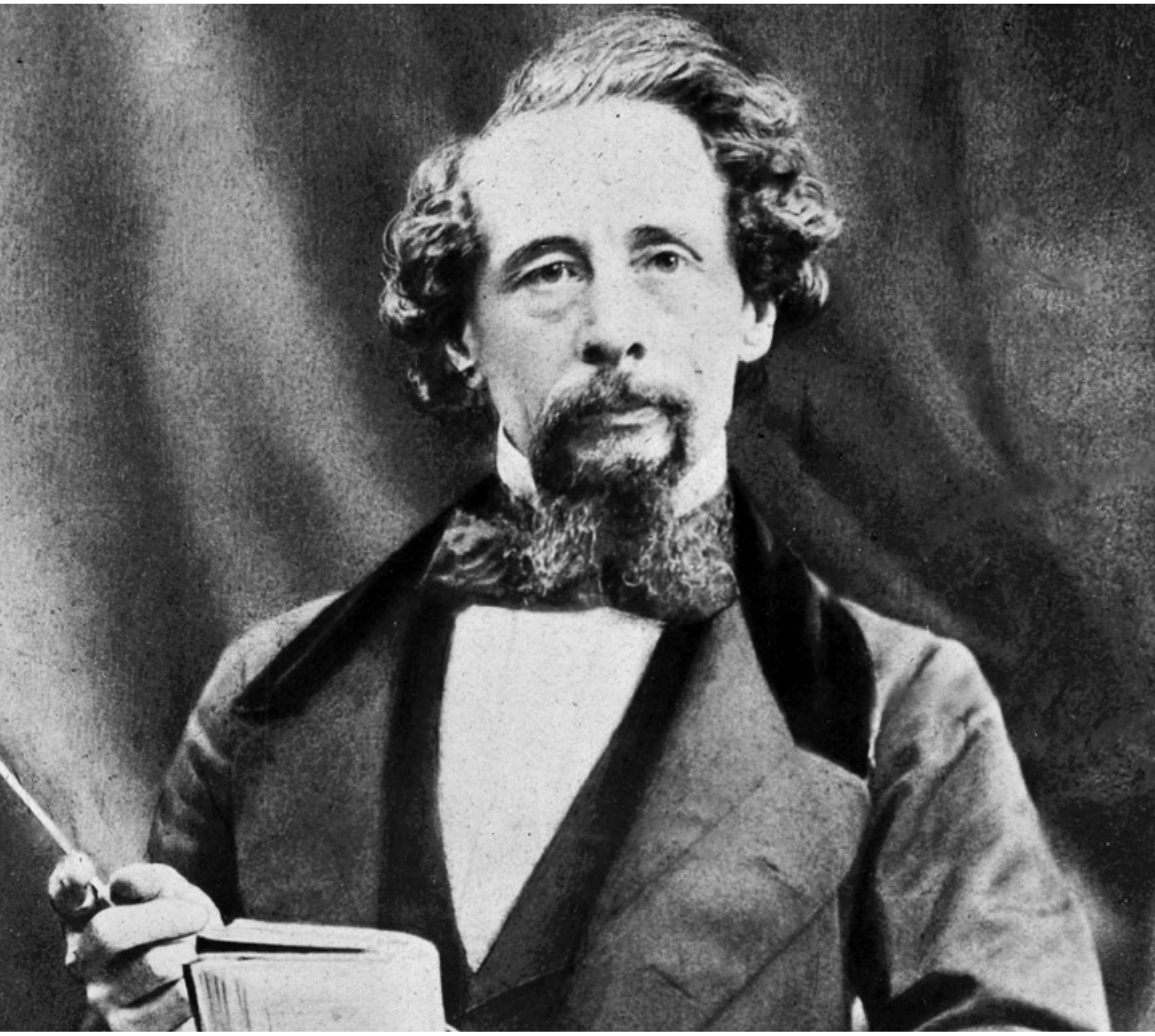
DICKENS AND DECADENCE

Stockholm University



2-3 SEPTEMBER 2021

Department of English and Department of Culture and Aesthetics
Stockholm University

DICKENS AND DECADENCE

Stockholm University

DAY 1

Thursday, 2 September 2021

10:00 - 10:30 INTRODUCTION

10:30 - 11:45 Keynote: John Bowen

University of York

Dickens' Theatre of Cruelty

12:00 - 13:00 Session 1: Dickens Early and Late

Dominic Rainsford

Aarhus University

Decadence in Early Dickens

Tamsin Evernden

Royal Holloway

Sincerity and Decadence in *Our Mutual Friend*

13:00 - 14:30 LUNCH

DICKENS AND DECADENCE

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DAY 1

Thursday, 2 September 2021

14:30 - 16:00 Session 2: Dickensian Decadence

Tiffany Olgun

Royal Holloway

Dickensian dandy marks Charles Dickens' shift from realism to proto-decadence

Jonathan Foster

Stockholm University

Yellow Books, Blue Books: Dickens, Decadence, and the Higher Civil Service

Ioanna Skordi

University of Cyprus

Female characters reflecting decadent societies in the literature of Charles Dickens and Gregorios Xenopoulos

16:00 - 16:15 CONCLUDING WORDS

DICKENS AND DECADENCE

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DAY 2

Friday, 3 September 2021

10:00 - 10:15 INTRODUCTION

10:30 - 11:45 Keynote: Claire Wood

University of Leicester

Decadent Appetites

12:00 - 13:00 LUNCH

13:00 - 13:45 Keynote: Dennis Denisoff

The University of Tulsa

Charles Dickens, Arthur Machen, and Occult Ecstasy

13:45 - 14:00 BREAK

14:00 - 15:30 Session 3: Dickens' Decadent Afterlives

Claire Woods

Ulster University

Le beau monde: Dickens on French decadence

DICKENS AND DECADENCE

Stockholm University

DAY 2

Friday, 3 September 2021

Giles Whiteley

Stockholm University

Huysmans' Dickensian Ark: Decadence and the Domestic

Irina Rasmussen

Stockholm University

City Phantasmagorias in Andrei Bely's *Petersburg* and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*

15:30 - 15:45 CONCLUDING WORDS

Generously funded by the Faculty of Humanities, Stockholm University

John Bowen
University of York

'Dickens' Theatre of Cruelty

> it is understood that life is always someone's death.'
>
> Antonin Artaud, *Letters on Cruelty, First Letter, The Theatre and Its Double*

G. K. Chesterton's seminal 1906 study, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* presented Dickens's novels as an explicit counterweight to decadent aesthetics. For Chesterton, 'The hour of absinthe is over. We shall not be much further troubled with the little artists who found Dickens too sane for their sorrows and too clean for their delights.' A.C. Swinburne, whose sonnet on Dickens described him as combining the 'soft bright soul of Sterne' with 'Fielding's kindliest might and Goldsmith's grace', also saw him as an author of cleanliness and sanity, contending that the 'imagination or the genius of Dickens … never condescended or aspired to wallow in metaphysics or in filth'. But, I want to argue, Dickens's two final novels *Our Mutual Friend* and the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* have strong affinities with decadent writing, and they positively incite their readers to wallow in metaphysics and filth. We see this both in the derangements wrought by the embedded cruelties, obsessions and dispossessions of the two books, and in their formal and representational radicalism, their inability to be dominated by metaphors of representation or reflection. I would like to explore some of the ways in which these novels are permeated by – and intermittently enact – strange theatres of cruelty, as when Mr Venus tells the legless Wegg that 'if you was brought here loose in a bag to be articulated, I'd name your smallest bones blindfold equally with your largest, as fast as I could pick 'em out, and I'd sort 'em all, and sort your wertebrae, in a manner that would equally surprise and charm you' or Jenny Wren/Fanny Cleaver tells her alcoholic father 'If you were treated as you ought to be … you'd be fed upon the skewers of cats' meat;—only the skewers, after the cats had had the meat'. In dialogue with Jacques Derrida's discussion of Antonin Artaud's work in his 1965 essay 'La parole soufflée' (1965, *collected in Writing and*

Difference, 1967), I will explore questions of madness, torment and trial on the one hand, and of articulation and exhaustion on the other, through the flushed, derisive and excremental voices and breath of *Our Mutual Friend* and the stony, worn and asphyxiated poetics of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

John Bowen is Professor of Nineteenth-Century Literature at the department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. He is the author of *Other Dickens: Pickwick to Chuzzlewit* (Oxford University Press, 2000, 2003) and has edited Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* for Penguin, as well as Palgrave Advances in Charles Dickens Studies with Robert L. Patten. He is the author of more than fifty academic articles and book chapters, including contributions to the *Oxford History of the Novel in English*, *Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens*, the *Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins* and the *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

Dominic Rainsford

Aarhus University

Decadence in Early Dickens

Important aspects of Dickens's late work can reasonably be seen as anticipations of the European Decadent movement of the late nineteenth century. However, they can also be understood as returns to forms of decadence *avant la lettre,* at the very beginning of Dickens's career. This return can be understood as Dickens reinventing aspects of his earlier authorial persona that he may not have fully recognised, or that he may have hoped to leave behind. It can also be understood in broader terms, as a kind of bookending of High Victorianism, where a perceived cultural and moral falling off, towards the end of the century, echoes an earlier period of uncertainty and malaise, after the euphoria of Waterloo and the swagger of the Regency, and before a new British self-confidence had fully taken shape. I shall discuss this way of looking at Dickens and the 1830s through shabby, amoral, narcissistic and flippant characters, and scenes of seedy sociality, in *Sketches by Boz*, *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twis*t and *Nicholas Nickleby*. As well

as showing ways in which these figures and scenes re-emerge in a more familiar 'decadent' context in Dickens's work of ca. 1859–70, I shall also briefly suggest how they may have originated in the underworld culture that Dickens encountered (more, I think, than has yet been appreciated) on the London streets of his childhood and early youth.

Dominic Rainsford is Professor of Literature in English and Head of the Department of English at Aarhus University, Denmark. His publications include *Authorship, Ethics and the Reader: Blake, Dickens, Joyce* (Palgrave, 1997), *Literature, Identity and the English Channel* (Palgrave, 2002), *Literature in English: How and Why* (Routledge, 2014; 2nd ed., 2020) and many articles, especially on Dickens. He is President of the Danish Association for English Studies and General Editor of Dickens Quarterly.

Tamsin Evernden

Royal Holloway

Sincerity and Decadence in *Our Mutual Friend*

In his preparatory notes on *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–5) Dickens sketched out Eugene Wrayburn as 'an easy, airy fellow [brought] into near relations with people he knows nothing about'. Eugene is particularly at ease in the province of language; both in his wide cultural terms of reference, and in his ability to undercut what others say with wit that often relies upon semantic play. This paper examines instances of this play through close readings, and interrogates the issue of sincerity and fallacy in language as preemptive to that dichotomy within decadent culture of the fin de siècle. Eugene is in danger of becoming the preemptive prototype of Oscar Wilde's *The Critic as Artist* (1890), wherein 'Aesthetics are higher than ethics'. and multiplicity is vaunted over coherent selfhood: 'He will realise himself in many forms, and by a thousand different ways'. His moral reckoning, in the form of a critical injury at the hands of Bradley Headstone, substitutes the lack of compass effected by perpetual play with the

indeterminate struggle of a near-death experience. In his peculiar renaissance as a hero, Eugene's modes of communication remain recognisable however; and this brings new insights as to how a certain deflection of the serious provides a space for others to thrive. This in turn helps us to recalibrate how we might find sincerity in modes of communication we see as antidotal to Victorian earnestness and akin to decadence: ostensibly knowing, self-absorbed and world-weary.

Tamsin Evernden gained her BA and MSt at the Univerisity of Oxford and PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London, funded by the AHRC. She is arts and heritage consultant to the international group that owns The Ritz Hotel, London.

Tiffany Olgun

Royal Holloway

Dickensian Dandy and Charles Dickens' Shift from Realism to Proto-Decadence

In this paper, I will argue that the Dickensian dandy marks Charles Dickens' shift from realism to proto-decadence. In *Bleak House*, Dickens notes a change in dandyism: no longer of the Regency sort, dandies have rid themselves of harmless foppery and frills and have become those

> who would make the vulgar very picturesque and faithful by putting back the hands upon the clock of time and cancelling a few hundred years of history … who have found out the perpetual stoppage. (Dickens 112)

Dickens observes a dangerous severance of art from morality in the dandy's quest to turn both himself and life into works of art. In effect, he is incapable of being moved or impress-ed, either physically or morally. In *Against the Grain*, Des Esseintes leaves behind the vulgar city and enters a self-contained tableau of stillness in which art becomes his bulwark against reality. The way in which Harold Skimpole of *Bleak House* pays to remove the smallpox-stricken crossing

sweeper from his place of residence is none too dissimilar from Des Essenintes' resolve to "allow nothing to enter his hermitage which might breed repugnance or regret" (50). All must be pictorial and present no threat, either bodily or aesthetically, which become one and the same for Des Esseintes. As Skimpole says of the world, "'there should be no brambles of sordid realities in such a path as that. It should be strewn with roses'" (Dickens 288). Furthermore, Des Esseintes seeks to "find the perpetual stoppage" by denying his corporeality; in one of his more extreme attempts, he replaces food and drink with an enema. Dickens, through his discovery of a more sinister strain of dandyism, and with his portrayal of increasingly enervated and debauched aristocrats, created the prototype of the decadent dandy and may be considered a proto-decadent writer.

Tiffany Olgun is a last-year PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research is on the Dickensian dandy and the ways in which Dickens upends traditional readings of dandies by playing with dichotomies such as stillness/movement and wholeness/hollowness.

Jonathan Foster

Stockholm University

Yellow Books, Blue Books: Dickens, Decadence, and the Higher Civil Service

Dickens' midcentury fiction features numerous young professionals gone astray, including Richard Carstone, James Harthouse and Eugene Wrayburn. Dickens' portrait of these directionless young men may be read as a critique of the liberal education that crystallised in the nineteenth century at Oxford and Cambridge, which allowed students to postpone career decisions until after university. In *Our Mutual Friend*, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has noted, Dickens registers how Oxbridge educational forms 'made one unfit for any other form of work, long before they entitled one to chance one's fortune

actively in the ruling class' (Between Men). Lauren Goodlad has also situated Dickens' writing in relation to the university system, interpreting Dickens' account of Carstone in *Bleak House* not only as a commentary on the 'compromised moral fiber of Britain's educated elite' and the 'degenerative effects of place-seeking', but also on the 'developing norm of the civil servant-as-old-boy' ('Is there a Pastor in the House?'). This constitutes a decidedly inspired inference on Goodlad's part (since Carstone is not connected to the civil service in the novel), opening an important plane of analysis by directing our attention to the links between Oxbridge and the modernisation of the higher civil service in the wake of the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854. In this paper I explore the entanglements between Oxbridge, the higher civil service and Anglophone decadent culture, using Dickens' midcentury fiction as my point of departure.

Jonathan Foster is a PhD candidate at Stockholm University. His dissertation examines representations of state administration in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British fiction, focusing on the authors Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, H. G. Wells and Joseph Conrad. He has several articles on literature and state administration forthcoming.

Ioanna Skordi

University of Cyprus

Female characters reflecting decadent societies in the literature of Charles Dickens and Gregorios Xenopoulos

This essay attempts to approach comparatively the theme of the representation of female characters, as reflections of decadent societies in the oeuvre of Charles Dickens and Gregorios Xenopoulos, filling a relevant gap in existing comparative scholar research.

Gregorios Xenopoulos is a prolific Greek writer (1867-1951), who acknowledges Dickens as one of his greatest teachers, mainly in terms of realism. Famous for his moral short stories and theatrical plays, he is considered the innovator of the urban novel in Greece and one of the main purposes of his work is the depiction of society and morals at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth, both in the province (mainly Ionian Islands and Zakynthos) and the city (Athens). Through this depiction, based on both realism and naturalism, we see the degeneration of the aristocracy and in particular the moral degeneration of the girls of this class. Xenopoulos devotes a significant part of his work to female characters, and their different sides and aspects reflect their time and sometimes even precede their time. The New Woman, the fatal woman, the degenerate girl, the woman who rebels against patriarchy, all meet in Xenopoulos' work, in an extremely realistic analysis of female characters, linked to the depiction of the society of the time, with its degenerate aristocracy and decadent morality. The representation of female characters in Gregorios Xenopoulos shares many common characteristics with the female characters in Dickens' work, linked to the structures of a decadent society. Morbid patriarchy and social inequalities even lead female characters to addictions and suicide as a way out. This representation of female characters as carriers of the afore-mentioned characteristics, reflecting decadent society and moral degeneration, is present in both Dickens' and Xenopoulos' work and its comparative examination contributes to a better understanding of their oeuvre and epoque.

Ioanna Skordi has a BA in Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, by the University of Cyprus, with specialisation in Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language, by the Centre for the Greek Language, in Thessaloniki, Greece. She continued her studies at King's College London, receiving her MA in Comparative Literature, comparing the work of the famous Alexandrian poet Cavafy and Walt Whitman. She has a PhD in Modern Greek Studies, by King's College London. The title of her PhD thesis is "The 'Regiment of Pleasure': Cavafy and his homoerotic legacy in Greek writing". She is currently a Special Scientist at the University of Cyprus, School of Modern Greek, as well as a secondary education teacher, at the Senior School, Nicosia.

Claire Wood

University of Leicester

Decadent Appetites

The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870) – perhaps Dickens's most decadent novel – finishes abruptly with Dick Datchery's breakfast, which he 'falls to with an appetite'. While Datchery's identity remains mysterious, his appetite is reassuringly healthy, echoing the 'wholesome and vigorous' relish for breakfast exhibited by Reverend Crisparkle. Dickens sets such examples against cravings with more troubling connotations, such as Rosa Bud's 'zest[ful]' snacking upon Lumps-of-Delight.

As this brief survey suggests, who eats what and when matters in Dickens. Unsurprisingly, given the centrality of food to Dickens's fiction, the topic has attracted considerable attention, including to the alimentary arrangements of the Dickens family (Rossi-Wilcox 2005), the moral and social significance of eating (Watt 1974), the dynamics of feasting and fasting (Houston 1994), cannibalism (Stone 1992), imperialism (Mara 2002; Moore 2009), and starvation (Mangham 2020).

In contrast, anticipations of aestheticism and decadence in Dickens's approach to food culture are less well-studied. This paper examines the role of spectacle and tantalisation in stimulating appetites that cannot necessarily be satiated, and may in turn awaken other desires, tracing these motifs across a range of dining scenes, from the grotesque 'pudding' man of 'Night Walks' (1860) to the Veneerings' dinner party, reflected in a 'great looking-glass above the sideboard' in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65).

Claire Wood is Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Leicester. She is the author of *Dickens and the Business of Death* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and part of the Editorial Board for Dickens Quarterly. Her research interests include Victorian death culture, materiality, and afterlives, and she is currently exploring different forms of death comedy in the work of Dickens and other nineteenth-century writers.

Dennis Denisoff

University of Tulsa

Charles Dickens, Arthur Machen, and Occult Ecstasy

Was Dickens aware that by milk-punch he meant ecstasy?
– Arthur Machen, *Hieroglyphics*

Arthur Machen – the Welsh author of *The Great God Pan* and other popular occult tales – was richly influenced by more canonical decadent authors. He imitated William Morris and Algernon Swinburne, sought the writerly advice of Oscar Wilde, and published his first two books with John Lane, the quintessential publisher of the decadents. On the purpose of literature, he felt that Walter Pater's conception of the relationship between art and spirit 'had the root of the matter'. His own efforts during the 1890s to get at this root resulted in writing engaged with what, in his essay 'The Literature of Occultism', he describes as 'the knowledge of the secret workings of the universe'. This Symbolist vision of a more-than-materialist, more-than-human ecology led reviewers to associate Machen with Joris-Karl Huysmans and other decadent authors invested in a Symbolism rife with stench, filth, and detritus. And yet, Machen famously disassociated himself from decadence and 'those 'nineties of which I was not even a small part, but no part at all'. It was, I propose, through Charles Dickens's writing, not that of the decadents, that he came to understand putrid urban squalor as an intrinsic component of the same ecological network as the mystical and otherworldly forces that he venerated.

Machen noted that he first learnt of alchemy from a series of pieces in Dickens's *Household Words* (*Far Off Things*). He doesn't mention the author of these essays, just Dickens, the journal's editor. This early reading at around the age of 10 led to a lifelong engagement with the alchemical and occult. He even uses the language of alchemy to describe Dickens as a writer: 'I think he is golden, but he is very largely alloyed with baser stuff, with indifferent metal, which was the product of his age, of his circumstances in life, of his own uncertain taste' (Hieroglyphics). For Machen, a key factor of Dickens's genius

is the decay and putrefaction in which he spent his early life – 'Camden Town and worse places' – and 'the artistic atmosphere on the banks of Fleet Ditch, the "mother of dead dogs"'. What did Dickens manifest in his work, I wish to ask, that spoke so deeply to Machen's investment in the Symbolist correspondences, the 'ecstasy'—as he put it—of a decaying, putrefying urbanism? Dickens was keenly taken by everyday detritus, 'ever tracing […] the circulation of matter, the transformation of dust and ashes – and particularly bodily dust and ashes – into new forms' (Tyson Stolte). Through this ecological network of exchange, Machen writes of Pickwick Papers, 'the comic cockney romance of 1837 communicate[s] that enthralling impression of the unknown, which is, at once, a whole philosophy of life, and the most exquisite of emotions.' From this perspective, it is the human that is the marginal, the detritus in a system of forces operating on an ecological scale beyond conventional human modes of comprehension. The root of Machen's occult decadence, I propose, can be found here, in Dickens's evocation of the intimate engagements of the everyday grit and grime of humanity within an ecology beyond human scales of time, space, and the spiritual.

Dennis Denisoff is the Ida Barnard McFarlin Chair of English and Film at the University of Tulsa and past president of the North American Victorian Studies Association. He is the author of 6 books and (co-)editor of 9. Recent publications include the edition *Arthur Machen: Decadent and Occult Works* (2018) and *The Routledge Companion to Victorian Literature* (2019, co-edited with Talia Schaffer). He has forthcoming a special issue of *Victorian Literature and Culture* on "Scales of Decadence" and a monograph, *Decadent Ecology: Desire, Decay, and the New Paganism, 1860-1920.*

Claire Woods

Ulster University

Le beau monde: Dickens on French decadence

Dickens often spoke of his love for France. He joked that he 'should have been

'born a Frenchman'. Indeed, as a boy he grew up closer to France than much of England. France and the French had a considerable impact on his personal and professional life, although his writing shows an ambivalence and a deep-rooted fear of French passion and decadence.

19th century England was greatly influenced by French culture and fashion. To have a knowledge of French language, custom or design suggested an air of sophistication or superior knowledge. This is demonstrated by a range of characters in Dickens' mid-career novels such as *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. There is a broad spectrum of French influence and its uses from the benign Guppy and his use of 'Ill fo manger', Inspector Bucket's pragmatic French, Mr Meagles' allonging and marshoning in his efforts to find his daughter, to Lucie Manette's charming Anglo-French home. However French influence is used as a veneer to impress others, as seen when used by the pretentious Mr Turveydrop, outmoded jokes by Volumnia Dedlock or vain William Dorrit's jewellery shopping in Paris. French takes on a more sinister guise when we consider the Merdles – their very name and their bon choix bon gout buhl furniture, Hortense the bitter French lady's maid, the heartless Marquis St Evrémonde, the bloodthirsty Madame Defarge and the most duplicitous character of all, Rigaud – Blandois .Blandois has a hedonistic air and moves with decadent ease from one country to another, while adopting different tongues and identities . Rigaud appears as Le Chat Botté, the decadent stray cat who can use his charm and wit for his own gains. For Dickens, Rigaud's Frenchness is inextricably linked to his danger and decadence

Claire Woods did her Ph. D. in 'France and the French in the Novels of Charles Dickens'. She has given papers in Portsmouth and New Hampshire, where she was awarded the Partlow Prize. She was chosen to give a paper on 'Dickens and l'héritage français' at the ESSE Conference in Lyon (now postponed). She has recently published a chapter 'Devilishly Attractive: Dickens on Frenchwomen' in *Dickens and Women Reobserved*. She has taught French and English Literature in Northern Ireland, France and Sri Lanka. She is now a Lecturer in Education at Ulster University.

Giles Whiteley

Stockholm University

Huysmans' Dickensian Ark: Decadence and the Domestic

As is well known, the novels of Dickens play a key role in that 'breviary of decadence', Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À rebours* (1884). In chapter eleven of the novel, the aesthete protagonist des Esseintes determines to travel to London, taking the train from his suburban home in Fontenay-aux-Roses, and traversing a Paris inspired by a Dickensian London. This paper seeks to consider these passages, and Huysmans' response to Dickens, by focusing on his discussion of the Dickensian novel as a kind of ark protecting a certain image of Victorian domesticity from the grittier aspects of 'realism'. Here, I will highlight and unpack two aspects of this interlude less widely discussed. Firstly, Huysmans' trial of this material in his earlier essay on the 1881 sixth Impressionist exhibition, discussing the American painter Mary Cassatt. Secondly, and more curiously, lexical echoes which link this image of the Dickensian ark to Huysmans' earlier description of des Esseintes' own home Fontenay-aux-Roses, which is figured as an ark protecting the aesthete from the mediocrity and monotony of Parisian everyday life. Drawing on Benjamin's discussion of Jungenstil and the interior, this image can be read as a defence of what one might characterise as Dickens' own aestheticism (a kind of art for art's sake) as a reaction against the decay and decadence he saw around him in Victorian London, in a manner which anticipates Huysmans' own attack on the 'decadent' values and politics of the nineteenth-century capitalism and which underwrote his break with the 'unexceptional' of naturalism in both *À rebours* and *Là-Bas* (1891). But it can also be read as an image of Dickens the decadent, reading his aesthetic experiments within the safe world of his imagination as a kind of parallel to the interior spaces of Fontenay-aux-Roses, where des Esseintes conducts his own series of decadent experiments.

Giles Whiteley is Professor of English at Stockholm University. He has published widely on nineteenth-century literature and is the author of four

monographs, including *The Aesthetics of Space in Nineteenth-Century British Literature, 1843-1907* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020). Current projects include a monograph on nineteenth-century humour for Routledge and editing Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* for Oxford University Press.

Irina Rasmussen

Stockholm University

City Phantasmagorias in Andrei Bely's Petersburg and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*

Referring to Russian translations, critical reception, and theatre adaptations of Charles Dickens's works from the 1840s to the end of the Soviet era, Julia Palievsky and Dmitry Urnov (2012) discuss the writer's extraordinary popularity in Russia, not least with Russia's foremost realists such as Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Lev Tolstoy, and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Reading comparatively Dickens's major works alongside these writers' Russian classics, they identify similarities in themes and stylistic orientations, arguing that Dickens and the Russian realists shared what can be called "the formula of all the Russian novelists" – namely, "the utterly emotional sympathy," or compassion, for "the insulted and injured." This essay draws on Palievsky and Urnov's study of the Russian reception of Dickens, exploring another possible literary connection, namely, between Dickens and Andrei Bely, a Russian Symbolist poet, critic, and novelist, born a decade after Dickens's death. While the essay does not discuss the extent of Bely's familiarity with Dickens, it focuses instead on the two writers' shared preoccupation with the atmosphere and dynamics of a major city on the verge of a revolutionary upheaval, their dramatization of external forces and private fears that fragment the cityscape and the psyche. Dicken's Paris and Bely's Peterburg emerge as both magnificent and terrifying. This essay explores how the writers' city phantasmagorias inflect revolutionary terrorism through a prism of theatricality. It argues that reading Dickens into Bely, and Bely into Dickens

reveals how anxieties about social upheaval and cultural decay call forth strange and monstrous literary visions.

Irina D. Rasmussen is a specialist in British modernism, with sub-specialties in American, Irish, and Russian modernisms, the history of aesthetics, cultural poetics, material cultures, and modern world literatures in English from the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *James Joyce Quarterly, Modernism/modernity, Comparative Literature*, and *Joyce Studies Annual*.