

## SEBASTIAN LECOURT

The Humanities Center  
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### ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

The Johns Hopkins University, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities, 2015-Present  
University of Konstanz, Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, 2014-15  
Rutgers University, ACLS New Faculty Fellow (English), 2012-14  
Brandeis University, Visiting Assistant Professor of English, 2011-12

### EDUCATION

Yale University, Ph.D. in English Language and Literature, December 2011  
Dissertation: "Cultivating Belief: Victorian Anthropology and the Secular Imagination"  
Advisors: Linda Peterson, Katie Trumpener  
Macalester College, B.A. *summa cum laude* in English, June 2003

### RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

British and Anglophone literature of the long nineteenth century, including the novel, poetry, and nonfiction prose; religion and secularism; world literature and transnational literary studies; literary theory and the history of literary studies; intellectual history.

### WORKS IN PROGRESS

*Cultivating Belief: Aestheticism, Anthropology, and the Secular Imagination* (book manuscript).  
"Many Therasas: George Eliot and the Generic Life of Religion" (draft article).

### ARTICLES

"Idylls of the Buddh': Buddhist Modernism and Victorian Poetics in Colonial Ceylon." *PMLA* (forthcoming).  
"That Untravell'd World: The Difficulties of Thinking Globally in Victorian Studies." *Literature Compass* (forthcoming).  
"The Mormons, the Victorians, and the Idea of Greater Britain." *Victorian Studies* 56.1 (Autumn 2013): 85-111.  
"'To surrender himself, in perfectly liberal inquiry': Walter Pater, Many-Sidedness, and the Conversion Novel." *Victorian Studies* 53.2 (Winter 2011): 231-53.  
"Matthew Arnold and Religion's Cosmopolitan Histories." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 38.2 (September 2010): 467-87.

### REVIEWS AND SHORTER PIECES

Review of Lauren Goodlad, *The Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic* (Oxford, 2015). *The Wordsworth Circle* (forthcoming).  
Review of Alison Byerly, *Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism* (Michigan, 2013). *Victorian Studies* (forthcoming).

- “Victorian Studies and the Transnational Present.” Guest blog post at v21collective.org. Available at: <http://v21collective.org/sebastian-lecourt-victorian-studies-and-the-transnational-present/>
- Review of Norman Vance, *Bible and Novel: Narrative Authority and the Death of God* (Oxford, 2013). *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 69.3 (December 2014): 405-08.
- Review of Kirstie Blair, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* (Oxford, 2012). *The Wordsworth Circle* 44.4 (2013): 236-38.
- Review of Lene Østermark-Johannson, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Ashgate, 2011). *Victorian Studies* 55 (2012): 141-43.
- Review of Marjorie Wheeler-Barclay, *The Science of Religion in Britain, 1860-1910* (Virginia, 2010). *Victorians Institute Journal* 40 (2012; online).
- Review of Joshua Landy and Michael Saler (eds.), *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age* (Stanford, 2009). *Religion and the Arts* 15 (2011): 184-86.
- Review of Peter Melville Logan, *Victorian Fetishism: Intellectuals and Primitives* (SUNY, 2009). *Religion and the Arts* 14 (2010): 349-52.

### INVITED TALKS

- Discussant. Empire and Unfielding: roundtable on Antoinette Burton's and Isabel Hofmeyr's *Ten Books That Shaped the British Empire: Creating an Imperial Common* (Duke UP, 2015). V21 Symposium, University of Chicago. October, 2015.
- “History's Second-Hand Bookshop: Self-Cultivation and Scripturality in *Daniel Deronda*.” 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Colloquium, University of California, Berkeley. April, 2015.
- “The Genres of Comparative Religion.” CUNY Graduate Center Victorian Seminar. May, 2013.
- “Idylls of the Buddh': Buddhist Modernism and Victorian Poetics in Colonial Ceylon.” British Studies Colloquium, Yale University. April, 2013.
- “Victorian Anthropology and the Secular Imagination.” P19 Colloquium, Temple University. December, 2012.
- “Walter Pater's Secular Ethics.” Religion, Politics and Society Colloquium, Yale University Departments of Sociology and Political Science. April, 2011.

### CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “George Eliot, Mohammed, and the Problem of Exceptionality.” Panel on New Religious Movements and the Victorian Literary Imagination. MLA Convention, Austin, TX. January, 2016.
- “George Eliot and the Vanishing Scripture.” NAVSA Conference, University of Western Ontario. November, 2014. (Missed due to illness.)
- “Idylls of the Buddh': Buddhist Modernism and Victorian Poetics in Colonial Ceylon.” NAVSA Conference, Pasadena. October, 2013.
- “The Life of Buddha and the Genre-Systems of Victorian Comparative Religion.” NAVSA Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison. September, 2012.
- “Richard Burton and the Believing Body.” NAVSA Conference, Vanderbilt University. November, 2011.
- “The Rise of English and the Decline of Ethnology.” NVSA Conference, University of Maryland. April, 2011.
- “Religion, Culture, and the Mormon Problem.” NVSA Conference, Princeton University. April, 2010.
- “Walter Pater and the Anthropology of Survival.” Joint BAVS-NAVSA Conference, Cambridge University. July, 2009.

“Arnoldian Secularism.” British Studies Colloquium, Yale University. February, 2009.

“Frazer and Machen: The Detective Plot between Anthropology and Occult Belief.” NAVSA Conference, Yale University. November, 2008.

“Andrew Lang, Anthropology, and the Alternatives to Realism.” Graduate Student Conference, University of Chicago. October 2007.

“*Marius the Epicurean*: Nostalgia, Conversion, and Culture in the Historical Novel.” Graduate Student Conference, University of Chicago. October 2006.

## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2015-Present: Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities, the Johns Hopkins University

2015-19: Society of Fellows, University of Chicago (declined)

2016: Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Notre Dame (declined)

2015-16: Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University (declined)

2015-16: Fellowship, Center for Transcultural Studies, University of Heidelberg (declined)

2014-15: Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Konstanz

2014: NEH Summer Institute (Problems in the Study of Religion), University of Virginia

2012-14: ACLS New Faculty Fellowship, Rutgers University

2012-14: ACLS New Faculty Fellowship, the University of California, Berkeley (declined)

2011: Warnock Research Fellowship, The Private Papers of James Boswell, Yale University

2010: Veech Prize for Outstanding Essay Accepted for Publication, Yale University

2009-10: Mrs. Giles Whiting Dissertation Fellowship, Yale University

2008: Summer Research Fellowship, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University

2005-2009: Graduate Fellowship, Yale University

2003: Phi Beta Kappa, Macalester College

2003: Harry Scherman Essay Prize, Macalester College

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Nineteenth-Century Science Fiction: Ecology, Utopia, Catastrophe (Johns Hopkins University; Fall 2015)

The Genres of Victorian Anthropology (Rutgers University; Spring 2014): This course explores how Victorian writers used a range of literary modes to flesh out different kinds of anthropological thinking; selections include detective fiction (Arthur Conan Doyle), horror (M. R. James), naturalism (Thomas Hardy), and lyric poetry (W. B. Yeats).

The History of Literary Theory (Rutgers University; Spring 2014): A survey of major figures in literary theory from Plato and Aristotle to recent media theorists like Brian Larkin.

Victorian Poetry (Rutgers University; Fall 2013): Readings from major Victorian poets including Felicia Hemans, Alfred Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Secret Gardens: Children’s Literature since the Grimms (Rutgers University; Spring 2013): This seminar traces the motif of hidden worlds as it informs works of Anglophone children’s fiction from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* to Louise Fitzhugh’s *Harriet the Spy* and Lev Grossman’s *The Magicians*.

Victorian Poetry (Rutgers University; Spring 2013).

Other Worlds: British Literature, 1870-1914 (Rutgers University; Fall 2012): A study of late-Victorian literature focusing on plots of hidden, parallel, or future worlds. Selections range from urban gothic (Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle) to primitivism (James Frazer,

Thomas Hardy) to aestheticism (Oscar Wilde) to utopia and dystopia (William Morris, H. G. Wells).

- Novel Horizons: Victorian Fiction and the Global Imagination (Brandeis University; Spring 2012): This course introduces students to nineteenth-century Anglophone novels that take empire and globalization as their subjects. Readings include Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.
- The Literature of Adolescence (Brandeis University; Spring 2012): This lecture surveys narratives of adolescent development from Henry Fielding to Jonathan Lethem.
- British Literature in the Age of Darwin and Dickens (Brandeis University; Fall 2011): An introduction to Victorian literature that reads major texts by Dickens, Eliot, Tennyson, and Wilde alongside essays in biology, anthropology, social criticism, and aesthetics.
- The History of Theory and Criticism (Brandeis University; Fall 2011).
- Reading and Writing the Modern Essay (Yale University; Spring 2011): This small, workshop-centered course on creative nonfiction allows students to hone their skills in a variety of essay modes, including autobiography, the ethnographic sketch, the portrait, and satire. We also spend a fair amount of time engaging in close readings of such essayists as William Hazlitt, Langston Hughes, Annie Dillard, David Sedaris, and James Baldwin.
- Religion in a Secular Age (Yale University; Fall 2010): This first-year seminar examines some of the thorny questions that surround the public role of religion today. How do we define religion from the standpoint of secular politics? How do different definitions of the term imply distinct attitudes toward religious toleration? Students read lengthy selections from major thinkers both past and present, including John Locke, Ludwig Feuerbach, Max Weber, Michael Walzer, Wendy Brown, and Saba Mahmood, and write four papers that progress from a close reading to a comparative critique to a final research paper.
- Reading and Writing the Modern Essay (Yale University; Spring, 2009).
- Fiction Without Borders (TA; Yale University; Fall, 2008): A survey of contemporary international novels reflecting upon the global; writers include Aleksandar Hemon, J. M. Coetzee, Salman Rushdie, Chu Tien-wen, Ruth Ozeki, and Amitav Ghosh.
- The Victorian Novel (TA; Yale University; Spring, 2008): Texts include Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.
- The Modern British Novel (TA; Yale University; Fall, 2007): This survey of British modernist fiction ranges from H. G. Wells' *Tono-Bungay* to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.
- Romantic Poetry (TA; Yale University; Fall, 2006): A lecture on major figures of British Romanticism from William Blake to Mary Shelley.

## ADVISING

- 2011-12: Senior Thesis Director, Julia Heckman-Mark (Brandeis University), "‘A Vague and Terrible Power’: The Threat of Mormonism in the Victorian Imagination"

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2015-16: Committee member, Rudikoff Prize for Best Book in Victorian Studies, Northeast Victorian Studies Association.
- 2014: Manuscript reader, "Mormon Fever: Sensationalizing the Saints in Wood's 1861 *East Lynne* and 1863 *Verner's Pride*." *Victorian Studies*.

2013: Manuscript reader, "Semitic and Aryan Concerns of Arnold, Renan, and Gobineau." *Religion and Literature*.

2011-13: Member, Northeast Victorian Studies Association conference planning committee.

2012: Coordinator, Networking Session on Religion and Secularism. NAVSA Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2011: Chair, "Sacred Play and Secular Pleasures." NAVSA Conference, Vanderbilt University.

2011: Chair, "Social Form." "The Politics of Form" graduate conference, Columbia University.

2010-11: Organizer, Yale British Studies Colloquium.

2010: Response to Clifford Ando, "The Ontology of Religious Institutions." Religion, Politics and Society Colloquium, Yale Departments of Sociology and Political Science.

2010: Chair, "Strategies of Serialization." Research Society for Victorian Periodicals conference, Yale University.

2010: Chair, "The Digital Age Library." "The Past's Digital Presence" conference, Yale University.

2008-09: Organizer, Yale English Department Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Colloquium.

2008: Student assistant, NAVSA Conference, Yale University.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Modern Language Association  
Northeast Victorian Studies Association  
North American Victorian Studies Association

### **LANGUAGES**

French, German, Latin (reading)

### **PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES**

James Eli Adams  
Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University  
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Tanya Agathocleous  
Associate Professor of English, Hunter College  
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Linda H. Peterson (Dissertation Advisor)  
Niel Gray, Jr., Professor of English, Yale University  
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