

Victorian Reproductions

International Workshop

24th-25th March 2023

Mainz, Germany

Programme



<https://victorianreproductions.uni-mainz.de/>

Welcome

Welcome to the Victorian Reproductions Workshop. We are delighted to be able to host this workshop at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. We wish to thank all speakers, chairs and our keynote speaker for their contribution to this event. We hope you enjoy our two-day exchange of ideas and look forward to the discussion.

We also thank the sponsors of this event. Many thanks to our Internal University Research Funding, Freunde der Universität Mainz e.V. and Deutscher Anglistenverband for their support. Additional thanks to Lisa Korluß and Jan Eckhard for their hands-on assistance in organising this event.

Sarah Wegener and Wolfgang Funk (workshop organisers)
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

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Programme Overview

Friday, 24 March

From 13:00	Registration	Philo I Lobby (P5)
14:00-14:30	Welcome and Introduction Sarah Wegener & Wolfgang Funk	Philo II 00-212
14:30-16:00	Keynote Prof. Hilary Marland (Warwick): “The Protracted Funeral of Puerperal Insanity? Diagnosis, Heredity and Reproduction in Britain c.1900” Chair: Wolfgang Funk	00-212
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break	Lobby
16:30-17:30	Panel 1: Sexuality and Reproduction Chair: Sarah Wegener Lorraine Rumson (FU Berlin): “‘Would You Like to Have Your Cunt Pricked?’ Discourses of Virginity and its Loss in Victorian Pornography” Melissa Sarikaya (Erlangen): “Sexuality and Reproduction in A. Mary F. Robinson’s Poetry”	00-212
19:00	Workshop Dinner Heiliggeist, Rentengasse 2, 55116 Mainz	

Saturday, 25 March

9:00-10:30	Panel 2: Pathological Reproductions Chair: Lorraine Rumson Louise Benson James (Ghent): “The Menopause and Hysteria in Victorian Medical Texts and Women’s Fiction” Martina Allen (Frankfurt): “‘The Great Unhinging Agent’: The ‘Disease’ of Drug Addiction as the Birthing of the Other in Stevenson’s <i>Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> and Stoker’s <i>Dracula</i> ” Ashni Clayton (Washington): “(Re) Producing the Human: Monstrosity, Artificiality, and the Importance of the Maternal Body in Mary Shelley’s <i>Frankenstein</i> ”	00-212
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Programme Overview

10:30-11:00	Coffee Break	Lobby
11:00-12:00	Panel 3: Reproductions of Nation and Time Chair: Louise Benson James Leonie Jungen (Mainz): “At such unworthy hands’: Transgenerational (Re-) Productions of the Nation in Scott’s <i>Waverley</i> (1814)” Sarah Wegener (Mainz): “My little Now perpetually’: Michael Field’s Rifts in Reproductive Temporality”	00-212
12:00-14:00	Lunch Break	Baron
14:00-15:30	Panel 4: Reproductions of Text and Author Chair: Martina Allen Deborah Giggie (East Anglia): “A Crisis of Credibility: Class-Based Impacts of Eugenic Thinking on Socially-Marginalised Authors of the Fin de Siècle” Mary Elizabeth Gearen (Cambridge): “Textual and Sexual Reproduction in <i>Dracula</i> ” Franziska Stolz (Munich): “Patch Works: Rethinking Myths of Creativity in <i>Frankenstein</i> ”	00-212
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break	Lobby
16:00-16:30	Final Discussion and Farewell Sarah Wegener & Wolfgang Funk	00-212

Keynote

Prof. Hilary Marland (Warwick)

'The Protracted Funeral of Puerperal Insanity'? Diagnosis, Heredity and Reproduction in Britain c.1900

During the final quarter of the nineteenth century, doubt began to be cast on the separate existence of one of the most clearly recognised psychiatric entities of the Victorian period: puerperal insanity. After the 1820s puerperal insanity, along with its sister disorders of insanity of pregnancy and lactation, had been recognised as a common cause of mental breakdown in women, a disorder prompted by the strains of reproduction in combination with a range of hereditary, social and biological factors. By around 1900 it appeared to have been eliminated from the psychiatric canon, the coincidence of childbearing and insanity no longer regarded as sufficient to warrant a discrete diagnosis. However, rather than producing taxonomic clarity, the result was diagnostic confusion, and as late as 1935 one psychiatrist was prompted to declare that puerperal insanity was still enjoying its 'protracted funeral'.

This presentation explores debates around the separate existence of puerperal insanity as other factors also came into play in the latter part of the nineteenth century, notably a shift towards more clinical rather than narrative forms of reporting cases of mental breakdown and the tendency to relate mental disorders connected to childbirth to heredity causes. It will explore the tensions between changing psychiatric definitions and actual practice, as the diagnosis of puerperal insanity continued to be employed in many institutional settings and the courtroom, in some obstetric and psychiatric texts and medical journal articles and case reports. In some asylums, the number of cases attributed to puerperal insanity actually increased towards the end of the century. The presentation also questions how far there was continuity and change in terms of ideas of causality, as alongside heredity doctors continued, well into the early decades of the twentieth century, to hark back to the explanations of 'the Victorian doctors' which highlighted the intrinsic risks of reproduction, the challenges of becoming a mother, and the impact of poverty, marital distress and exhaustion in producing insanity in pregnancy and childbirth.

Hilary Marland is Professor of History at the University of Warwick. She is author of *Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain* (2004), *Health and Girlhood in Britain 1874-1920* (2013) and with Catherine Cox, *Disorder Contained: Mental Breakdown and the Modern Prison in England and Ireland, 1840-1900* (2022). Between 2014 and 2021 she was co-Principal Investigator on a Wellcome Trust funded project on prison medicine in England and Ireland, 1850-2000 and is currently Principal Investigator on a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award, 'The Last Taboo of Motherhood: Postnatal Mental Disorders in Twentieth-Century Britain' (2021-24). She was founder and for many years Director of the Centre for the History of Medicine at Warwick and former editor of *Social History of Medicine*. Her research interests and publications have focused on women, medicine and psychiatry, migration and mental illness, prison medicine, medicine and the household, and the history of childbirth and midwifery.

Abstracts

“Would You Like To Have Your Cunt Pricked?” Discourses of Virginity and its Loss in Victorian Pornography

Lorraine Rumson (FU Berlin)

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As Victorian medical texts proliferated scientific approaches to sexuality, the extreme cultural significance of the figure of “the virgin” came into tension with medical specifics around the experience of intercourse. The association of virginity with a specific physical state (i.e. the intact hymen) was under question in Victorian culture, both from a medical perspective that reminds readers that there is no physical characteristic that can reliably prove virginity, and from a moral-educational perspective that figures the loss of virginity as a moral “scar” (c.f. Edward Foote, *Medical Common Sense*, and Elizabeth Swell, *Principles of Education Drawn from Nature*, respectively). However, both of these perspectives are inherently didactic, and therefore, examining Victorian notions of virginity purely through their light neglects the significant fields of desire and pleasure in understanding virginity and its disappearance.

This paper explores how these intersecting discourses of medicine and morality are expressed in pornographic accounts of young women’s first sexual experiences. Bearing in mind that these accounts are not memoir but fantasy, this paper takes as the objects of analysis episodes that dramatise “the loss of virginity,” from serialised novels in the Victorian pornographic publication *The Pearl*. It also explores the conversations around virginity that exist within these novels, as the female narrators narrate experiences of both empowerment and disempowerment associated with “the loss of virginity.” With these episodes as primary texts, I ask both: how do these pieces describe the physical and emotional experiences of the loss of virginity? And: how do these representations align with or diverge from dominant moral or medical discourses about virginity?

Lorraine Rumson is a PhD candidate at the Freie Universität Berlin, where she is writing her dissertation on representations of the Middle Ages in Victorian Jewish literature, and lectures in cultural studies. She is interested in minor and forgotten Victorian literature and cultural products. Her book *Divergent Women: Interdisciplinary Essays on Female Deviance and Dissent* will be published with Emerald Publishing at the end of 2022, and her article “Victorian Porn Stars: Agency Among the Women of Victorian Erotic Novels” will appear in the upcoming book *Women In Power: Female Agency in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Fern Riddell.

Sexuality and Reproduction in A. Mary F. Robinson's Poetry

Melissa Sarikaya (Erlangen/Nuremberg)

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Lovers, for you no passion-flowers I bring,
Nor any roses for your ladies' wear,
No violets fragrant still from Sappho's hair,
Nor laurel crowns to garland them that sing.

("Honeysuckle", opening poem to Robinson's first poetry collection *A Handful of Honeysuckle*)

The academic world has recently become more interested in the versatile writer Agnes Mary Frances Robinson. While the discourse both circles around Robinson's affiliation with Vernon Lee and her marriages to James Darmesteter and Emile Duclaux, as well as Robinson's impressive circle of literary friends and acquaintances (John Addington Symonds, Edmund Gosse, Robert Browning, Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater), an in-depth study of Robinson's poetry is so far lacking. Yet it is the dark poems that reveal Robinson's stance on love, life, and lust in late Victorian society.

Robinson's allusive poetry creates an atmosphere of darkness elicited by the use of symbols and images that transfer an emotional response, for instance in converting established Romanticist motifs into stylised bearers of obscurity. Humankind is ultimately doomed to decay, portrayed as death's glorious victory. The only redemption for humanity is love: Numerous poems cherish the (Paterian) burning fire of love as love is elevated to be the "King and God" ('Love's Epiphany'). While some of Robinson's poetry displays failed love relations which result in traumatic and destructive forces (e.g. 'Le roi est mort'), other poems reveal love to be the only way of overcoming life's mortality. Yet it is unlikely that Robinson's poetic lovers will succeed in human reproduction after all, as already Robinson's first poetry volume *A Handful of Honeysuckle* (1881) and the ones to follow hint at lesbian love. After all, Robinson's aesthete poetry relies on transcending the Victorian world. Instead of conquering the leitmotif of death, Robinson's poetry suggests that it is rather worth striving for the complete consumption of and devotion to love as the only salvation for the soul's transcendence – which is ultimately beyond earthly life and death.

Melissa Sarikaya: I am a lecturer at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen/Nuremberg since 2019 as well as currently writing my dissertation on marginalised women poets of the late Victorian / Modernist era (including A. Mary F. Robinson). My expertise is poetry (late Victorian, (post)modernist, contemporary), gender studies, the publishing industry and the media. My latest projects are a contribution to a volume on Instapoetry (coming soon, published in Bloomsbury) and the recently published co-edited volume *Distinktion, Ausgrenzung und Mobilität – Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf soziale Ungleichheit* (2022). I am also speaker of the early career scholars/young researchers' section of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender, Difference, and Diversity (IZGDD).

The Menopause and Hysteria in Victorian Medical Texts and Women's Fiction

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By the nineteenth century, medical science understood that the spasms, pains, fits, or choking sensations of hysteria were not caused by the uterus wandering around the body; hysteria was increasingly classified as a disorder of the nervous system. Yet its association with the female reproductive system persisted. From the 1860s onward, medical lecture halls resounded with fierce debates about whether the 'sick or dissatisfied uterus' played a central role in the production of hysteria. Gynaecologist Robert Barnes (1817-1907) and mental specialist Henry Maudsley (1835-1918) identified the onset and the loss of reproductive capacity – female puberty and the menopause – as dangerous times of 'bodily crisis', leading to psychological instability and heightened susceptibility to hysteria. This paper explores how Victorian medical texts linked the loss of capacity for reproduction marked by the menopause to both the danger of hysterical disorder, and transition into social redundancy.

I contrast my analysis of a selection of male-authored medical texts with the short supernatural fiction of Rhoda Broughton (1840-1920), stories which survey the ambiguous and shifting authority of the female body. My central case study is 'Mrs Smith of Longmains', in which the middle-aged narrator grapples with supernatural forces, menopausal symptoms, and the threat of her own social and domestic dismissal. The story thematises biological determinism, depicts hysterical women unsympathetically, and suggests the internalisation of patriarchal perspectives. Yet it also draws attention to the insidious medicalising and pathologising of female behaviour, intuitions, and agency. The narrator's apparent menopausal and hysterical symptoms are revealed to indicate genuine, powerful supernatural insight. Writing for a popular audience and growing readership of women at a time when the debate around hysteria and women's bodies was gaining traction, Broughton offered a counternarrative to cultural myths about reproductive capacity and redundancy, satirising dominant medico-cultural theories of the menopause and its dangers.

Dr Louise Benson James is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellow at Ghent University, Belgium. Previously a Lecturer at the University of Bristol, she is preparing a monograph entitled *Medicine and Women's Fiction: Hysteria, Bodies and Narratives, 1850s to 1930s*, forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press. Her MSCA project 'Intracorporeal Narratives: Reading Internal Biology in Women's Literature' explores internal organs in women's fiction, medical science, and popular culture, 1880s – 1930s.

“The Great Unhinging Agent”: The ‘Disease’ of Drug Addiction as the Birthing of the Other in Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Stoker’s *Dracula*

Martina Allen (Frankfurt)

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This paper looks at how two iconic late-Victorian texts, Robert Louis Stevenson’s gothic novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* imagine the effects of psychoactive drugs in terms of a main character’s ‘turning’. Both narratives have been read in the context of the discourse of degeneration as epitomising the struggle between the good/civilised and the bad/savage. What I seek to explore here, however, is the role psychoactive substances are imagined to play in this transformation and how this fed into the emerging view of drug addiction as a disease which dominated drug research and policies for roughly the next hundred years and culminated in the disastrous War on Drugs – a war that is increasingly seen as a vehicle for the persecution of minorities and marginalised groups. I argue that what I call “the disease paradigm of drug use” was beginning to take concrete shape around the turn of the century and these two texts provided some of the most compelling images for the mechanisms thought to underlie addiction by conceptually marrying the anxieties surrounding the unchecked reproduction of allegedly inferior parts of the population to a conception of disease caused by foreign pathogens: from a eugenics point of view, both Dr Jekyll and Lucy Westenra are presented as deeply flawed specimen even before their transformation, exhibiting behavioural traits thought to be indicative of hereditary pathology. While in Dr Jekyll’s case, his concoction (which recalls the then-recent ‘discoveries’ of psychoactive agents such as cocaine, chloral and morphine in European laboratories) gives birth to the degenerate Hyde, the same idea can be identified in the ‘vamping’ of Lucy if one reads vampirism as a metaphor for drug addiction (cf. Susan Zieger). Indeed, the symptomatology of Lucy’s ‘disease’ closely resembles that of female morphinism which was becoming an equally familiar and terrifying condition haunting middle and upper-class families in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In both texts, I argue, drugs are imagined as “the great unhinging agent” (Johann Hari) giving birth to the monstrous other.

Dr. Martina Allen is a post-doctoral researcher and lecturer for English literatures and cultures at the Institute of English and American Studies at Goethe University Frankfurt. Her dissertation thesis was published as *GenReVisions: Genre Experimentation and World-Construction in Contemporary Anglophone Literature* (Winter) in 2020. She co-edited the 2017 anthology *Poetik und Poesie der Werbung* (Transcript) and has published articles mainly on the role of genre in contemporary fiction and literary depictions of drug use. She is currently working on a monograph reappraising opiate use in Victorian literature in connection with the rise of the disease paradigm of drug use.

(Re)Producing the Human: Monstrosity, Artificiality, and the Importance of the Maternal Body in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

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Despite its striking dearth of mother figures, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is a text famously haunted by the specter of maternity. Notably, theorists such as Mary Poovey, Barbara Frey Waxman, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have demonstrated the ways in which motherhood informs and is explored throughout Shelley's novel. However, their analyses focus primarily on psychological and biographical representations of maternity, paying only passing attention to the importance of biological processes of reproduction in the text.

My paper attempts to address this silence, arguing that reproduction, as a natural and bodily process, is vital to *Frankenstein's* construction of humanity and monstrosity. Indeed, Frankenstein's creature attributes much of the prejudice he experiences to his unnatural and artificial origins and looks to more organic processes of reproduction as a form of redemption. That said, the mere possibility that his creature could eventually share in natural processes of procreation is enough to solidify Victor Frankenstein's horror and hatred towards his own creation, as this act threatens to mimic and even surpass the human. In this way, the female body and its capacity to reproduce are transformed into essential battlegrounds on which to define and defend mankind from encroaching threats of science and evolution, rendering the feminine and maternal body important spaces through which to distinguish and preserve the sanctity of one's humanity in the nineteenth century.

Ashni Clayton is a doctoral candidate at Washington University in St. Louis. Her field of study is nineteenth-century British fiction, with an emphasis on Victorian literature and women, gender, and sexuality studies. She is particularly interested in representations of women and domesticity and the ways in which these themes intersect with questions of identity and politics in Victorian novels.

“At such unworthy hands”: Transgenerational (Re-) Productions of the Nation in Scott’s *Waverley* (1814)

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In the age of Romanticism, past civilisations of “primitive savagery” came to symbolise an intrinsic virtue that had faded in civilised societies (Collingwood 87). The general understanding of history and the past shifted from an absolute term to a developing progress that anticipated a utopian future built upon widespread education (Collingwood 84-86). It is in this climate of re-shaping and re-thinking that Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* (1814) is published and establishes the new genre of the historical novel as an educational journey for its hero and readership alike (Millgate 55). The anonymous but decidedly male narrator recounts Waverley’s adventure as he ventures into the Highland past of ‘Sixty Years Since’. The reader accompanies the romantic hero on his journey, starting as a young novice lost in romantic visions of the Scottish countryside and emerging as an experienced man who navigates his surroundings with historical knowledge and expertise reaching beyond the narrator’s (Millgate 54). Emphasised by the expression “Since” in its title, *Waverley* bridges a historical gap between early nineteenth-century England and the second Jacobite Uprisings of 1745 – a seemingly picturesque landscape artificially shaped and reproduced by its Highland residents, in particular Flora MacIvor (Scott 113-14).

This paper aims to investigate the capacity for (re-)productions of national identity through the characters of Flora MacIvor and Rose Bradwardine as portrayed in Scott’s *Waverley* (1814). While Rose acts as civilised and sophisticated interpreter between Waverley and the clan culture he struggles to understand (75), Flora embodies the wild, primitive spirit of the Highlands and the “Celtic Muse” (114) that is said to inhabit the Northern landscape. Waverley’s eventual marriage to Rose and Flora’s flight to a French convent suggest the Anglicised, civilised present as a preferable utopia to the alluring, romantic vision of Scotland’s primitive, savage Jacobite past.

Works Cited

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 Scott, Sir Walter. *Waverley*, edited by Ian Duncan. London, Penguin Books, 2011.

Leonie Jungen is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of English and Linguistics at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. She studied Communication Sciences and English Literature and Culture in Mainz and Edinburgh and obtained her M.A. in 2021 on gender as an aspect of Scottish national identity in the works of Sir Walter Scott and Margaret Oliphant. Her PhD thesis focusses on female identity and transgenerational storytelling in Scotland in the early 19th century.

“My little Now perpetually”: Michael Field’s Rifts in Reproductive Temporality

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As the chronometers of industry, technology and science increasingly dictated the rhythm of Victorian economy, daily routines, and perhaps the human species at large, the ticking of the clock became an all too obstructive reminder of an impassable time (Lysack 7-9). Time was heavily spatialised and conceptually tied to workhouses, the railway, or the home with its scheduled rituals (Ferguson 2). With its imperative on family, childbirth and genealogy, Victorian society acutely followed the rhythm of what Halberstam has termed “repro-time” (5). Time thought of as synchronised and experienced around cycles of birth, maternity and generational transmission follows an inherent “repro-narrativity” (Warner 7) that posits reproduction (inevitably heteronormative) as the most productive goal – for the individual and the nation alike. Victorian literature, in large parts, incorporates this in narratives that unfold in endless lines of marriage plots, kinship rites and tales of childhood and parentage. Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper (Michael Field), however, present a challenge to the dictate of reproductive time. Besides the fact that their genealogical ties as aunt and niece and their presumed queerness upsets the telos of “reprosexuality” (Warner 9), their poetry, this paper argues, provides a most striking case of resistance to the discourse of reproductive timeliness.

To substantiate this, the paper will look at 1) Michael Field’s representation of horology as an oppressive instrument to chronicle procreative cycles and 2) at the metrical fissures and discordances that Field employs to introduce asynchrony and gaps into reproductive temporalities. In Field’s verses, clocks refuse to synchronise with the “tiny trespass” of their irritatingly ticking hands (“Minute-Hand” 16). “Time’s hour-glass” is a mere symbol for the death of children (“Forever” 14) and “Time’s child” is a wrinkled effigy of barren ageing (“Enna’s Cave” 2). The hectic and forward-driven “Tick-tack and beat” in Field’s poems is continuously interrupted by silences and pauses, by lines that come to nothing and thereby disclose a hiatus in and a resistance to the pressure of reproductive time.

Sarah Wegener is currently a research assistant and PhD candidate at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz at the Institute of English Literature and Culture. She studied English and French and is currently working on a PhD thesis on the representation of maternity, reproduction and birth in women-authored poetry from the Victorian period. Her research interests include poetic forms, New Formalism, literary representations of bodies and materiality, gender studies, science and literature and the philosophy of the self and the senses.

A Crisis of Credibility: Class-Based Impacts of Eugenic Thinking on Socially-Marginalised Authors of the *Fin de Siècle*

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Interest in (and, in some cases, support for) eugenic thinking amongst the British intelligentsia at the *fin de siècle* had serious implications for aspiring authors from humble backgrounds. Commentators such as John Ruskin had promulgated essentialist discourses, earlier in the century, presenting artistic sensibility as inherent to elite social status, whilst also vilifying the cultural life of the (primarily lower middle-class) suburbs.¹ Francis Galton's quasi-scientific arguments added further emphasis, creating a climate in which the potential for individual 'genius' among the socially marginalised was denied.² As a result, whilst English literature at the *fin de siècle* was built upon a proud legacy of influential works penned by lower middle-class authors, the first-generation white-collar writers of this period faced a tangible (but largely unacknowledged) crisis of credibility. Acceptance into the *fin de siècle* literary coterie was not an impossibility for authors from humble backgrounds. Powerful discussions of the 'capital values' of social groups based on ancestry, however, created a class-based hierarchy for the validation of artistic endeavour in which the author's social status could relegate his or her literary output to an assumed position of inferiority. Acknowledging that class-based impacts of eugenic thinking on *petit bourgeois* literature of the *fin de siècle* have received comparatively little scholarly attention to date, this paper will analyse how two largely-overlooked lower middle-class authors challenged, problematised and rejected discourses of hereditary determinism in their novels, against the political, scientific and cultural tide.

1 Notably in John Ruskin's, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. (New York: J Wiley, 1865), 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture' (1849), and *Of Vulgarity* published posthumously (London: 1906).

2 This discourse is articulated at length in Francis Galton, *Hereditary genius : an inquiry into its laws and consequences* (London: Macmillan, 1869).

Deborah Giggie is a Postgraduate Research Student at the University of East Anglia, England. Her doctoral project explores how late-Victorian and Edwardian writers from the social periphery represented issues of class. Focusing on the period from 1880 to 1910, her thesis analyses how the social critique of socially-marginalised authors conveyed/encoded criticism of institutionalised elitism/class-based inequality.

Textual and Sexual Reproduction in *Dracula*

Mary Elizabeth Gearen (Cambridge)

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Bram Stoker's 1897 *Dracula* has been read as a comment on empire, on Anglo-Irish relations, on homosexuality, and with an overwhelming variety of Freudian interpretations. This paper will examine an unexplored current in the text, which is its engagement with the Victorian tension for women between the labour of childbirth and labour in the workplace. The novel follows a cohort of men and a lone woman as they pursue the vampire Dracula out of London and across the European continent. The text is the woman, Mina's, brainchild—she collects the journal entries, letters, and observations of her male fellows and reproduces them with her typewriter alongside her own interpretations of events. It is Mina who correctly guesses the path of Dracula's flight because it is only Mina who has consumed the knowledge of the whole group. It is her labour at the typewriter which has enabled her to become the locus of the information network in the text.

The years between 1870 and 1890 saw the number of female typists in the workforce increase by more than 3,000%. English suffrage periodicals including *Shafts* and *Votes for Women* explicitly reference the typewriter as a vehicle for the education of women, and for the emancipation of female workers from the confines of domestic life. The labour of typewriting was almost entirely reserved for unmarried and childless women. Upon marriage, or certainly upon motherhood, women were excluded from labour outside of the home. Mina, recently married and still childless, is reluctantly allowed by the men to participate in the hunt for Dracula, though they fear that this participation puts in jeopardy her femininity. She is described by them as having a 'woman's heart' but a 'man's brain'. The culmination of the text sees not just the neutralisation of Dracula by his death, but also Mina's neutralisation into motherhood. She must eventually set down her typewriter in order to hold her son. She cannot have room for both in her lap.

Mary Elizabeth Gearen is a third year PhD candidate in Intellectual History at the University of Cambridge. She holds an MPhil in Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of Cambridge and a BA(Hons) in English Literature from King's College London. Her doctoral research focuses on the reception by Victorian socialists of evolutionary theory, particularly the implications which the supposed inherency of competition to human nature might have for the cooperative utopias they envisioned. She has published on timekeeping in the novels of Joseph Conrad. In her free time she enjoys sailing, art museums, and—recently—began learning Italian.

Patch Works: Rethinking Myths of Creativity in *Frankenstein*

Franziska Stolz (Munich)

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Victorian literary productions have been eminently shaped by Romantic myths of creativity. A key figure in this context has always been Victor Frankenstein and the fiction of his ground-breaking experiment which has profoundly influenced the cultural imagination of the 19th century. Dr. Darwin looms large in Mary Shelley's intertext and his ideas about spontaneous generation provide a link to Romantic conceptions of genius and original literary creation. However, I want to argue that Shelley's text is crucially critical of this metaphorical connection and instead rethinks and replaces it through a model of textile (inter- and intra) textual (re-) production.

While, as critics have long noted, the final hours leading up to the completion of Frankenstein's creature are evocative of labour before birth, the resulting monstrous body problematises that notion. Monster and text emerge in a procedure of collecting, assembling, and patching together bits and pieces; they are reproductions only in the sense of having been recycled from pre-existing materials. By setting up this *mise en abyme* Shelley both engages with and positions herself against the highly topical conceptions of genius that cultural authorities like Edward Young, William Duff, and William Hazlitt had purported and to which the male writers in her immediate circle, her husband Percy and Lord Byron, were strongly drawn. My paper aims to explore how Shelley's novel takes up the idea of the brain-child and a rhetoric of original creation as spontaneous organic generation to then dispel and displace them by the literary patchwork that her novel performs in its content as well as its narrative form.

Franziska Stolz is a Ph.D. candidate and lecturer at the Department for English and American Studies at LMU Munich. She studied at the UNSW in Sydney (2015) and the LMU Munich (2012–2021) where she completed her M.A. in 2021. Her research interests include literature of the 19th century, poetics of narrative, female authorship, and monster studies. Her Ph.D. project focuses on the discursive connection between monstrosity and family in English literature.

