"Communities":
NNCN Symposium
6 April 2018, Cergy-Pontoise University, France.

Conference Venue:
Cergy-Pontoise University - 33 Boulevard du Port
95011 CERGY-PONTOISE.
Salle des Thèses, Chênes II.

How to get here

8.45 - 9.15 – Conference registration
9.15 - 9.30 – Welcome address - Professor Odile BOUCHER-RIVALAIN, Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).

Workshop 1: Seriality à l’oeuvre.

Chair: François ROPERT

Françoise DUPEYRON-LAFAY – (Paris-Est Créteil University, UPEC).
“Absent, criminal or symbolic communities in Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1892).”

Peggy BLIN-CORDON – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).
“Thomas Hardy, novelist and ‘editor’: from fictional community to reading community.”
Question time

Workshop 2: The warp in the pastoral.

Chair: Peggy BLIN-CORDON

Rosemary MITCHELL - Leeds Trinity and All Saints University.
"Charlotte Yonge and the Parish Church: Constructing a Conservative Community: shaping gender, religious, disabled, national identities in the 19th c."

François ROPERT – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).
"Semel et Semper (...) and I tell him it's a beastly chouse: country house communities under French influence in Lesbia Brandon, A.C. Swinburne’s impossible novel."

Question time

11.15 - Coffee break

11.30 - Keynote Address:

Professor Ruth LIVESEY - Professor of Victorian Literature and Thought, Royal Holloway College, University of London.

"Nineteenth-Century Communities and Rhythms of the Everyday: Theorizing Provincial Fiction with George Eliot."

Chair: Pr. Odile BOUCHER-RIVALAIN

Lunch break 12.30-2pm

2pm - Parallel sessions: Forms, Aims and Roles of Communities.

Workshop 1: Political communities.
Salle 230 dit Salle Ananzie Chênes II

Chair: Stéphane GUY

Françoise BAILLET – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).
"Lines of Nationhood: (re)drawing the national community in the context of the 1867 Reform Act. The example of The Tomahawk."

Frank RYNNE – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).
"A community of revolutionaries? The Land War in Ballydehob 1879-1882."

Yann BELIARD – Paris 3 Sorbonne-Nouvelle University.
"The port workers of Hull: the making of community, 1850s-1920s."

Farouk LAMINE – Nantes University.
"Orwell's Common Decency: a conception of the English Community."

Question time

Workshop 2: Working and cultural communities.
Salle des Thèses - Chênes II.

Chair: Rosemary MITCHELL
Alan McNEE – Institute of English Studies, University of London
“Travelling Communities: Irreverence & Class Tension in late-Victorian Visitors’ Books.”

Di DRUMMOND – Leeds Trinity and All Saints University.
“Culture, Compliance and Dissent in Railway Company Communities in England, 1838-1900.”

Karina BENAZECH WENDLING – (EHPE – Paris 8 Vincennes).
“A City upon a Hill: Protestant Missions in Ireland and the disruptions of traditional communities in the mid-19th c.”

Laurence DUBOIS – Paris Nanterre University.
“The Hanwell Asylum in the 1840s.”

Question time

3.40 - Coffee Break

4pm – Plenary session: Visualising communities

Chair : Françoise BAILLET

Lucy Ella ROSE – University of Surrey, UK.
“A Community of Artists, Authors, and Activists : The Syrett Sisters and the Yellow Book Group in the 1890s.”

Marty GOULD – University of South Florida – Brunel University.
“Communal Connections in Cinematic Adaptations of Dickens’s novel Great Expectations (1860-1)”.

Question time

5.15pm – Closing remarks
Françoise DUPEYRON-LAFAY – (Paris-Est Créteil University, UPEC).

“Absent, criminal or symbolic communities in Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1892)”.

The series of twelve short detective stories collected as The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1892), after being published serially in The Strand Magazine from July 1891 to June 1892, is characterized by the absence of real communities. The very few notable exceptions in the collection concern criminal organizations such as “The Red-Headed League”, the KKK and its deadly spider’s web in “The Five Orange Pips”, and the gang of German forgers in “The Engineer’s Thumb”. The lost sense of reassurance produced by belonging to a community has, of course, much to do with the fact that seven out of twelve of the short stories take place in an urban setting. Besides some of Holmes’s clients – Violet Hunter, the governess of “The Copper Beeches” or Victor Hatherley, the engineer of “The Engineer’s Thumb” – represent ideal preys since they live quite alone in London, without any ties or relatives.

But even in the stories of the collection set in the countryside, such as “The Speckled Band”, “The Five Orange Pips”, or “The Copper Beeches”, rural communities are not evoked either and the protagonists usually live in complete seclusion in large isolated houses. In close-knit, pre-industrial and rural communities, members know and recognize one another, which involves familiarity, visibility and sometimes surveillance (Cf. Stephen Knight’s Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction). Therefore, the disappearance or absence of this type of social organization appears as a fertile breeding-ground for criminal acts.

The very few non-criminal communities briefly mentioned in the stories are Freemasons (in “The Red-Headed League”), the Sporting Times readers (in “The Blue Carbuncle”), race-goers and horse lovers in “A Scandal in Bohemia”. These micro-communities primarily seem to serve as clues since they represent sociocultural, psychological and behavioural markers that the detective reads and deciphers. They enable him to make progress in his investigations, or to get a more thorough understanding of the personality, habits and background of his clients.

Holmes himself does not belong to any community. He is an individualist who leads a solitary life, except for his professional relations and his friendship with Watson. His cultivated isolation is one of the signs of modernity just as, as a detective, he is a new hero of modernity. Paradoxically, though, the lonesome and unconventional Holmes plays a healing role, as the weaver or at least mender of the social “fabric” for the male middle-class readers of The Strand Magazine for whom the stories were written. Indeed, he defends and preserves social and moral values, threatened both in the stories and in late Victorian society. Therefore, The Adventures reflect Conan Doyle’s own values, and, through Holmes, they recreate and restore the feeling of belonging to an ideological and ethical community.
“Thomas Hardy, novelist and ‘editor’: from fictional community to reading community.”

Although Hardy has long ceased to be categorised as a “regionalist writer”, when considering the idea of community in Hardy, recollections of the novels conjure up images of a preserved, harmonious, self-contained and self-sustained rural community, threatened by modern times. This community is also memorable for sharing tradition and folklore, for being dedicated to the collective working of the land, and is encapsulated in picturesque and poetic characters emblematic of the heath in particular (Christian Cantle, Diggory Venn, Farmer Troutham, Marty South...) and later, of the imaginary country of Wessex in general.

Such a reminiscence might partly owe its persistence to the generic veneer of pastoralism of some of novels (Under the Greenwood Tree, The Woodlanders), but more likely, to relentless celebration of the natural bond linking the characters of this community to their environment, a bond rendered perfectly explicit in the categorisation by the author himself, of his most famous novels “Novels of Character and Environment” section of the “Wessex Edition” in 1912. Another explanation might be the fact that the community of “rustics”, as Hardy called the dwellers of the heath, is located in a specific and idiosyncratic setting, since Hardy fictionalized the topography of an existing territory expanding beyond the borders of Dorset. Such uniformity (of façade, at least) as we see it now, is also the product of substantial revisions by the author. Mainly after the first publication of many of his novels and short stories, Hardy engaged in a patient weaving of threads, building of echoes in plots, strengthening of ties between characters in different novels, multiplying literary “thresholds” to give consistency to a work of several decades.

After 1896, “Hardy the novelist” turns into “Hardy the would-be editor”. In so doing, he subsequently gives shape to yet another type of community: the community of “model Hardy readers”. Indeed, the revisions significantly alter the outline of what Eco calls the “target” reader, as the author means to appropriate a reading community quite different from that imposed by the magazines (The Cornhill, Belgravia, Macmillan’s...) and publishing houses at the time of first publication, which originally imposed their editorial line in connexion with the reading public their journals or novels were supposed to address. Such a post-publication textual strategy incidentally reshapes the image of a literary “œuvre”, but also encourages the reader to connect the events, family names, and places linked with the Wessex community and, to put it trivially, almost as an insider, to feel “at home” from one novel to the other.

Charlotte Mary Yonge ( ), a committed Tractarian spinster best known as the writer of domestic fictions such as The Daisy Chain and The Heir of Redclyffe, was recently been the subject of much
reassessment by critics such as Gavin Budge, Tamara Wagner, and Susan Walton. They have demonstrated both the intellectual sophistication and the significance and impact of her work on the shaping of gender, religious, disabled, and national and imperial identities in the nineteenth century. This paper, part of a broader project on the character of the conservative imagination in the works of lesser-known writers and painters including Lord John Manners, Daniel Maclise, and Alfred Austin, will consider Yonge’s representation of the parish church as a site for the construction of a traditional Tory community, particularly in a rural setting. Key themes will be:

- **Naturalising the social order**: how Yonge linked religious rituals and practices of the church to the natural rhythms and cycle of the agricultural calendar, and represented the natural world as symbolic of religious truth and social order.

- **Historicising the social order**: how Yonge represented the church as a continuous presence in rural lives and landscapes, eliding or reversing discontinuities such as the Reformation.

- **Situating the social order**: how Yonge figured the parish church as the physical heart of the community and its spaces as the site for the reiteration of the ‘chain of being’: quite literally the place where social order was built.

A chronological and generic range of Yonge’s works will be used to examine her representation of the parish church, including *Abbeychurch, or Self-Control and Self-Conceit* (1844), *The Herb of the Field* (1853), *Heartsease; or the Brother’s Wife* (1854), *The Daisy Chain* (1856), *Hopes and Fears* (1860), *English Church History, Adapted for Use in Day and Sunday Schools* (1883), *The Pillars of the House* (1873), and *An Old Woman’s Outlook in a Hampshire Village* (1892).

**François ROPERT – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).**

Semel et Semper (...) and I tell him it’s a beastly chouse: country house communities under French influence in Lesbia Brandon, A.C. Swinburne’s impossible novel.

*Lesbia Brandon* is an autobiographical novel by Algernon Charles Swinburne. It is also an impossible, endlessly funny novel. It challenges genres and genders in many ways. The prose in it is interspersed with verse and lyrics. It comprises the script of a cross-gender pantomime. It includes dialogues in English and French, scattered with demotic Latin and slang, hardly fit for the stage, while suiting the cabaret better.

Swinburne never finished the novel. The title is apocryphal and belongs to a first edition, ‘for private circulation only’, of part of the original MS as it was bungled by a notorious book thief. Yet the book is no spoof, since its existence is documented extensively in letters by Swinburne in particular. The MS is today extant in the form of 178 leaves of various papers, mostly watermarked foolscap, available at the British Library (Ashley MS 5264. Also Ashley MS 1953 for the lyrics). The dates are 1859, 1863, 1864, 1865, and 1866.

Letters also evidence hints of a community of contemporary readers, or rather audiences, Swinburne regularly reporting on the feedback he got after reading the MS in settlements to friends and relatives in London throughout the 1860s. Our hypothesis is that the novel’s incomplete, fragmentary state is no accident. Nor is it primarily linked to the nature of the project. Nor even to a lack thereof! Nor again to the writer’s incapacity to carry out his project! The narrative shows no signs of such blocks or overall failure,
but it unfolds serially, *semel et semper* (once and always) ... as if according to the motto of the once Catholic Swinburne family. This motto seems to underscore the seriality of the novel. It might be the only adequate title for it!

Or again: the novel wobbles like a lopsided feat of cabinet working, its various and sundry parts defiantly bound together, as if out of 'time out of joint', or through nothing but the amount of 'play' that makes the novel wobble, like some strange closet bursting with skeletons — ‘(...) and I tell him it’s a beastly chouse’. The term 'chouse', repeated four times in the novel, evidences a puzzling community of slang and French. It sounds like a gamey burden (of sins) that belongs with the country house people born and bred there: *Roman des origines et origines du roman*.

Or again: the narrative unspools like «(...) un câble qui maintient le navire à quai, et ce câble est fait de fibres, cependant sa force ne lui vient pas d'une certaine fibre qui le parcourait d'un bout à l'autre, mais du fait qu'il y a un nombre considérable de fibres qui se chevauchent. » (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Le cahier bleu et le cahier brun*, tr. fr. M. Goldberg et J. Sackur, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, p. 150).

The paper purports from here to question the drive of the obtaining community of meaning in Swinburne’s text (as frayed strands), notably as that drive makes itself metaphysical through humour, bent as it is on embracing, or again crocheting in multiplicities. Wittgenstein’s concept of *Sprachspiel*, or language-game, will be used as philosophical background to questioning the role of language in that regard.

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**References:**


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**Professor Ruth LIVESEY — Professor of Victorian Literature and Thought. Royal Holloway College, University of London.**

**Nineteenth-Century Communities and Rhythms of the Everyday: Theorizing Provincial Fiction with George Eliot.**

This presentation examines the rise of English provincial fiction in the mid-nineteenth century. In contrast to the strongly marked regional fictions of Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott, or the Bronte sisters, provincial fiction imagined a community held together by the subdued rhythms of the everyday. Regional fiction engaged readers with an aesthetics of difference and distance, in the form of dialect, local custom and landscape. By contrast, the outlines of English provincial fiction as it took shape from the 1850s onwards offered something else altogether. In an era of economic instability and imperial expansion, provincial fiction inscribed an idea of introspective
community held together by the routine interactions of professional work, social visiting, and family obligation. Rather than economy or state, the communities of provincial fiction are structured by the autonomous geographies of power of the Church of England, in the shape of cathedral cities such as Trollope’s Barchester, Oliphant’s Carlingford Chronicles, and Eliot’s *Scenes of Clerical Life* and *Middlemarch*.

The paper takes as a case study Eliot’s first foray into fiction: *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857). It will trace Eliot’s debt to Gaskell’s *Cranford* (1851-4) but also mark out how Eliot innovated new forms of provincial fiction in these first stories. Key to her innovation, I shall argue, is her aesthetics of middleness in realist form. English provincial fiction of the 1850s and 1860s, I suggest, was a vital means of imagining a stable middle class community, resilient to change and writing its own destiny in the face of global uncertainties. But this writing of the middle went beyond the novels’ subject matter: it is to provincial fiction in this period that we turn to find our examples of classic nineteenth-century English realism. That literary development, I suggest, is an effect of provincial fiction’s concern with writing of, about, and within an imagined middle.

The paper will close with an analysis of the reception of Eliot’s *Scenes* by her own community and the local provincial press. Eliot’s home town of Nuneaton and its parishes were so lightly disguised in the fiction that the publication was the cause of dissension, controversy, and permanent self-exile for the author. Communities, and provincial ones in particular, for Eliot, were never an uninflected good.

Françoise BAILLET – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).

“Lines of Nationhood: (Re)drawing the national community in the context of the 1867 Reform Act. The example of *The Tomahawk*.”

At a time when contemporaries discussed the social order with “with unprecedented urgency, intensity and anxiety,” in particular among the among middle-class groups, the Victorian periodical press played an active role in the shaping of class, gender and national identities. “Who was being brought within the pale of the constitution,” Hall, McClelland and Rendall remark in *Defining the Victorian Nation*, “was a particular man whose definition—the social, political and moral qualities he was thought to carry, his perceived relationship to processes of government and politics—was crucial to the redefinition of what the political nation was and might become”.

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In the pages of Punch, The Illustrated London News, and later on The Graphic (1869), the British nation appeared as a collective construct, shaped by an imagined community of readers, critics, and artists brought together through the act of seeing, discussing and creating.

Edited by William À Beckett and largely illustrated by Matthew Somerville Morgan (1837-90), The Tomahawk was launched only a few months before the House of Lords agreed to pass Disraeli’s Reform Act (Aug. 15, 1867). Although favourable to a degree of extension of the franchise, the short-lived journal (1867-70) saw the admission of working men to the political process as a threat to the order of the Victorian social fabric, and expressed its distrust – and even fear - of the Reform League through several cartoons, among which ‘Vox Populi’ or ‘A Bully that Must be Put Down’ (7 December 1867).

This paper will examine The Tomahawk’s (re)drawing of the national community in this specific context, focusing in particular on the collective mapping out of social and political territories. Both inclusive and exclusive, the journal’s interpretive communities collectively but unevenly shaped a new brand of British citizenship. But beyond the networks structured by texts and images existed other systems of connections. Tracing Matt Morgan’s cartoons as well as A Beckett’s texts for The Tomahawk allows the researcher to uncover the width and scope of Victorian artistic and journalistic associations, a close-knit group with a distinct cast of mind, social and political.

Frank RYNNE – Cergy-Pontoise University (AGORA).

“A Community of revolutionaries? The Land War in Ballydehob 1879-1882”.

In early 1880 Ballydehob, Co. Cork presented a united front in the face of extreme poverty and deprivation caused by three years of bad harvests. Landlords, tenants, townspeople and country people, priest and pastors all seemed to work for the common good. In the same period a national movement fronted by Charles Stuart Parnell and run by members and supporters of the Irish Republican Brotherhood was organising and fundraising internationally ostensibly to campaign for tenant rights under the banner of the Irish National Land League.

This paper will examine the changes in community relationships and the creation of a new order in the village and district over the course of 1880 and 1881. This grassroots movement centred on the Ballydehob branch of the Irish National Land League attracted both protestant and catholic tenants among its supporters but it upset the old order. Among the main targets were
Landlord/Magistrates residing in the community, employees of the government and anyone who employed by them. The reaction of certain landlords to the situation in Ballydehob was raised in parliament and highlighted the social tensions that had always existed under the veneer of community spirit and order.

Yann BELIARD – Paris 3 Sorbonne-Nouvelle University.

“Class and community in the port of Hull (1870s – 1920s)”.

The making of a British working class, though it was a macroscopic process taking place on a national and even international scene, was made of an infinity of local, microscopic processes – the making of myriad working-class communities – that deserve to be studied both for themselves and in relation to that wider evolution.

How do the concepts of class and community relate? This paper, by examining the case of Hull – the third British port in 1900 – will seek to explore some aspects of that complex relationship.

Indeed the sense of community that prevailed among Hull workers in the early Victorian age was not necessarily based on class. If asked what “community” they belonged to, many would surely have mentioned their professional or religious group before anything else. Besides, the port of Hull being a place where the labour force was formed by successive waves of migration, most of those labourers had more reason to feel part of a national, regional, linguistic and / or cultural community than of any “working-class community”.

This paper will show how a series of industrial struggles in the period under study led to a relative unification of Hull workers, so that, for a while at least, the pre-existing senses of community were superseded by, or melted into, a sense of belonging linked to class. The older understandings of the word “community”, however, did not all die out in Hull – and the word has taken on new meanings since.

Farouk LAMINE – Nantes University.

“Orwell’s Common Decency: a conception of the English Community”.

This paper deals with a fundamental principle of George Orwell's moral thought, namely the principle of common decency. It designates the faculty of the ordinary or common people — in opposition to intellectuals to make the right moral judgment intuitively.
This principle, picked up by some contemporary philosophers (Michea, Zizek), has triggered interminable debates on the (in)consistency of such moral utterance. The aim of this paper is to argue that Orwell's common decency cannot be fully grasped without reference to a historically and geographically situated community, i.e. the English working class of the first half of the twentieth century.

Bibliography:


Alan McNEE – Institute of English Studies, University of London

‘Travelling Communities: Irreverence & Class Tension in late-Victorian Visitors’ Books’.

As access to leisure time and travel expanded in the late nineteenth century, more Victorians from a wider section of society were able to take holidays in their own country (and to a lesser extent on Continental Europe). The visitors’ books of hotels and inns where these visitors stayed provide a rich source of material about their travel experiences, the attitudes and values they brought with them, and the inter-class antagonisms which often surfaced as a result of the enforced proximity of very different visitors in these establishments. Visitors’ books provided a rare unedited and unmediated opportunity for people of all backgrounds to record their impressions, and sometimes to poke fun at their fellow travellers. For the historian, they provide evidence of a virtual community of travellers and tourists, sharing information and impressions and sometimes expressing discontent, irreverence, and impatience with each other and with the whole experience of travel. My paper will draw on extensive archival research in the visitors’ books of British inns and hotels that were popular with visitors in the late nineteenth century, demonstrating how irreverence and debunking are as common as awe and wonder in this neglected sub-genre of travel writing.

This paper will be based on my work as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of English Studies (IES), part of the University of London’s School of Advanced Study, where I am pursuing research on the theme of irreverence in nineteenth-century literature and culture, with a
particular emphasis on travel narratives. It will also draw on material from my 2017 book *The New Mountaineer in Late Victorian Britain: Materiality, Modernity, and the Haptic Sublime*, part of Palgrave Macmillan’s ‘Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture’ series.

**Di DRUMMOND – Leeds Trinity and All Saints University.**

“Culture, Compliance and Dissent in Railway Company Communities in England, 1838-1900”

During the Victorian period a new form of community centred on the railway industry sprang up in Britain. Ranging from small groups of cottages provided for employees and their families, to ‘railway towns’ such as Swindon and Crewe where workshops employed as many as 14,000, initially these communities complied with the demands of the railway companies. However in time they developed organisations and ideals that were often at odds with these, generating cultures of dissent, and forces for change.

The proposed paper will explore how these railway communities functioned, considering how these cultures of compliance and of dissent were generated through a range of factors. These include employer-employee relations on the railways and in their workshops; political organisations, trade unions and churches within rail communities; relationships between company workers within the rail towns or geographically dispersed across an entire rail network; and finally, within the ‘railway family’ itself. This draws on my own research into ‘railway towns’, together with work carried out by others on ‘railway communities’ (Dudley Clark PhD on the Taff Vale Railway), and on the ‘railway family’ (Hannah Reeves PhD).

**Karina BENAZECH WENDLING – (EHPE – Paris 8 Vincennes).**

“ ‘A City upon a Hill’. Protestant Missions in Ireland and the disruptions of traditional communities in the mid-19th c.”

While the concept of community implies a bond, uniting or connecting a group of individuals who share common characteristics, it conversely draws a bordering line between the inside and the outside, what is common and different, between distinct communities. In his 1887 book *Community and Society*, Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) distinguished between the ‘natural’ gathering of individuals within the Gemeinschaft, a group inherited from tradition, and the commitment to the Gesellschaft, meant to promote specific interests.

In 19th-century Ireland, the issue of religious conversion questioned the traditional demarcations of religious affiliations by promoting self-determination and individual discernment. Established
in the South and the West, Protestant missions disrupted the traditional identity of the religious communities and territoriality. Indeed, the increasing amount of conversions led to the creation of new organisms identified as ‘colonies’ of converts. Since they developed innovative methods of organisation, but also depended on the support of landlords, Protestant missions stirred strong opposition from the Catholic elite, who denounced British imperialism, aiming at eradicating Catholicism from Ireland. Hence, the missions were accused of corrupting the souls of the poor population to get converts in times of crisis.

This ‘Protestant Crusade’ has been considered in the literature as a cultural struggle (Bowen, 1978), or the armed wing of Protestant imperialism (Whelan, 2005), without thoroughly considering the impact of conversion on the definition of collective identity. This paper, prompted by the analysis of a large corpus of primary sources, argues that this ‘war for souls’ also originated from opposite views on the individual and its status within the community, thus catalysing the underlying antagonism between the British State and Catholic nationalism. Through the study of the Dingle Mission, it will explore the ‘City upon a hill’ as a redefinition of the religious community, to identify the dynamic process of this living organism, and to analyse the resistance and revolutions it prompted during the Great Irish Famine.

Laurence DUBOIS – Paris Nanterre University.

“The Hanwell Asylum in the 1840s”

Whether a lunatic asylum should be considered as a proper community is highly debatable. There are indeed some objective criteria that would undoubtedly define asylum life as a certain type of community life: people living together, under the same roof, sharing daily activities and forming a specific group. Nevertheless, what makes it quite difficult to conceive any asylum population as a true community is a limitation that could be applied to all places of forced community life (such as prisons or hospitals): the fact that people never actually chose to be part of this so-called “community” and have no common project or real sense of belonging. In the case of psychiatric institutions in general, the only thing people have in common is their mental illness. There is thus a lack of shared purpose or free choice that makes it delicate to consider them as fully fledged communities, but this paper will analyse how Hanwell pauper lunatic asylum, notwithstanding these limitations, may be seen as an exception in the Victorian psychiatric landscape and may indeed be better understood as a planned community. This is mainly due to the singular political background of Dr John Conolly, its superintendent from 1839 to 1852. Not only did he change his patients’ daily life by giving them more autonomy and freedom of movement through his “non-restraint” therapeutic programme, but he also conceived a whole range of activities – including education – that were part of a more ambitious scheme for social emancipation and/or rehabilitation. The whole process was surprisingly similar to the experiment carried out at New Lanark mills by Robert Owen at the beginning of the century. This may explain why Owen himself allegedly paid a visit to Conolly when he took office at Hanwell in 1839, accompanied by William Pare, who was soon to become the governor of Queenwood, the only community to be officially supported by the Owenite movement. One may then legitimately wonder to what extent Hanwell Asylum could be considered as a non-official Owenite community, embedded in a wider social and political context than might be expected when dealing with a medical institution.
Lucy Ella ROSE – University of Surrey, UK.

“A Community of Artists, Authors, and Activists : The Syrett Sisters and the Yellow Book Group in the 1890s.”

Combining literary and art historical approaches, this paper will explore the creative partnerships and wider creative community of the little-known Syrett Sisters: five cohabiting artists, writers and suffragists. Netta Syrett (1865-1943) was a prolific New Woman writer and esteemed contributor to The Yellow Book in the 1890s along with the likes of Max Beerbohm and Henry James. Netta was a close friend of famous Yellow Book illustrator Aubrey Beardsley’s sister Mabel, who introduced her to the magazine. Netta and Mabel worked together as teachers at the Polytechnic School for Girls in Langham Place, and Mabel and Aubrey encouraged one another’s creative careers; Mabel joined Aubrey in his artistic exploration of London and he encouraged her theatrical aspirations. Nellie Syrett, an artist who owned drawings by Aubrey Beardsley, contributed an illustration to The Yellow Book and even designed its cover in 1896. She illustrated her sister’s fairy stories as well as those of militant suffragette Evelyn Sharp (who had also published in The Yellow Book), making connections with leaders of the escalating women’s suffrage movement.

Through an analysis of life writing, fiction and archival material, this paper will trace the development of these interconnected, interdisciplinary creative partnerships and their move into controversial artistic, bohemian and suffrage circles. It will discuss the subversive content of The Yellow Book - with its links to Oscar Wilde, Aestheticism and Parisian decadence - which attracted a reading and writing community of its own. Specifically, I will show how Netta’s proto-modernist and proto-feminist stories are aesthetics, dealing with shocking themes such as adultery and highlighting the constructedness of gender roles. By presenting the crossovers of coteries and intersections of communities, this paper aims to reveal a wider nineteenth-century creative network and offer a broader understanding of Victorian-Edwardian literature, art, feminism and culture.

Marty GOULD – University of South Florida – Brunel University.

“Communal Connections in Cinematic Adaptations of Dickens’s novel Great Expectations (1860-1)”.

Twentieth-century cinematic transfers of Great Expectations have tended to turn Dickens’s bildungsroman to larger nationalist purpose. A story of identity and development, of desired and unwanted affiliations, of grappling with the traumatic legacies of the past and of forging a new future, Great Expectations is teeming with potential political resonance. My paper looks at the representation of the individual’s relationship to community in two twentieth-century film adaptations of Great Expectations: An Orphan’s Tragedy (1955) and Mr. Pip (2012), the film adapted from the Lloyd Jones novel of the same title.
Filmed in Hong Kong and starring Bruce Lee as young Frank (the Pip figure), *An Orphan’s Tragedy* offers a reading of its source text as a critical commentary on social inequality under Western capitalism. As a Western writer, Dickens was regarded with suspicion in post-revolutionary China, but *An Orphan’s Tragedy* recuperates *Great Expectations* as a realist text that endorses communal service over individual self-interest, an anti-capitalist message in line with China’s communist ideology.

New Zealand novelist Lloyd Jones’s novel *Mr. Pip* is an object lesson in adaptation—how active readerly engagement transforms static texts into portable cultural property. Adamson’s film adaptation, also entitled *Mr. Pip*, refines that message, exploring how adaptations make literary texts available for individual and communal appropriation. The film demonstrates an active form of literacy that gives readers access to literary texts as structures with which they can frame their own life experiences and understand their cultural histories. In the process Matilda finds herself torn between different communities, the community of Dickens readers and the community in which she has been raised. Where Jones ends his novel ambiguously, Adamson offers more concrete evidence that Matilda ultimately manages to reconnect her adopted readerly community with the community of her birth.