Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (University of Victoria, 2015)
BA Honours (University of Calgary, 2011)

“As the Times Want Him to Decide”: the Lives and Times
of Florence Maybrick, 1891-2015”

Department of History

August 28, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Simon Devereaux, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Tom Saunders, Department of History, UVic (Member)

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Dr. Monica Prendergast, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic
Abstract

This thesis examines major publications produced between 1891-2015 that portray the trial of Florence Maybrick. Inspired by Paul Davis’ *Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, it considers the various iterations of Florence’s story as “protean fantasies,” in which the narrative changed to reflect the realities of the time in which it was (re)written. It tracks shifting patterns of emphasis and authors’ rigid conformity to associated sets of discursive strategies to argue that this body of literature can be divided into three distinct epochs. The 1891-1912 era was characterized by authors’ weaponization of sympathy on Florence’s behalf in response to contemporary concerns about the administration of criminal justice in England. From 1923 until 1964, this “Victorian tragedy” was restructured according to the tropes of detective fiction and non-fiction crime writing in a cultural atmosphere increasingly preoccupied with postmodernism, “the psychological,” and shifting gender relations. The concept of the “permissive society” and emergence of “new social history” following the late 1960s and early 70s produced a revised version of the story that accentuated aspects of the case that were illustrative of the structures of Victorian society. As such, this thesis is a metahistorical examination of how authors’ approaches to the question of whether or not Florence poisoned her husband in 1889 have been shaped by contemporary mentalités.