

A Christmas Carol
Professor Dr. Divya A
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Lecture 31
Introduction to the Christmas Ghost Story and Charles Dickens

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*Dickens' A Christmas
Carol*



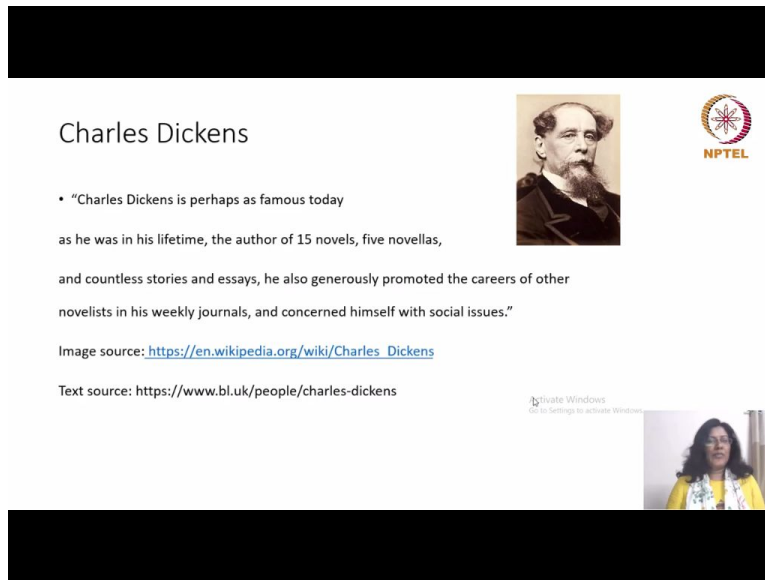
Lecture 7A: Introduction to the Christmas
Ghost Story and Charles Dickens

Image source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Christmas_Carol#/media/File:Marley's_Ghost_-_A_Christmas_Carol_\(1843\),_opposite_25_-_BL.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Christmas_Carol#/media/File:Marley's_Ghost_-_A_Christmas_Carol_(1843),_opposite_25_-_BL.jpg)



Hello and welcome to Week Seven's lectures on Dickens', A Christmas Carol. In today's introductory session to this week, I will be talking about Charles Dickens, his literary output, his Gothic imagination, as well as briefly introduce the context to the Christmas Ghost Story.

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Charles Dickens

- "Charles Dickens is perhaps as famous today as he was in his lifetime, the author of 15 novels, five novellas, and countless stories and essays, he also generously promoted the careers of other novelists in his weekly journals, and concerned himself with social issues."

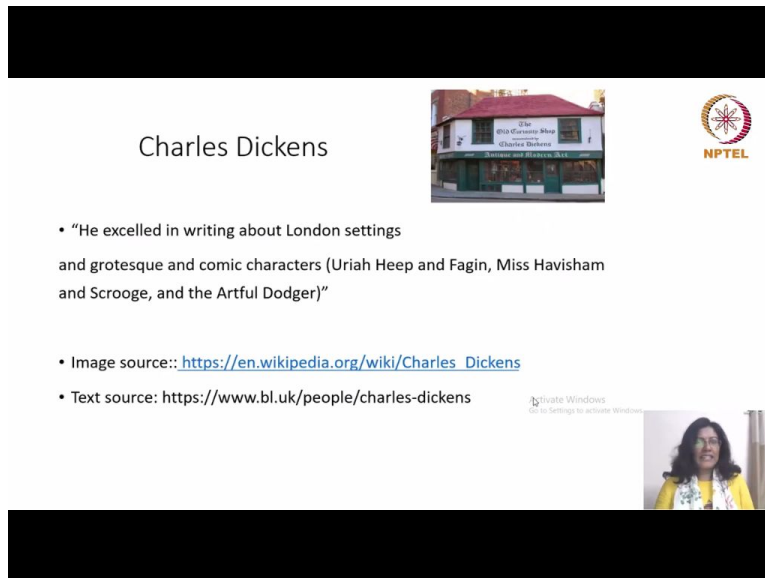
Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens

Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/people/charles-dickens>

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Charles Dickens was immensely popular. Even in his own lifetime, he was very prolific. He was also very important in promoting the careers of other writers, such as Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell. So he was an important influence on them as well. More importantly, he was a social reformer, especially discussing issues that needed reforming in his fictional narratives.


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Charles Dickens

- “He excelled in writing about London settings and grotesque and comic characters (Uriah Heep and Fagin, Miss Havisham and Scrooge, and the Artful Dodger)”
- Image source:: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/people/charles-dickens>

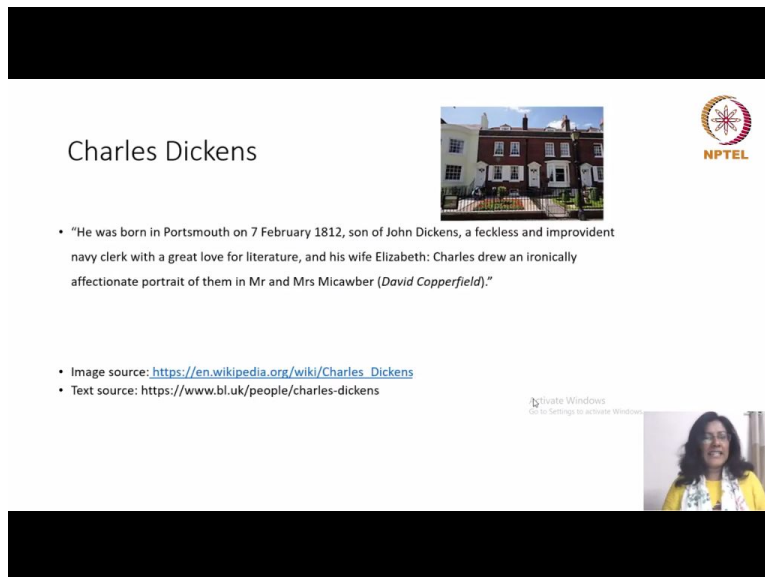
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“He excelled in writing about London settings and grotesque and comic characters. And some of those characters are Uriah Heep and Fagin, Miss Havisham and Scrooge, and the Artful Dodger.” Miss Havisham is from Great Expectations, Fagin from Oliver Twist, Dodger from Oliver Twist as well.

So you can see that his characters come from a wide social spectrum based in London. He was a London writer, and Dickens is known as a caricaturist. He is known for his grotesque characters and his macabre settings as well. And Gothic becomes a subtext to some of the ways in which Dickens fictionalizes the issues that he wants to reform.

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The slide features a black header bar at the top. Below it, the name "Charles Dickens" is displayed in a large, dark font. To the right of the name is a small photograph of a red-brick building with white window frames. Further right is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a stylized sun or starburst pattern and the text "NPTEL" below it. Below the name and images, there is a bulleted list of text. The first bullet point reads: "He was born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812, son of John Dickens, a feckless and improvident navy clerk with a great love for literature, and his wife Elizabeth: Charles drew an ironically affectionate portrait of them in Mr and Mrs Micawber (*David Copperfield*)."

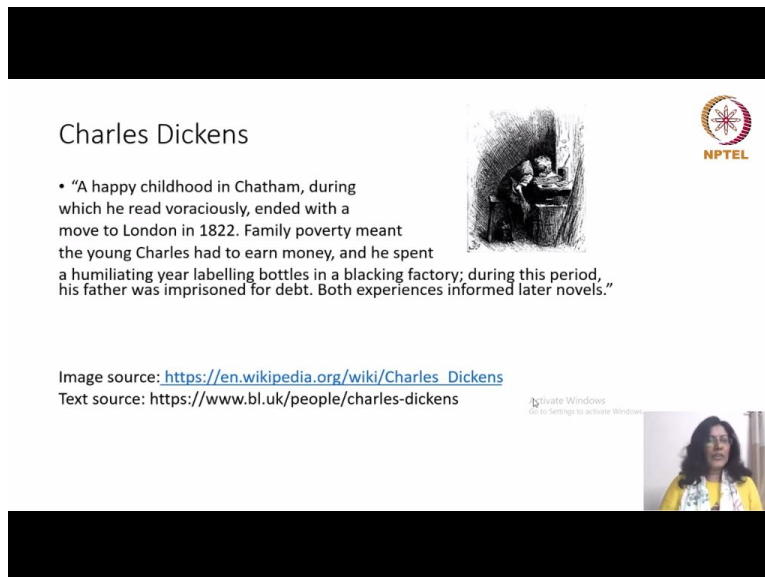
- Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/people/charles-dickens>

At the bottom of the slide, there is a small video thumbnail showing a woman with dark hair wearing a yellow top, with a "Activate Windows" watermark overlaid on the image.

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Dickens is a 19th-century novelist. Dickens was born to an improvident father, one who was not very careful with his money. In fact, the family went into debt because of the mismanagement of the family's finances. In fact, Dickens was taken out of school as a boy and sent to the Blacking Factory, which had an immense impact on his psyche. You also realize that Dickens drew on his own personal experiences in sketching certain characters and events in his works.




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Charles Dickens

- “A happy childhood in Chatham, during which he read voraciously, ended with a move to London in 1822. Family poverty meant the young Charles had to earn money, and he spent a humiliating year labelling bottles in a blacking factory; during this period, his father was imprisoned for debt. Both experiences informed later novels.”

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens
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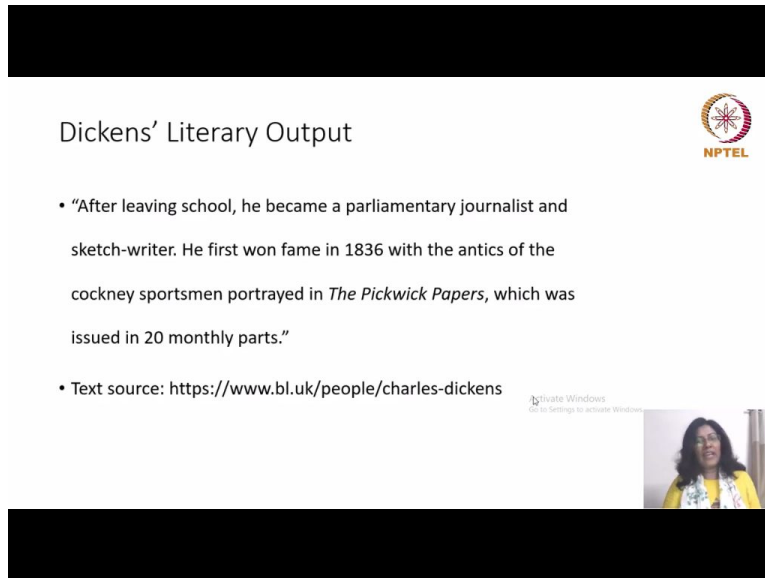


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The interesting thing here to note is that Dickens was not in London. He moved to London in 1822. He was an outsider looking into this world, so that understanding of London as an outsider is something that had an interesting influence in the way he sketched, in the way he narrated London in his works.

His family's poverty meant that he had to go into work very early and it was extremely humiliating for him to do manual labour. And he felt endlessly injured, mentally speaking, because of that experience. He tried to get rid of that haunting, impoverished past by writing about it in his work. So his early experiences were written into his later novels.

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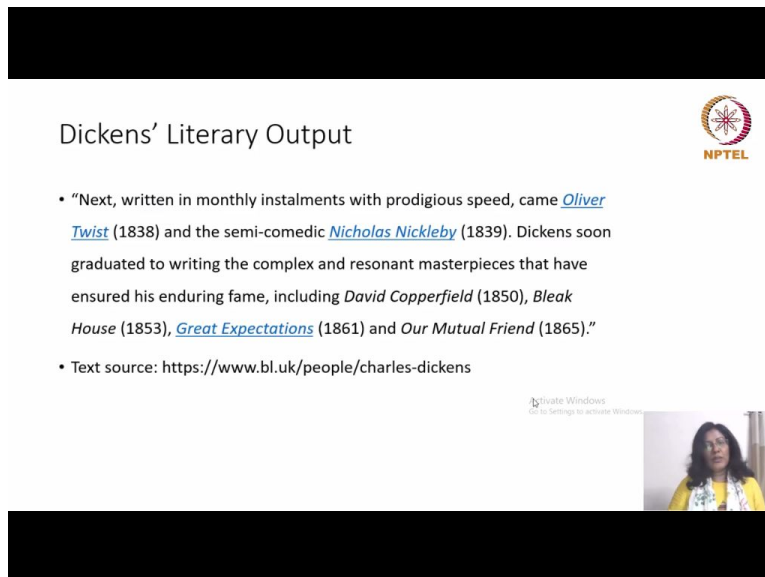
Dickens' Literary Output

- "After leaving school, he became a parliamentary journalist and sketch-writer. He first won fame in 1836 with the antics of the cockney sportsmen portrayed in *The Pickwick Papers*, which was issued in 20 monthly parts."
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You can see where Dickens got his experience in writing. He was a journalist and a sketch writer before he went into full-time fiction writing. He also became very well-known with his *Pickwick Papers*, and this work was issued in a series. It was published in 20 monthly parts, 1 part for every month. Most of the novels of that time were issued in this fashion.


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Dickens' Literary Output

- "Next, written in monthly instalments with prodigious speed, came *Oliver Twist* (1838) and the semi-comedic *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839). Dickens soon graduated to writing the complex and resonant masterpieces that have ensured his enduring fame, including *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865)."
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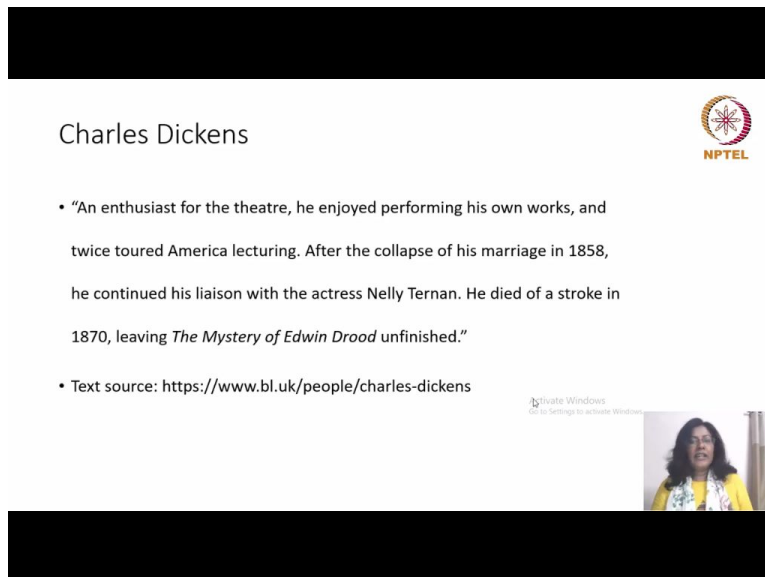
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Dickens wrote at an enormous pace. He was prodigious in his output, and the speed with which he turned out works was very impressive. *Oliver Twist* was very popular and it was followed by *Nicholas Nickleby*. And there was a comic trajectory running through *Nicholas Nickleby* to just as we saw in the *Pickwick Papers*. His later masterpieces such as *Great Expectations* and *Bleak House* were very evocative. They were bleak as well and in fact, the plots were complex and the issues that they tackled were also problematic social issues


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Charles Dickens



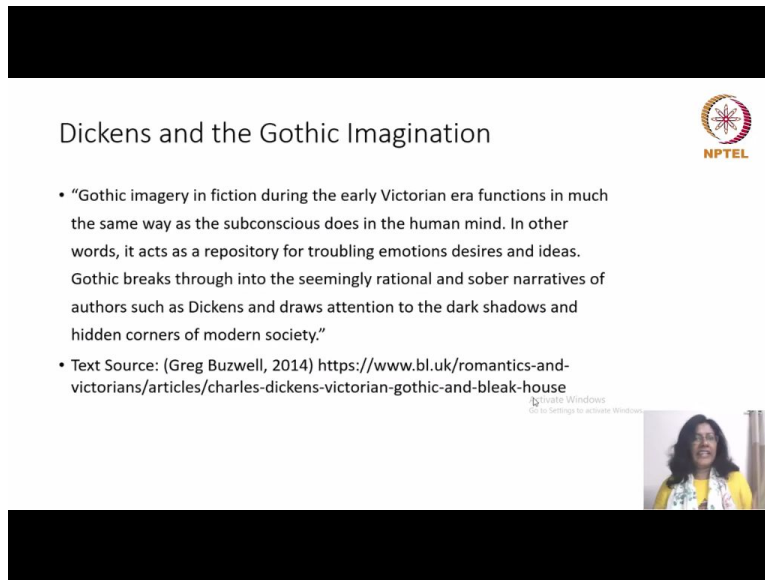
- “An enthusiast for the theatre, he enjoyed performing his own works, and twice toured America lecturing. After the collapse of his marriage in 1858, he continued his liaison with the actress Nelly Ternan. He died of a stroke in 1870, leaving *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished.”
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“An enthusiast, an enthusiast for the theatre, he enjoyed performing his own works and twice toured America lecturing. After the collapse of this marriage in 1858, he continued his liaison with the actress Nelly Ternan. He died of a stroke in 1870, leaving *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished.”


Dickens enjoyed theatre. In fact, he also performed in place and he also enjoyed reading, performing excerpts from his own fiction, his own works. These lectures were immensely popular with the audience, both in Great Britain and in America. In fact, he went on tour twice in America lecturing. His marriage to Catherine Hogarth collapsed in 1858. And because of that, he continued his liaison with the actress Nelly Ternan. And he died of a stroke, which was apparently brought about by his exhaustive work ethic. And his last work was unfinished, which is *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.


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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination

- “Gothic imagery in fiction during the early Victorian era functions in much the same way as the subconscious does in the human mind. In other words, it acts as a repository for troubling emotions desires and ideas. Gothic breaks through into the seemingly rational and sober narratives of authors such as Dickens and draws attention to the dark shadows and hidden corners of modern society.”
- Text Source: (Greg Buzwell, 2014) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/charles-dickens-victorian-gothic-and-bleak-house>






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There is plenty of interesting information and critical perspectives in this set of ideas by Greg Buzwell. Firstly, we need to understand that there was a connection between Gothic and the subconscious in the human mind. There is a direct relation between these two aspects. In fact, the subconscious does break out through Gothic imaginary that could be fine in fiction. Secondly, the Gothic becomes an upholstery, it becomes a vessel, it becomes a collection space that collects all the troubling emotions, desires and ideas.

And further, we need to understand that the Gothic subtext becomes very powerful, even in works that are apparently about rational aspects of the human society, about sober issues of society, dealt with by authors such as Dickens. So even when Dickens is writing about bureaucracy or the complications of the bureaucracy, suggest the judicial system, the Gothic subtext or the narrative plays havoc in that fictional universe, in that fictional narrative. And by

such a Gothic narrative, what the writer is doing is to bring attention to the dark shadows and the hidden corners of modern society and the human psyche.

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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination

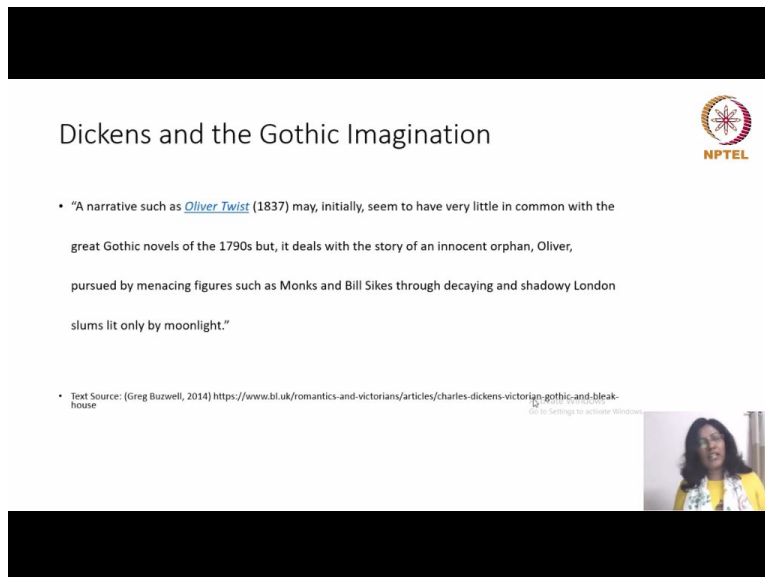
- "During this era, Gothic moves away from the castles, abbeys and mountain landscapes so beloved of authors like Ann Radcliffe and instead moves into contemporary urban environments: in particular Gothic moves into London."
- Text Source: (Greg Buzwell, 2014) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/charles-dickens-victorian-gothic-and-bleak-house>
- Image source: <https://cloisterhamtales.wordpress.com/2014/12/05/the-gothic-imagination-and-edwin-drood/>

On the right side of the slide, there is a small image of a dark, atmospheric scene, possibly a Gothic interior, and the NPTEL logo. At the bottom right, there is a small video inset showing a woman with dark hair wearing a yellow top, speaking. A Windows watermark is visible over the video inset.

“During this era, Gothic moves away from the castles, abbeys, and mountain landscapes so beloved of authors such as Ann Radcliffe and instead moves into contemporary urban environments; in particular Gothic moves into London.”

So you can see a shift in terms of the growth or the progression of this Gothic mode in Radcliffe and other early Gothic writers such as Monk Lewis. The Gothic was associated with castles, abbeys and mountain landscapes, extreme specialities. But with Dickens and even with Collins, the Gothic moves into contemporary urban spaces. So the Gothic comes home in some sense. The Gothic comes to London, to the London urban houses, to the townhouses.

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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination

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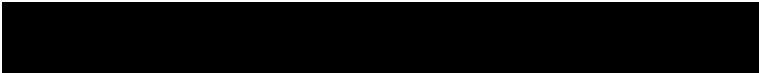
- "A narrative such as *Oliver Twist* (1837) may, initially, seem to have very little in common with the great Gothic novels of the 1790s but, it deals with the story of an innocent orphan, Oliver, pursued by menacing figures such as Monks and Bill Sikes through decaying and shadowy London slums lit only by moonlight."
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“A narrative such as *Oliver Twist*, published in 1837 may initially seem to have very little in common with the great Gothic novels of the 1790s, but it deals with a story of an innocent orphan Oliver pursued by menacing figures such as Monks and Bill Sikes through decaying and shadowing London slums lit only by moonlight.”


So you can see how the Gothic enters even this story, which apparently seems to be the story of an orphan who is having a difficult time in London. However, the Gothic comes through such terrible and bizarre threatening figures such as Monks and Bill Sikes. These are thieves or men who run a den of thieves. So it is very interesting to see how the Gothic infuses social discourses about the lives of orphans and children who are out in the streets.

London itself becomes a problematic space because it is decaying, it is corrupt, it is shadowy and it is threatening. And it gets lit only by moonlight. And then there's no rationality apparently seeping into the streets of London in this work.



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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination



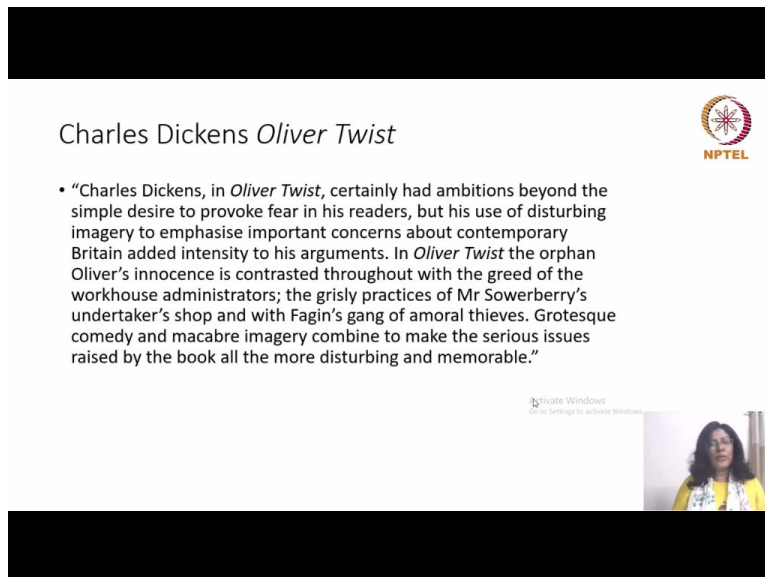
- “The central idea behind the plot, together with the atmosphere and the portrayal of the city, are decidedly Gothic in nature. Whereas the youthful innocents in the novels of Ann Radcliffe are pursued down castle corridors, in *Oliver Twist* they are pursued through Victorian city streets.”
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“The central idea behind the plot, together with the atmosphere and the portrayal of the city is decidedly Gothic in nature, whereas the youthful innocence in the novels of Ann Radcliffe is pursued down castle corridors, in *Oliver Twist*, they are pursued through Victorian city streets.”

Once again, you see how Gothic is embedded in the urban space of London, which is the central subject of the *Oliver Twist*. It is very interesting to see how the Victorian city streets become Gothic and instead of these young and innocent vulnerable young women who are chased down the Kardos of dark castles, here we have vulnerable young boys who are persecuted by thieves such as Fagin and Bill Sikes.

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Charles Dickens *Oliver Twist*

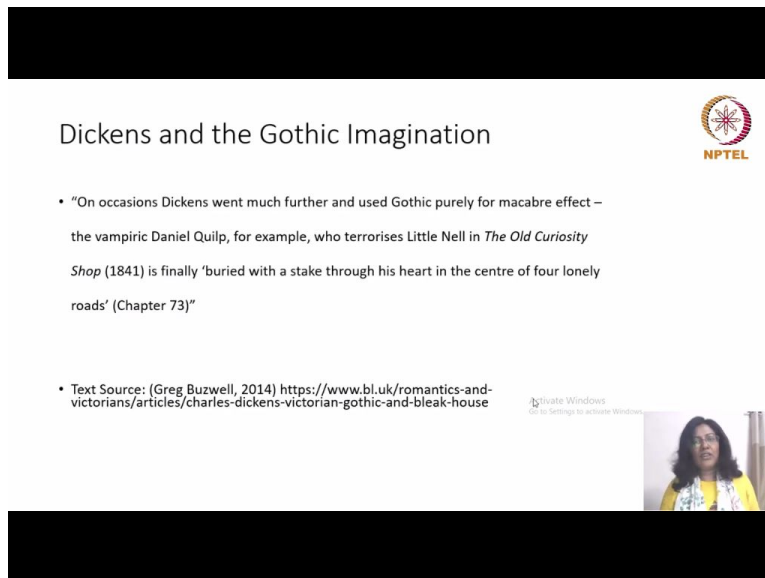
- “Charles Dickens, in *Oliver Twist*, certainly had ambitions beyond the simple desire to provoke fear in his readers, but his use of disturbing imagery to emphasise important concerns about contemporary Britain added intensity to his arguments. In *Oliver Twist* the orphan Oliver’s innocence is contrasted throughout with the greed of the workhouse administrators; the grisly practices of Mr Sowerberry’s undertaker’s shop and with Fagin’s gang of amoral thieves. Grotesque comedy and macabre imagery combine to make the serious issues raised by the book all the more disturbing and memorable.”

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Again, this point by Greg Boswell is remarkable for the contrast it brings out. What he is trying to highlight here is that *Oliver Twist* is not just about provoking fear in his readers, it is about holding up to the view of the readers, the contrast between the innocence of the orphan, and the greed of the administrators as well as the gang of amoral thieves. So grotesque characteristics and macabre imagery paint a series of characters, from the administrators to thieves.

And in fact, greed underlies most of these characters’ practices in the story. So this macabre imagery becomes Gothic. The grotesque becomes Gothic as well and the novel becomes more disturbing and memorable for these reasons.

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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination

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- "On occasions Dickens went much further and used Gothic purely for macabre effect – the vampiric Daniel Quilp, for example, who terrorises Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) is finally 'buried with a stake through his heart in the centre of four lonely roads' (Chapter 73)"
- Text Source: (Greg Buzwell, 2014) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/charles-dickens-victorian-gothic-and-bleak-house>

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“On occasions, Dickens went much further and used Gothic purely from macabre effect. The vampiric Daniel Quilp, for example, who terrorized Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is finally buried with a stake through his heart in the centre of 4 lonely roads.”

Even in the old Curiosity Shop, whose most memorable character is Little Nell, there are Gothic overtones. And these Gothic overtones create a particular effect, a disturbing dark impact on the readers. Daniel Quilp, who is grotesque, who is comically evil, is finally killed with a stake through his heart at the end. And he's buried in a centre of 4 lonely roads, implying that he has an unholy death.

So these effects that Dickens brings into his narratives make the points that he wants to stress really going home with the readers, and he uses the Gothic for greater effect. Sometimes the Gothic may not be a fully fleshed plot in his works. It can be for the effects that he wants to bring through his use of language.

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Dickens and the Gothic Imagination

- "Krook, the rag and bottle merchant from [Bleak House](#) (1853) dies of spontaneous combustion (Chapter 32), and Miss Havisham's bridal gown effectively doubles as her funeral shroud in [Great Expectations](#). This intertwining in the Victorian era of realism and a sense of moral outrage with an inventive use of Gothic imagery results in a powerful new variation on the traditional Gothic novel".
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“Krook, the rag and bottle merchant from Bleak House dies of spontaneous combustion and Miss Havisham’s bridal gown effectively doubles as her funeral shroud in Great Expectations. This intertwining in the Victorian era of realism, and a sense of moral outrage with an inventive use of Gothic imagery results in a powerful new variation on the traditional Gothic novel.”

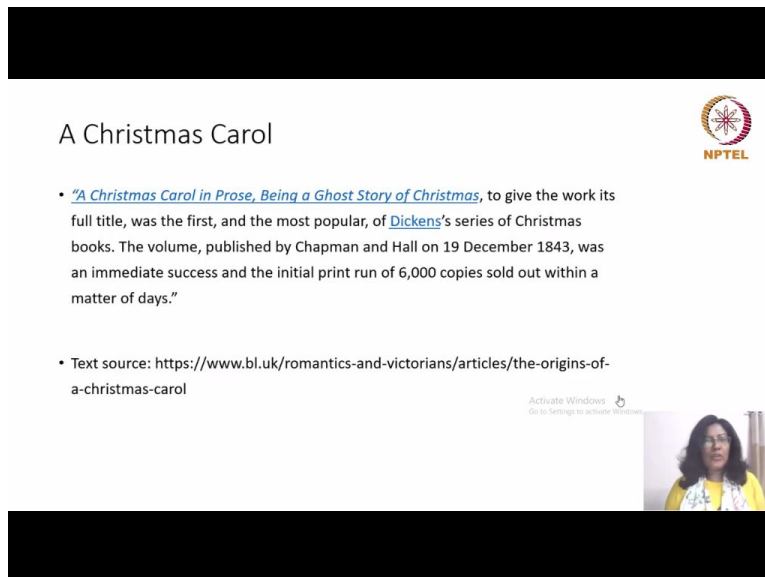
So all along, what I have been trying to point out with Dickens’ context in terms of the Gothic is that the Gothic undergoes a remarkable change in the hands of Dickens. Gothic is urbanized. Gothic comes home. Gothic comes into the townhouses. And Dickens also appropriates signs in order to make a bizarre point in a very, very effective manner.

For example, Krook, the rag and bottle merchant in Bleak House dies of spontaneous combustion. He just buzzes into fire one fine day and he dies and that's very ironic as well. And Dickens is satirizing Krook here by pointing out that, at one point, his own body couldn't handle the kind of greed and exploitation that he reeks on his victims.


And further, in Great Expectations, Miss Havisham’s bridal gown, her white gown becomes her shroud itself that she doesn't change. She seems to freeze in time when her wedding doesn't happen. And she just goes straight from her wedding to her funeral in some sense and that's very

ironic. So Dickens is creating a particular effect through the Gothic mode instead of having really traditional Gothic tropes as just spirits. He is not harnessing signs, instead, he is harnessing the personal characteristics of the characters themselves and turns them into an inventor way of making the Gothic very effective.



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A Christmas Carol



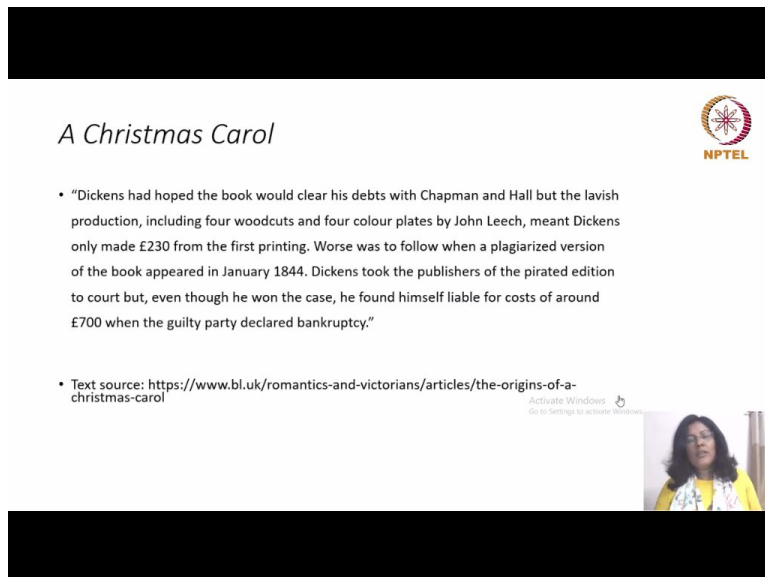
- “*A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*, to give the work its full title, was the first, and the most popular, of [Dickens](#)’s series of Christmas books. The volume, published by Chapman and Hall on 19 December 1843, was an immediate success and the initial print run of 6,000 copies sold out within a matter of days.”
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-a-christmas-carol>




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A Christmas Carol is a ghost story, written at the time of Christmas. It is a series and it is an early work by Dickens’. It was published in 1843, and so it came before all the mature works. It was very popular. It was an instant bestseller and the 6,000 copies sold out in a matter of days. So you can see the popularity of the subject matter with the British reading public.


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A Christmas Carol



- "Dickens had hoped the book would clear his debts with Chapman and Hall but the lavish production, including four woodcuts and four colour plates by John Leech, meant Dickens only made £230 from the first printing. Worse was to follow when a plagiarized version of the book appeared in January 1844. Dickens took the publishers of the pirated edition to court but, even though he won the case, he found himself liable for costs of around £700 when the guilty party declared bankruptcy."
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-a-christmas-carol>



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So it was very interesting to see the publication context for a Christmas Carol. It is maddening and saddening for Dickens. He wanted to make a lot of money with this book. But unfortunately, the illustration elements, for instance, the woodcuts and the colour plates done by John Leech was very expensive and he could make only a little bit of money.

And it was even worse for him when he realized that a plagiarist version of this work was doing the rounds in January 1844. And he takes the publishers of the pirated edition to court. Though he wins the case, he does not get money out of it because the guilty party declares bankruptcy and Dickens had to bear the cost of the court.

So you can see that there is a lot of irony when you think about the external details. The external events surrounding a Christmas Carol which is a moral tale that Dickens tries to drive home through a ghost story. And there are lots of not very moral and underhand dealings happening with relation to publishers who pirate this edition.

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The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a black header bar. The title "A Christmas Carol" is displayed in a serif font. To the right of the title is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a star-like pattern and the text "NPTEL" below it. Below the title, there is a bulleted list of text. The first bullet point reads: "• 'A Christmas book by [Charles Dickens](#) (1812–1870), published in 1843. Dickens was prompted to write this morality tale having been 'perfectly stricken down' by the appalling revelations published in a parliamentary report on child labour in 1843.'" The second bullet point reads: "• Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/works/a-christmas-carol>". In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small video inset showing a woman with dark hair wearing a yellow and white patterned top. A watermark "Activate Windows Go to Settings to activate Windows" is visible in the background of the slide.

“A Christmas book by Charles Dickens published in 1843 had been prompted. Dickens had been prompted to write this morality tale because he had been perfectly stricken down by the appalling revelations published in a parliament report on child labour in 1843.” That is the immediate provocation for Dickens in writing this tale, the report on child labour. The involvement of children in manual labour and the appalling conditions had been the social cause which drives Dickens to write this tale.

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A Christmas Carol

- "A *Christmas Carol* is an allegory about a penny-pinching misanthrope, Ebenezer Scrooge, who on Christmas Eve receives an unexpected visit from the spectre of his long-dead business partner. Jacob Marley warns Scrooge that three further spirits will haunt him. The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present, and The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come force Scrooge to confront the consequences of his actions."
- Text Source: <https://www.bl.uk/works/a-christmas-carol>
- Image Source: <https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/charles-dickens-a-christmas-carol>

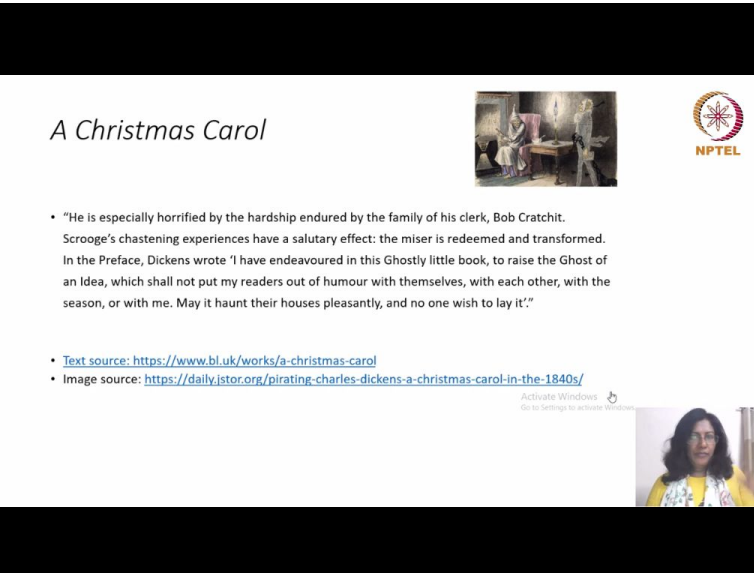
NPTEL

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“A Christmas Carol is an allegory about a penny-pinching, misanthrope, Ebenezer Scrooge, who on Christmas Eve receives an unexpected visit from the spectre of his long-dead business partner. Jacob Marley warns Scrooge that 3 further spirits will haunt him. The Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come force Scrooge to confront the consequences of his actions.”

You have the very traditional signifiers of a Gothic tale here in this story. Ebenezer Scrooge the central protagonist of this novella receives a visit from his dead partner, Jacob Marley, who warns him that 3 further ghosts will visit him and will make Ebenezer Scrooge face the consequences of what he had been doing so far. So the spirit world immediately kind of gives a Gothic framework to this story. This is the Gothic story with a moral lesson at the end of it for the readers to take home.


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A Christmas Carol



- "He is especially horrified by the hardship endured by the family of his clerk, Bob Cratchit. Scrooge's chastening experiences have a salutary effect: the miser is redeemed and transformed. In the Preface, Dickens wrote 'I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.'"
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/works/a-christmas-carol>
- Image source: <https://daily.istor.org/pirating-charles-dickens-a-christmas-carol-in-the-1840s/>

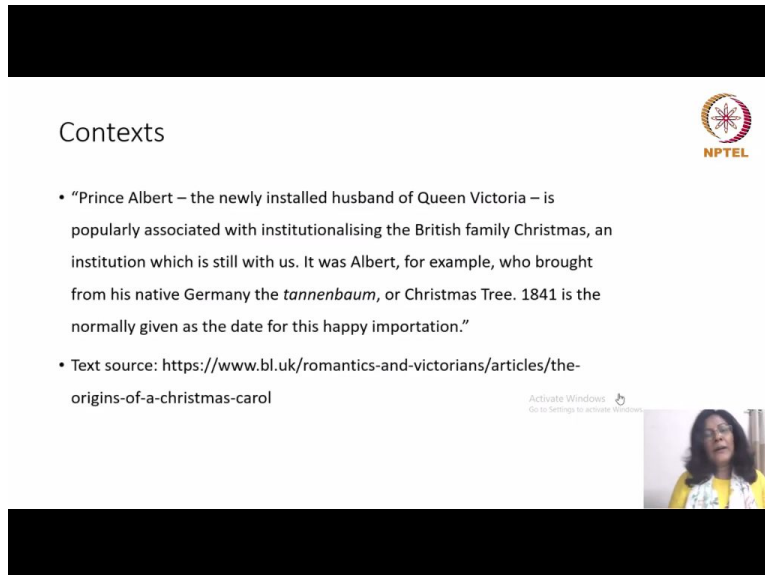


“He is especially horrified by the hardship endured by the family of his clerk Bob Cratchit. Scrooge’s chastening experiences have a salutary effect. The miser is redeemed and transformed. In the Preface, Dickens wrote, I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book to raise the Ghost of an idea, which I will not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.”

The point of the visitations of the 3 ghosts is to show Scrooge the experiences of the family of his clerk Bob Cratchit, the poverty, and yet the ideal family bond in his clerk’s home makes Scrooge realize that he had been extremely miserly. And then he makes sure that he means his ways, and he resolves to change his attitude towards his clerk and his family.

So the presence of the ghosts has a beneficial effect on Scrooge. The presence of the ghost helps redeems Scrooge and transforms him. And in the Preface, Dickens wrote that he had infused the ghost with an idea, a very important idea, the idea of being very charitable towards those who are in need. And he mentions that this kind of ghostly idea will not put the readers out of humour. The readers won’t be affected by this kind of ghost. In fact, nobody will be injured by the nature of these ghosts and nobody will wish to lay these ghosts. So these ghosts are sketched in a more benign manner. These ghosts have nothing of the dark side to them.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:10)



The screenshot shows a presentation slide with the following content:

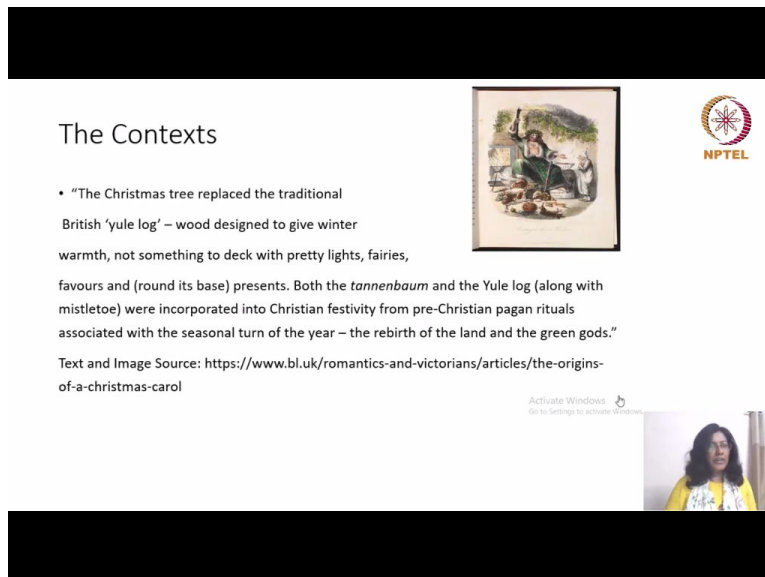
- Contexts
- NPTEL logo
- "Prince Albert – the newly installed husband of Queen Victoria – is popularly associated with institutionalising the British family Christmas, an institution which is still with us. It was Albert, for example, who brought from his native Germany the *tannenbaum*, or Christmas Tree. 1841 is the normally given as the date for this happy importation."
- Text source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-a-christmas-carol>

A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with dark hair wearing a yellow and white patterned top, speaking.

“Prince Albert, the newly installed husband of Queen Victoria is popularly associated with institutionalising the British family Christmas, an institution which is still with us, in the sense that Christmas is celebrated across the world. It was Albert, for example, who brought from his native Germany, the Tannenbaum, or Christmas Tree. 1841 is normally given as the date for this happy importation.”

So the idea of celebrating Christmas with the Christmas Tree is apparently Prince Albert’s idea. Apparently, he brought the tree from Germany in 1841, and this habit was really picked up by the British Public and it was exported across the world.




(Refer Slide Time: 28:02)



The Contexts

- “The Christmas tree replaced the traditional British ‘yule log’ – wood designed to give winter warmth, not something to deck with pretty lights, fairies, favours and (round its base) presents. Both the *tannenbaum* and the Yule log (along with mistletoe) were incorporated into Christian festivity from pre-Christian pagan rituals associated with the seasonal turn of the year – the rebirth of the land and the green gods.”

Text and Image Source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-a-christmas-carol>



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“The Christmas tree replaced the traditional British ‘yule log’ - wood designed to give winter warmth, not something to deck with pretty lights, fairies, favours, and (round its base) presents. Both the Tannenbaum or the yule log (along with mistletoe) were incorporated into Christian festivity from pre-Christian pagan rituals associated with the seasonal turn of the year - the rebirth of the land and the green gods.”

So in this set of ideas, what we realize is the pagan origins of certain aspects of Christmas. In fact, the yule log was traditionally used before the tree became very popular. The yule log was designed to give heat and warmth to people during winter. The idea of decking it with lights and fairies came later. And what is important to notice is the pre-Christian pagan rituals associated with the seasonal celebration, which was meant to celebrate originally the rebirth of the land and the green gods. So Prince Albert’s arrival in Great Britain did make a lot of changes to the way this festival was celebrated.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:24)

A Ghost Story for Christmas

- "Shortly after the arrival of the Christmas tree into the British parlour, [Dickens](#), with [A Christmas Carol](#), institutionalised what one could call the modern 'spirit of Christmas'.

Dickens subtitled his story 'A Ghost Story for Christmas'. The ghosts are imported from folklore and legend, not the Christian gospels. The famous spirit of Christmas designed by the artist John Leech for the first edition of *A Christmas Carol* clearly draws on classic pagan iconography..."

Text and Image source: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-a-christmas-carol>

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“Shortly after the arrival of the Christmas tree into the British parlour, Dickens with *A Christmas Carol* institutionalized what one would call the modern spirit of Christmas, Dickens subtitled his story, *A Ghost story for Christmas*. The ghosts are imported from folklore and legend, and not Christian gospels. The famous spirit of Christmas was designed by the artist John Leech for the first edition of *A Christmas Carol* clearly draws on classical pagan iconography.”

So just as Albert made a few changes to the way this festival was celebrated. Dickens also brings in a new tradition of celebrating the spirit of Christmas. The idea of Christmas Carol was institutionalized and becomes one of the modern additions to the spirit of Christmas and this was added by Charles Dickens.

The subtitle to this story, a ghost story is interesting because ghosts are part of folklore and legend and not part of the Christian gospels. And this particular illustration on the slide is designed by artist John Leech. And he draws or he is influenced by classic pagan iconography illustrations and visual elements.

So these are some of the interesting contexts that we need to keep in mind when we think about the idea of the Gothic and the ghosts in relation to this narrative. Thank you for watching. I'll continue in the next session.