to modernist *magna opera*. It may be of interest to BSLS members with interests in archaeology, geology, psychology, psychoanalysis, psychical research, sound and optics.



Philipp Erchinger. *Artful Experiments: Ways of Knowing in Victorian Literature and Science*. Edinburgh UP. October 2018.

What is the connection between Victorian writing and experiment? *Artful Experiments* seeks to answer this question by approaching the field of literature and science in a way that is not so much centred on discourses of established knowledge as it is on practices of investigating what is no longer or not yet knowledge. The book assembles various modes of writing, from poetry and sensation fiction to natural history and philosophical debate, reading them as ways of knowing or structures in the making, rather than as containers of accomplished arguments or story worlds. For many Victorians, the book argues, experimentation was just as integral to the making of literature as writing was integral to the making of science.



Philipp Erchinger, editor. *Earth Writing*, Special Issue, *Philological Quarterly* 97.2 (2018).

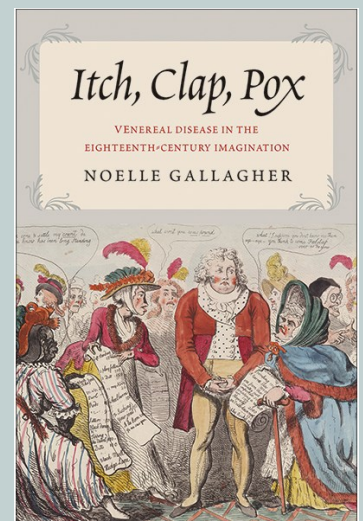
Bringing together six essays by renowned scholars, this special issue on “earth writing,” a literal interpretation of geography, seeks to involve the material existence of the planet humans inhabit (*geo*) with the practice of extending or translating it into meaningful forms (*graphein*). The issue contains research articles by Tim Ingold, Fiona Stafford, John Wylie, Ralph Pite, Adelene Buckland, and Christopher F. Loar. The introductory essay aims to establish a theoretical context for the notion of “earth writing” as well as to situate each of the subsequent contributions within recent debates in ecological criticism and environmental thought.

Noelle Gallagher. *Itch, Clap, Pox*. Yale UP. January 2019.

In eighteenth-century Britain, venereal disease was everywhere and nowhere: while physicians and commentators believed the condition to be widespread, it remained shrouded in secrecy, and was often represented using slang, symbolism and wordplay. In *Itch, Clap, Pox*, Noelle Gallagher explores the cultural significance of the ‘clap’ (gonorrhea), the ‘pox’ (syphilis) and the ‘itch’ (genital scabies) for the development of eighteenth-century British literature and art.

As a condition both represented through metaphors and used as a metaphor, venereal disease provided a vehicle for the discussion of cultural anxieties about gender, race, commerce and immigration. Gallagher highlights four key concepts associated with the disease, demonstrating how the infection’s symbolic potency was enhanced by its links to elite masculinity, prostitution, foreignness and nasal deformity. Casting light where the sun rarely shines, this study will fascinate anyone interested in the history of literature, art, medicine and sexuality.

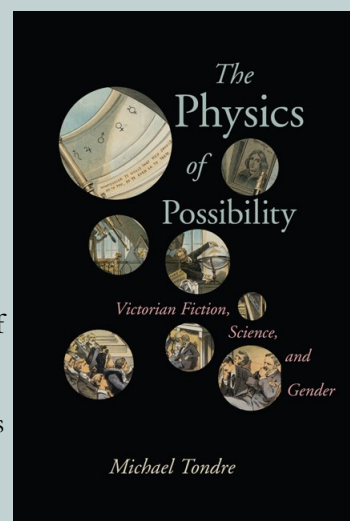
The UK publication is forthcoming in March (www.yalebooks.co.uk; discount code Y1894); the US publication is currently available (discount code YZ929, good until 1 April).



The Physics of Possibility traces the sensational birth of mathematical physics in Victorian literature, science, and statistics. As scientists took up new breakthroughs in quantification, they showed how all sorts of phenomena—the condition of stars, atoms, molecules, and nerves—could be represented as a set of probabilities through time. Michael Tondre demonstrates how these techniques transformed the British novel.

Fictions of development by Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and others joined the vogue for alternative possibilities. These novels reflected received pieties of maturation but plotted a wider number of deviations from the norms of reproductive adulthood. By accentuating overlooked elements of form, Tondre reveals the novel's changing identification with possible worlds through the decades when physics became a science of all things.

Going beyond Foucault's observation that statistics served to invent normal populations, Tondre brings influential modes of historical thinking to the foreground. His readings reveal an acute fascination with alternative temporalities throughout the period, as novelists depicted the categories of object, action, and setting in new probabilistic forms. Privileging fiction's agency in reimagining historical realities, never simply sanctioning them, Tondre revises our understanding of the novel and its ties to the ascendant Victorian sciences. More information is [available here](#).



CALLS FOR PAPERS

VICTORIAN POPULAR FICTION ASSOCIATION'S 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

'MIND, MATTER(S), SPIRIT:

FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE IN VICTORIAN POPULAR FICTION AND CULTURE'

**8-10 JULY 2019, INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH STUDIES,
SENATE HOUSE, LONDON**

Keynote: Chris Louttit, 'Capturing the Spirit of Bohemia: The Life of the Artist in 1860s Popular Fiction'

Keynote: Beth Palmer, 'Sensation Fiction and the Theatre: Braddon, Boucicault and Matters of Adaptation'

Keynote: Christopher Pittard, 'Vanishing Points: Sidney Paget, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sherlock Holmes'

Exhibition: 'Late-Victorian & Edwardian Paperback Fiction', curated by John Spiers

Reading Group: 'Altered States of Mind and Body', hosted by James Green and Henry Bartholomew

The Victorian Popular Fiction Association is dedicated to fostering interest in understudied popular writers, literary genres and other cultural forms, and to facilitating the production of publishable research and academic collaborations amongst scholars of the popular.

The organisers invite a broad, imaginative and interdisciplinary interpretation on the topic of 'Mind, Matter(s), Spirit: Forms of Knowledge in Victorian Popular Fiction and Culture' and its relation to any aspect of Victorian popular literature and culture which might address literal or metaphorical representations of the theme.

We welcome proposals for 20 minute papers, panels of three papers affiliated with an organisation or a group of scholars and non-traditional papers/panels, on topics which can include, but are not limited to:

- Altered states of mind, drugs, séances etc.
- Truth, secrets and lies; different perspectives (sex, gender, race/ethnicity, class, profession)
- Mind over matter: resistance, heroics, resilience
- Physical matter: material culture, objects and things, thing theory



- Geography matters: transport, place and space, organisations, institutions and buildings
- Exploration, mapping, urban and imperial knowledge
- Illness of the mind and body, including disability studies
- Household matters: economics and budgets, food, family life, scandals
- Business matters: global economy, trade, partners, shipping, deals
- Spiritual matters: different religions and practices
- Educational matters: school system, education, teachers/teaching, education Acts
- Archival matters: collections, museums, personal papers
- Genre matters: transforming genres, writing practices, co-authorship, publishing practices, syndication, neo-Victorianism
- Historical matters: reforms, parliamentary Acts, debates, events
- Interdisciplinary approaches to Victorian popular fiction and culture
- Teaching Victorian popular fiction and culture

Special topic panels: following our successful formula, we are continuing the special panels which will be hosted by guest experts; therefore we especially welcome papers about the following topics:

Topic 1: 'The Spirit of Exploration in Victorian Popular Fiction' hosted by Minna Vuohelainen

Topic 2: 'Matters of the Mind in Victorian Popular Fiction' hosted by Valerie Fehlbauum

Topic 3: 'Matters of the Home in Victorian Popular Fiction' hosted by Jessica Cox

Please send proposals of no more than 300 words, a 50 word biography and your availability over the conference dates in Word format to Drs Janine Hatter, Helena Ifill, Jane Jordan and Erin Louttit at: vpfainfo@gmail.com

Deadline for proposals: Friday 1 March 2019

Website: <http://victorianpopularfiction.org/vpfa-annual-conference/>

The BSLS is particularly encouraged to submit a panel on forms of scientific and/or medical knowledge.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT – UK AND IRELAND, BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, 2019

CO-EMERGENCE
CO-CREATION
CO-EXISTENCE

4-6 SEPTEMBER 2019, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Confirmed Plenary Speakers

- Greg Garrard (University of British Columbia)
- David Higgins (University of Leeds)
- Adeline Johns-Putra (University of Surrey)
- Harriet Tarlo (Sheffield Hallam University)



It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. (Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*)

The University of Plymouth is delighted to be hosting the 2019 Biennial Conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, UK and Ireland. The purpose of ASLE-UKI is to encourage scholarship, criticism, and appreciation of environmental literature and of the relationship between literature and environment, through activities and publications based in the UK and Ireland. ASLEUKI welcomes participation by anyone interested in environmental literature and culture – past, present, or future – from anywhere in the world, and whether as scholars, readers, or creative writers.

While proposals on all and any aspects and periods of environmental literature are welcome, this year's theme is 'Co-emergence, Co-creation, Co-existence'. The conference takes its impetus from the prefix 'co-' as a starting point for en-

gaging with ideas, processes, practises and theorisations of mutuality, collaboration, co-production, collectivity and modes of being, thinking, and creating generated through entanglement. How might we understand ‘ways of being [as] emergent effects of encounters’ (Anna Tsing)? What are the implications of understanding agency as an intermingling of human and nonhuman forces? And, to return to Haraway’s notion of thinking/telling/knotting/making ‘with,’ what happens if we begin from the premise that ‘[w]e become-with each other or not at all’?

The conference hopes to explore how literature, culture and ecocriticism can engage with such ideas, and inquire into their implications for ethics, politics, subjectivity, collectivity and aesthetics as these relate to environmental questions. We welcome contributions from researchers working on any period of literature and culture, and we also hope to put perspectives from literary and cultural studies, theatre and performance, film and the visual arts into conversation, as well as inviting engagement with a widening disciplinary gyre that has increasingly become a productive characteristic of ASLE events and networks. We invite proposals for individual (20-minute) papers, or pre-formed panels (90 minutes) which may comprise traditional panels of 3 or 4 papers, roundtables or paper jams with 6 or more speakers, or other innovative formats. We welcome proposals for creative contributions or creative-critical dialogues.

Possible themes may include, but are not restricted to:

- Multi-species assemblages and ontologies
- Symbioses, mutualisms and commensalisms
- Entanglements between practice and theory
- Ecological interdisciplinarity
- Environmental justice and decoloniality
- Collective action and activism in times of environmental crisis
- Embodiment, proprioception, ‘eco-ception’
- Intra-actions with weather, atmosphere and land/sea/waterscapes
- Intersectional activisms
- Collaborative working
- Agency and power in posthuman ‘becomings-with’

Please send proposals and queries to asleuki2019@gmail.com

Deadline for Proposals: April 1st 2019

Delegates must be members of ASLE-UKI or one of its affiliates by the time the conference takes place. Information about joining can be found at <http://www.asle.org.uk>

Venue: The University of Plymouth campus is conveniently located 5-10 minutes’ walk away from Plymouth railway station and in close proximity to the city centre, restaurants and bars. The historic city is surrounded by distinctive South Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Dartmoor and numerous coastal areas for walking, swimming, surfing, kayaking and more.

Conference website: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/asle>

ASLE website: <http://asle.org.uk>

ASLE on twitter: @asleuki

UPCOMING EVENTS

SCIENCE GOSSIP CELEBRATION

9 March 2019, The National Science and Media Museum, Bradford

Keep an eye out for further details of this upcoming event, organised by the AHRC-funded Constructing Scientific Communities project and the National Science and Media Museum as part of British Science Week! Expect bite-size talks, an animation workshop with world-renowned animator Sydney Padua, and a whole host of fun activities for the whole family!

INTERRUPTION

25 MARCH 2019, JESSOP WEST, UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

A 'lift-off' occurs when an accumulation of creative awareness powers us into the zone, and there is often reference to movement, distance and speed in describing reaching this desirable state. Where is this zone? How do we know we are there? Are we in control of our entry and exit? Both neuroscience and literature have helped Rachel Genn to understand the importance of this state for creating new work and she is asking, if we were to programme creativity into AI, would data from neuroscience or art best help the endeavour?

Emma Bolland and Rachel Genn will play live Chinese whispers with excerpts from literature, art and neuroscience in an attempt to eviscerate then examine the notion of reverie using live interpretation of text. Emma Bolland is the 2019 #interrupteur artist-writer in residence for the University of Sheffield's Faculty of Arts and Humanities. This interruption, expanding on translation, will take place on March 25th, in Jessop West, UoS.

Rachel Genn

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR LITERATURE AND SCIENCE 4-6 APRIL 2019 ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The fourteenth annual conference of the British Society for Literature and Science will take place at Royal Holloway, University of London, from Thursday 4 April until Saturday 6 April 2019. Keynote speakers will include Professor Tim Armstrong (Royal Holloway) and Professor Angelique Richardson (Exeter).

Information concerning onsite accommodation and local hotels will be forthcoming.
<https://onlinestore.rhul.ac.uk/product-catalogue/events-and-conferences/departments-of-english>

Membership: conference delegates will need to register/renew as members of the BSLS (annual membership: £25 waged/ £10 unwaged).

(Photo credit: Mike Wainwright)

