towards clichéd comedic devices, resulting in the de-humanisation of many of the characters it sought to bring to life. The preceding and more successful season *Asylum* humanised its characters to far greater effect, suggesting that it is more appropriate for a horror serial to take a more solemn tone. With this in mind, it's good to hear that the forthcoming season *Freakshow* will purportedly return to the formula that made earlier seasons of *American Horror Story* so much more successful than this one.

Oisin Vink

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EVENT REVIEWS

Report from 'Remarkable Reynolds: Dickens's Radical Rival' symposium, Westminster City Archives, London, 26 July 2014

This symposium, presented by the University of Roehampton and the Westminster City Archives, was put together by Mary L. Shannon to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of the novelist, journalist, and radical George William Macarthur Reynolds (1814–79). Now no longer a household name, Reynolds was perhaps 'bigger than Dickens' in his day. He wrote fifty-eight novels, eleven works of translation, several political tracts, and edited eight journals (four of which he had also founded); it has been estimated that he wrote between thirty-five and forty *million* words over a twelve-year period.[1] Reynolds's serial fiction *The Mysteries of London* was 'almost certainly the most widely read single work of fiction in mid-nineteenth century Britain', attracting more readers than the novels of Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, or Trollope.[2]

After some opening remarks from Mary Shannon, the first talk was given by Adrian Autton, Head Archivist at the Westminster Archives. Autton outlined the vast resources available in the Archives (dating from 1256 onwards) by showing a selection of images: everything from West End theatre ephemera and archives of the Liberty department store to some great gothic representations of the 'Devil's Acre' slum and one or two of the Archive's numerous images of Wilkie Collins.

[1] Anne Humpherys, 'The Geometry of the Modern City: G. W. M. Reynolds and *The Mysteries of London*', in *Browning Institute Studies*, 11 (1983), 69-80 (pp. 80, 81).
[2] Louis James, foreword to G. W. M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, vol. 1 (Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2013), pp. v-xi (p. v).

The next speaker was Louis James (Kent). Paying tribute to Dick Collins's research on Reynolds's biography, James sifted through the hard evidence available, pointing out where previously accepted 'facts' about Reynolds may actually be scurrilous rumours spread by detractors, or romantic misdirections supplied by Reynolds himself. James also situated Reynolds as a writer in the long nineteenth century, noting his echoing of Maturin and Radcliffe, his links with Thackeray and Dickens, and his influence on Braddon, Collins and Reade.

Following on from this, Ian Haywood (Roehampton) offered the audience fascinating glimpses of Reynolds as he appeared in newspaper court reports (often impecunious) and in political cartoons (often caricatured, for example as a cheeky child or a monkey). Perhaps most intriguing were the images in which a face in the crowd turns out to be Reynolds; his presence encourages us to look again at the image as a whole.

Mary Shannon spoke next, giving us a flavour of her book *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street*, due out in 2015. Both Reynolds and Dickens had offices on Wellington Street for a period in the mid-1800s; Shannon held out the tantalising possibilities that these bitter rivals may have passed one another on the street regularly, and that from his own office, Reynolds may have been able to watch The Inimitable at work on *Household Words* in his.

The relationship between Dickens and Reynolds was under discussion throughout the day, with Rowan McWilliam (Anglia Ruskin) memorably describing Reynolds as Dickens's 'evil twin'. Particularly at issue was Reynolds's use of Dickensian characters for his own purposes: was it plagiarism, or something closer to modern-day fan fiction?

Michael Slater (University of London) treated us to two sets of readings over the course of the day. The first compared seamstresses in Dickens's *The Chimes* and Reynolds's *Mysteries of London*, provoking some discussion (in my corner of the room, at least!) about which is actually the most effective piece of writing.

Next up was Anne Humpherys (CUNY), who gave us another glimpse of Reynolds the man by describing the staff dinners held at *Reynolds's Newspaper*. Humpherys contrasted these with better-known events such as the *Idler* tea parties and the *Punch* dinners: Reynolds's were styled 'festivals', and consisted of an annual two-day event held at various locations in the UK. All the workers on the publication, from the writers to the warehousemen, were invited; however, though female contributors were included, it remains unclear whether wives were also welcome. For those who attended, there was apparently good wine and plenty of singing.

Michael Slater's second reading came from Reynolds's *Wagner the Wehrwolf*, his spirited rendition of the transformation of Wagner, the cross-dressing of Nisida, and the murder of Agnes provoking much hilarity in the audience. It was a pleasure to experience Reynolds's work as so many of his first working-class consumers must have done, collectively as an audience rather than as solitary silent readers. When we finally finished laughing, the possible influence of this text on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was proposed.

I then gave my talk, comparing the graveyard in Reynolds's *Mysteries of London* with that in Dickens's *Bleak House*. I demonstrated that common details in the text and images of these fictional works corresponded with non-fiction writing on contemporary London graveyards, and proposed that a reading of Reynolds can enrich our experience of a familiar text like *Bleak House*.

The next speaker was Jessica Hindes (Royal Holloway), who is currently completing the first PhD thesis to focus solely on Reynolds's *Mysteries of London* – all twelve volumes of it! Responding to critics who dismiss Reynolds as a mere writer of potboilers, Hindes demonstrated that apparently pornographic episodes in *Mysteries* can be read as witty responses to the concepts of 'pornography' and the 'obscene' (as defined in relation to the risk presented to 'vulnerable' readerships: the poor, the young, and women).

Our final speaker was Rowan McWilliam, who proposed the term 'Chartist Gothic' to describe a structure of feeling in the 1840s (duly acknowledging the Anglocentrism of this title, and suggesting 'Radical Gothic' as an alternative). From its origins in Hogarth and Romanticism to its present-day incarnation in audiences' emotional response to the movie *Les Misérables* (2012), the Chartist Gothic directs the reader's gaze to the poverty of the streets, and proclaims that the reader does not have the right to avert his/her gaze.

The day was brought to a close in suitably celebratory fashion, with sparkling wine and birthday cake. The abiding impression left by the symposium was that there is much exciting work to be done on Reynolds; whether or not 'Reynolds Studies' ultimately becomes a recognised field, a closer study of his work as writer, journalist, and radical will illuminate our study of the current canon of nineteenth-century writing. A Reynolds Society has been proposed, and there are plans afoot to host a similar event in 2015 on publisher and newspaper proprietor Edward Lloyd (1815–90).

Ruth Doherty

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National Theatre Live: Frankenstein Encore Screening
October 2013

There's something inherently uncanny about watching a theatrical production being screened in a cinema, but it's becoming a regular feature of my cinema-going with the evolution of *National Theatre Live* and other simulcasts. These events, in which a play is broadcast simultaneously to cinemas around the world from the theatre in which it is staged, have included some noteworthy productions within the field of gothic and horror studies — most famously in Danny Boyle's *Frankenstein* (2011), but also in the Shakespearean ghostliness of Nicholas Hytner's *Hamlet* (2010), for example. These simulcasts come complete with some of the trappings of both a regular trip to the movies (trailers and end credits) and an outing to the theatre (an interval and curtain call), but they ultimately provide quite a different kind of viewing experience that is neither entirely cinematic nor theatrical.

Although they are designed to capture a live theatrical show, there is a concerted effort to forestall any accusation of 'staginess' in the way that these productions are shot, employing multiple cameras and making use of such cinematic devices as the close-up to capture nuances that might not play as well in the back row of the theatre. The 'theatrical' experience is further interrupted by repeated (ill-advised) attempts to entertain the cinema-goers before the show, and during the interval, with a selection of short informative films about the production, or live interviews with the creative team that has staged it. These serve as repeated reminders that you're not actually sitting in the theatre along with the real-life punters who've paid a reduced rate for seats with obscured views to accommodate the various cameras that are allowing you to watch the production in the cinema in the first place. At the same time, though, they indicate that this is not an entirely cinematic event either. Intervals in the cinema weren't generally designed to remind you about the real people behind the smoke-and-mirrors onscreen. They were unlikely to feature an interview in which a director is prompted to describe their leading man as 'passing sexy' (as happened when Emma Freud interviewed Josie Rourke during the interval at January's live simulcast of *Coriolanus* from the Donmar Warehouse, just before Tom Hiddleston stepped back onstage in the title role). Despite these distractions, though, it seems that audiences at these events are determined to treat the performance as though it is taking place right before them, unmediated by the camera. Consequently, these have usually been the most reverentially silent cinema spaces

I've ever encountered; the actors may be onscreen, but it's as though the anxiety remains that they might hear us, were we accidentally to break the silence.

Of course, a live audience repeatedly contributes to the soundscape of any theatre space, in ways that have now become part of the soundtrack of these plays when they are granted encore screenings. These repeat screenings of the original live performances are also a key part of *NT Live*'s repertoire; recorded for posterity, they remain thus far stubbornly averse to DVD or other home release, and can only be viewed on the big screen. They also feature aural traces of the original live audience: the sound of their pre-show murmurs that signals to the cinematic audience that the simulcast link has been established between cinema and theatre; stray coughs during quiet moments; laughter; applause; gasps; and even appalled silence at events on the stage. Enshrined as part of the original performance — and the record of the original theatrical space — these moments actually seem even more heightened at an encore screening, when the audience in the cinema can't help but be aware that the performance they're watching (and hearing) is a fundamentally haunted one, which bears within it the ghostly double of its own original broadcast.

Ghostliness abounds in these encore screenings, then, including some ghosts in the machine (*Hamlet*, for example, boasted an unexpected chorus in the form of a disembodied voice from the control room) but another kind of gothic bogeyman also looms large in *Frankenstein*: the double. Adapted for the stage by Nick Dear and directed by Danny Boyle, the production famously featured Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller in alternating roles as Victor Frankenstein and the Creature, and received an encore screening in October 2013 as part of the National Theatre's 50th Anniversary celebrations. I've now seen the production twice, first when it was broadcast live in March 2011, and again on Halloween last October. Since each of these versions featured the same line-up (Cumberbatch as the Creature, and Miller as Frankenstein), there remains an alternative version of the play that has as yet eluded me (though this may be rectified in the future, with further encore screenings planned for later this year). And of course, the original theatrical productions themselves are entirely lost to me, so this is a performance I can only judge through the mediated lens of the simulcast, which has captured the live show in a unique way. However, as far as I can gather, that camera's gaze did necessitate some concessions that the theatre space didn't require; for example, the audience in the cinema would likely have got much more intimately acquainted with Frankenstein's Monster in close-up, were it not for the decision to provide the actor with a modesty-preserving loincloth for the opening scene of the play on broadcast night.

Proceedings open with the tolling of a bell and the birth of the Creature, on an empty stage (save for the 'womb' from which he emerges) underneath a canopy of countless light bulbs, their flashes signifying the electrical charge that animates his flesh. This makes for a visually arresting opening, and the lengthy sequence that follows is equally engrossing, as the solitary Creature (Cumberbatch) gradually becomes aware of his surroundings, his limbs, and the noises that issue from his mouth. It's an impressive physical and vocal performance, all the more so in its command of an empty stage (or screen?), interrupted only when Victor Frankenstein (Miller) arrives onstage to banish his creation. Things largely follow Shelley's original from there (albeit with some key omissions, and a modified conclusion which sees both Creature and Frankenstein still locked in a seemingly unending pursuit of one another, each needing the other as an antagonist in order to justify their very existence). The Creature is the showier role by far, in the physicality of the opening scene, in his acquisition of language through his interactions with DeLacey (Karl Johnson), and in his menace in the latter stages of the play, but Miller's Frankenstein was certainly better than I remembered this time round, and I remain curious to see just what he did with the less-thankless role of the Creature when given the chance. However, the rest of the main cast, including Naomie Harris as Elizabeth, are often overshadowed by the main event of the two male leads, with a very uncomfortable-looking George Harris proving especially disappointing as Frankenstein Senior. It's perhaps inevitable that the two main roles will dominate a stage-show like this, but that said, some stronger characterisation and performances from the supporting cast might have made for a more balanced production overall.

The other real star of the production remains the staging itself, which makes great use of the Olivier Theatre's 'drum revolve' stage and an eclectic score by regular Boyle collaborators Underworld; it also features some well-conceived stylised sequences, such as one involving the birth of the Female Creature (Andreea Padurariu). Most memorable, though, is probably the moment in which a 'steampunk' train makes its way onstage, heading for the auditorium. In hindsight, there are elements in this vision of industrial Britain that anticipated Boyle's 2012 Opening Ceremony of the Olympics, which culminated in the unveiling of an Olympic cauldron (designed by Thomas Heatherwick) not dissimilar to the elaborate lighting fixture that oversees events in this production of *Frankenstein*.

In Boyle's vision of *Frankenstein*, that light illuminated the stage and breathed life into the Creature on a nightly basis in 2011. The *NT Live* encore screenings revive his flesh once more, rebroadcasting a show that is no longer 'live' but which remains curiously invested with life, bearing within it ghosts of a performance and theatrical space that have

been captured in curious ways. In the end, these repeat screenings of the *NT Live* production of *Frankenstein* continue to provide a record of an ambitious production that was not entirely perfect, but which did boast some impressive performances (off-set by some decidedly mediocre ones), striking visuals, and a set that most likely looked incredible, from the right seat in the theatre itself. Ultimately, in its reanimation of that recorded performance and theatrical space, it makes for an intriguingly haunting (and at times haunted) viewing experience.

Jenny McDonnell

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INTERVIEW

Jug Face (2013): An interview with writer/director Chad Crawford Kinkle and producer Andrew van den Houten

Jug Face, released on DVD and Blu-ray last October, is an indie horror film and winner of Best Screenplay at Slamdance that has been widely acclaimed following its numerous screenings at film festivals last year. It tells the story of a cult-like community living in the woods of America's Deep South, in rural Tennessee. These people are bound by their fearful and devout worship of a naturally formed pit, to which they ritually sacrifice members of their own community, in return for their continued physical wellbeing. The victims are chosen by a selected 'seer', who is guided by the pit to create on clay jugs the physical likeness of the intended sacrifice. The film follows especially the story of Ada (Lauren Ashley Carter), who discovers that she is next to be killed, before hiding and burying her jug face, with devastating consequences.

Chad Crawford Kinkle, the writer and director of the film, is known also for the short film *Organ Grinder* (2011), while Andrew van den Houten, one of its producers, has worked on *The Woman* (2011) and *All Cheerleaders Die* (2013), and is president of the production company Moderncine. In an interview for the *IJGHS*, the pair discussed the film and some of its more gothic themes.

Speaking first on the arguable tendency for the most interesting and original works in the genre to emerge from indie filmmakers, rather than mainstream Hollywood, van den Houten suggests that this is due to the considerably greater 'creative freedom' allowed in indie productions. 'As far as the genre goes', he continues, 'it allows for so much more