

## Worksheet 2 – Ghosts

### Review: Lecture 1: Storytelling

In the previous lecture of the unit, Prof. Mullan explained the importance of Dickens as a storyteller, both within the text of *A Christmas Carol* and in Dickens' public performances

- ✓ Based on what you learnt in the last lecture, name the ways in which Dickens the narrator 'speaks' as if he is right beside us

### Recall: Lecture 2: Ghosts

**Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.**

1. What are many ghost stories designed for?
  - a) Reading silently
  - b) Reading aloud to a group who know each other
  - c) Reading aloud to strangers
  - d) Reading aloud to one person
2. When was the first, unauthorized adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*?
  - a) 19<sup>th</sup> December 1844
  - b) 9<sup>th</sup> December 1843
  - c) 19<sup>th</sup> December 1943
  - d) 19<sup>th</sup> December 1843
3. What ghostly word does Dickens use to describe ideas for his characters?
  - a) Ghosts
  - b) Spirits
  - c) Spectres
  - d) Beings

### Analysis

4. In the lecture (9.03 – 9.22), Prof. Mullan quotes from Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*:

What he liked to talk about was the latest new piece at the theatres, the latest exciting trial or police case, the latest social craze or social swindle, and especially the latest murder and the newest thing in ghosts.

– George Augustus Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known* (1894)

How does Sala use language to emphasise that Dickens was enthusiastic about new scandals and ghost stories?

### Evaluation

5. In the lecture (9.03 – 9.22), Prof. Mullan quotes from *Dickens, All year Round, 21 March 1863*: In this extract, Dickens argues against the practice and tricks of Spiritualism:

They must by no means believe that Conjuring and Ventriloquism are old trades. They must disbelieve all Philosophical Transactions containing the records of painful and careful inquiry into now familiar disorders of the senses of seeing and hearing, and into the wonders of somnambulism, epilepsy, hysteria, miasmatic influence, vegetable poisons derived by whole communities from corrupted air, diseased imitation and moral infection.

– Dickens, *All The Year Round, 21 March 1863*

**Using the glossary to help you:**

- a) Explain in your words what Dickens thought Spiritualists did in order to trick their audiences.
- b) Explain in your own words what Dickens thought were the true causes of strange sightings or behavior

Challenge: What is the difference between the Spiritualists and Dickens' ghost story?

Extra Challenge: Read the first two paragraphs of Prof. Mullan's article for the British Library: [Ghosts in A Christmas Carol](#) and explain how Dickens used ghosts to mix the 'terrible and the comic'

**Glossary**

- **Conjuring:** *the performance of tricks which are seemingly magical, typically involving sleight of hand: "a conjuring trick"*
- **Corrupted:** *to change (something) so that it is less pure or valuable: "He's convinced that the Internet is corrupting [=ruining] the English language."*
- **Disorder:** *an illness or condition that disrupts normal physical or mental functions: plural noun: disorders: "skin disorders"*
- **Epilepsy:** *a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which brain activity becomes abnormal, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations and sometimes loss of awareness.*
- **Miasma:** *a heavy vapor or atmosphere that was thought to cause disease: "A miasma of pollution hung in the air above Mexico City."*
- **Somnambulism:** *sleepwalking: "She would have liked to wake up from her somnambulism to find herself back in bed."*
- **Spiritualism:** *a system of belief or religious practice based on supposed communication with the spirits of the dead, especially through mediums: "He used a spiritualist to reach the dead."*

- **Ventriloquism:** *the production of the voice in such a way that the sound seems to come from a source other than the speaker: “The performer used ventriloquism to make the puppet talk.”*