

★DICKENS DAY★

Saturday 14th October 2017, Senate House, London

Dickens and Fantasy

Dickens Day 2017 will be considering Dickens and Fantasy. Fantasy pervades Dickens's writing, from the goblins who stole a sexton in his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, to the use of fairy tales in *Edwin Drood*, his last. His deeply held commitment to 'fancy', a word from the same root as 'fantasy', and the influence of the *One Thousand and One Nights* on his work is well known. Dickens also loved theatrical fantasies, such as pantomime with its 'gaslight fairies' as he called them in *Household Words*. Dickens often linked scientific and technological developments to fancy and fantasy and delighted in juxtaposing the fantastic and the mundane.

Dickens peopled his work with fantasists of all sorts, from Mr Dick, Josiah Bounderby and Harold Skimpole to Pleasant Riderhood's fantasies of sailors and breadfruit and Louisa Gradgrind's visions in the fire. Oliver Twist's hallucinatory dream, Fagin in the condemned cell and Dickens's well-known influence on Sigmund Freud confirm the fertility of Dickens's work for conceptions of the unconscious and associated mental states. G. H. Lewes claimed that Dickens hallucinated his characters and Robert Buss's painting Dickens' Dream implies he dreamt them. How does Dickens's creative process relate to fantasy in both the imaginative and psychological sense?

In what way do Dickens's 'Christmas' books fit within the fantasy tradition and what is their relationship to his other works? What was Dickens's influence on contemporary and subsequent fantasy authors? How does Dickens use fantasy motifs? How does fantasy use Dickensian motifs? These are just some of the questions we hope to consider on the day.

Jointly run by Birkbeck, Cardiff University and the Dickens Fellowship, this one-day conference will explore all aspects of Dickens and fantasy. We invite proposals for 20-minute papers on any aspect of the theme and warmly encourage Dickensians and scholars of all backgrounds and career stages to apply. Topics could include but are not limited to:

- Fantasy, fancy and the imagination
- Dickens's 'Christmas' books
- Dickens and neo-Victorian fantasy, steampunk and gaslight romances
- Dickens, fantasy and science-fiction
- Dickens, pantomime and theatrical fantasy
- 'Gaslight Fairies': Dickens's journalism and fantasy
- 'Frauds on the Fairies': Dickens and fairy tales
- The 'romantic side of familiar things': fantasy and the everyday
- 'Swart giants, Slaves of the lamp of knowledge': technology, science and fantasy
- Robert Buss's Dickens' Dream
- Fantasy and Dickens's illustrators
- *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Tales of the Genii*
- Fantasy versus utility
- Dickens characters in other fantasy works (e.g. Jasper Fforde's Thursday Next novels)
- Dickens and Television fantasies (e.g. *Doctor Who* and Tony Jordan's *Dickensian*)
- Mr Dick, Harold Skimpole, Mr Bounderby and other Dickensian fantasists
- Oliver Twist's dream and other Dickensian dreams, nightmares, delusions and hallucinations
- Dickens, Freud and the unconscious
- Dickens's creative process: acting, making faces in the mirror, hearing voices?
- 'Good Mrs Brown': Dickens, fantasy and pornography

Please send proposals (maximum 500 words) to Bethan Carney, Holly Furneaux and Ben Winyard at [bethan\[dot\]carney\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:bethan[dot]carney[at]gmail[dot]com), [furneauxh\[at\]cardiff\[dot\]ac\[dot\]uk](mailto:furneauxh[at]cardiff[dot]ac[dot]uk) and [benwinyard\[at\]hotmail\[dot\]com](mailto:benwinyard[at]hotmail[dot]com). The deadline for paper proposals is 31st May 2017.