



SGNCS

Society for Global
Nineteenth-Century Studies

Global Distribution of Popular Fiction: Forms of Circulation and Circulation of Forms Graham Law

In “How Histories Make Geographies: Circulation and Context in a Global Perspective” (*The Future as Cultural Fact*, 59-69), Arjun Appadurai suggests that, in contrast to the more complex cultural flows emerging under contemporary conditions of global diaspora and digital communication, the main generic forms linked to the imagined national community in an age of imperialism and colonialism, that is, novels and newspapers, tended to follow the “well-established circulatory paths and circuits of religion, migration, and trade”. Yet, with regard to the distribution of nineteenth-century popular fiction at least, a good deal of work remains to be done to clarify not only the dominant literary forms in circulation but also the specific routes that they travelled along. Around a decade ago, I rashly proposed to write a monograph presenting an overview of this territory, before quickly realising that no single scholar would be able to command the required linguistic skills or regional knowledge. This workshop at the first World Congress of the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies is intended to facilitate a more feasible approach, perhaps providing a platform to work towards a multi-authored collection of articles on the subject. Participants with research interests in this general area are invited to write short position papers of around 1,500 words that will be pre-circulated and form the basis of the discussion sessions at the Congress.¹ Topics to be explored could include:

- developments at specific central and peripheral locations, whether global or regional
- relations between literary form and publishing format, particularly different modes of serialization
- aesthetic-psychological, socio-economic and political-ideological dimensions
- the roles of specific authors, publishers and readers (or producers, distributors and consumers)

Graham Law is Professor in Media History at Waseda University, Tokyo. His books include *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (2000) and (with Andrew Maunder) *Wilkie Collins: A Literary Life* (2008). With William Baker, Paul Lewis and Andrew Gasson, he is an editor of the letters of Wilkie Collins. He is currently working on a monograph analysing the 19th-century British media system under the title *The Periodical Revolution*, as well as (with Jenny Bourne Taylor) an edition of the journalistic writings of E.S. Dallas.

Please send a 250-word abstract of your paper together with your CV to glaw@waseda.jp by 1 February 2023.

¹ An example of my own recent work in this field (“Nineteenth-century Soaps: Towards a Comparative Account of the Popular Victorian Serial Tale,” *Transcommunication* 7-2, Fall 2020) can be accessed from the following link: https://waseda.repo.nii.ac.jp/?action=repository_uri&item_id=58125&file_id=162&file_no=1.