

Victorian Antipathies

Programme

Thursday, 3 November 2022 (Baden-Württemberg Stiftung, Kriegsbergstr. 42)

- 4.30 Nina Engelhardt (Stuttgart) & Anja Hartl (Konstanz), Welcome Address
5.00-6.00 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS I**
Pamela Gilbert (University of Florida), “Antipathy, Hatred and Disgust”
6.00-8.00 Conference Warming / Reception

Friday, 4 November 2022 (Literaturhaus, Breitscheidstraße 4)

- 9.00-10.30 **PANEL I: ANTIPATHY AND GENDER IDENTITY**
Helena Esser (Birkbeck), “Stoned by Sisterhood? Ouida’s Libertarian Misogyny”
Fiona MacHugh (Dundee), “Maternal Antipathy as a Symptom of Puerperal Insanity and the Preservation of the Maternal Ideal”
Lara Virrey (Edinburgh), “Native, Female, Unmarried, and Elderly: Anti-Humanisms and Late-Victorian Antipathies for the Female Sage Figure in H. Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) and *People of the Mist* (1894)”
10.30-11.00 Coffee Break
11.00-12.00 **PANEL II: ANTIPATHY AND GENRE**
Irmtraud Huber (Konstanz), “Antipathy and Judgement: Revisiting the Dramatic Monologue”
Will Abberley (Sussex), “The Ecopolitics of Disgust in John Ruskin’s Nature Writing”
12.00-1.30 Lunch Break
1.30-2.30 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS II**
Zachary Samalin (New York University), “The Antagonistic Century”
2.30-3.00 Coffee Break
3.00-4.30 **PANEL III: ANTIPATHY AND CLASS IDENTITY**
Linda Mathlouthi (Lorraine), “Antipathy, Aversion, and Rejection: The Case of the Labouring Classes in Victorian England”
Sophie Franklin (Tübingen), “Contagious Antipathy in Anne Brontë’s *Agnes Grey*”
Carolyn Sternberg (Vechta), “Pernicious Reading: Penny Dreadfuls between Popularity and Moral Panic”
4.30-4.45 Coffee Break
4.45-5.45 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS III**
Tara MacDonald (University of Idaho), “Victorian Affect Aliens”
7.30 Conference Dinner

Saturday, 5 November 2022 (Literaturhaus, Breitscheidstraße 4)

- 9.00-10.30 **PANEL IV: VICTORIAN AND BEYOND**
Geoffrey Rodoreda (Stuttgart), “Restraint and the Colonised Other: Shifting Antipathies from *Jane Eyre* to *Heart of Darkness*”
Julia Boll (Konstanz), “[sic]: Conrad’s N-Word and Ugly Feelings Past and Present”
Viktoriya Sukovata (Kharkiv), “Victorian Antipathies in the Novels of Agatha Christie”
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.00-12.30 **PANEL V: ASIA AND ANTIPATHY**
Ross G. Forman (Warwick), “‘The Furious Prejudice and Blind Superstition of That Awful Country’: Chinese Antipathy in Late Victorian Narrative”
Atul V. Nair (Hyderabad), “Victorian Antipathies: Reporting the 1857 Uprising in Select Indian English Periodicals”
Purna Banerjee (Kolkata), “Racial & Sexual Antipathies-Sympathies Contestations in Cross’ *Anna Lombard*”
- 12.30-2.00 Lunch Break
- 2.00-3.30 **PANEL VI: ANTIPATHY AND RACIAL PREJUDICE**
Tim Sommer (Passau), “The Limits of Sympathy: Negative Affect and Victorian Negotiations of Racial Difference”
Ge Tang (Melbourne), “Race, Victorian, Antipathy, and Emotional Practice”
Jessica M. Durgan (Bemidji State University, Northern Minnesota), “Blind Antipathy in Wilkie Collins’s *Poor Miss Finch*”
- 3.30-4.00 Concluding Discussion

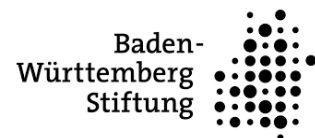
Please register:

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Victorian Antipathies

3-5 November 2022

University of Stuttgart

In this conference, we aim to explore the neglected ‘opposite’ of sympathy: antipathy. Sympathy has long been a focal point of Victorian studies, so much so that Carolyn Burdett (2020) has recently asked with reference to George Eliot: ‘Is there anything left to say about sympathy [...]?’ While sympathy in its various guises – as concept, feeling, intersubjective ideal, connection between characters, and ethical appeal to readers – has undoubtedly been a productive field of enquiry, this one-sided focus on sympathy in criticism carries the danger of overstating its role. Also referring to Eliot’s work, Rae Greiner points out that the ‘wealth of talk is disproportionate to the narrow fund of sympathy represented in [Eliot’s] novels’ (2009, 300). Besides sympathy, other, similarly important if less appealing, feelings and actions, including hatred and protracted conflict that may lead, in their extremes, to violence and murder, occupy a defining place in Victorian literature. This conference turns the spotlight on these various manifestations of antipathy in Victorian literature and culture to explore their literary and cultural significance, to determine their aesthetic implications, and to identify their progressive potential.

Victorian psychologist and philosopher Alexander Bain argued that the ‘very name “antipathy” implies the deathblow to fellow-feeling’ (1859, 183), suggesting that antipathy was, like sympathy, of concern to the Victorians. It features in explorations of relations between mental and physical aspects, self and other, individuals and groups. Bain defines antipathy as a ‘malevolent passion’ that ‘may arise without the provocation of injury, as in the antipathies of race, of caste, and of creed’ and has its ‘highest activity’ in ‘Warfare, Hostility, Combat’ (Bain 1870, 265). Similar to Bain, who explores the physiological basis of antipathy, his contemporary Sophie Bryant claims that ‘the physical accompaniment’ precisely distinguishes antipathy from mere dislike: ‘Antipathy is full of horrid thrill: it stirs the physical being like a shock: it is a thing of nervous tremors and heart-pangs and even deranged digestion’ (Bryant 1895, 366). Victorian writers, too, showed a keen interest in creative explorations of antipathy across a wide range of themes and in diverse fictional and non-fictional genres. In 21st-century Victorian Studies, therefore, Bryant’s assessment that the ‘analysis of antipathy and its relation to sympathy is a subject which may be worth more detailed and careful study than it appears as yet to have received’ (Bryant 1895, 365) remains as timely and urgent as it was in the nineteenth century.

Taking Bryant’s call for the study of antipathy as our point of departure, this conference aims to contribute to the growing research on unprestigious feelings with a specific focus on the Victorian age. As opposed to the cathartic effects triggered by pity and fear, for example, antipathetic sentiments are less likely to lead to purifying release, and feature in texts that ‘foreground[] a failure of emotional release ([... a] form of suspended “action”)’ (Ngai 2005, 9). Sianne Ngai in *Ugly Feelings* explores the political potential of such ‘ugly,’ non-cathartic and repressed emotions, while Zachary Samalin has recently focused specifically on Victorian cultures and the political aesthetics of disgust (Samalin 2021). Audre Jaffe has argued that affective cues and responses of distress, disgust, and shame shape representations of and reader responses to class identity (Jaffe 2017). Relatedly, we might ask in how far the ‘representation of class as affect’ (Jaffe 2017, 731) is a representation of class as antipathy. Arguably, the aesthetic ideals of realism and naturalism lend themselves to eliciting readers’ antipathies to discourage immoral behaviour and foster a sense of group (often middle-class) identity – aims that also inspire Victorian hopes for sympathy and its ethical effects.