The Brontës’ Childhood: Fantasy Kingdoms in Tiny Books – Emma Butcher *
Wednesday 6 May – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

This session looks at the Brontës’ childhood writings. Before the siblings wrote their most famous novels, such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, they created the little known fantasy worlds of Angria and Gondal, writing sagas as dramatic and detailed as Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. For this session, I will give a crash course on these kingdoms, which were steeped in violence, passion and betrayal. Together, we will explore the early imaginations of these famous authors, recorded through sketches, paintings and secretive, tiny books, and decide if these juvenile stories preempted some of the greatest novels in literary history.

Morally Corrupting Literature: Victorian Sensation Fiction & Its Afterlives
– Dr Janine Hatter *
Wednesday 13 May – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

While the mid-Victorian literary period has been dominated by Dickens, Eliot and Gaskell, lesser-known popular fiction authors such as Wilkie Collins, Mary Braddon and Ellen Wood are finally coming into view. With their unruly female heroines, mistaken identities and murder plots, the darker, more perilous side to Victorian society emerged. Combined, these authors were credited with creating a whole new genre in the 1860s: Sensation Fiction. This genre merged melodrama and the Gothic with detective fiction to create a hybrid genre that gripped its readers and shocked the Victorian critics. Designed to stimulate the senses, rather than intelligence or morality, it was denounced as morally corrupting literature which ‘brought the literature of the kitchen into the drawing room’. In this session we will explore why the Victorian critics found it so subversive, though readers relentlessly consumed it, drawing comparisons to the emerging genre of Neo-Victorian fiction.

“Don’t mention the war!”: Feminine Fiction and Film of the Forties
– Sue Kennedy
Wednesday 20 May – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

Many women authors of the 1940s seem to have followed their illustrious foremother, Jane Austen, in not mentioning the war, ostensibly placing the personal and domestic ahead of national and political concerns. Fiction by women during and just after the war largely retained a personal focus, although tinged, to a greater or lesser degree with the exigencies of a time of conflict. The overwhelming need for propaganda during and just after the war was fulfilled more directly by film in the form of State sponsored narratives of bravery and patriotism, which certainly did ‘mention the war’. Then, as the war rolled on fantasies of historical ‘Romance’ offered welcome escape from it. This session will sample 1940s fiction by women and a selection of film adaptations to evaluate the influence of propaganda, censorship, patriotism and escapism on the culture of the time.
Summer 2015

Women in Modernism – Ellen Ricketts
Wednesday 27 May – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

For years, the genius behind modernist works of art, literature and other cultural forms was gendered male. Thanks to a wealth of revisionist work carried out by feminist scholars after the advent of the women's liberation movement in the 1970s, this masculine bias has been redressed and we now have a much more nuanced appreciation of women's contribution to this varied, experimental and sprawling movement. This talk will introduce the main tenets of modernism and discuss how it has been viewed critically and constructed as a movement based on collaborative and communal values but one in which the individual genius of the artist is nevertheless still privileged. It will consider how women's contributions to modernism have been seen as posing a challenge to this notion of masculine individualism, and to what extent do women appropriate this position for their own artistic and political purposes? Finally the session will introduce several examples of female literary modernism and encourage a vibrant dialogue between canonical and marginal modernisms as well as between different media and forms.

Tyranny and Gothic Literature – Matthew Crofts *
Wednesday 3 June – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

The Gothic tyrant is one of the mode’s most persistent figures, represented in classic literature, modern horror writing, and even B movies. Tyrants combine both the terror of absolute or unquestionable power with the allure of being able to act exactly as they please, which is morally repellent yet compelling in literature. This talk will present an overview of how the figure of the Gothic tyrant has changed and adapted alongside Gothic fiction, from its origins at the genre’s inception with Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto (1764) to cultural archetypes like Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1897) and its many twentieth century adaptations.

The Narrative Power of Domestic Space – Jackie Goodman
Wednesday 10 June – 3pm to 4.30pm – Lecture Theatre 15 – Wilberforce Building

‘a building...brings with it a set of values, behaviours and expectations that provide the conditions for the activities which take place within its walls’ (Bordieu, 1986). Using five novels written over a one hundred year period, this talk will explore the way in which writers of fiction use domestic space to add layers of meaning to their work. Country houses, flats, bedsits and bedrooms reflect periods of social change and provide clues to the personal challenges confronting their inhabitants. Moving from mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, the status and struggles of women are reflected in their fictional living spaces.

*The Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, (CNCS*)

Sessions marked by an asterisk denote that these speakers are connected with the work of the Centre for Nineteenth Century Studies, which has supported various ventures by its associated postgraduates and postdoctoral researchers. Located in the Department of English the Centre aims to expand and promote research excellence at Hull and to enhance the cultural life of the region by fostering a lively and enterprising research culture at the cutting edge of international and interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of Victorian Studies and the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914). We also wish to support the development of early career and postdoctoral researchers and research students and expand our postgraduate base in Nineteenth-Century and Victorian Studies. All our events are free and open to the general public. For more information visit: http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fass/english/research/centre-for-victorian-studies.aspx. If you would like to discuss, or get involved with, the work of the Centre please contact Dr Jane Thomas, Director of the CNCS, at j.e.thomas@hull.ac.uk

Places are limited so booking is essential. To book a place you can visit the website www.hull.ac.uk/opencampus you can call Nicola Sharp or Jackie McAndrew on 01482 466321/466585 or you could email us at opencampus@hull.ac.uk

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