



CALL FOR PAPERS
VICTORIAN RESURRECTIONS

International Conference 22nd-24th Sep 2022 (University of Vienna)

Deadline for proposals (300 words): 15th May 2022

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Ann Heilmann (University of Cardiff)
Patricia Duncker (University of Manchester)

Death and resurrection as well as the fears, fantasies and fads that surround them, pervade Victorian literature and culture in a myriad of ways. From literary representations of the dead coming back to life, to cultural practices of mourning and memorialising the dead, the Victorian era betrays a striking concern with how to cope with one's mortality. Working-class literature such as penny dreadfuls fictionalised concerns about the illegal trade in corpses led by resurrection men, or body-snatchers, who exhumed corpses to sell them to medical men, most specifically, to anatomists. Gothic texts throughout the 19th century often featured reanimated corpses or the living dead. The rise of spiritualism and the popularity of mediums and séances in the second half of the century complemented upper- and upper-middle-class practices of mourning, while the working-class was confronted with the (financial) impossibility to memorialise their lost ones in what was thought 'the proper way'. Queen Victoria herself mourned Prince Albert for over four decades, famously making her servants lay out his clothes in the morning and bring hot water for his shaving, as if he were about to come back.

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary, cultural, and material practices are guided by a wide range of agendas – revisionist, political, nostalgic, commercial, aesthetically experimental – in their manifold recurrences to the Victorian Age. At the same time, the manifold recurrences of the Victorian age in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary, cultural, and material practices have preserved an interest in the idea of resurrection(s) and its implications. As a cultural phenomenon neo-Victorianism, for instance, could be described as one giant resurrectionist enterprise geared towards a reimagining of the Victorian Age through a wide range of different media and genres. Driven by a desire to fill historiographical gaps, retell the lives of iconic figures or uncover the stories of side-lined,

obscure or marginalized individuals, neo-Victorian appropriations are what Kate Mitchell calls “memory texts”. As such, they simultaneously reflect and shape our perceptions of the Victorian Age by creating specific versions of that past; by selecting which stories are being (re)told and whose voices are being recovered or made heard. These acts of remembrance often serve our need to constitute or reaffirm our social and cultural identities through the idea of a shared past and a common set of values. Neo-Victorian recoveries and (re)assessments of the 19th century are hardly ever ‘innocent’. Instead, they are ideologically charged and reflect the concerns of our present, how we position ourselves with regard to the past, and how our meaning-making activates texts selectively. Neo-Victorian texts and practices participate in the project of producing and consolidating but also revising our cultural memory of the 19th century, contributing to the rich spectrum of Victorian after-lives and after-images in our society.

Topics for papers may touch on but are not limited to:

- the Gothic (the undead, re-awakened mummies etc.)
- resurrection men and body-snatching practices
- Victorian cultural practices surrounding death (spiritualism, séances, mediums)
- Victorian memorial cultures
- neo-Victorian literature’s resurrective practices
- the Empire, ancient cultures & *translatio imperii* (Egypt; Assyria; Greece; Rome)
- 20th/21st century costume drama
- 20th/21st century re-imaginings of Queen Victoria and other iconic Victorian figures
- critical revivals (e.g. the fin-de-siècle Scottish Revival)
- the re-discovery and/or re-evaluation of forgotten Victorian texts
- the re-discovery and/or re-evaluation of forgotten or marginalized Victorian figures
- resurrection of forgotten Victorian traditions and/or social movements
- dark tourism (or thanatourism) in connection with the Victorian era
- (neo-)Victorian literature and biofiction
- Religion/spirituality in (neo-)Victorian literature and biofiction
- neo-Victorianism and cultural memory
- Victorian life writing / writing Victorian lives
- Victorian and neo-Victorian resurrective practices and fame/obscurity
- Victorian afterlives and reputations

Those interested in contributing should send 300-word abstracts for 20-minute papers in English by 15th May 2022 to Sandra Mayer (Sandra.Mayer@oeaw.ac.at) and Sylvia Mieszkowski (sylvia.mieszkowski@univie.ac.at), and include a short bio-bibliographical note (approx. 100 words).

Conference Warming: 22nd Sep

Conference Dinner: 23rd Sep

Conference Fees:

- full fee: 60 Euros
- reduced fee (PhD students): 30 Euros

For practical and organisational information about **VICTORIAN RESURRECTIONS** please check from mid-May 2022 onwards: <http://anglistik.univie.ac.at/victorian-resurrections/>

References:

Böhm-Schnitker, Nadine, and Susanne Gruss. *Neo-Victorian Literature and Culture: Immersions and Revisitations*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Heilmann, Ann, and Mark Llewellyn. *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2009*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Hotz, Mary Elizabeth. *Literary Remains: Representations of Death and Burial in Victorian England*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009.

Kucich, John, and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000.

Lutz, Deborah. *Relics of Death in Victorian Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: CUP, 2017.

Matthews, Samantha. *Poetical Remains: Poets' Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: OUP, 2004.

Mitchell, Kate. *History and Cultural Memory in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Victorian Afterimages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Mole, Tom. *What the Victorians Made of Romanticism: Material Artifacts, Cultural Practices, and Reception History*. New Haven: Princeton UP, 2017.