

Department: Humanities

Module: Magic, Murder, & Mystery in London Literature

Module Convenor: Alastair Sherwood

Module Tutors: Jay Sullivan and Mollie Clarke

Module Outline

London is a global icon. But how do we receive this icon, and how has it been made? In part, the idea of London has been—and continues to be—constituted by its literary reflection. From the dirty underbelly of Charles Dickens’ imaginary; to the squirming mass unfurling under Sherlock Holmes’ magnified gaze; to the corporate peel around *Harry Potter*’s magical world, London comes to us through a haze of Magic, Murder, and Mystery. In this module, students will be given the opportunity to unpick London’s complex literary past—and present. You will be guided by tutor-led lectures and whole-class discussion through London’s museums via the late-Victorian vogue for mummy fiction; through the terrorised London of Jack the Ripper; through the “queer magic” of 20th-century fiction of the Capital, and more. At the end of the module, you will provide your own written response to the iconography of London as it presents itself in your chosen texts.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this module will:

- Foster a curiosity about London as a setting for literary texts
- Have secure knowledge of a range of literary texts from the late Victorian period to the present day
- Understand the history of key areas of London through its literature
- Develop their ability to plan, structure and execute an academic essay

Class themes

Magic	Murder	Mystery
Science and Séance: Supernatural Naturalists in Victorian London	London’s Burning: Death and the City in WWII	Sherlock Holmes and Labyrinthine London
Queer Magic: Subversion, Sexuality and Neo-Victorian Fiction	Murder Capital: Jack the Ripper	Ghosts of the Gothic in Dickensian London
Parallel Worlds: <i>Harry Potter</i> and Magic Alongside London		Nights at the Museum: Mummies, Mystery and Curses

Assessment

Assessment for this module will consist of two assignments:

1. **(30%)** An essay plan, which will be discussed in class and developed independently. You will provide a summary of your essay, which must include **up to** two primary texts from the module and **at least** four secondary texts, either from the reading list or of your own choosing (500 words).
2. **(70%)** An essay on any aspect of the module, covering up to two primary texts and drawing on secondary reading material (2,000 words).

Bibliography

Core texts:

Please read the following texts in full, many of the older texts are out of copyright and available online free:

Bowen, Elizabeth. *The Heat of the Day*. Vintage, London, 1998,
<http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/380997>.

Carter, Angela. *The Magic Toyshop*. Virago, London, 2018.

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist, Or, the Parish Boy's Progress*. Penguin Books, London; New York, 2003,
<http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/597047>.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Sign of the Four*. Bibliolis Books Ltd, London, 2010.

Eva M., Henry "The Curse of Vasartas" (1889) in *Lost in a Pyramid & Other Classic Mummy Stories*, The British Library, London, 2016.

Hitchcock, Alfred. *The Lodger*. Film Four, London, 2000, <http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/505565>.

Rohmer, Sax. *The Mysterious Mummy*. Available at: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Mysterious_Mummy

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Bloomsbury, London, 1997,
<http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/287547>.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*. Penguin, London, 2004, <http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/648946>.

Other texts

You will be reading extracts from the following texts (however, it would be advisable to read them in full, too):

Curtis, L. P. *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*. Yale University Press, New Haven; London, 2001,
<http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/499482>.

Dickens, Charles. *Night Walks*. Penguin, London, 2010, <http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/787999>.

Moorcock, Michael. *Mother London*. Gollancz, London, 2016.

Petrie, William Matthew Finders. *Seventy Years in Archaeology* pages 175-6: https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=nbs0AAAAQBAJ&pg=PA175&lpg=PA175&dq=seventy+years+in+archaeology+museum+is+a+dangerous+place&source=bl&ots=ZunazhfZYn&sig=ACfU3U22OvfJvKX2xmHSPVVC4egidI30Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjo-t_mne3oAhUYGsAKHa7XABQQ6AEwAnoECAwQLg#v=onepage&q&f=false

Wallis, E.A. *Budge By Nile and Tigris: A Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on Behalf of the British Museum between the Years 1886 and 1913* Volume 2 Pages 332 and 381-392.

Available online at: <https://archive.org/details/cu31924088412592/page/n7/mode/2up>

Waters, Sarah. *Affinity*. Riverhead Books, New York, 2000.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine*. Wildside Press, New York, 2009,
<http://capitadiscovery.co.uk/roehampton/items/602890>.

Useful websites

<http://www.victorianlondon.org>

http://londonist.com/2010/03/hand-drawn_maps_of_london_a_mystery.php <http://victoriansupersleuth.com/>

<https://archive.org/> <http://www.victorianweb.org/>

<http://strangemaps.wordpress.com/2008/06/05/284-londons-lost-rivers/> <http://mappinglondon.co.uk/>