

“Hard Times” or “Great Expectations”? How the Victorians Saw Themselves



CHARLES DICKENS READING "THE CHIMES" AT 58 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS
ON THE SECOND OF DECEMBER, 1844. FROM A SKETCH BY DANIEL
MACLISE, R.A.

Midwest Victorian Studies Association Annual Conference Bloomington, Indiana, April 20-22, 2012

In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Charles Dickens's birth, we invite papers on his writings and influence, but the conference will also consider issues of Victorian reflexivity and self-representation. Among topics to be considered might be Victorian ideas of progress and degeneration; social commentators, ethnologists and journalists; parliamentary reports and reform movements; mirrors, disguises, and masquerades; visions of heaven and hell; utopias/dystopias; photography and portraiture; autobiographies, biographies and histories; museums and exhibitions; and Victorian psychology and theories of identity. The conference will include a panel on teaching the Victorians, and proposals for topics and speakers for this panel are also invited.

Our first keynote speaker will be John R. Reed, whose many academic publications include *Dickens and Hyperreality* (2011), *Victorian Conventions* (1975), *The Natural History of H. G. Wells* (1982), *Decadent Style* (1985), *Victorian Will* (1989), and *Dickens and Thackeray: Punishment and Forgiveness* (1995). Our second keynote address will be by Anne Helmreich, Senior Program Officer of the Getty Foundation. An art historian and former director of the Humanities Center at Case Western Reserve University, she has published *The English Garden and National Identity* (Cambridge UP, 2002).

Held on the beautiful campus of Indiana University, the conference will include unique evening entertainment honoring Dickens, including a special film screening of the 1917 *A Tale of Two Cities* with live piano accompaniment and a "Dickens Variety Show" with music and a magic lantern performance. Accommodations are at the Indiana Memorial Union.

Please submit an abstract! Papers or full panels are welcome. Submissions should include 500-word abstracts and 1-page (only) vitas by October 20, 2011 to conferencesubmissions@midwestvictorian.org.

For more information, see our website, <http://www.midwestvictorian.org/>