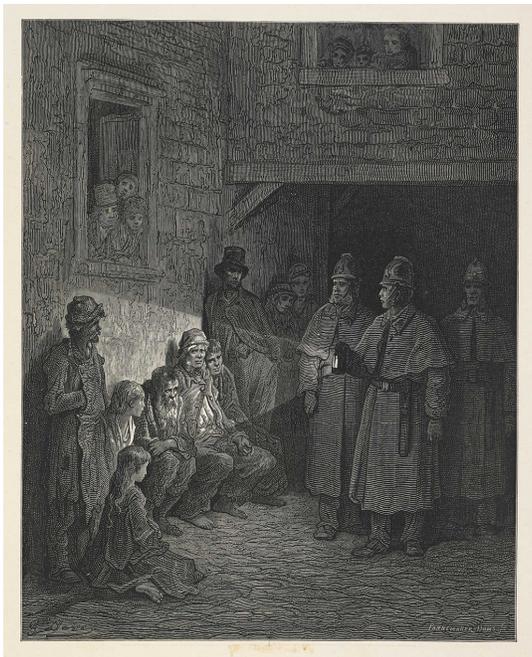


MIDWEST VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION CALL FOR PAPERS — “TRUTH, INVESTIGATION, & MYSTERY”

In an age when the mystery novel was invented and popularized, Charles Darwin propounded the theory of evolution, and police investigations were covered extensively in the popular press, did Victorians develop a distinctive attitude towards revealing the truth? Were nineteenth-century Britons convinced that they possessed the means to find answers to long-standing questions both practical and theoretical? Did some Victorians feel that casting a light on mysteries both religious and secular risked exposing dangerous answers to the public view? The Program Committee for the 2020 MVSA conference invites proposals for papers and panels on the subject of Victorian inquiry broadly defined. Submissions are welcome from scholars working in art history, musicology, history, science, philosophy, theater, theology, literature, and other fields of scholarly endeavor. We encourage proposals that will contribute to cross-disciplinary discussion, which is a special feature of MVSA conferences. Topics might include:



“The Bull’s Eye,” from *London: A Pilgrimage* by Gustave Doré and William Blanchard Jerrold, 1872.

- Victorian methodologies of investigation, critique, and inquiry
- Detection, horror, the uncanny, and the supernatural in the public imagination
- Press coverage of scandals or crimes, and subsequent attempts by police and legal authorities to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice
- Medical responses to perplexing cases, epidemics, or pathological debates
- The search for “truth” in the public sphere (via journalism, parliamentary inquiries, or participation in voluntary societies) in regard to the most important issues of the day, such as imperialism, race, social justice, legal and governmental reforms, and the idea of progress
- The cultural influence of pseudo-sciences such as physiognomy, mesmerism, and craniology upon racial relations and class prejudices
- Debates regarding religious faith (and doubt) in an age of rising secularism
- Exploration and discovery in any realm of Victorian life, including the sciences, world travel, music, psychology, sociology, archaeology, or aesthetics
- Nineteenth-century attempts to identify, study, and collect literary editions, folk traditions, “ancient music,” artifacts, or the vestiges of ancient civilizations
- Victorian literary, dramatic, or musical forms for narrating patterns of discovery and the mysterious
- How the discovery of lost documents, the use of specific archives, or the development of new modes of research and pedagogy (example: digital mapping) allow scholars and students of Victorian Britain to offer insights into the nature of nineteenth-century British life that may have been invisible to the Victorians themselves, or that they may have wished to keep hidden from their contemporaries, from posterity, or both

For individual papers, panels, or lecture-demonstrations, send a 300-word abstract and 1-page vita (as MWord documents) by **September 30, 2019**, to conferencesubmissions@midwestvictorian.org.

For more information, please visit www.midwestvictorian.org.

