



An international interdisciplinary conference

Dickens and the Visual Imagination

Organised by the School of English and Languages, University of Surrey
and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London

9 – 10 July 2012



Dickens' Dream image courtesy of the Charles Dickens Museum, London

Dickens and the Visual Imagination

Our Sponsors



The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art was founded in 1970 through a generous grant from Paul Mellon, KBE to Yale University. The PMC is an educational charity registered in Britain and administered by a Director of Studies. The Advisory Council, comprised of twelve distinguished representatives from the British academic and museum community, meets twice a year to make recommendations on grants and fellowships to be awarded. The PMC publishes books on aspects of British art and architecture through Yale University Press, and sponsors academic events and conferences. The PMC was based at 20 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1, from its foundation in 1970 until 1996, when it moved to the present Grade I listed premises at 16 Bedford Square, London WC1.



The Institute of Advanced Studies

The Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Surrey hosts small-scale, scientific and scholarly meetings of leading academics from all over the world to discuss specialist topics away from the pressure of everyday work. The events are multidisciplinary, bringing together scholars from different disciplines to share alternative perspectives on common problems.



Watts Gallery

Watts Gallery is an art gallery in the village of Compton, near Guildford. First opening its doors to the public in 1904, Watts Gallery is a purpose built art gallery created for the display of work by the great Victorian artist George Frederic Watts (1817-1904). After a major restoration project visitors can now experience the paintings by Watts in the historic galleries set against their original decorative schemes.

About us

Formed in 2011, the School of English and Languages at the University of Surrey brings together the academic disciplines of English literature, creative writing, modern languages, linguistics, intercultural communication and translation studies. As a School we are interested in literary texts and languages in a global context. Our focus is on understanding how texts and languages work across national boundaries, how they function, and how they interact. We are home to two internationally-renowned research centres, the Surrey Morphology Group and the Centre for Translation Studies.



We are delighted to welcome all participants to the *Dickens and the Visual Imagination* conference, co-hosted by the University of Surrey and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, in association with Watts Gallery.

Dickens is renowned for the richness of his visual imagination, and his publications encouraged readers to interpret his words with and through their accompanying illustrations. Not only was Dickens deeply engaged with ideas of the visual in his writing, but his work also provoked responses from artists across multiple disciplines within the Victorian period and beyond. We have put together an exciting programme of papers which showcases the scope of current research into Dickens and the visual, taking in subjects as diverse as architecture, Victorian street art, and twenty-first-century graphic novels. In addition to our programme of papers, the first day of the conference, Monday 9 July, will conclude with a wine reception and viewing of the *Dickens and the Artists* exhibition at Watts Gallery.

We would like to thank the Institute of Advanced Studies and the Paul Mellon Centre for their generous support for *Dickens and the Visual Imagination*. We hope that you all enjoy the conference, and that it makes a unique and fruitful contribution to the multidisciplinary study of Dickens in his bicentenary year.

Organising Committee

<i>Churnjeet Mahn (University of Surrey)</i>	<i>Hilary Underwood (University of Surrey)</i>
<i>Beth Palmer (University of Surrey)</i>	<i>Mark Bills (Watts Gallery)</i>
<i>Gregory Tate (University of Surrey)</i>	<i>Martin Postle (Paul Mellon Centre)</i>

With thanks to Mirela Dumic and Lucy Ella Hawkins for their assistance.

Dickens and the Visual Imagination Programme

Conference Programme

9 July: University of Surrey, Guildford

School of Management Building

09.00-09.50: Registration and coffee (MS Foyer)

09.50-10.00: Opening Address and Welcome

Phil Powrie, Faculty Dean, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

Greg Tate, School of English and Languages

10.00-11.00: Plenary session (Room 31 MS 01)

Andrew Sanders (University of Durham), 'Some of Dickens's Rooms'

11.00-11.30: Tea and coffee (MS Foyer)

11.30-13.00: Parallel panel sessions

Panel 1: Dickens on Stage

Room 31 MS 01

Chair: Beth Palmer

Karen Laird (University of Manchester) – 'The Posthumous Dickens: *David Copperfield* on Stage in the 1870s'

Christopher Pittard (University of Portsmouth) – 'Hand/Eye Co-ordination: Dickens and Secular Magic'

Pete Orford (University of Birmingham) – 'Dickens on Style and Substance in the Theatre'

Panel 2: The Sights of London

Room 81 MS 02

Chair: Pat Hardy

Christine Corton (Wolfson College, Cambridge) – 'London Fog: From the Verbal to the Visual'

Ursula Kluwick (University of Bern) – 'The Dickensian Thames in Word and Image'

Estelle Murail (University of Paris VII) – 'London's Technologies of Seeing'

Panel 3: Revisionings of Dickens

Room 72 MS 02

Chair: Janet Wilkinson

Mark Bills (Watts Gallery) – ‘Dickens and the Painting of Modern Life’

Esther Bendit Saltzman (University of Memphis) – ‘A Graphic Novel Goes Victorian’

Pamela Gerrish Nunn (Independent scholar) – ‘“Dickensian Subjects” and the Women’s Movement Agenda’

13.00-14.00: Lunch (Room 38 MS 02)

14.00-15.30: Parallel panel sessions

Panel 4: Dickens’s Eye

Room Room 31 MS 01

Chair: Christine Corton

Janet Wilkinson (Watts Gallery) – ‘Portraits in Dickens’s Novels’

Nicole Bush (Northumbria University) – ‘The Eye in Technological Motion from *Dombey* to *Dorrit*’

Heather Tilley (Birkbeck, University of London) – ‘Dickens, Blindness, and Narrative’

Panel 5: Architecture and Interiors

Room 81 MS 02

Chair: Andrew Mangham

Emma Gray (University of Bristol) – ‘Victorian Domestic Interiors in the Novels of Charles Dickens’

Clare Pettitt (King’s College London) – ‘Dickens, Time, and the Baroque’

Dominic Janes (Birkbeck, University of London) – ‘Ambivalence and the Gothic Revival in *The Old Curiosity Shop*’

Panel 6: Caricatures and Clowns

Room 72 MS 02

Chair: Janice Carlisle

Gary Watt (University of Warwick) – ‘Dickens, Daumier, and the Caricature of Law’

Leigh-Michil George (University of California, Los Angeles) – ‘The Fat vs the Skinny: The Caricature System in *The Pickwick Papers*’

Jonathan Buckmaster (Royal Holloway, University of London) – ‘The Dickensian Clown in Word and Picture’

Dickens and the Visual Imagination

Programme

15.30-16.00: Tea and coffee (MS Foyer)

16.00-17.00: Plenary session (Room 31 MS 01)

Sambudha Sen (University of Delhi), 'City Sketches, Panoramas and the Dickensian Aesthetic'

18.00-22.00: Drinks reception and an exhibition *Dickens and the Artists* at Watts Gallery followed by Conference Dinner at the Withies Inn

Transport organised from the University.

10 July: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London

09.00-09.50: Arrival and coffee

9.50-10.00: Welcome

Martin Postle, Paul Mellon Centre

10.00-11.00: Plenary session

Lynda Nead (Birkbeck, University of London), '"To let in the sunlight": Dickens, Lean and the Chiaroscuro of Postwar Britain'

11.00-11.30: Tea and coffee

11.30-13.00: Panel session

Panel 7: Perception and Perspective

Chair: Clare Pettitt

Andrew Mangham (University of Reading) – 'Dickens, Hogarth and Perspective'

Janice Carlisle (Yale University) – 'Light Shows: *Great Expectations* and J. M. W. Turner'

Aleza Tadri-Friedman (St. Johns University, New York) – 'Art Appreciation and Visual Perception in *Dombey and Son*'

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-15.30: Panel session

Panel 8: Dickens and Painting

Chair: Heather Tilley

Dehn Gilmore (California Institute of Technology) – ‘Reading the Dickensian Gallery’

Pat Hardy (Museum of London) – ‘Dickens and Portraiture’

Vincent Alessi (La Trobe University) – ‘Van Gogh and the Influence of Charles Dickens’

15.30-16.00: Tea and coffee

16.00-17.00: Plenary session

Kate Flint (University of Southern California), ‘Pavement Art’

17.00-17.15: Close

Dickens and the Visual Imagination

Plenary Speakers

Kate Flint (University of Southern California, USA)

Pavement Art

In *Somebody's Luggage* – a multi-author Christmas tale – Dickens gives us a vivid representation of a pavement artist (or, as it turns out, pavement con-artist). Victorian pavement painting was a very public form of art. It provided a form of entertainment, a chance to see some talented workers in chalk and pastel (including Simeon Solomon and on one notable occasion George du Maurier), an opportunity to mock aesthetic clichés, and offered up a ready subject for literary sketches of street life. Writers from Dickens through George Moore to George Sims, together with many occasional pieces in periodicals, offer a range of informative commentary on the various ways in which its presence was interpreted, and on the way in which it brought together a cross-section of classes as observers. Pavement artists are discussed in terms of local color; as potential subjects for a day's photographic outing to the capital; as avatars of people involved in artistic professions. To give money to a pavement artist was to perform an act capable of various interpretations. It could be an gesture of charity ("Like the Artist – On the Rocks!" ran the legend under a chalk drawing of a shipwreck), or it could involve rewarding a skill – above all the careful management of perspective when drawing on a flat surface for an ambulatory public - or it could mean the rewarding of a performance, as a colorful design magically appeared on a blank grey surface. The street offered a rare opportunity for a mixed public to see an artist at work, and also to engage in the patronage of a unique work of art - although the repetition of stock scenes, the replication of famous images, and the recreation of an earlier image in a new site complicates this category of uniqueness. But the capacity of pavement art to provide an unlooked-for instant of aesthetic beauty, together with its ephemerality; the fact that process, rather than result often formed the focus of the audience's attention, and the obvious circumstance of being produced and displayed in open and public surroundings meant that the pavement artist had much more in common with a street musician or barrel organ operator than he (very rarely "she," until suffragettes took up the practice for political ends) did with gallery exhibitors. Furthermore, as George Orwell notes in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the street artist was also frequently seen as a "nuisance," and moved on, the art work erased, and its producer treated like a beggar.

This paper explores how the pavement artist not only troubled law enforcement officials through the creation of images that disrupted the flow of pedestrians, but troubled many other boundaries besides that liminal space between dwellings and roadway. It considers what it means for artistic production to be seen as something that refigures the purposes of the street. And, turning back to Dickens, it explores what these issues of public display have to do with Dickens's own concern about authorship, about the ownership of a piece of work, and about controlling the relationship between text, image, and audience once the aesthetic production is out there in the public sphere.

Kate Flint is Provost Professor of English and Art History at the University of Southern California, where she is Chair of the Art History department, and directs the Visual Studies Research Institute. Author of The Woman Reader 1837-1914, The Victorians and the Visual Imagination, and The Transatlantic Indian 11786-1930, she is finishing a book on flash photography and surprising illumination, and beginning a new project on the globalization of art in the C19th.

Lynda Nead (Birkbeck, University of London)

“to let in the sunlight”: Dickens, Lean and the Chiaroscuro of Postwar Britain

Many of our most memorable visual images of the world of Dickens come from David Lean’s two great film adaptations: *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948). This paper will examine the uses of chiaroscuro – of light and shadow – at three moments in the visual imagining of Dickens: in the nineteenth century; in the years following the second world war; and today. It will consider the power and meaning of black and white and the way its visual language has shaped our fantasies and myths of the Victorians and of modernity.

Lynda Nead is Pevsner Professor of History of Art in the Department of History of Art and Screen Media at Birkbeck College. Her books include Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London (Yale University Press, 2000) and The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c.1900 (Yale University Press, 2008). She has recently written on the visual culture of boxing and is currently working on a book entitled The Tiger in the Smoke: British Visual Culture in the 1950s.

Andrew Sanders (University of Durham)

Some of Dickens’s Rooms

Dickens is a very precise describer of both public and domestic interior spaces. To some extent these spaces help to define the characters who inhabit them, but they also function as significant entities in their own right. Some are conspicuously empty, others are intensely full of human activity. Many reflect the essence of early- and mid-Victorian taste. This paper will make reference to Dickens’s own rooms and his taste in furniture and painting as well as considering the variety and decoration of his fictional interiors. It will concentrate finally on the use of domestic space in *Dombey and Son*. The paper will be illustrated.

Andrew Sanders is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Durham. His books include The Victorian Historical Novel (1978), Charles Dickens: Resurrectionist (1982), Dickens and the Spirit of the Age (1999), Charles Dickens (Authors in Context) (2003), Charles Dickens’s London (2011) and The Short Oxford History of English Literature (1994). He was editor of The Dickensian (1978-86) and he has published editions of Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Bleak House and A Tale of Two Cities. His In the Olden Time: Victorian Responses to the British Past will be published by Yale University Press in 2013.

Sambudha Sen (University of Delhi, India)

City Sketches, Panoramas, and the Dickensian Aesthetic

My paper is going to argue that Charles Dickens built a whole, unique urban aesthetic based on expressive resources that had developed in predominantly visual forms such as the city sketches and panoramas. Several scholars have worked with Michel Foucault’s powerful ideas on the relationship between power and social space to argue that forms such as panoramas helped Dickens to sustain the fantasy of mapping the nineteenth century London in its entirety; of drawing its disparate often hidden spaces within the domain of the visible, the identifiable and the penetrable. I shall argue, though, that panoramas and the city sketches also trained the eye to work with fragments and that this enabled Dickens to produce a predominantly spatial aesthetics based on contrast, juxtaposition and superimposition.

Sambudha Sen is Professor of English at the University of Delhi. His book London, Radical Culture and the Making of the Dickensian Aesthetic (Ohio State University Press) is scheduled for publication this July. Sen has also published essays on the popular print culture of nineteenth-century England and its relationship with novelists like Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray in Representations, English Literary History and Nineteenth-Century Literature. His present research focuses on the making of women’s identities in relation to a set of nineteenth-century texts that stretch from canonical novels like Mansfield Park to

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Sanitary Committee Reports and working class fiction such as Earnest Jones's Women's Wrongs. Sen is on the Advisory Board of Victorian Studies.

Paper Abstracts

Vincent Alessi (La Trobe University, Australia)

The Tale of Two Creators: Vincent Van Gogh and the Influence of Charles Dickens

There is no writer, in my opinion, who is so much a painter and a black-and-white artist as Dickens. His figures are resurrections. [Vincent van Gogh 1883]

Throughout his life, Vincent van Gogh was a voracious reader. From the French naturalists like Emile Zola, to the religious doctrinarians, such as John Bunyan, van Gogh was constantly reading and subsequently discussing texts in his letters. Literature had an enormous influence on his development as a person and as an artist. It helped shape his morals, ideals and beliefs and during his early artistic years was a compass as he searched for his creative voice. 'Much of what applied to van Gogh's approach to art is', as the authors claim in the recently published *Vincent van Gogh The Letters*, 'equally true of literature.' Of all the authors mentioned by van Gogh in his letters one of the most referenced is Charles Dickens. Van Gogh discovered Dickens while living in England in the early 1870s and he continued to cite the author, both in the context of books read and as an analogy to describe his work or ideals, as late as September 1889. Van Gogh read Dickens's complete output both in English and in translations, emphasising his admiration for the author. Quite simply, Dickens and his view of the world was a significant influence throughout van Gogh's life. This proposed paper aims to investigate the complexity of Dickens' influence on van Gogh's development. Examining his first acquaintance with the author, this paper will aim to reveal the influence of Dickens on the young van Gogh while he grappled with life in London, a large city which was the complete opposite of the small rural settings in which he had previously lived. It will investigate how Dickens' novels shaped van Gogh's ideals and world-view, especially his support and sympathy for the working and lower classes. It will also demonstrate how the influence of Dickens manifested itself in van Gogh's work, especially in two symbolic companion paintings, a self-portrait and a portrait of Paul Gauguin.

Jonathan Buckmaster (Royal Holloway, University of London)

'... a face after the portraits of the late Mr. Grimaldi': The Dickensian Clown in Word and Picture

In 'The Stroller's Tale' of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens narrates the miserable death of a pantomime clown, who dies starving and friendless in a fit of madness. The raving demise of this thoroughly wretched character is depicted in one of the most arresting images in Dickens's work. However, both the image and sentiment of this inset tale misrepresent Dickens's treatment of clowns and clownish figures elsewhere. In this paper, I will present a more positive history of Dickens's clownish figures through both word and image. In the first part, I will consider Dickens's lesser-known 'biography' of a real-life pantomime clown, *The Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi*. In conjunction with his earlier essay 'The Pantomime of Life', the *Memoirs* sought to demonstrate the idea of life as theatre through the life story of a theatrical performer. As I will show, this idea was articulated through text *and* picture, as Cruikshank's accompanying pictures served as both 'illustration' and 'realisation', *a la* Martin Meisel. Just as Dickens's characters do not merely exist on the page, Grimaldi's performances were not confined to the stage, and also appeared in a number of popular prints. These prints circulated his image as part of a strong visual culture during the Regency period, and in the second part of my paper I shall show how, this visual culture could also be seen to inform Dickens's textual and visual depictions of the clownish characters within his novels.

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Nicole Bush (Northumbria University)

The Eye in Technological Motion from *Dombey* to *Dorrit*

This paper considers visibility in Dickens's prose through the lens of nineteenth-century optical technology. Looking specifically at persistence of vision devices which worked to create the illusion of an artificially moving image, this paper discusses Dickens's imaginative response to the mobilised image, and asks what impact the newly mechanised experience of visual motion had on the representational strategies of his mid-century novels. Joss Marsh has illuminated one aspect of Dickens's engagement with his contemporary culture of visual spectacle by focusing on metaphorical references to the dissolving slides of the magic lantern in *A Christmas Carol* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This paper follows such work in its concern with material culture and Dickens's imaginative use of new visual experiences, but aims to focus more closely on responses to and representations of the eye in motion in the mid-century novels. How then did moving image technology, such as the zoetrope and phenakistiscope, inform and contribute to a specifically nineteenth-century, or, more narrowly, Dickensian way of seeing? His fiction describes how the eye can bend, sweep, catch, grasp, and even pierce the object of its gaze. This paper contends that such textual representations of the movement and agency of sight can be read productively alongside the physiological and physical demands of pre-cinematic optical technology. These devices required that a handle be cranked or a disc spun, relying on an amalgamation of perception and bodily action which provoked a textured and tactile representation of vision in the literary imagination. Focusing on the period from *Dombey and Son* to *Little Dorrit* (1846-57), this paper offers an exploration of moving image technologies and their role in the textual rendering of visual experience in Dickens's fiction.

Janice Carlisle (Yale University, USA)

Light Shows: *Great Expectations* and J. M. W. Turner

At the end of *Techniques of the Observer*, his ground-breaking study of the science and art of vision in the nineteenth century, Jonathan Crary claims that there is no graphic representation of the 'new type of observer' who emerged in the 1820s and 1830s in response to the paradigm shift from mechanical to organic understandings of sight. *Great Expectations*, however, does offer such a representation, and his name is Pip. For Crary, the conception of vision that he describes is epitomized by Turner's handling of light in paintings such as *Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory)* and *The Angel Standing in the Sun*. Dickens himself implied that Turner's 'finest water-colour drawings, done in his greatest day,' provide an experience of transcendent vision surpassed only by the sight of a sublime landscape. Not surprisingly, then, *Great Expectations* depicts a number of revelations made possible by literal illuminations: when Pip glimpses Estella in a sudden glare of gaslight or when he describes the rising sun as a marsh of fire on the horizon. Such moments, instances when the play of light calls attention less to the object seen than to the observer seeing, might even be called "Turner effects" achieved by the prose of the novel. Yet what precisely does the conjunction of Dickens's words and Turner's images say about the nature of Pip's visual perception and about his status as a 'new type of observer'? Addressing that question will be the goal of this paper.

Christine Corton (Wolfson College, Cambridge)

London Fog: From the Verbal to the Visual

Everyone is familiar with the famous opening scene of *Bleak House*, in which Dickens uses fog as a metaphor for the law in a virtuoso display of linguistic inventiveness. But it was also a very visual metaphor that played an important and constantly changing role in many of his other novels. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), a natural fog confuses Quilp, the emblem of industrialisation, to drown in the Thames. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-4) fog produces elements of the fairy tale to create a London that is insubstantial but also confusing and blinding. But in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5) it symbolises a crisis of the city and threatens the very survival of London. This paper will begin by looking at the way Dickens's use of London fog revealed the author's growing pessimism about London, but it will also explore the visually imaginative way Dickens

employs fog. London, in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), is 'a mere dark mist – a giant phantom in the air'. He exploits the metaphorical possibilities of the different colours of fog – yellow, brown, black - in *Our Mutual Friend*, reflecting contemporary representations but transforming them into a discourse of urban morality. By contrast, *The Old Curiosity Shop* describes London as a white, natural fog, thereby distinguishing it from the 'London Particular' experienced by many Londoners, and mobilizing it in the service of a very different moral discourse. Colour thus takes on a representational function as well as being used metaphorically.

Leigh-Michil George (University of California, Los Angeles, USA)

The Fat vs. the Skinny: The Caricature System in *The Pickwick Papers*

Building on the work of scholars like Michael Steig, Robert Patten, and Alex Woloch, I argue that Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*, including its forty-three illustrations, operates in terms of a caricature system: the fat vs. the skinny. We have the fat, ridiculous protagonist Mr. Pickwick and his nemesis, the skinny, ridiculous Mr. Jingle. Interestingly, we see Pickwick as fat before we read him as fat. The book's first illustration, drawn by caricaturist Robert Seymour, gives us an image of a rotund, bald man wearing glasses. The text, however, describes his bald head and spectacles, but without offering us any description of Pickwick's size. The visual eye precedes the mind's eye. However, it is the verbal caricature and not the visual caricature that ultimately dominates this book. This process of 'caricaturization,' where one type of caricature becomes more fully realized than the other, operates within a system in which the 'skinny' visual information is subordinate to the 'fat' verbal description. Through investigating these two types of caricature functioning in this novel, I hope to offer a more nuanced way of seeing caricature than is typically presented. Caricature both flattens and rounds; it both opposes and supports realism. In order for character and realistic portrayal to appear so 'real' it needs to be set against an other, and in literary terms that other is caricature.

Dehn Gilmore (California Institute of Technology, USA)

Reading the Dickensian Gallery

It is well known that in the Victorian period, literary critics often borrowed language from the art world in making their appraisals of novels. Dickens's work invited many such turns and in addition to inviting the expected references to individual paintings and styles--for example, to "Dutch Painting" and "Pre-Raphaelite mimesis"-- his episodic, polyphonic and highly heterogeneous novels also gave critics occasion to turn to the gallery space full stop, itself a site of divided attention and diverse aesthetics. In this paper, I offer a short tour of the "gallery" allusions of Dickens's critics. I then trace the language of the gallery, and of his critics into later novels like *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Our Mutual Friend*, to show how he composed a set of novelistic sites of artistic display that would seem to constitute a reflection on his own actual or potential reception by a popular audience, or by his critics. If, for him, as he wrote as early as in the preface to "Sketches by Boz," the act of writing a book consisted in making and then bundling together a set of "pictures," but especially if one's critics were engaged in framing and appraising one's "gallery," then the actual sites of display one put into one's books could take on a pointedly self-bearing significance. When Dickens dramatizes the consumption of visual art, he seems to be considering a set of possibilities for how his own work will be read.

Emma Gray (University of Bristol)

Victorian Domestic Interiors in the Novels of Charles Dickens

The devil is in the detail is a phrase that could have been written by Dickens himself. His novels exude carefully drawn detail in all aspects of his story-telling as one would expect: characters, geographical locations, cityscapes, transport and costume for example. Less well known or written about are the detailed interior spaces of the Victorian homes that he depicted. The notion of comfort was an important aspect in most Victorian homes brought about by copious books on interior decoration, new colour dyes and the invention of sprung upholstered furniture for example. Contemporary novelists such as Dickens and Trollope

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drew on modern life for their work and used interior design as a key feature to draw distinctions about class and gender and placed comfort centrally within their plots, which suggests that these fashionable notions were important to their reading audience. In *Dombey and Son* Dickens depicts the houses of both the great Dombey and Dombey's manager, Mr Carker, helping to draw sharply observed gender and class distinctions as well as incredibly accurate depictions of mid-Victorian interior decoration. As part of my PhD research, I have looked at the London decorating company of Crace & Son, one of the most distinguished of its time, working for amongst other important clients, Queen Victoria. It is clear that Dickens may well have drawn on his friendship with JG Crace to better and more accurately describe the contemporary Victorian domestic interiors spaces of that period. I hope that this paper will be a test case for a discussion on whether this connects text, image and interior space in Dickens's mid Victorian novels. This work forms part of my doctoral thesis: 'The Country House, Past, Present & Future: Interpretation, Presentation & Relevance from 1843 to the Present Day'.

Pat Hardy (Museum of London)

'False hair, false titles, false jewellery and false histories': Dickens and Portraiture

This paper explores portraiture in Dickens's novels. It contends that 'Bleak House' 1852/3 is a key work in the development of visual culture of the period through its adaptation of Lavaterian physiognomical theories. In it work Dickens directly engages with the function and purpose of the portrayal of likeness and its association with conveying character and personality. Together with works such as 'Our Mutual Friend' 1864-5 they prefigure the works of British Social Realist artists such as Luke Fildes, Frank Holl and Hubert Herkomer whose later careers specialised in portraits, after working in the graphic press. Dickens directly engaged with the form of narrative structures through his use of the ideas about portraiture. His distinctive, intuitive descriptions used portraiture to signify major themes as in the fate of Lady Dedlock, 'of all the shadows in Chesney Wold the shadow in the long drawing room upon my lady's picture is the first to come and the last to be disturbed'. They also responded to the uncertainties of later Victorian urbanisation and industrialisation in which former social classifications and outward characteristics could not always be relied upon creating uncertainty, suspense and illegibility, narrative tensions later explored by Tissot and Whistler.

Dominic Janes (Birkbeck, University of London)

Ambivalence and the Gothic Revival in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and its Illustrations

This paper will explore the ways in which gothic art and architecture is depicted and contested in the text and images of Dickens' 'The Old Curiosity Shop'. Published at a time (1840-1) when the gothic revival in church building was starting to develop a powerful momentum, the text and illustrations display strong feelings of ambivalence towards ancient gothic architecture in which picturesque and gothic modes of viewing co-exist in complex ways. The histories of gothic architecture and gothic literature have often been studied in isolation from each other. Moreover, the revival in gothic architecture has often been presented as representing a relatively clear-cut divide between 'goths' and their opponents who championed the classical tradition. Study of the *Old Curiosity Shop* and its illustrations suggests that attitudes towards gothic material culture were complex and ambivalent. On the one hand, picturesque viewpoints advocated the village church as the epitome of a comforting and moral community. Gothic revival churches which copied those of the medieval countryside and that were newly built in the expanding cities might be seen, in this mode of viewing, as beautifying and as sacralising a threatening urban landscape. On the other hand, from a gothic literary viewpoint, the arrival of ancient forms might confirm, through the mode of the uncanny, the sinister dislocations of contemporary urban life.

Ursula Kluwick (University of Bern, Switzerland)
The Dickensian Thames in Word and Image

This paper investigates the representation of the River Thames in Charles Dickens's novels, both in his words and in the illustrations accompanying his texts. It relates Dickens's textual representations of the river to the visual dimension of his fiction, and analyses the dialogue which emerges between the two in *Our Mutual Friend* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Dickens's writing, of course, possesses a highly visual quality in itself, and it is illuminating to compare the images conjured up by his texts with the pictures created as interpretative companion pieces by his illustrators, in close collaboration with the author himself. In the 1850s and 1860s, the condition of the Thames occasioned grave concern. Dickens was an active participant in the struggle for sanitary reform, and deeply perturbed by the pollution of the river and, by extension, of London water supplies. These anxieties surface in his fictional portrayals of the Thames, which features prominently in his writing. The river acquires a highly symbolic function, and descriptions of its polluted state abound. Interestingly, however, where Dickens's texts foreground the environmental degradation of the river, the accompanying illustrations obscure the condition of the Thames. The river is visually underrepresented; where it appears, it is often as barely perceptible background, or else as an embellished version of Dickens's Thames. My paper suggests that the politics of representation behind these symbolically charged discrepancies can be seen as an expression of mid-Victorian ambivalence towards the social and demographic changes causing the transformation of the great English river.

Karen Laird (University of Manchester)
The Posthumous Dickens: *David Copperfield* on Stage in the 1870s

In the wake of Charles Dickens' death, theatres from London to San Francisco commemorated his life by staging dramatizations of his novels. This paper investigates these commemorative adaptations to consider how Dickens' posthumous reputation was immediately constructed out of his fiction to console his mourning public. Theatre managers overwhelmingly selected *David Copperfield* as the definitive text to celebrate Dickens' life. While *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* were performed only twice in 1870, *David Copperfield* was staged at least eighteen times. Adaptations of *David Copperfield* continued at a frenetic pace throughout the decade, resulting in fifty versions worldwide by 1880. Most were spin-offs of Andrew Halliday's wildly successful *Little Em'ly* (1869), as their titles alone betray: *Lost Em'ly*, *Poor Lost Em'ly*; or, *The Wreck of the Rosa*, *Little Em'ly's Trials*, and *The Ark on the Sands*. These plays show little interest in the eponymous protagonist David, who had been identified in John Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens* (1871) as a reflection of Dickens' own traumatic childhood. Rather, the 1870s dramatizations map Dickens' biography onto the character of Mr Peggotty, making him a locus of the late novelist's most celebrated traits. In doing so, these commemorative *David Copperfield* adaptations forged Dickens' legacy as a strong, faithful, and forgiving patriarch.

Andrew Mangham (University of Reading)
Methods in Madness: Dickens, Hogarth and Perspective

In the 1841 preface to *Oliver Twist*, Dickens strongly defended the realism of his second, and most famous novel, claiming that – like William Hogarth – he had 'compromise[d not] a hair's breadth' in his gritty portrayals of the real London. Despite the fact that Dickens's references to Hogarth centre on accuracy of content ('as really do exist', 'as they really are'), his attention to the artist's methods suggests that, for him, the *mode* of representing reality was as important, if not more so, than the result. In the 1841 preface, for instance, Dickens's focus is laid on the act of representing: he will show; he will attempt; he will do his best. The significance of this interest is something that has been overlooked in discussions of his realist vision. Realism, according to Dickens, was a *method* or tool, not a result or a product. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth's work on realism has illustrated how the use of perspective, and a vanishing point in particular, is one of the traits that typify the realist style. What makes the work of Hogarth realistic is its careful use of perspective.

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The foreground of images such as the famous *Beer Street* (1751) and *Gin Lane* (1751) may be packed with detail that suggests chaos and disorder, but the backgrounds of these prints, and many of the artist's other works, offer careful studies of perspective, metered angles, and straight lines. The eye of Hogarth is realistic yet what falls within the scope of its visual power are scenes of chaos and disorder. And so it is with Dickens's vision of Oliver's story. The reader encounters images, settings, and characters that are incredible. Fagin, Sikes, and the rest of their motley crew that go 'skulking uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life' are gothic nightmares, despite the author's insistence that they are 'TRUE'. What makes *Oliver Twist* an exercise in realism is not the objects that the narrator discovers in the benighted pathways of the city, but the clever way in which he uses the spotless parish boy as a means of providing perspective.

Estelle Murail (University of Paris VII, France)

Sketches and Panoramas: London's Technologies of Seeing and their Influence on the Writing of the Dickensian Cityscape

In this paper, I wish to examine how London's multiple technologies influenced the perception and depiction of the nineteenth-century city in Dickens' writing. To do so, I shall focus on two ubiquitous and immensely popular visual (and verbal) forms: sketches and panoramas. These appear to crystallize two seemingly opposed modes of apprehending the city, which Michel de Certeau delineated admirably well in his text 'Marches dans la Ville'. He establishes a useful opposition between on the one hand, the fixed panoptic aerial viewpoint of the map-maker or, one might say, of the panorama artist, which renders the city legible and comprehensible, and on the other the walker's perception of space at ground-level. This is the perception of the sketch-artist – and which has to be apprehended through a rhetoric of walking and fleeting acts of seeing, and 'which inevitably remains illegible and mysterious'. I would like to look at the way Dickens' writing of the London cityscape was influenced by these 'technologies of seeing', and will suggest, through a study of Dickens' writing, that the two modes of vision might not be as radically opposed as they seem.

Pamela Gerrish Nunn (Independent Scholar)

'Dickensian Subjects' and the Women's Movement Agenda

A generally accepted idea of Dickens as a social reformer has remained remarkably constant, from its construction through Household Words to the present-day currency of the adjective 'Dickensian' (more often than not prefixed with the adverbial emphasis 'positively'). An intriguing interface presents itself for examination, between this one-man agenda of social concern and that of the women's rights movement which was also emerging in the 1850s. This paper looks at these two (rival?) programmes of social concern for elements of agreement, polarisation and sexual difference, through the works of women artists associated with this mid-Victorian feminism.

Pete Orford (University of Birmingham)

Looking the Part: Dickens on Style and Substance in the Theatre

The paper explores the nineteenth-century fixation with elaborate visual display in the theatre, as viewed through Dickens' eyes. The preoccupation with detailed scenery, pageantry and authentic costumes, championed by the likes of Charles Kean and Dickens' friend Macready, was explored - and often lampooned - by Dickens through several accounts of professional and amateur productions. At the heart of Dickens' preoccupation with this is the dynamic between the artifices of the theatre and the reality behind the scenes. The weltschmerz of the actor's daily descent 'to the comparatively un-wadded costume of every day life', and of poor men masquerading as rich nobility on the stage was both a source of pathos for Dickens in his many speeches for the General Theatrical Fund, and a point of absurdity in sketches such as 'Mrs Joseph Porter' or Mr Wopsle's ill-fated portrayal of Hamlet in *Great Expectations*. This paper will also

explore audience reaction to the grand displays and special effects in the theatre, particularly highlighted by Dickens through Mr Whelks, representative of the everyman in 'The Amusements of the People'. By linking this in to Dickens' championing elsewhere of focusing on text and meaning rather than fiercely-guarded stage traditions (particularly when portraying the characters of Shakespeare), the paper will close by not only addressing to what extent, as Dickens suggested, the opulence of these picturesque scenes can be justified when presenting a moral message in a palatable format, but also considering Dickens' thoughts on whether the popularity of such means are indicative of an audience unable to visualise these tales for themselves through their own imagination.

Clare Pettitt (King's College London) Dickens, Time, and the Baroque

Walter Benjamin described the vitality of the international Baroque style as residing in its "transposition of the originally temporal data into a figurative spatial simultaneity." In Italy in 1846, whenever Dickens encountered the "voluptuous designs" of the high baroque style, his writing intensified. The "intolerable abortions" sculpted by Bernini that he sees in Rome, he describes as, "breezy maniacs; whose every fold of drapery is blown inside-out." Of St Peter's, "after many visits", he concludes, "[i]t is an immense edifice with no one point for the mind to rest upon; and it tires itself with wandering round and round." In the Palazzo Tè, "as singular a place as I ever saw", he is astonished and disturbed by the frescoed giants "staggering under the weight of falling buildings, and being overwhelmed in the ruins; upheaving masses of rock." The writing is swept up and fascinated as well as repelled by the movement, the hybridity, and all the simultaneous knotted and entangled activities of baroque style, its figures "wandering round and round" and "flying upward, and downward." Dickens may claim to object to all this breezy billowing but it blows into his own writing after 1844. This paper argues that a major stylistic shift in Dickens's work happens not in London, but in Italy, in his rented villa where "every inch of the walls is painted in fresco." The only fiction he wrote between 1844 and 1846 were the Christmas books. In *The Chimes* (1844), which he wrote in Genoa in 1844, he dramatises a "host of shifting and extraordinary figures" who appear in the bell tower, with their "restless and untiring motion", and their deliberate collapsing of different categories of time. Certainly Dickens's experiences of 'abroad' in this period were to lead to a profound change in his sense of historical narrative. The goblins in *The Chimes* are effectively placeholders for the new style towards which Dickens was straining in his itinerant years, and which more fully emerges in *Dombey and Son* (1846-7).

Christopher Pittard (University of Portsmouth) Hand/Eye Co-ordination: Dickens and Secular Magic

While Dickens' performative career as actor and reader have been extensively discussed, less attention has been paid to the influence of conjuring (or, in Simon During's term, secular magic) on Dickens' narratives. Dickens was a keen conjuror, performing shows regularly at Christmas and on summer holidays. In this paper, I explore Dickens' conjuring as a model for his narrative techniques, paying particular attention to the role of the visual. Conjuring places particular emphasis on the visual as guarantor of truth ('seeing is believing'), yet only works by making the visible invisible (through misdirection) or the invisible supposedly visible (the explanation that 'the hand is quicker than the eye' is itself misdirection; such explanations invite the spectator to see something that was never actually there in the first place). My approach to the role of conjuring in Dickens' fiction is twofold. Firstly, I consider Dickens' representations of conjurors and their relation to the field of vision; for instance, Sweet William, the conjuror who practices unnoticed in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, proves anomalous in a novel in which almost every character is subject to some form of surveillance. Furthermore, William's favourite routine 'of inserting metal lozenges into his eyes' draws attention to the importance of sight in conjuring. Secondly, I consider the role of illustration in reading Dickens' fictions as narrative sleights of hand, drawing on examples from *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, reading Hablot Browne's illustrations as descendants of the cautionary tales established by

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Bosch's The Conjurer.

Esther Bendit Saltzman (University of Memphis, USA)

A Graphic Novel Goes Victorian: A Visually Imaginative Adaptation of A Christmas Carol

Dickens' use of the visual, in his writing and in his collaborations with illustrators, is celebrated in recent graphic novel adaptations of his work. A comparison of Classical Comics' *A Christmas Carol: the Graphic Novel* and John Leech's original Victorian illustrations of Dickens' text shows that both artistic renderings express their respective period viewpoints. In *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* Kate Flint addresses Victorian concerns with the visual, including the "act of seeing," the visual interpretation of reality, and discomfort with "the visible and the unseen." Discussing the Victorian use of image and text, she explains that "...fiction's appeal to the imagination could find itself circumscribed or supplemented by the provision of illustrations: illustrations which--most notable in the case of Thackeray and Dickens-- could provide an interpretive gloss on the written word." This paper argues that a graphic novel depiction of a Dickensian text can provide more than an interpretive gloss; it can highlight the Victorian preoccupation with the visual as well as provide a new perspective on the text. The Classical Comics' creative team consists of Sean Michael Wilson, script adaptation; Keith Howell, American English adaptation; Mike Collins, pencils; David Roach, inks; James Offredi, coloring; Terry Wiley, lettering; and Jo Wheeler and Jenny Placentino, design and layout. The team visually guides the reader with a contemporary perspective and attention to detail. Though the art and medium of the present-day graphic novel differ from the illustrated Victorian text, both versions demonstrate the visual concerns of the Victorian period.

Aleza Tadri-Friedman (St Johns University, New York, USA)

Art Appreciation and Visual Perception in Charles Dickens' Dombey and Son

Situated inside the tale of Paul Dombey's personal and commercial decline in Charles Dickens' novel *Dombey and Son* (1848), art production and consumption emerge as the repeating motif which analogizes perception tout court. This paper examines how Dickens frames one of the central conflicts of the novel – how to contain the transgressive Edith Granger – within nineteenth century British art discourse. In Dickens' writing, this is accomplished both through the *ekphrasis* of individual art objects and through the insertion of the vocabulary of art into descriptions of the characters' visual perceptions. Additionally, Hablot Knight Browne's illustrations not only pictorialize Dickens' text, but importantly graphically anticipate the dynamics among characters in ways not yet fully realized in the narrative. In this paper, I identify and discuss three interrelated tensions that arise out of the adoption of the artistic trope. First is the extent to which Edith Granger is complicit in her own objectification, as she is given one of the most continually perceptive gazes within the novel. Second, Carker the Manager, the villain of the novel, is endowed with artistic sensibility (and thus astute perception), yet is still chastised for his disruption of the heteronormative British institutions of home and business. Finally, recalling John Ruskin's plea for artistic vision to be based on direct observation rather than transmitted preconceptions, the novel culminates when Dombey learns to see perceptively, rather than only acknowledging those characteristics which flatter his own expectations of self-gratification.

Heather Tilley (Birkbeck, University of London)

'For I cannot see you Charley; I am blind'. Dickens, Blindness and Narrative, 1842-52

Throughout his career, Dickens's writing demonstrates a marked preoccupation with vision, and its corollary, blindness as we repeatedly encounter the spectre of blindness, the blind and failing vision. An important shift occurs in Dickens's visual imagination across the 1840s, and his use of blindness as a textual device is a crucial indicator of that shift. From an early interest in the object of blindness, Dickens demonstrates an increasing awareness of the fragile relationship between vision and writing. I will trace this shift across three episodes which display clearly the connection between the figure of the blind and the figure of the writer in Dickens's imagination: his encounter with the blind, deaf and mute Laura Bridgman, recounted in

American Notes (1842); the description of David Copperfield as 'blind' in the eponymous novel (1849-50); and Esther Summerson's near-blinding in *Bleak House* (1851-52). My discussion clarifies Dickens's interest in literal as well as metaphoric blindness in these texts by analysing them within their educational and medical contexts. Disability Studies scholars including Elisabeth Gitter and Mary Klages have noted the ways in which Dickens's description of Bridgman constitutes her as an object of the male gaze, reinforcing a problematic association between femininity and disability in his writing. I argue that in both *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House* the narrative identification with the feminine is indicative of a more complex construction of blindness and gender in Dickens's imagination however, as loss, impairment and difference mark the material and metaphoric conditions in which his writing takes shape.

Gary Watt (University of Warwick)
Dickens, Daumier and the Caricature of Law

I propose to compare Dickens's literary caricature of law and lawyers to the lithographic caricatures of lawyers produced by Dickens's contemporary, the French artist Honoré Daumier (1808-1879). There are striking similarities in the background, outlook, thematic concerns and artistic styles of both men which provide intriguing pointers to something like a shared visual imagination. This is clear in their portrayal of politicians, bankers and so forth, but it is nowhere more graphically illustrated than in their portrayal of lawyers; a fact which is in large part attributable to their real-life encounters with theatrical and grotesque aspects of the legal profession. For the most part their depiction of the legal profession was presented in the stark contrast of black and white, which was a saleable stereotype well-suited to the black lines of Daumier's lithographs, Dickens's illustrated texts and, in general terms, to the contemporary Gothic imagination; but occasionally, and then most revealingly, the depiction was more nuanced. The similarity between Dickens's portrayal of lawyers and other characters in his major law novel, *Bleak House*, is such that one may even speculate that Dickens was acquainted with Daumier's lithographic series *Les Gens de Justice*. There are numerous grounds for considering that possibility to be more than merely fanciful, but the similarity between Dickens's and Daumier's contemporary portrayal of lawyers and legal themes may be more generally informative if, as is most likely, they arose independently of one another.

Janet Wilkinson (Watts Gallery)
'Living Copies' and 'Unearthly Features': Portraits in Dickens' Novels

This article draws on Dickens' use of the visual arts, in particular portraiture in his novels, to convey the subtle relationship between what is revealed and hidden in an image, and how a nineteenth century reader would interpret it at a time when art was entrenched with ideas of 'storytelling'. In Victorian society, portraits represented what could be emulated or rejected in the formation of an image, as opposed to photography (or daguerrotype) which gave a 'true' image. In *Bleak House*, the figure of Esther comes to mind when Guppy visits Chesney Wold's ancestral picture collection, driving the plot towards the real identification of Lady Dedlock. Similarly, Oliver is enlivened by Agnes' portrait at the Brownlow's home at a time when he has become 'worn and shadowy'. Although it may be seen as a device for exposing secrets and revelations, or identity forming, the author's use of portraiture as a literary device enabled a nineteenth century reader to glean the 'likeness' of a character and their story once visual clues are betrayed. While Dickens is often considered to be sceptical of some of the religious stories painted by the 'Old Masters', his sustained employment of portraiture in his novels suggest that his view of such storytelling devices through images was quite considered. The presentation of a form that is open to interpretation by fictional characters and actual readers creates a device that builds the imaginations of both individual and society. In a period that fostered the culture of collecting images of celebrity, the use of portraiture in his novels suggests that Dickens displayed an attention to detail which could be recognised by all layers of Victorian society.

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