

[Nightmare/s in the Long Nineteenth Century \(CFP for edited volume\)](#)

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Call for Publications

Date:

March 15, 2023

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Subject Fields:

Literature, Cultural History / Studies, Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Humanities, History of Science, Medicine, and Technology

Nightmare/s in the Long Nineteenth Century

(CFP for edited volume)

Building on the exciting multidisciplinary conference held last May 2022 at King's College, University of Cambridge, funded by the Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership, we would like to invite proposals for essays to be included in an edited collection titled *Nightmare/s in the Long Nineteenth Century*.

The collection aims to explore the rich and multifaceted theme of nightmare in the arts, thought, and culture of the long nineteenth century. From Johann Heinrich Füssli's 1781 oil painting *The Nightmare*, which was to become the iconic image of a newly emergent sensibility, to the first psychoanalytic investigations culminating in the Freudian study *On the Nightmare* by Ernest Jones (first published in 1911), the nineteenth century was characterised by a pervasive fascination with nightmares both as frightening dreams and, in their personified form, terrifying creatures or spirits (like the *incubus*).

Described by Samuel T. Coleridge as "not a mere Dream" but a peculiar oneiric phenomenon taking place "during a rapid alternation, a *twinkling* as it were, of sleeping and waking", in the course of the nineteenth century the nightmare raised fundamental questions about conscience, the mind, fear, the Other, and the fear of the Other.

It occupied a special place in "the mythology of the Gothic imagination" (Philip W. Martin) not only because nightmares abounded in Gothic texts but also, and more significantly, because some of the most famous works in this genre - such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) - allegedly had their origins in their author's nightmares. As "a phenomenon of passivity, self-effacement, irrationality, terror, and erotic excess" (Lisa Downing), the nightmare also conveyed cultural anxieties about repressed and deviant aspects of sexuality, as exemplified by another Füssli's painting, the sapphic *An Incubus Leaving Two Sleeping*

Girls (c. 1793), and by Louis Dubosquet's definition of the nightmare as a nervous illness similar to hysteria in his medical thesis *Dissertation sur le cauchemar* (1815). Additionally, the age of imperialism witnessed the rise of 'colonial nightmares' which haunted Western imagination and gave voice to fears of racial otherness, as can be seen in "Lukundoo", an American short story written in 1907 by Edward Lucas White about an explorer cursed by an African witch doctor and based on the authors' own nightmares.

We invite proposals for contributions from various disciplines across the arts & humanities, with different methodological approaches and different geographical focus areas. Topics may include but are not restricted to:

- 19th-century literary and artistic representations of nightmares
- 19th-century psychological and medical understanding of nightmares;
- nightmares and sleep
- nightmares and the unconscious
- nightmares and the Gothic;
- nightmares, inspiration, and the creative mind;
- nightmares, eroticism, and sexuality;
- nightmares and spectral apparitions;
- nightmares and hallucinations
- nightmares, altered states of consciousness, and psychoactive substances;
- nightmares and madness;
- prophetic nightmares;
- nightmares and the fear of (racial, ethnic, social, sexual...) Otherness;
- 19th-century non-Western conceptions and depictions of nightmares.

Abstracts of 500 words, together with a short bio (max. 200 words), due **March 15 2023** (notification of outcome by May 2023).

Final essays of 7.000-10.000 words, due **September 15 2023**.

All materials to be submitted to nightmaresconference@gmail.com.

With all best wishes,

The editors,

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