

# Nineteenth-Century Transmedia Practices

International Symposium  
30 January – 1 February 2020

## Venues

### 30 January

Hs 1, Universitätsring 1  
(main building), 1010 Wien

### 31 January

SER 6, Institut für Anglistik  
und Amerikanistik, Spitalg. 2  
Hof 8.3 (Campus), 1090 Wien

### 1 February

SER 4, Institut für Anglistik  
und Amerikanistik, Spitalg. 2  
Hof 8.3 (Campus), 1090 Wien

## Organizers

Prof. Monika Pietrzak-Franger  
(University of Vienna) & team  
Prof. Christina Meyer (FU Berlin)



<https://anglistik.univie.ac.at/research/conferences/nineteenth-century-transmedia-practices/>

## Abstracts

### Manon Burz-Labrande: From the *String of Pearls* to the *Fiend of Fleet Street*: Sweeney Todd's 1847 Transmedial Trajectory

Recent popular culture has drawn the words ‘Penny Dreadful’ back into the limelight thanks to the eponymous TV series created by John Logan in 2014, which brought the originally serialised literary format in contact with modern media practices while preserving a link to their storytelling tradition. Before this revival, penny dreadfuls spent over a century excluded from public discourse and academic attention alike; but the popular texts reached staggeringly high sales numbers at the time of their publication, meeting a growing readership and reacting to changing patterns of literary consumption at a time when an ever-growing taste for blood was materialising in Victorian entertainment. Interestingly, although the rise of penny dreadful literature hinges on the rise of literacy, some of their stories circulated across media instantaneously, and assumed a form of independence from the written page that might seem at odds with their very nature. This paper will consider *The String of Pearls: A Romance* (1846-47), a penny dreadful whose protagonist (Sweeney Todd) circulated across media rather successfully through the twentieth- and twenty-first century; but which was also transposed to the Victorian stage by George Dibdin Pitt as early as 1847. To clarify, the play was not simply simultaneous to the publication of the original story, but it was actually performed even before the story itself had reached its last weekly instalment. From the page to the stage, this eagerness to utilise the penny dreadful’s success as soon as humanly possible therefore had to involve a form of ‘rebranding’ (by tweaking the original title) as well as some creative license, since the end of the original story was not known at the time the play started running. This analysis will draw on Sharon Aronofsky Weltman’s work in the special issue of *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* that she dedicated to the Sweeney Todd melodrama (in 2011), and bring the original penny dreadful text in direct dialogue with the Dibdin Pitt play. I will first explore the circumstances and the characteristics of

this transmedialisation process, in order to establish how the two pieces could coexist and what their coexistence meant for the 1840s Victorian entertainment landscape. The consequences that this transmedia practice bore on the story's plot development and characters, but also on its originally serialised aesthetics, will then be under scrutiny. This transposition from one medium to another reasserts some original themes, disposes of others, and enhances tragic possibilities while at the same time shifting the whole focus of the tale. I will examine how these mechanisms also shed light on the target audience and on the period's ethos, demands, and needs at the beginnings of mass media frenzy. I contend that this case of instantaneous transmedialisation in 1847 comes to challenge the terms of adaptation and appropriation, and that it managed to bridge the different forms of lower-class entertainment, from the long-standing tradition of gaffs and theatres to a new relationship with the physical page.

#### **Michael Connerty: "Funniosities": Hollywood Slapstick Comedy and Early British Comics**

Beginning in 1920, Amalgamated Press in the UK, began publishing two companion comics, *Film Fun* and *the Kinema Comic*. Both relied heavily on the presentation in comic strip form of short narratives featuring stars of American silent comedy, including Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Buster Keaton and Mabel Normand. These strips proved popular with readers, reflecting the increasing global hegemony of Hollywood cinema during this period. In contrast to the films in which they were appearing, the cartoon incarnations of these performers were endowed with speech via the balloons that had become commonplace in UK comics during the previous two decades. The dynamics of the strips themselves, created by artists like George Wakefield and G.M. Payne, are rooted in British comic traditions, as exemplified by the music hall- itself also a source for American screen comedy, via Charlie Chaplin. This paper focuses on the various ways in which the characters and screen personas of these figures were adapted and reoriented towards the substantially different medium of (children's) comics, and cultural terrain of 1920s Britain. From a Film Studies

perspective, these comics provide a powerful sense of the reception of imported American entertainment in Britain during the early years of cinema, and of how a medium which predated it, as the comic strip did, was able to absorb and channel its influence. The strips provide us with early examples of transmedia figures, accessible by the public across a variety of 'platforms', resulting in an interpenetration of cross-promotional strategies, fan activity and the industrial star system, that has a contemporary resonance as an early example of 'convergence culture'. While film comedy and the comic strip have often been critically linked at this point in their evolution, these examples serve as useful test cases regarding the differences between the two in their respective approaches to narrative and action.

#### **Roxana Elena Doncu & Robert Matthias Erdbeer: Crossing (B)orders: Transmediality as Transfer Across Art and Science in the Work of Nicolae Minovici"**

Nicolae Minovici (1868–1941) played an important role in the development of the modern Romanian medical system, as the founder of the first ambulance service in Bucharest (and the Balkans) organized after the Viennese model, of the first emergency hospital, and together with his brother Mina, as the theorist and founder of criminology and forensic medicine. His interest in science and social activism went hand in hand with a love for art (he founded the first museum of folk art) and weird experiments (like self-hanging). Both in his theoretic research and didactic activity he made frequent use of photography and drawing, as well as displays of his 'collectibles'. For a contemporary historian of science, Minovici's eclectic practices, oscillating between scientific rationality and what has been called 'modern esotericism' open a window into the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'frenzy of the visible', when science reinforced its narrative by means of the new technical inventions. Apart from introducing dactiloscropy and judicial photography into Romanian forensic medicine, Minovici invested a great deal of personal interest and effort in his research, which may appear 'weird' at first sight: his self-hanging experiments were not only extensively documented by photographs taken by his assistants, they were accompanied by

'mystical' drawings made by Minovici himself (a former student of the School of Belle Artes and an anatomic illustrator for the dissection room) of the angels that reside at the 'border between worlds'. Another controversial issue both for his contemporaries and the now ethical turn in medical history is his extensive collection of tattoos – pieces of tattooed skin – that he harvested while working at the Bucharest morgue, a collection that served as the basis for his groundbreaking PhD thesis on *Tattoos in Romania* (1898). Minovici's versatile approach to science was anything but orthodox in the context of the day, when the concept of objectivity and rationality was the cornerstone of every scientific practice. He switched as easily between different media as he did between his scientific, artistic and social interests. By analyzing Minovici's transmedial practices together with his general inclination towards border-crossing and innovation, we will show how he managed to transfer and translate various esthetic/metaphysical contents into the domain of science, by capitalizing on the 'frenzy of the visible', the need and demand for visual evidence that made up what Daston and Galison called 'mechanical objectivity' in science. Thus, in the work of Minovici transmediality opened a channel of communication between two seemingly opposite (and mutually exclusive) narratives, those of art and science.

#### **Alex Fitch: Tracking Ally Sloper in and Across Different Media**

Although not the first serialised comic strip or reoccurring personality in a nineteenth-century magazine, Ally Sloper was the first British multimedia sensation, a character, who moved between different print media – the popular periodical (*Judy*) and a variety of his own titles between 1867 and 1916 – and who moved outside its original carrier medium in the form of different consumer wares. Sloper merchandise included, among other things, greetings cards, condiment bottles, walking sticks and tie pins. Furthermore, Sloper puppets, masks and performances were seen on stage in music halls, comedy revues and pantomimes by the late nineteenth century, and on the cinema screen between 1898 and 1921. This paper will look at when and how Sloper moved back and forth between print and 'real life' with later Sloper

performances by actors and activists influencing the character's appearances in print. Sloper was originally created by Charles Henry Ross and greatly developed by Isabelle Émilie de Tessier, but the character quickly spread outside print media. In my paper I aim to track the 'social agents' involved in Sloper's 'career' – artists, readers, actors, printers, lithographers, advertisers, toy manufacturers and more –, reflect on questions of authorship, and tackle questions regarding the specific quality of Sloper's transmediality.

#### **Marie Léger-St-Jean: Transmediation into Toy Theatre as a Force for the Preservation of Early Melodrama**

Toy theatre was a common pastime in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England as in other Western countries. It required children and teenagers to buy printed sheets with images of the characters in different postures and the various scenes of a play, usually an early melodrama. They would then colour them, and cut up the characters to paste them on cardboard. On a miniature wooden stage, they could enact the plays by following the instructions of the book of words (similar to a playtext), placing the proper scenes as backdrop and moving the paper figures along rails. After settling on a useful definition of "transmediation," this paper discusses the production, consumption and preservation practices involved in English toy theatre. Production practices in toy theatre involved transmediation —the transformation of contemporary three-dimensional performance art into two-dimensional printed images— only until 1850, though sheets based on the earlier transmediations were printed well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, toy theatre did not preserve in print the Victorian plays adapted from sensation fiction most commonly associated with melodrama, such as *The Woman in White* (1859-1860) *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862). Its mainstay is rather early melodrama, the most popular being *The Miller and his Men* (1813). Shakespeare and the stage adaptations of Sir Walter Scott's novels were also widely transmediated for toy theatre. Consumption practices can be reconstructed through the recorded and published experiences of white Englishmen who went on to have careers in the arts. These nostalgic writings are unlikely to form a representative

sample of what nineteenth-century children did with their toy theatres and the printed sheets they were meant to feed into them, but they are all that 21<sup>st</sup>-century researchers have found so far. As seen through the eyes of these boys who grew into theatre critics, artists, and writers, toy theatre was a process-based pastime. Indeed, they speak of ‘managing’ their toy theatres rather than *playing* with them. They recount the painstaking preparation of the paper figures more so than the restoration to three dimensions in miniature stage performances. One important exception is the famous explosion in *The Miller and his Men*, which led to many tales of fires breaking out. The active participation and physical interaction with the prints was thus not necessarily accompanied by creative interaction with the stories. Finally, the preservation practices of toy theatre are reminiscent of today’s collectibles. Most collectors favor “virgin” sheets that have not been cut-up and pasted or even colored, unless by the printer-publisher himself. Likewise, fans prefer action figures that have been preserved in unopened packaging. Some collectors present shows with their fully functioning toy theatres. By transmediating early melodrama, the printer-publishers of toy theatre preserved that particular performance art form for generations of children in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to be influenced by its esthetics. In turn, the preservation practices of collectors brought these 19<sup>th</sup>-century transmediations into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and kept alive early melodrama. Collectors are in fact responsible for the preservation and production of knowledge regarding all past popular culture until libraries buy their collections and academia begins researching the topic and institutionalizing their knowledge. Academia must acknowledge their invaluable contribution.

#### **Ian Lewis Gordon: Rose O’Neill’s Kewpies and Early Transmedia**

In December 1909 the *Ladies’ Home Journal* published “The Kewpies Christmas Follies,” a full page illustrated verse for children by Rose O’Neill. The Kewpies, cherub like figures with a distinct tuft of hair, were an instant success and episodes followed in January and February 1910. O’Neill then moved the feature to the competing *Woman’s Home Companion* in a pay dispute. By 1912 the American toy distributor

George Borgfeldt & Company began marketing bisque Kewpie dolls manufactured by the quality German doll maker J. D. Kestner. By the latter half of the twentieth centuries Kewpies had become synonymous with Kewpie Dolls but the dolls were a reflection of the early broad appeal of the Kewpies and not the cause of their popularity. While the dolls alone would have made Kewpies an important form of transmedia expansion, the sheer range and form the Kewpies took made them a global sensation that out-stripped the media of their origin. This paper will examine the origins of Kewpies in illustrated stories, the development of different forms of seriality through their use in stories, comic strips, paper dolls and, and advertisements across several magazines. To be sure, the sheer scale of the Kewpie transmedia career is staggering. The Kewpie dolls in all their varieties from high quality collectible bisque to the cheap sideshow ally celluloid, plastic, and vinyl versions became a ubiquitous presence across the globe for much of the twentieth century. This paper sets out to trace the origins of the Kewpie dolls in early twentieth century American magazines and advertising to reflect on the generative forces of the doll’s transmedia spread.

#### **Ralf Haekel: Humphry Davy and the Medial Fashioning of the Scientist**

My proposed paper starts from a paradox. The development of science and the gathering of scientific knowledge from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was primarily the result of collective efforts. It is particularly the product of a common endeavour of scientists who met in gatherings like the Birmingham Lunar Society or, more officially, the Royal Society in London. The storage and proliferation of scientific knowledge is furthermore the outcome of established transmedial practices involving the official transactions of scientific societies, popular periodicals, encyclopaedias and also public lectures. Knowledge is constantly remediated and thus established in a number of different medial shapes and forms. After 1800, at a time when science begins to take its modern shape with its specialized disciplines, mass print culture, proliferation through publications and

very popular public lectures, a paradox happens and one can witness the development of a new figure that seems to rely only on his intellectual powers of analogy: the solitary scientist as genius. One man is particularly instrumental in this regard: the chemist and revered natural philosopher Humphry Davy, president of the Royal Society – who refers to himself in a poem as a “true philosopher” (Ruston) and who is one of the first to fashion himself as a self-contained savant (Golinski). In my proposed talk, I want to investigate this medial paradox. I want to argue that this figure of the scientist as solitary genius is not a turning away from the emergence of mass media in the wake of the industrial revolution but rather its outcome. Davy’s self-fashioning as genius is modelled on the medial construction of the poet as genius – e.g. Wordsworth or Shelley – that is characteristic of the Romantic period. Christoph Reinfandt has shown that the apparent immediacy associated with the topics of subjectivity, selfhood, ingenuity, and originality in early 19<sup>th</sup>-century poetry is actually the result of mass readership and the mass market of print capitalism that began to explode in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The result is that readers deem to have immediate and intimate access to the poet’s mind and the medium seems to vanish, become invisible. The construction of the scientist as genius not only makes use of literary mediation and remediation, it follows the same logic: the construction of the scientific genius relies on an intricate cooperation of transmedia practices that are all the more successful the less visible they are.

### **Heidi Liedke: Democratizing Culture? Early Forms of Live Theatre Broadcasting”**

There are no definitive borders between media types as such—they all overlap each other, in complex patterns of similarities and differences. When one art form is (trans)mediated via a medium, does it become another? And what impact does this transmediation have on the experience of it? Taking a comparative and transhistorical approach, I am looking at early forms of live theatre broadcasting from a present-day perspective. For about ten years now, the Metropolitan Opera in New York (since 2006), the National Theatre (NT) in London (since

2009) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in Stratford (since 2013), to name just the biggest companies in this field, have produced live broadcasts of their productions that are shown in cinemas worldwide, transporting theatre from page to stage to screen. In 2015, Lyndsey Turner’s *Hamlet* at the Barbican set a new record for global cinema viewing with more than 225,000 people in twenty-five countries seeing it broadcast in October of that year. Especially the NT is following the “imperative of innovation” and the “digital imperative” – a phrase Bill Blake (2014) uses to encircle the “new habits of thought that are accruing around the theatre’s engagements with the digital [and that] are indicative of all sorts of change, in both artistic and entrepreneurial arenas” (10–11). Yet these transmedial cultural practices actually are not that new. In this paper, I want to look at the nineteenth-century predecessor of livecasting, the *théatrophone*, and electrophone technology to shed light on how technology and culture have been intertwined for more than 100 years now. The *théâtrephone*, invented by Clément Ader, was a precursor to ‘live’ broadcasting: on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1892, a room was set apart as a music-room during the Electrical Exhibition at Crystal Palace and was fitted with the necessary appliances for the reception of music. The music of performances at the Lyric Theatre in London, and at theatres and concert-rooms in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and other places, was transmitted with great success, a large number of visitors availing themselves of the unusual facilities. The music-room remained in operation for six months and nearly 60,000 people were recorded as having paid it a visit. This was not simply an exhibition novelty. The Théâtrephone Company of Paris was selling the equipment for home use with more 1500 subscribers in place by 1893 and an expanded repertoire that included the Opéra, the Opéra Comique, the Comédie-Française and the Concerts Colonne. In London, the Electrophone Company was in operation from 1894 and counted Queen Victoria among its subscribers. Other countries, including the United States, had similar commercial ventures with subscription and casual users. The promise that new technologies created – to expand audience numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – is likewise recognized in an

epigraph to the 2016 report, “From Live-to-Digital”, prepared by AEA Consulting for Arts Council England, UK Theatre and Society of London Theatre. It quotes the early twentieth-century inventor Lee de Forest (the “Father of Radio” in America) who envisioned a world in which everything from opera to church music could be transported to households. Against this background, I will investigate in what ways the intertwining of technological innovation, the democratization of culture and the experience of audiences that characterizes contemporary phenomena such as livecasting have its roots in these nineteenth-century transmedia practices. I argue that both in the nineteenth-century and in the present day-context these examples underscore a history where new advances in technology have relied on cultural products to demonstrate their new capabilities, to create a new consumer market and, thus, to prove economic viability. When transmediality is understood “as referring to the general concept that different media types share many basic traits that can be described in terms of material properties and abilities for activating mental capacities” (Elleström 5), I am interested in the ways in which early forms of trans(mitted)-theatre represented a form of transmediality that affords a different experience of liveness and of being an audience member.

### **Martin Lütke: Telephonic Conversations: The Transmedial Phone in the Culture of the Progressive Era**

In 1880, the year that National Bell became American Bell, Mark Twain entered a conversation by imagining the transcription of another in his piece “A Telephonic Conversation”, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in June. While the name and signifier Mark Twain obviously lends the epigraph to this proposal some gravitas, the choice for the epigraph has decisively less to do with the who than with the what (and the how) of the quote: This weird little sentence inspires the trajectory of this proposal for a talk at/about “Transmedia Practices” in at least three ways: Firstly, it contemplates and establishes an immediate connection between the practice and process of writing and the “telephonic conversation” and, secondly, reads the former to be fruitfully inspired by the latter – a claim one might indeed find curious.

Thirdly, the quote finds the public’s eyes and ears in and through Mark Twain’s own favorite media outlet, the monthly distributed literature and culture magazine then still called *The Atlantic Monthly* hinting at the complex and competitive relationship between the wire and writing, between transmission technology and other forms of distributing information and goods, or in the case of the *Atlantic Monthly* information as – and wrapped in – a material good. In a way, then, “A Telephonic Conversation” invites the readership and audience of the magazine to literally take part in the telephonic conversation and the public conversation on the telephone. However, this conversation found itself becoming dominated by another agent and a different mode, as printed advertising acquired a central role in the same discourses and networks I set out to analyze. AT&T began to deploy advertizing as a concerted tool of self-description and as a means to convince a skeptical public of the benefits of telephonic communication in general and of the trustworthiness and the progressive outlook of the company in particular. American Bell’s coordinated efforts in the sphere of what would now be referred to as public relations thus marks a remarkable space within the discursive formation of what I call *wire writing*. In my talk I will read the literary and advertising “conversations” about the phone as competing transmedial practices in the telephonic imaginary as attempts to approach, to make sense of, and to ultimately manage Progressive modernity via – precisely – practicing/doing transmediality

### **Roberta Pearson: “To just steal the name of a character”: Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and the Conditions of Transmedia Dispersion**

The Sherlock Holmes character first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, a novella published in 1887 in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*. The appearance of the short stories in the *Strand Magazine* from 1891 onwards gave the character widespread popularity and recognition. By the 1920s, the character had spawned a transmedia universe, consisting of adaptations (films, dramas, literary parodies) and journalistic paratexts; these originated in the United Kingdom and other European countries as well as in the United States. The textual contributors to this

universe ranged from American actor-managers to Danish film producers. The author, Arthur Conan Doyle, did relatively little to assert his intellectual property rights over adaptations but paratexts regularly lauded him as the creator of the Great Detective. My paper will consider texts and paratexts as well as their underpinning conditions of production to illuminate the early years of Sherlock Holmes, who, by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, had become one of the most pervasive of all transmedia characters. First, it will trace the development of the character from the initial textual instantiation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the international transmedia universe of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Textual analysis will employ a character template consisting of demographics, psychological traits, habitual behaviours, speech patterns, physical appearance, relationships with secondary characters and geographical and temporal setting. This analysis will determine the role that various characteristics played in the construction of the character, from the most to the least prominent. Second, I will explore the role of copyright and authorial authority. What degree of recognition did the various adaptations and paratexts accord to Conan Doyle? Were certain adaptations more subject to Conan Doyle's authority than others and if so why? Which prominent elements in the character template originated with the original author and which with various other contributors to the transmedia universe? Third, in my paper I will contrast the long 19<sup>th</sup> century character template with that of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, pointing to key distinctions. The author will argue that these distinctions arise from the very different industrial underpinnings of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century transmedia universes.

### **Susanne Reichl: Transmedial Trajectories: The Golliwogg and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture**

In 1895, Florence and Bertha Upton published *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls*, the first in a series of adventures set in a toy shop, featuring two wooden dolls and a black rag doll called the Golliwogg. Today, the Golliwogg is mainly known as the topic of controversial debates around the question of its racist connotations, and British public discourse is torn between nostalgia and disgust when it comes to

the Golliwogg. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, though, those visual schemata were not considered particularly disrespectful: readers were used to black caricatures, and the Golliwogg was essentially a caricature of black-faced minstrelsin the US. The picturebook became an instant success on both sides of the Atlantic, and the title was soon changed to *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwogg*. The following titles all started with the Golliwogg. Florence Upton, the illustrator, had modelled the Golliwogg after a childhood rag doll which she herself claimed to have loved dearly but who was also very ugly. In the first picturebook of the series, the Golliwogg is quickly integrated into the toyland community, and the two wooden dolls, dressed in clothes made out of the US American flag, are the visual proof that this integration succeeds. In the following 12 volumes, the Golliwogg goes on all kinds of very British adventures, which were full of imperial and colonial references, such as *The Golliwogg's Polar Adventures* (1900) or *Golliwogg in the African Jungle* (1909). The success of the Golliwogg series meant that the figure became more popular than the actual books themselves, and many children were given handmade Golliwogg rag dolls. Soon, toy companies in the UK and Germany started producing Golliwogg toys, with Steiff becoming the first company to mass produce the Golliwogg. The Uptons had failed to copyright their character, so it was not only in the public domain but also subject to change and transformation. The turn of the century was the perfect time for a visual proliferation of such a popular figure: colour printing had become cheaper and easier, and in the early 1900s, thousands of greeting cards featuring the Golliwogg were produced. At the time, companies were beginning to discover the power of visual advertising. Robertson's, the British jam-maker, started using a version of the Golliwogg for its products in 1910, and continued to do so until 2001. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Golliwogg commodities proliferated, and the Golliwogg continued to transform and diversify. In my presentation, I will focus specifically on the first two decades of the Golliwogg's life and analyse his transformations from picturebook via greeting card to jam jars in the context of rapidly changing technology and an increasing interest in childhood commodities. Along those



transmedial trajectories, the Golliwogg changed from benevolent picturebook character to advertising celebrity and went through a number of visual and other transformations. I will trace how in the first two decades of the Golliwogg's "cultural biography" (Kopytoff), cultural and media contexts were fully in place to promote the success of a figure like the Golliwogg.

**Eckart Voigts: Literary Events and Real Fictions: The Transmedia Cases of Literature, Buildings, Arms and Institutions around George Chesney's "The Battle of Dorking" (1871) and Walter Besant's "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" (1882)**

A consensus in transmedia research holds that we cannot simply transfer the contemporary situation of media convergence, which gave rise to theorizing transmedia storytelling in the first place, to previous historical periods. As Freeman and others have pointed out the industrial-cultural configurations of the past need specific tools for analysis. As Freeman (2014) also makes clear, historical approaches to transmediality have invoked collective, 'spreadable' literary efforts such as the Bible (Person) and epic narratives (Johnson). Rather than looking at characters that have loomed largely in studies of literary industries on the cusp of transmedialization (Alice, Sherlock) I will look at two textual universes within an industrialized literary system on the cusp of consumerism. One case study will focus on the frenzied transnational 'narrative sprawl' (Kelleter) of 'Dorking' literature (parodies, sequels, transpositions) – the proliferation of the textual universe of British invasion fantasies begun by George Tompkins Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871). The second example is Walter Besant's novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882) and its crucial impact on the "People's Palace", which was opened in 1887 by Queen Victoria on the current site of the Queen Mary Polytechnic College (Mile End Road). In both cases, authors have successfully sought to transcend the boundaries of fiction and have aimed to have tangible effects in the real world beyond the confines of their narrative paper publication, turning their texts into objects (Chesney: arms) and architecture (Besant: a community 'palace'). Besant also worked in

close cooperation with literary agents and pioneered successful serialization: *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* was serialized in *Belgravia* magazine from January to December 1882; Both examples (1) are representative of 19<sup>th</sup>-century literary distribution and circulation, (2) illustrate how quickly literary events and world-buildings once thought of as crucial and definitive have become forgotten with the loss of their material and institutional contextualization, and (3) show how intensely 19<sup>th</sup>-century world building is tied to notions of place and spatial anchoring (Dorking/East End). I will thus look both at the fictional and non-fictional settings of two textual universes that both have transcended the fiction/non-fiction divide – a feature of many transmedia practices. My analysis will show how 'spreadable' 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature is enmeshed in institutional, architectural and social concerns.

**Lisanna Wiele: Toward a Popular Cultural Sphere: Transmedia Circulations of the Antebellum City Mystery Novel**

Perhaps no genre in the 19th century encapsulates the defining processes of serialization, adaptation, and appropriation of the period as forcefully as the antebellum city mystery novel, which began with the French *roman feuilleton* and quickly became an "international vogue" (Werner Sollors) in the 1840s and 50s. While our previous scholarship on this sprawling genre has concentrated on the specifics of the genre's transnational spread, this cooperative paper centers on practices of transmedial proliferation that accompanied, and indeed furthered, the border- and media-crossing popularization of the city mystery novel. Transmedia practices abound in the city mystery genre. They range from the illustrations featured in George Lippard's *The Quaker City* and stage adaptations of the novel to Ned Buntline's literary adaptations of blackface minstrelsy in *Mysteries and Miseries of New York*, and to the cross-pollination of newspaper reportage and fictional narration in works by American as well as German-American city mystery authors such as Lippard, George Foster, George Thompson, Emil Klauprecht, Heinrich Börnstein, and Ludwig von Reizenstein. This paper traces the emergence and the effects of these practices in



order to better understand their impact on the development of an increasingly transnational and transmedial popular cultural sphere. Drawing on work by Stephen Greenblatt, Benjamin Lee, Edward LiPuma, Elizabeth A. Povinelli, and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, we propose that the circulation of “social energy” through media and discourse (Greenblatt 1987; 1988) can be profitably traced in the genre development of the city mystery novel. The paper pursues three main lines of investigation: first, it utilizes Lee and LiPuma’s (2002) construct of cultures of circulations as the motor of nationalized capitalistic processes of globalization; second, it employs Gaonkar and Povinelli’s (2003) concept of a matrix of circulation as a means of structuring new discursive forms, practices and artefacts for the modern public sphere; and third, it tests Edwards and Gaonkar’s (2010) claim that the United States form the center of an increasingly global circulation of forms, practices, and artifacts. The paper thus develops a theoretical framework through which the nineteenth-century city mystery genre can be studied as an example of transnational and transmedial serialization. In doing so, the paper extends our investigation of nineteenth-century transnational serial narrative (see Stein & Wiele, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Serial Narrative in Transnational Perspective, 1830s–1860s*, 2019) into the realm of the serial transmedia practice, where city mysteries circulate into the wider media landscape and back again in a process that prefigures much of what we have come to know as transmedia popular culture today.

### **Lukas R.A. Wilde: Pictorial Personifications and Transmedial Characters: Who is Uncle Sam?**

One of the lenses transmedia practices are most commonly discussed through today is certainly the paradigm of transmedia storytelling. However, as Scolari, Bertetti, and Matthew Freeman have argued in *Transmedia Archaeology* (2014), “older forms of transmedia franchises were constructed on character sharing rather than on the logics of a particular world” (Bertetti 2014, 17). Characters were (and still are) in many cases the nodal points and intersections of various processes discussed as media convergence, yet the distinctions between “actual”

characters and related terms such as “popular heroes” (Bennett 2017), “cultural icons” (Brooker 2013), or “serial figures” (Denson/Mayer 2012) remains somewhat contested and often hard to draw in practice. The proposed contribution intends to address these issues from a media theoretical perspective by investigating the 19th century emergence and transformation of recognizable figures such as Brother Jonathan and Uncle Sam within political cartoons (Dewey 2007), especially owed to British and Central European immigrants (Thomas Nast, Adalbert Volck, or Joseph Keppler). Without any overarching creative authority *or* salient “storyworlds” to speak of, these figures lend themselves easily to recontextualizations by any artist able to uphold a recognizable iconography. Building on the works of Roger Sabin (2009) and others, we could say that many 19th century “characters” like Ally Sloper were indeed designed to transcend their origins in print to become a cultural resource for the general public to draw upon in a variety of media. In media historical terms, political cartoons that did not merely comment upon actually existing public persons but instead developed their own inventory of allegorical figures could be seen as an important medial link between earlier, more “static” pictorial personifications of – and symbols for – countries and ideas (such as Lady Liberty or Columbia) and the later emergence of serial characters within comic books and other narrative media.