DICKENS TIME AND AGAIN

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> My purpose was, in a whimsical kind of masque which the good humour of the season justified, to awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts, never out of season in a Christian land. I have the happiness of believing that I did not wholly miss it.—Charles Dickens, Preface to the Cheap Edition, *Christmas Books*[1]

Justly admired though his essay on "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" is, Edmund Wilson surely does not reflect the response of most readers of *A Christmas Carol* when he posits that Scrooge's conversion is temporary. For Wilson, the melodramatic dual world of early Dickens included only two types of characters, good and bad. Scrooge embodies both types, and his transformation is the sheerest flummery.

> We have come to take Scrooge so much for granted that he seems practically a piece of Christmas folklore; we no more inquire seriously into the mechanics of his transformation than we do into the transformation of the Beast in the fairy tale into the young prince that marries Beauty. Yet Scrooge represents a principle fundamental to the dynamics of Dickens' world and derived from his own emotional constitution. It was not merely that his passion for the theatre had given him a taste for melodramatic contrasts; it was rather that the lack of balance between the opposite impulses of his nature had stimulated an appetite for melodrama.[2]

Having arrived at this psychological cause for Dickens' simultaneous interest in virtue and vice, Wilson then reads Dickens' psyche back into the *Carol:*

> Shall we ask what Scrooge would actually be like if we were to follow him beyond the frame of the story? Unquestionably he would relapse when the merriment was over—if not while it was still going on—into moroseness, vindictiveness, suspicion. He would, that is to say,

reveal himself as the victim of a manic-depressive cycle, and a very uncomfortable person.[3]

To believe this is to deny the emotional impact of the fifth stave, and to respond with very diminished sensibility to the preceding joys and terrors. For surely the intensity, the excesses of the book are justified—if justified at all—by the immensity of the transformation that does take place, the tremendous change of heart experienced by that cold, hard, "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner,"[4] Scrooge. Edgar Johnson strikes nearer the mark in calling the *Carol* "a serio-comic parable of social redemption,"[5] but his emphasis on the social dimension of the story, and on Scrooge as the personification of "economic man," reads the book in the light of *The Chimes,* which Michael Slater has identified as "Dickens's Tract for the Times,"[6] and obscures its more fundamental, religious character. Moreover, Johnson denies "that Christmas has for Dickens more than the very smallest connection with Christian dogma or theology," and later assures us that "ironically Dickens is never profound."[7]

On the contrary, *A Christmas Carol* enacts a spiritual transformation, conversion, rebirth, performed through the assistance of supernatural powers. It shares this interest with many other works of the 1840s, which, as Mrs. Tillotson has observed, was a decade that witnessed a strong revival of fiction dealing with religious issues.[8] The notion of sudden conversion was familiar to many in Dickens' audience through Evangelical tracts; and conversion as a literary topic pervades nineteenth-century literature, both English and American. Moreover, it shares with Dickens' other writings of that decade—*The Old Curiosity Shop, Martin Chuzzlewit, The Chimes, Dombey and Son, The Haunted Man, David Copperfield*—a concern with the dynamics of conversion. Starting with Dick Swiveller, and developing in complexity and subtlety as the decade passes, Dickens presents a series of imperfect characters who are shocked by various circumstances into a new awareness of themselves and a new attitude toward others. The almost obsessive repetition of this pattern confirms that the process of reformation was vitally important to Dickens, and not merely a melodramatic interlude between two opposing selves. Studies of the regeneration of sinners are the very staple of his fiction during the forties, are treated with increasing seriousness and prominence, and resurface in subsequent decades in the lives of Gradgrind, Pip, and Bella Wilfer. For all their joyousness and buoyancy, the earlier novels did not place conversion at their centers: the permanence of Jingle and Job's transformation is questioned by the worldly Perker, whose opinion of Pickwick's faith in them is nonetheless undiluted. But Ralph Nickleby cannot be redeemed, and Fagin, living under the old law, cannot accept the child Oliver's offer of mercy and forgiveness, though Charley Bates, after reflecting on the cautionary example before him, reforms to become "the merriest young grazier in all Northamptonshire."[9]

Though concerned with spiritual issues, the *Carol* does not engage in

doctrinal debate, as do other novels of the decade. That Dickens eschewed doctrinal controversy has often been adduced as evidence of his weakness of intellect, yet far more cerebral Victorians, for example John Stuart Mill, Robert Browning, and George Eliot, found, after agonized personal investigations, reliance on the "wisdom of the heart" to be, in this age of transition, the best, though not inevitably correct, guide. For Dickens, especially in the early period, a well-disposed heart was the only prerequisite to successfully benevolent action, and from dealing at first with those already so disposed, Pickwick and Oliver and Nicholas, he came in time to consider how it could be achieved.

Such a concern is patently religious. The "seasonal relevance" of the *Carol,* like most of his Christmas numbers from *Pickwick* through the annual tributes in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round,* lies not in the retelling of the life of Christ, a task difficult enough in a century that saw the higher criticism flourish, though Dickens did write a *Life of Our Lord* for his children. Rather, Dickens provides a myth, or parable, expressing what he believed was the central truth of Christianity: the sense of communal identity and corporate responsibility, the ideal of a society bound together in mutual affection and good-feeling, composed of open-hearted and -handed individuals existing in love and charity with their neighbors. *Caritas* was still for Dickens a potent ideal. Of Christianity as a lonely, rigorous inward way he seems to have known and cared little, but he conceived it his duty to promulgate Christianity as a social gospel wherever possible. And theologians as disparate as John Wesley, F. D. Maurice, and Émile Durkheim agree that imitating the social ideals expounded in Dickens' favorite text, the Sermon on the Mount, is a profoundly religious activity.[10]

Moreover, for Dickens, as for nineteenth-century writers from Hazlitt and Shelley to Carlyle, George Eliot, and Nietzsche, art made it possible to *enact,* as well as *present,* that ideal. The sense of benevolent good feeling is as much the *object* of Dickens' prose as it is its *subject.* To *compel* the *Carol's* readers to believe in the possibility of Scrooge's transformation, in his becoming "as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world," as Dickens, strangely mastered by the tale himself, believed in it, "wept over it, and laughed, and wept again," is, finally, the whole design of the story.[11] Dickens' style, organized to move his audience to an emotional pitch that would result in benevolent action, is not cathartic, but hortatory, a feature not lost on contemporary reviewers: "A tale to make the reader laugh and cry," said the *Athenaeum* of the *Carol,* and "to open his hands, and open his heart to charity even towards the uncharitable."

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> In the work of neither Dickens nor Trollope . . . is there any of what we might call "metaphysical" concern with

> time. Both authors, of course, were signally unintellectual and uninterested in such matters.—John Henry Raleigh, "The English Novel and the Three Kinds of Time"
>
> We may call books fictive models of the temporal world. —Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*

Contributing to the emotional power of the *Carol* is its brevity. Dickens later apologized for the "narrow space within which it was necessary to confine these Christmas Stories when they were originally published," alleging that it "rendered their construction a matter of some difficulty, and almost necessitated what is peculiar in their machinery."[12] By narrow space, he refers to the format which, after the *Carol,* became standard for his, and many other authors' Christmas Books, tales short enough to be sold for a modest price, five shillings. But space and time are intimately connected for Dickens as professional writer: the major novels are not only longer, occupying more pages or space, but also were composed *and read* over a longer period of time. The difficulties he experienced in trying to compress a conversion into the shorter compass of *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations* are well known; in the longer works, he was able to take a more leisurely, and realistic, course.

The reference to "realistic" leads us to a second observation. The *Carol* was written in little over six weeks, beginning around the thirteenth of October; its effect was thus compressed for Dickens, as he compressed it for his readers by inventing "what is peculiar in their machinery," namely, the Ghosts. Ghost stories are a feature of English Christmases, as we can see in *Pickwick* and *The Turn of the Screw.* But the Ghosts are seasonally relevant in more complex and profound ways, because three of them are not the spirits of dead persons, but of Christmases Past, Present, and Yet to Come.

Framed within the twenty-four hours in Scrooge's fictional life the *Carol* recreates at least five past times, a fictive present from Christmas morning through Twelfth Night, and a potential future encompassing the deaths of Tiny Tim and Scrooge himself. The multiplicity of the story's temporal dimensions points up its central concern, a concern that is adumbrated by its peculiar machinery, for the *Carol* is about Time: Scrooge's conversion is effected, in multiple ways, by the agency of Time itself.[13] And the whole story is an exposition of the meaning of Christmas Time—a book published at Christmas (17 December), about a Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, to be read, as it has been for over a century, as a kind of Christmas ritual. Its time is as close to that of its audience as the Ghosts are to Scrooge or the narrator to his readers, and he is "standing in the spirit at your elbow" (24).

The variety of kinds of time present in the opening staves establishes its complex, and multiple, values. The simplest concept of time is that demarcated by calendars, Scrooge's own reliable repeater, and apparently—though not actually—by the chimes of the neighboring church. Regular and

unremitting, this time can be counted on to persevere in its accustomed rhythm, day after day, night after night, until, unaccountably, on Christmas morning, having gone to bed after two in the morning Scrooge hears the heavy church bell toll midnight. Unsettled, he first assumes that the clock is wrong: "An icicle must have got into the works" (23). His repeater confirms the preposterous hour. "It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun," he speculates, "and this is twelve at noon!" Running to the window, he looks out to see if indeed "night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world." Happily, it appears to be midnight in fact, night has not swallowed up day, and time seems still the regular medium in which Scrooge has conducted his business, "a great relief, because 'three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or his order,' and so forth, would have become a mere United States' security if there were no days to count by."

Scrooge counts by this time, a concrete fact, hard, impersonal, unyielding, shaped in his own image to badger others in the service of his own prosperity. It is the time of notes and bills, equated with money: so many hours for so much pay, and so many days at so much interest per day. Time, for Scrooge, is money; Bob Cratchit's day off with pay is a double deprivation. "It's not convenient," he complains, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound. . . . And yet . . . you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work" (14). Christmas is merely a "poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" Such abstractly quantitative time has no qualities, no seasonal associations: "Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you," he expostulates in reply to his nephew's friendly greeting, "but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you?" (10). Unless one makes money, time is "dead against you."

Against this calendrical and quantitative chronology Dickens sets Scrooge's nephew. For him, time has qualities, as well as quantity:

> "I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open thier shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

This time is not linear, abstract, discrete, and regularly sequential, not measured by calendars and reliable repeaters and the customary alteration of days and nights, but circular ("when it has come round" contrasts with the linear

and computational senses of "a round dozen of months"), recurrent (instead of repetitive), ceremonial, emotional, and, by virtue of the similarity of response called up in all men and women each time, oddly stationary. That is, every Christmas "men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely," and thus every Christmas is to that extent and in that way like every other Christmas. Scrooge's time makes one older, and, he plans, richer; his nephew's makes time almost stand still. The ramifications of this distinction will occupy us shortly.

Both speakers refer to a third kind of time, the span of one human life, from birth to death. Scrooge deplores getting older without getting richer; his nephew thinks that Christmas time compensates for the "long calendar of the year," and speaks of the span of human life as a journey "to the grave." We confront finite human time at the beginning of the novel, which is an end: "Marley was dead, to begin with." His passing has been confirmed, in a sense determined, by the signatures in the burial register of the officiating "clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to" (7). Scrooge knows Marley is dead. And Dickens insists vehemently—if ultimately ironically—upon this fact. "There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate."

Paradoxically, Marley has not altogether ceased to exist on the face of the earth. Scrooge has gradually turned into Marley, assumed his worldly goods as sole assign and sole residuary legatee, and moved into the "chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner," and which looked as if they had run to their gloomy location as a playful young house, and "forgotten the way out again," growing old as their inhabitant (14). His identity is interchangeable with that once belonging to Marley; though he is willing to sign his own name to a burial register, he cannot bring himself to efface his partner's name from the door.

> Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him. (8)

Moreover, like Marley, Scrooge grows corpselike and metallic. Marley is "as dead as a door-nail."[14] Or a coffin-nail, which the narrator is "inclined . . . to regard . . . as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade" (7). Scrooge too is slowly reifying:

> Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose,

> shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. (8)

Cold and solitary, he is unaffected by external heat and cold, as unresponsive to the weather as a corpse. He is likewise unaffected by his "fellow-passengers to the grave," having, in a sense, got there already: no one ever stops him in the street to inquire after his health, or solicit funds, "no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place." He takes delight in warding off all human commerce: "To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts' to Scrooge."

If Scrooge is nearly a piece of dead ironmongery, however, Marley is more alive than he, or we, suspect, and first presents himself to his former partner in the guise of a doorknocker, suddenly, "without its undergoing any intermediate process of change," transformed into his face (15). A fourth kind of time present in the opening stave of the *Carol* is the time after death, the time, adumbrated in Dickens' favorite Scriptural texts, the Gospels and especially the Sermon on the Mount, when the characteristics of this life are reversed. Since Marley was cold and impervious, like Scrooge, and accustomed to such chilly surroundings as Scrooge provides for Bob Cratchit, now his "hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air," and his "hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven" (15, 18). Since he remained shut up in his counting house during life, and like Scrooge took no notice or thought of his fellow passengers, he must make his journey now. "It is required of every man," he instructs Scrooge, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world" (19). Since Marley, again like Scrooge, made the passing hours pay, he is now shackled by the chain he forged in life, a chain clasped about his vacant bowels, made "of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel" (17). The constipation of his life has taken a dreadful, if appropriate, revenge.[15]

A fifth kind of time present in the opening stave of the *Carol* is the historical time of the story. It occurs, apparently, in the present of its first readers' lives. There are sufficient references to familiar and topical affairs and locations—to 'Change, Sabbatarianism, prisons, Union workhouses, Lord Mayor and Mansion House, Joe Miller's jest book, cockney street boys who employ contemporary London slang ("Walk-ER")—to anchor the world to London, circa 1843, for us a clearly defined actual historical past. Indeed, John Butt has traced the topics on Dickens' mind in the months preceding the *Carol's* composition, and shown how many of these subjects appear in his Christmas book.[16] But Dickens calls his tale "a whimsical kind of

masque," and immediately after the principal character and situation have been introduced, the story makes a new beginning with the conventional formula for romance or fable or myth: "Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house." The *Carol* seems to participate in not just a fictionally historical, but also a fictive, time. This feeling is reinforced by the presence of Ghosts, who, Dickens insists, cannot be dismissed as products of Scrooge's fancy: "Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including—which is a bold word—the corporation, aldermen, and livery" (14). Nor can they all be ascribed to "a slight disorder of the stomach" that makes Scrooge's senses cheat, no matter how much, to distract his own attention, and keep down his terror, he tries to be waggish and renounce Marley by such feeble verbal fencing: "You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" (18).

Considering the historicity of the temporal setting, if we reject Scrooge's attempt to discredit and disavow their reality, the status of the Ghosts is by no means clear. For one thing, we must distinguish between Marley, literally a *geist,* a spirit, and the three Christmas Phantoms, which are not the immortal remains of individual human lives. For another, we *do* know only through our senses, as Marley reminds Scrooge. In insisting on the analogy between the narrator's voice and the Christmas Ghosts, Dickens provides one way of taking their eruption into the fictional world: our senses respond to his voice as Scrooge does to the Ghosts, and we respond to the story he tells as Scrooge does to the times which the Ghosts present. The *Carol* becomes the analogue to Scrooge's experiences, a relationship familiar to anyone who has read the Christmas number of *Pickwick* attentively.[17] But the Ghosts are more than this, as we shall see.

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> It is the irruption of the sacred into the world, an irruption narrated in the myths, that *establishes* the world as a reality. —Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*
>
> The path of the soul, which is traversing the series of its own forms of embodiment, like stages appointed for it by its own nature. —G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*

We are prepared for something supernatural to occur by the very extremity of the contrasting conditions depicted in the first stave: the deadness of Marley, the covetousness of Scrooge, the heightened merrymaking of the sea-

son, the coldness and bleakness of the weather, the seclusion, vacancy, and decrepitude of Scrooge's chambers, the general darkness, so pervasive that "candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air" (9). Entropic, it is a world slowly choking on its own congealing effluvia. "Piercing, searching, biting cold" (13) freezes all external objects in terms that relate them to Scrooge's coldness and hardness: "The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice." Human beings are left with two options: Scrooge's, to reify and thus become impervious to the weather, or his fellow passengers', the charity solicitors and the poulterers and grocers, whose "trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do." The Lord Mayor keeps Christmas as a Lord Mayor should, with fifty cooks and butlers to pass out the cheer, and the gas-men light "a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture." Inner coldness or communal warmth appear to be the alternative responses to such hungry weather, which gnaws and mumbles at noses "as bones are gnawed by dogs." It is the "time, of all others," the charity gentlemen tell Scrooge, "when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices" (12).

The central and most intense focus of all these contrary intensities lies near Scrooge. In his icy countinghouse Bob Cratchit sits in the Tank before the absolute minimum of coal fire, surrounded by the dingy cloud of fog that came "drooping down, obscuring everything," until "one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale" (9). Returning home with a cold in his head, Scrooge passes through the gateway of his house, around which the fog and frost hang so heavily "that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold" (14). We move, in the opening stave, from the commercial world of London into Scrooge's countinghouse, and thence into his chambers, coming ever nearer the heart of the cold and fog, the source of that obscuring blackness, fecal and icy, that has turned day into night at three o'clock in the afternoon. And as we move from reality to its underlying sources, from 'Change to the private center of Scrooge's miserly self-identity, we approach a kind of omphalos, or center, where physical and spiritual worlds interact, a sacred space, to use Mircea Eliade's term.[18] Scrooge's doorknocker becomes Marley's face; his solitude is interrupted by a ghostly visitor; outside his window the air fills with "incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory," as the phantoms condemned to wandering rush "hither and thither in restless haste, . . . moaning as they went" (22).[19]

All this, as we have stressed in other contexts, takes place on Christmas Eve. Marley died seven years before on Christmas Eve, the number seven being itself further reinforcement of our expectation that something supernatural

may occur in this heightened environment. Before, Scrooge had not allowed Marley's death to interrupt his accustomed rhythm of business, for the very day of the funeral was solemnized "with an undoubted bargain" (7). Now, his thoughts preoccupied by the sudden apparition of his partner's head, he pauses at the door, looks behind it for Marley's pigtail, then slowly and deliberately mounts the stairs to his chamber, thinking, as he traverses the wide staircase, that he sees a "locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom" (16). After searching his chambers, and finding nothing more irregular than his dressing-gown "hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall," Scrooge double-locks himself in, "which was not his custom," to be "secured against surprise." Brooding by his small fire, his thoughts "disjointed fragments" atomized by his recent experience, Scrooge contemplates the Dutch tiles "designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts," the narrator concludes, hundreds of instances of the "Invisible World" and the human one interacting, of the two worlds in contact. For Scrooge, the literalist of time, "that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole." No more than any other human being can he successfully insulate himself against the surprise that is to come at this Christmas time when the spiritual world became incarnate, and time stood still.

Marley is announced by the ringing of every bell in the house. Typical Gothic ghostly machinery, but elaborated here into another indication of the interaction of these two worlds. Scrooge has always measured time by the bells of the neighboring churches. But now that measurement loses its expected regularity; Scrooge thinks the length of the house bells' ringing, "half a minute, or a minute," more like "an hour" (17). Bells which have hitherto seemed to measure out quantitative time now begin to function differently, in ways that will eventually redeem all time for Scrooge.

Marley's visit has two purposes: to teach Scrooge what his proper business is, and to inform him of the coming of the three Ghosts. Man's business, as Marley, having neglected it, though a "good man of business," has come to know in after life, is mankind. "The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business" (20). As the bells suggest, his lesson is a Christian one (cf. Luke 2:49: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"), and his neglect of it is all the more piercing "at this time of the rolling year" (21). "Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me!*" Rich in life, but poor in the things of the spirit, he has procured for Scrooge, equally impoverished, a "chance and hope." The Christmas star has now conducted him to a

poor home: Scrooge's, which is as barren physically and spiritually as any human habitation upon earth. The Ghosts will take Scrooge through many abodes of the poor: his own past, the Cratchits', his nephew's, miners' huts, old Joe's rag and bone shop, educating him to that better treasure which moths and rust do not consume, and thieves do not break through and steal.[20]

Such treasure works for the common good, and is the product of free will. Marley's chain he forged in life, "link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it" (19). Being time and money bound, as Scrooge has been, is a voluntary choice, whose voluntary determinism is inversely mirrored in that other life where one is condemned to wander, *unable* to rectify one's earthly mistakes. One gentleman whom Scrooge observes outside his window, and whose waistcoat and situation recall the gentleman in the white waistcoat in *Oliver Twist,* "with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, . . . cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever" (22).

Why, then, can Marley interfere with Scrooge? For two related reasons: because Scrooge's nature is not yet wholly unredeemable, having the traces, in the past, of a better soul, and because he has absorbed Marley's identity, become his alter ego. The interference is thus susceptible to both theological and psychological interpretations. Scrooge's spirit still has the possibility of choosing a different course, of "working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be," and of finding "its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness" (20). Man is free to make the choice, whose consequences are reflected in the next life: as Guiseppe Caponsacchi learns God has a use for him, so Scrooge is allowed, through Marley, to discover that "ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed," that each man has an infinite potential for good actions which will ramify down through the ages, if he makes proper use of his time on earth.

But Marley's time with Scrooge is short, and he turns over to others the agency by which this conversion is to be effected. Scrooge is to be haunted by Three Spirits, the first coming "to-morrow, when the bell tolls One," "the second on the next night at the same hour," and the "third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate" (21). His intercessory power is limited to an exposition of Scrooge's actual condition and business; he can provide the precept, but the examples come from Scrooge's own life and times, from a review of the series of his own soul's forms of embodiment.

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> In order to enter eternal life, it is necessary, as Simone Weil said one day, "to press time on our heart until it crushes it."—Jean Mouroux, *The Mystery of Time*

Our past, always separated from our present, is often reached through memory via contemplation and reflection. The first night after Marley's visit, Scrooge awakens a whole hour before the promised time of the first Spirit. At first, he imagines that he has slept through twenty-two hours, the temporal dislocation is so great. But his observation confirms, though his reason and habit want to deny, that it is midnight. He then spends the hour thinking: he "went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more he endeavoured not to think, the more he thought" (23). His mind keeps returning, "like a strong spring released" from a woundup watch, to the same question, the ontic status of Marley: "Was it a dream or not?" (24). Slowly becoming human again through the shock of Marley's appearance—Edgar Johnson identifies Marley as a manifestation of grace[21]—Scrooge once again experiences time qualitatively: between the three quarters chime and the hour time stretches out "so long, that he was more than once convinced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock." At length (Dickens' word), "it broke upon his listening ear," a whole hour suddenly speeded up into a moment:

> "Ding, dong!"
> "A quarter past," said Scrooge, counting.
> "Ding, dong!"
> "Half-past!" said Scrooge.
> "Ding, dong!"
> "A quarter to it," said Scrooge.
> "Ding, dong!"
> "The hour itself," said Scrooge, triumphantly, "and nothing else!"
> He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE.

Frank Kermode has written about the human compulsion to organize time into humanly significant moments, "tick-tock," and about the necessity we, "in the middest," feel to create fictions that make our beginnings and our ends concordant.[22] Scrooge has not yet learned to experience time in the interstices between moments, "to live," as Durrell puts it in *Clea,* "between the ticks of the clock, so to speak,"[23] but he is attending to time's variability and quality in a way he never has before. Marley's Ghost has seen to that.

In depicting the three Spirits, Dickens faced, and overcame, his greatest artistic problem in the *Carol,* a problem, as we have seen, partly arising from the condensation of space and time necessary for his story. He had to emblemize Christian time, Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, which Edgar Johnson identifies in their didactic aspects as memory, example, and fear.[24] The iconographical tradition, if any, is obscure; whereas Phiz and Cruikshank could count on their audience's recognizing familiar iconographical motifs like

the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan, Dickens and Leech themselves had to create the emblems of these ideas. And as the emblems participate at the same time in a Christian and spiritual, and earthly and psychological, experience, the blending had to be accomplished with tact and imagination.

In its secular aspects, the Ghost of Christmas Past emblemizes human memory. Looking back into our pasts through a reverse perspective, we perceive events sequentially last as "closest" to us. The Ghost is like an old man seen through the wrong end of a telescope: "like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions" (24). Though old and hoary, the past is eternally youthful and fresh; the Ghost has long white hair, "yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin." The past has a tenacious hold on us; the Ghost's arms "were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength." Our memory of the past is evanescent, distinct yet ever-changing, as we recall different incidents at different moments, and juxtapose clear recollections in varying relationships, which fade off into the obscurity of forgetfulness. The strangest thing about the Ghost is that its "figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again, distinct and clear as ever" (25). So fluctuating is this Spirit of the Past that it cannot ever be frozen into a single image: Leech's illustration depicts only its cap and light, which is permanent.

The Spirit is specifically the Ghost of Scrooge's Past; in its face "in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces" it shows Scrooge (37). It is therefore sexless, having a grasp as "gentle as a woman's hand" and a voice "soft and gentle" (26,25). But its persistent, if fitful, illumination is more lasting than mere human memory could achieve; this Past is more than Maupassant's, described by Georges Poulet as a "profound feeling of attrition," a " 'scattering of vanished events.' " For many Romantics, "duration no longer seems the genesis of life, but the genesis of death: incompleted and successive deaths which the brief blaze of affective memory interrupts from time to time, rekindling an ephemeral animation in an existence which is burning out."[25] This Ghost is self-illumined by the sheen of its lustrous belt, and by the "bright clear jet of light" that rays from "the crown of its head" like a Mosaic *cornu*. In its hand it holds a "branch of fresh green holly," appropriate wintry emblem celebrated in carols of the ivy and the holly, but also associated through color with the living church, hope, growth, memory ("Lord, keep my memory green"), Dickens' monthly number wrappers, and the specially-tinted endpapers of the *Carol*. Since the past incorporates all times, and since Christian time, paradoxically a combination of duration and oneness, promises rebirth, its dress is "trimmed with summer flowers." There may even be a ref-

erence to Christmas in its dress, a tunic of the purest white, which reveals delicately formed bare legs and feet.

Representative of Christian and memorial time, the Ghost of Scrooge's Christmases Past proposes a tropological journey, the first stage in the "squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner['s]" pilgrimage. Recalcitrant and unrepentant, Scrooge attempts to bonnet the Spirit with the cap fashioned by his worldly passions. The Ghost's purpose is Scrooge's welfare, or, as he reformulates it when Scrooge pleads for the efficacy of a sound night's sleep instead, his "reclamation." On being solicited to fly out the window, Scrooge sensibly complains, "I am a mortal . . . and liable to fall"; to which the Spirit replies, " 'Bear but a touch of my hand *there,*" . . . laying it upon [Scrooge's] heart, 'and you shall be upheld in more than this!' " (26).

Upheld, Scrooge revisits five past times, past stages in his psychosexual and psychosocial development in which many of the conflicts Erik Erikson describes are recognizable.[26] Past time also removes us to a past space, the world of the country, of gate, post, tree, market town, bridge, church, winding river, shaggy ponies, broad fields, joyous boys, and crisp air. As we move forward in time into the more recent past, we move closer to the center of London, and away from country joys and old-fashioned country relationships, such as obtain in Dingley Dell, the Cheerybles' shop, and Fezziwig's warehouse, situated though it is amidst "all the strife and tumult of a real city" (30).

From each of these stages of his past life—youth, adolescence, apprenticeship, young manhood, and prematurely aged adulthood—Scrooge learns. In contrast to his own attitude toward people in the "cross-roads and bye-ways" of life, he observes the country villagers, the "jocund travellers," giving each other Merry Christmas, and shouting to each other in high spirits (27). Only in the large house of broken fortunes, full of spacious but empty offices like the chambers Scrooge now inhabits, is there a solitary and neglected person: the boy Scrooge, whose appearance makes the old man weep like a child "to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be." The only recourse of this forgotten child, abandoned by his family, is a kind of playing, imaginative literature.[27] On this Christmas Eve he is visited by all his "wonderfully real and distinct" companions: Ali Baba, Valentine and Orson, the Sultan's Groom and the Genii, the Parrot, Robinson Crusoe, and Friday (28). These are friends never to be outgrown, as Dickens, recalling them again, illustrates in his New Year's Piece for 1853, "Where We Stopped Growing."[28]

> If we can only preserve ourselves from growing up, we shall never grow old, and the young may love us to the last. Not to be too wise, not to be too stately, not to be too rough with innocent fancies, or to treat them with too much lightness—which is as bad—are points to be remembered that may do us all good in our years to come. And the good they may do us, may even stretch forth into the vast expanse

> beyond those years; for, this is the spirit inculcated by One on whose knees children sat confidingly, and from whom all our years dated. (363)

The boy has been forgotten by his family and friends, just as Scrooge has forgotten his own boyhood and loneliness. Otherwise, he would have given something to the boy "singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night." But neither in life nor death can one make amends for past opportunities missed to do some good to the world. Imaginative literature may put one back in touch with that world of childhood, with its hopes and fears and loneliness and magical power to overcome its deprivations, and thus awaken in the breasts of the old, through memory, the desire to "preserve ourselves from growing up." The Christmas Tree has the same power, for it is decorated with the toys of childhood, and topped by the bright star of Bethlehem. As he muses upon the tree Dickens recalls the words "This, in commemoration of the law of love and kindness, mercy and compassion. This, in remembrance of Me!"[29]

In the second episode from Scrooge's past, a few years later his sister Fan comes to take him home: "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven!" (29). Dickens does not present the confrontation of Scrooge with his father; presumably, from later episodes, his was not a permanent reformation, and his son was sent out into the world again to make his own way. Such parents as there are in Scrooge's life are surrogates, either frightening and cold, like Scrooge's schoolmaster and Scrooge himself, or genial and warm, like Fezziwig, Bob Cratchit, and his nephew. But though Dickens does not dwell at length on Scrooge's impoverished childhood, preferring to emphasize the freedom of choice, rather than the determination of circumstance, enough is indicated to refute the recent criticism of the President of Screen Gems, who, in announcing that Christopher Isherwood had been hired to rewrite the *Carol* for filming, charged that "Dickens was a terrible writer. In the original, Scrooge was mean and stingy, but you never know why. We're giving him a mother and father, an unhappy childhood, a whole background which will motivate him."[30]

The second scene is terminated by a little ceremonial communion in "the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes on the windows, were waxy with cold." In this room of worldwide cold the schoolmaster produces "a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people," without, it is apparent, any Christian fellowship resulting. When he looks into the future of this past, Scrooge is reminded that Fan, delicate though with "a large heart," left behind her at her death one child, the nephew who continues to invite him to his home every Christmas without success.

In contrast to the preceding episode's lack of community, the third scene,

beginning at the magical hour of seven o'clock, opens with old Fezziwig, the model employer, calling out to Ebenezer and Dick Wilkins from behind his high desk to transform the city warehouse into "as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night" (31). As the first scene brought to Scrooge's mind the small Carol singer he had ignored, and the second brought to mind his nephew, so this one, so analogous to his own situation, brings to mind Bob Cratchit, to whom he "should like to be able to say a word or two . . . just now" (33). Each of Scrooge's unregenerate responses on the present Christmas Eve of the opening stave is contrasted to a corrective example in the Past.

Fezziwig's celebrations are characterized by the creation of "affectionate grouping" of strangers, of rejuvenation, of feasting, and of light, conveyed through the "winking" of his legs:

> A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance . . . Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger. (32)

This light recalls the Ghost's belt, which "sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another"; it is also, through "winking," the figure of the dance, and the gallant ritual courtship, associated with sexual sensuality, which Dickens celebrates in the *Carol,* through veiledly and coyly. Replete with food and gratitude, the guests depart, Fezziwig having "spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?" the Ghost inquires (33). To which Scrooge, thawing, "heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self," replies:

> "It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

Scrooge has divorced monetary value from true worth; counting is no longer the measure of power.

Such an attitude contrasts sharply to the fourth scene, in which Scrooge's fiancée, Belle, breaks off their engagement because a golden idol has replaced her in his mind. If, under Fezziwig's tutelage, the young Scrooge learned the value of industry as a means of compensating for in-

feriority, to use Erikson's schema of psychosocial crises, he has not coped so well with the next stage of development, establishing his identity. Belle wishes him happiness in his "changed nature" and "altered spirit," for he is "another man" from the time when their engagement was made, "when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry" (34). She is ambivalent about whether she hopes he will recall the parting with pain, because he remembers their former lives, or "dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke" (35). Since in becoming worldly Scrooge confined this past to a dream, it is appropriate that it should be recaptured in a dreamlike state that becomes far more real and permanent than mortal life. Once again, it is insisted that Scrooge exercised free will in his choice: "May you be happy in the life you have chosen!" Belle concludes.

The last scene is one of several Dickens writes which show the wealth, vitality, and warmth of a family, in this instance Belle's. Such communities, like Mr. Wardle's or Fezziwig's, almost redeem the time themselves, revitalizing old age like Mrs. Wardle's, with the children serving as "a spring-time in the haggard winter of . . . life" (37). Their perpetuation depends upon procreation and generativity; there are, consequently, many references to the sensual knowledge of man, from which the innocent child of pre-Freudian myth is exempt.

> I should have dearly liked, I own, [says the narrator] to have touched [Belle's daughter's] lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value. (36)

Against this community stands Scrooge, alone in his office, illuminated by a solitary candle on a Christmas Eve seven years before the opening stave, while his partner Jacob unsuccessfully wrestles with the Angel of Death. Though his path away from the countryside and human community into the city has been voluntarily chosen, these shadows of the past cannot be changed: they have been determined by men's deeds, and are not the fault of the Spirit. Nonetheless, unable to bear it any longer, Scrooge wrestles with the Ghost, and, seizing the "extinguisher cap" with his "worldly hands," unavailingly tries to hide the light, "which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground" (37).

At this midpoint in Scrooge's journey, let me recapitulate by applying some categories derived from an earlier, and more doctrinally Christian, "path of the soul." It is Francis Fergusson's belief that the levels of interpretation advanced by Dante in his letter to Can Grande apply to subsequent

literature: he has pressed them even so far as *The Great Gatsby*.[31] With little distortion, and some gain in clarification and compression, we can see time in the *Carol* functioning in terms of these four levels, and each of the spirits as embodying one term. The literal time of the first stave, and Marley, bear resemblance to Dante's literal level. The second stave, in which Scrooge encounters the shadows of his former selves, similarly bears resemblance to the tropological. The third stave takes Scrooge on a survey of the entire world, London shops, the hearths of Cratchit and his nephew, the Miners' "bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants" (49), the lighthouse, a ship, sickbeds, on foreign lands, and close at home, rich and poor, in almshouse, hospital, and jail, wherever misery lives. The Ghost of Christmas Present is a sibling of the eighteen-hundred-odd Ghosts who have inhabited the world since the birth of Christ, and thus, though it is the presiding Spirit for this year, from Christmas Morning to Twelfth Night, it is the latest in a long series of Christmas Spirits. This survey of the world, which extends spatially and temporally, marks the allegorical level. And finally, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, shadowing forth a future not yet determined, adumbrates the anagogical.

Though we are divided from our past selves by the gap between present experience and memory, the past is separated from the present only by an instant. Exhausted by his effort to deny, Scrooge falls into an appropriate "heavy sleep," awakening "in the right nick of time" as the bell strikes One. To guard against being surprised once again, he is prepared for anything from "a baby [to a] rhinoceros. . . . Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling" (38). Though his bed lies "the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour," no Spirit visits him. Christmas Present cannot come to Scrooge, for he does not keep the season, as his nephew has pointed out; he must come to it—a far journey spiritually, though physically it lies in the very next room.

The chamber in which Scrooge mumbled his supper of gruel has been transformed into "a perfect grove" (39). If progress toward the present has entailed a journey from the country, then to keep Christmas in the present requires transforming the present and urban into the past and rural, as Fezziwig did. The aged chambers have been converted from a temple of parsimony into a temple of feasting; the twinkling belt and bough of holly from Christmas Past, the "living green," expand to fill the entire room: "The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there." The hearth blazes, and on the floor, heaped so as to form a kind of throne, lie every imaginable kind of Christmas comestible, in an Abundance that is not only appropriate, as the charity solicitors pointed out, but talismanic and emblematic of, and an offering to,

the spiritual season. From the Spirit's torch, "in shape not unlike Plenty's horn," streams light, incense to sprinkle over the dinners of poor revellers, and water which restores good humor to all who speak an angry word. *Cornu* becomes *cornucopia:* this brother Spirit exemplifies and dispenses the abundant grace of qualitative time.

A giant, the allegorical Spirit of the whole world at this season, the Ghost can yet stand beneath a low roof as gracefully as within a lofty hall. In Georges Poulet's familiar trope, it is both microcosm and macrocosm, center of humility and circumference.[32] Sibling to eighteen-hundred-odd brothers all strangers to Scrooge,[33] its kingly mantle is of green, "bordered with white fur." So free and open is its countenance and spirit that "its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice." On its head it wears "a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles" (40), a wreath which bears some analogy to the poet's bays of laurel. Indeed, this Spirit has much in common with the author of the *Carol:* the one by water, the other by words, tries to restore good humor. Its antique scabbard is rusty and swordless, the former occupant doubtless beaten into plowshares, whence its abundance derives, and also, one is tempted to say, into pens, whose power for good is greater. Its character is described in adjectives—genial, sparkling, open, cheery, unconstrained, joyful—appropriate for a Spirit that emblemizes *qualitative* time.

Willingly, now, Scrooge accompanies his new visitor. "I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it." Upheld by the touch of the Past in his heart, he is now borne by his own voluntary touch on the Ghost's robe.

The Christmas morning he encounters is still cold, gloomy, misty, and severe, but the cheerful people carving roads through the snow make with their scrapings, instead of Scrooge's "grating voice," a "rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music." This world has not let the thoroughfare of human commerce congeal into impassibility, and their cheerfulness, standing in stark contrast to the weather, sends forth "an air . . . abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain" (41).

Christmas Present conducts its disciple through the world of sensual abundance, symbolized in the contents of the poulterers', fruiterers', and grocers' shops, whose displays, we recall from stave one, become such a "glorious pageant" that it is "next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do" with them. The language likewise swells into a sensual, almost Keatsian richness, redolent in adjectives and active verbs, and climaxes, with the fishes, in a stunningly virtuosic instance of "negative capability":

> There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and

> tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. [What a mouthful!] There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shuffflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

For Professor Steig, the emphasis on "brownness, thickness, ordorousness and a ripeness that seems to approach decay," implies associations "as much anal as they are the oral ones we should normally expect in lengthy descriptions of food."[34] If excrement is the first rich thing we make as gift, then these associations, however unpleasant, are still radically appropriate. But a Freudian might also note the genital overtones of the scene: the brown-girthed onions winking in wanton slyness at passing girls who glance demurely at hung-up mistletoe, the pears and apples in blooming pyramids, and the bunches of grapes made in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed. In a passage of even more explicit sustained sexual innuendo, the grocers display "almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious; . . . the figs were moist and pulpy, [and] the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes" (42). Abundance, anal and genital transposed into the more acceptable oral, symbolizes open-hand and -heartedness: "the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose."[35]

Immediately afterward the steeples call people to worship, and this conjunction brings forth from Scrooge the reflection that the Spirit of Christmas Present seeks to close these very shops on every seventh day, an allusion to the Calvinist and Evangelical Sabbatarianism which Dickens attacked all his life, from *Sunday Under Three Heads* to *Little Dorrit*.[36] He is prop-

erly rebuked by the Spirit, who lays the charge to people of "pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness" (43), among whom Scrooge has until recently been counted one, his name, Ebenezer, being associated in the Preface to *Pickwick* with the narrow dissenting Ebenezer Chapel which has just enough religion to make people hate, and not enough to make them love, one another.

Having established the respective values of the closed and open societies, the Ghost leads Scrooge to the home of Bob Cratchit, where perhaps the most famous of all Dickens' feasts occurs. In contrast to the shops Scrooge has just passed, the Cratchits' feast is a triumph of spirit over straitened circumstances.[37] To begin with, "Bob" Cratchit brings home "but fifteen 'Bob' a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!"

Second, their social gentility, expressed in their naïve but touching efforts at Christmas finery, is not viewed as vain and selfish, but childlike and "brave" and "gallant." They take every possible opportunity to rejoice, for as a family they are constantly overcoming disappointment. Martha, late from work, hides from Bob when he enters the house, the childhood game of hide and seek being one of the first ways the infant learns to accommodate himself to the vicissitudes of fortune. Less comic, but still to be met and coped with in the same spirit, are Tiny Tim's withered arm and leg, the manifestations of his wasting disease. Crippled though he be, he has not ceased to walk among men nor constricted his journey to the confines of his iron frame: Bob is his "blood horse," and with him has come home "rampant" (45). "As good as gold," the child shows the way to the congregation, reminding them on Christmas Day of Christ, "who made lame beggars walk, and blind men [like Scrooge, who views it all] see."

The triumph of spirit over flesh is paradoxically conveyed through the flesh. The children suffer the pangs of excruciating hunger: "two young Cratchits . . . crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped" (45), and they bask "in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion" (44), their very imaginations, in matters of luxury, unable to go beyond food. For them to eat, the goose must be cooked and carved, the latter event celebrated with communal rejoicing.

> [Grace] was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah! (46)

Surely we are meant to reflect on the nearness of this goose, its breast slit open and its stuffing gushing forth, on the one hand to the corrupted effluvia

of man, and on the other to the body of Our Lord on the Cross, from whose breast wound flowed the blood and water of salvation. But perhaps not; perhaps the goose is just a goose, and the stuffing only stuffing. Dickens, as Augustine says of those who read the Bible, can have it both ways: those who wish to be literal can be literal, and those who descry spiritual significance can elaborate it to their heart's, and soul's, content.

In any event, it was not a large goose, and had to be eked out with applesauce and potatoes, though, to Mrs. Cratchit's delight, one small atom of a bone remained upon the dish. It was a "sufficient" dinner for the whole family, a brilliantly-chosen adjective that, following the excesses of the grocers' shops, indicates the limits of the feast, and also, by contrast to their usual hungry state, measures how satisfying, to the poor, the condition of being "steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows" can be.

The pudding is a replay of all the elements of this stave. Hard and firm, "like a speckled cannon-ball," it looks uncomfortably like the other end of food. Its presence is first in doubt ("suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it"), then preceded by a "smell like a washing-day," then heralded by a "smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other," and it makes its appearance, ceremoniously borne in by Mrs. Cratchit, "blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top." Its importance is aside from its adequacy: the parsimonious half of half-a-quartern, the doubts about the quantity of flour, its smallness for such a large family. To have remarked on its physical insufficiency "would have been flat heresy." In the final detail eloquent of the Cratchit's scrabbling penury—the name itself compounds crutch and scratch it—the "family display of glass" consists of "two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle" (47).

From a utilitarian standpoint, Bob is a man of sexual excess ("rampant"), fathering a line of children, starting with Peter and Martha, who are barely capable of supporting themselves, until his wasted vital substance dribbles out in Tiny Tim. If the shadows are not altered, in the Future Tiny Tim will die, a desirable end from a utilitarian viewpoint, since he will thereby "decrease the surplus population." At this reminder of Scrooge's retort to the charity solicitors, the Ghost declaims with Carlylean eloquence, while Scrooge, overcome with "penitence and grief" (47), hangs his head in shame:

> "Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!"

The remainder of the stave reinforces the lessons to be learned from the Cratchit Christmas. It adduces other examples of people "happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time" (49), especially Scrooge's nephew, who presides over childish games that ritualize sexual and spiritual pursuit, like Blind Man's Buff. To the Cratchits, Scrooge is the Ogre of the family; to his nephew, who also toasts him, he gives "plenty of merriment" (55). The second party is not so memorable as the first, being less exaggerated and extreme an instance of spiritual Abundance overcoming material Want; but it softens Scrooge still more, reducing him to the condition of a child who begs its parent for time to play one more game: "One half hour, Spirit, only one!" The game he then witnesses turns on the question of the identity of "an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, . . . and wasn't led by anybody," and so on, the answer to which is, "Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!"

It is, that is, and it isn't. For the ontological status of the Christmas Present scenes is the most perplexing of the lot. This is a Christmas that, in fact, doesn't happen. Scrooge, reformed, sends the Cratchits the prize turkey from the Poulterer's window; so presumably the Cratchits eat turkey, not goose. And he shows up unexpectedly at his nephew's for Christmas dinner, thus rendering it impossible for them to play the games described in stave three. Though Scrooge imagines it to be Boxing Day, the second day after the appearance of Marley late Christmas Eve, the Christmas of 1843 has not yet occurred, and even these shadows are not always of things that have been, but rather "a possible *alternative future* . . . experienced as present."[38] Their realization depends on Scrooge's identity, animal or child.

By Twelfth Night, the Spirit's hair has turned grey; the whole of the "Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together"[39] (56), and the Ghost's time is running out. Just before midnight, the Spirit reveals beneath his mantle, not the figures sheltered by Mater Misericordia, but "yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish" offspring of the times, Ignorance and Want, the only progeny of sexual and oral misers, the false and barren parents from whom they turn to the Ghost in prostrate humility. On Scrooge's asking if they have "no refuge or resource" (57), the Ghost once again turns his own words upon him: "Are there no prisons? . . . Are there no workhouses?" John Henry Raleigh remarks that Dickens "had two main temporal modes: the public plot—the mole burrowing or the mine exploding; and the subjective experience—the ego remembering."[40] Here in the Present lie the seeds of that potentially apocalyptic confrontation; if the present cannot be changed by mass conversion, the Future will appear as *Bleak House*.

The present, infinitesimally separated from the past out of which it flows, is contiguous with the future. As the bell strikes twelve, Christmas Present disappears. Scrooge, remembering the prediction of Jacob Marley,

lifts up his eyes to behold "a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him." The lineaments of the future are concealed; we know only its general outline and its tendency. This Phantom is "shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand" (58). The presence of the future is awesome, serious, eschatological; "the Spirit . . . seemed to scatter gloom and mystery." There is, to reverse Scrooge's earlier phrase, more of grave than gravy about it. But though the grave is the end of all human life, the journey to that end is not determined for us "fellow-passengers": this Phantom does not speak, only points.

The Spirit's "mysterious presence" fills Scrooge with a "solemn dread" not usually (for the early Victorians) associated with the straightforward secular contemplation of the future. Its anagogical import inspires an awe and terror that recall Rudolf Otto's description of the psychological characteristics of all religious experience: "the *feeling of terror* before the sacred, before the awe-inspiring mystery *(mysterium tremendum),* the majesty *(majestas)* that emanates an overwhelming superiority of power; . . . *religious fear* before the fascinating mystery *(mysterium fascinans)* in which perfect fullness of being flowers. . . . all these experiences . . . are induced by the revelation of an aspect of divine power."[41]

Eagerly now, despite his "vague uncertain horror," does Scrooge solicit this Spirit's aid. Time is now precious to him, and already he desires to use it as fully as possible. He "hope[s] to live to be another man from what" he was; the discrepancy between the Scrooge who began this fearsome journey and the man he is becoming increases in the passages to follow.

This Ghost leads Scrooge into "the heart" (59) of the city, and plunges deeper into its bowels as the night wanes. This heart is " 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals." Despite the fact that the exchange of words among these men on the occasion of a death is trivial and unimportant, ignorant yet of their portentous application to his dead self, "unwatched, unwept, uncared for" (64), Scrooge nevertheless chooses "to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw" (60). Contemplating a "change of life," Scrooge is comforted to find no image of himself among "the multitudes that poured in through the Porch." The dead self to which the men pay scant attention is like the dying self Scrooge is putting off.

Collecting now spiritual treasures, Scrooge is pointed onward, into the wretchedest part of town, the city's colon, where "the ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery" (61). If the speckled cannonball which smells like a washing-day be not converted, through cere-

monious spirit, into a blazing pudding bedight with holly, it will degenerate into its primeval ooze, and share in the entropic dissolution of the world. All Scrooge's worldly treasures reduce to the bundles of refuse, of sleeve-buttons and sheets and sugar-tongs and dark bed-curtains which the undertaker's man, the laundress, and the char lay down before the presiding deity of this den of thieves of "infamous resort," old Joe, in a mock Adoration on a future Twelfth Night Epiphany. Unnatural in life, Scrooge is served unnaturally in death. "If he had been [natural]," exclaims the char, "he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself" (62). The choric Mrs. Dilber, the laundress, responds: "It's the truest word that ever was spoke. . . . It's a judgment on him."

The principle of inversion which governs the relationship between this life and the next exemplified by Jacob Marley applies also to the relationship between life and death. Scrooge, that "tight-fisted hand," that "clutching, covetous, old sinner," does not die of "anything catching"; and those who plunder his material remains, profiting by his example, act in accord with the principle which the char derives from Scrooge's precept: "I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching out, for the sake of such a man as *he* was" (63). Setting the right example, for the Evangelicals and Dickens, is more important than dogma; John Wesley writes in a letter:

> I take religion to be, not the bare saying over of so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private, not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly life; but a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer.[42]

Scrooge understands the application of this lesson to his own condition, but only in a metaphorical relationship: "The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now" (64). *Anagnoresis* may be complete, but identity has not yet been determined, nor *palingenesis* wholly effected. The Phantom immediately confronts him with his dead self, veiled, lying in a curtainless bed, and though he longs to "withdraw the veil" he is powerless. The elements of the scene suggestive of an inverse Eucharist (the altar of a church, covered in Advent with purple or pall, is the bed/tomb of Christ) are indirectly stressed by the narrator, who in a last hortatory intrusion announces the possibility of transforming death into eternal life:

> Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It

> is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand WAS open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal! (64-65)

A number of lines of imagery converge at this point. Scrooge's gradual reification becomes finally associated with death. The contrast between clutching and open-hand and -heartedness is reinforced. And the "Strike, Shadow, strike" passage, referring as it does to the wound Christ suffered after death on the Cross (as Dickens tells it in *The Life of Our Lord),* gives additional strength to the earlier association with the goose, further points to the Ghost of Christmas Present's bared breast, and may even recall "the prophet's rod" which swallows up the parables on the Dutch tiles, since Moses', or Aaron's rod, striking the rock, brought forth water in an Old Testament prefiguration of the Crucifixion.

In liturgy and literature Dickens could have found precedents for the seasonal relevance of his conversion tale.[43] Advent is eschatological in orientation, and though Dickens had left the Church of England around 1843 for Edward Tagart's Little Portland Street Unitarian Chapel, Unitarianism, according to F. D. Maurice, did not confute the teachings of Anglicanism, but merely did away with doctrinal debate, and the excessive preoccupation with sin found in Evangelical sects.[44] The Church of England readings for the first Sunday in Advent stress that the time for conversion is at hand. The Collect, repeated every day until Christmas, solicits "Almighty God" to "give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal." The Epistle, Rom. 13:8-14, expounds the law Dickens believed central to Christianity, the law of love, for "now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; . . . put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." That the Spirits visit Scrooge in his sleep thus has religious, as well as psychological, significance. And the Gospel, Matt. 21:1-13, retells the entry into Jerusalem and the expulsion of the money changers from the Temple, one of the incidents from Christ's life that Dickens stresses in his *Life of Our Lord.*

The *Carol* opens with the ultimately ironic observation that "Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to." But the men on 'Change seek not His kingdom, and heed not the imminence of death, any more than Scrooge, who solemnized "an undoubted bargain" on the day of Marley's death. The fourth stave carries us into the false temples of 'Change and worldly abundance, from the Porch to Scrooge's death-

bed; wealth emerges as the detritus, the excrement of human processes. The Gospel reading speaks to the point in its concluding sentence: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." These visions help to convert Scrooge; the *Carol* is about 'Change in both its literal and spiritual senses.

To Christians, the Incarnation and the Passion are atemporal and simultaneous. The coming of Christ into time redeems time; from his wounds flow the water and blood that give eternal life. " 'Redemptive history,' " Oscar Cullmann argues, "is the heart of all New Testament theology."[45] Insofar as each man puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, from his life and death spring the deeds that sow the world with good, as Marley tries to teach Scrooge, the "captive, bound, and double-ironed." It is not, the narrator reminds us, "that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand WAS open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's."

Pervasive in Christian theology and literature, the idea of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and sowing the world with good deeds flowing from the Passion is at the heart of one of the most widely known of late medieval folk songs, adapted as a carol of the mass, at least three versions of which are recorded in the nineteenth century, of which one specifically associates the Passion with Christmas:

> Down in yon forest there stands a hall,
> The bells of Paradise I heard them ring,
> It's covered all over with purple and pall,
> And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
> In that hall there stands a bed,
> It's covered all over with scarlet so red.
> At the bed-side there lies a stone,
> Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon.
> Under that bed there runs a flood,
> The one half runs water, the other runs blood.
> . . . . . .
> Over that bed the moon shines bright,
> Denoting our Saviour was born this night.[46]

The stone on which Mary kneels, identified by commentators as the paten of the Eucharist which symbolizes the stone sealing Christ's sepulcher, was inscribed in the slightly earlier version preserved in Richard Hill's Baillol College commonplace book: " 'Corpus *Christi*' wretyn th*er*on."

Many details in the *Carol,* and especially in the fourth stave, suggest that Dickens may have been familiar, either with some popular version of this carol, or with the tradition—it is of course a Grail poem—out of which it springs: the bells, the "dark stuff" of the bed-curtains, whose sale is the climax of that scene with the *"Ghoules"* (Charles Dickens Edition running head), the stone

and water imagery, and the association of the Passion with Christmas, the bedridden wounded body with the promise of immortal life. Carols were not prominent in the early nineteenth century: William Hone predicted that they would shortly disappear, and the term came to be applied to prose as well as verse on Christmas subjects, while its original association with dances was virtually ignored.[47] Nonetheless, they were variously preserved: by antiquarians like Bishop Percy, Joseph Ritson, Sir Walter Scott, and William Hone, by Thomas Wright and the Early English Text Society, in folk-song adaptations in the West and North of England and Scotland, in mummers' plays, and printed in ballad-mongers' sheets originating from the Seven Dials.[48] If Dickens knew it, as he evidently knew "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen," the story's title takes on additional connotations, and the import of Scrooge's final entreaty to the Phantom, that he may sponge away his name from his headstone, is clarified. Surely Scrooge is not there exhibiting the emotions of a Michael Henchard; nor is he any more indifferent to his nominative identity, as when he retained Marley's name and assumed his identity. He seeks to replace Ebenezer Scrooge by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and would have, one supposes, "Corpus Christi" written thereon. Dickens' imagery at this climactic moment makes clear the kind of conversion promised: through the benefits conferred by Christ's sacrifice, Scrooge may sponge away from his reified being, and from its external symbol, the gravestone, his purely mortal identity, and become human, soft, open, and immortal through blood and water. He would be "man . . . in heart, not adamant."

Before this conversion is complete, Scrooge must visit three more scenes, the first a family of his debtors who express a "kind of serious delight" (65) in his death, the only emotion caused by it that the Spirit can show him, and the second, an instance of "some tenderness connected with a death" (66), the Cratchits. Finally, he is brought to the "iron gates" that divide life from death, the city from the graveyard at its center. We come at last back to that omphallic center like Scrooge's chambers, another place of passage where human and urban death meet the promise of resurrection and the life, as in the parody of the burial service for Nemo in *Bleak House:* "walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite" (69).

Scrooge cannot get from the Phantom any assurance that these are "shadows of things that May be, only" (70). Only if he sincerely reforms will the Future alter, but as his emotion rises, the Spirit trembles. His final conversion is marked by his promise to keep all three times, Past, Present, and Future, in his heart always. For Dickens, if time is eternally present, time is redeemable.[49] He grasps the "kind hand" of the Phantom, which struggles successfully to free itself from him. Repulsed, unable to make the anagogical Future subservient to his will, Scrooge instead holds "up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed." This appeal to Heaven works where no attempt to impose his will can succeed. The Phantom "shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost."

— 5 —

> A real novel, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. — Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*

The Past is neither trauma to be reexperienced in order to free oneself from it, nor, in Marx's terms, does "consciousness of the past [weigh] like a nightmare on the brain of the living."[50] Scrooge is reborn into redeemed, Christian time, with which we may associate the interpretation given by the Catholic theologian Jean Mouroux:

> [Christian] time is the *ever-present possibility of renewing* our existence and giving it fresh meaning. The past is valuable insofar as it has been integrated into our being and has become a part of us. The future is valuable insofar as it can be integrated into our being and can renew it. The present . . . is valuable because it can both anticipate and actualize the future and *take hold of our past to give it new meaning* and transform it into an entirely different future. Scheler points this out beautifully in *Repentir et Renaissance*. . . . Remorse, through the bankruptcy of our liberty, remains fixed on a terrible past; but repentance is the liberative activity of the psyche, an "effective intervention" in our past. It gives the past new meaning and value. It literally makes the penitent a new man. We are *really* the *free creators* of our *spiritual existence* because *through our present* we are *masters* of the *personal significance* of our life.[51]

The emotions aroused at moments that seem to show us how we are prepared to fulfill our intended purpose are described by Vauvenargues, whom Poulet quotes: "There are moments of power, . . . moments of elevation, of passion and enthusiasm, in which, self-sufficient, disdaining assistance, the soul is drunk with its own grandeur."[52] Scrooge now feels self-sufficient: "the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!" (71). He is elevated, "as light as a feather, . . . as happy as an angel"; he is inebriated, surprised, now, by joy, "as giddy as a drunken man." No longer a miser, he knows the world by a joyous sensuous participation, which has nothing to do with worldliness, but rather is the secular analogue of the "rich banquet," "furnished well with joyful guests," the Eucharist that combines past, present, and future and that is celebrated in the Episcopal Hymnal in these terms.[53] He has moved out of quantitative time into qualitative time, or, to employ Frank Kermode's terms, from the tock-tick of "simple chronicity, of . . . humanly uninteresting successiveness," into a tick-tock world of " 'temporal integration' —our way of bundling together perception of the present, memory of the past, and expectation of the future, in a common organization. Within this organization that which was conceived of as simply successive becomes charged with past and future: what was *chronos* becomes *kairos*."[54]

Thus the *Carol* is partly about developing a fiction about man's relationship to time that makes fiction possible, that allows us, in the *middest,* to imagine concordant beginnings and ends. This fiction is the fact of the Incarnation, which Auerbach argues is central to the style and content of Western literature, and which is celebrated in the Eucharist.[55] The fictional world of Victorian England and the fictive world of "once upon a time" are not ontically distinct, but congruent. The word of the fiction describes the metaphysical reality; conversely, as Eliade puts it, "the manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world."[56] "There's the saucepan that the gruel was in!" Scrooge cries, "There's the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat! There's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha, ha, ha!"

Having successfully come to terms with the conflict between generativity and self-absorption by moving forward in time to observe the consequence of failure, despair, Scrooge moves to the last phase of ego-development, integrity, and exhibits a concern for "Mankind."[57] Three actions manifest the new Scrooge, each confirming a portion of that new identity which contrasts to the old. All take place on a morning which itself has been reborn, cleansed, purified. The churches ring out "the lustiest peals he had ever heard" (72). And the fog, mist, and entropy of the first stave have left the land: "No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious! Glorious!"

First, Scrooge sends off the prize turkey to the Cratchits, anonymously, dispensing largess without the slightest attempt to gain worldly credit.[58] Second, he confirms his new identity by walking forth among men, and stopping "the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, 'Scrooge and Marley's, I believe?' " (73). This worthy cannot believe his eyes when Scrooge greets him with solicitous inquiries and a Merry Christmas. "Mr. Scrooge?" he stammers, astonished. "Yes," Scrooge replies, "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you" (74). He then proceeds to offer a sizeable donation, including a "great many back-payments," insisting that his only repayment be renewed human intercourse: "Will you come and see me?" Third, he walks forth, after church—not for Dickens by any means the most important enactment of his new being[59]—knowing his way and delighting in all his observations and companionship. In the afternoon he goes "home," to his nephew's, for a "Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, wonderful happiness!" (75). Something "wonderful" does come of the story.

Frequently in the last installment of his novels Dickens recapitulates his story through a final action. The *Carol* provides an instance. The next morning Scrooge arrives at his office early, eager to anticipate Bob Cratchit. And Bob is late. The clock strikes nine, and quarter past; he finally turns up a

"full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time." Leaping into his seat, Bob drives "away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock."

> "Hallo!" growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"
>
> "I am very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I *am* behind my time."
>
> "You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please."
>
> "It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

Bob Cratchit *is* behind the time. He is still living in the past of the old Scrooge; and though he has kept the season himself, he is unaware of its effect on Scrooge. That effect is manifested in Scrooge's triumphant divorce of time from money, in his joyous paradoxical conclusion from the premise that Bob is late: "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore . . . I am about to raise your salary!"

Scrooge proves "better than his word" (76). He does redeem the time to come. No longer an unnatural parent of Ignorance and Want, he becomes a second father to "Tiny Tim, who did NOT die," and, living in past, present, and future, does his part to redeem the city from entropy and death: "He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world." Dickens cannot resist punning on the relationship between Ghostly Spirits and earthly ones; he employs the verbal paradox in Stiggins and Gabriel Grub, and once again here: Scrooge "had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards." Moreover, "it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge." The keeping of Christmas is a spending of self, for others, in direct contradiction of the ideal of capitalist natural economy, saving.[60]

Conversion, for Dickens in the 1840s, is the solution to the world's present and future ills, to the mist and congealing cold that fogs men's hearts and minds. As miser, Scrooge exemplifies the bourgeois mind, as the Russian idealist philosopher, Nicholas Berdyaev, disciple of Dostoevsky, defines it: "a spiritual state, a direction of the soul, a peculiar consciousness of being. It is neither a social nor an economic condition, yet it is something more than a psychological and ethical one—it is spiritual, ontological."[61] An unbeliever, Scrooge believes only in this world and is enslaved by it, a "captive, bound, and double-ironed": "Bourgeois consciousness of life is in opposition to the tragic consciousness of life" (17). A naive realist, the bourgeois denies that the "visible and transitory world is but the symbol of

another invisible reality" (18), the heart of the Carlylean vision Dickens revered. "The bourgeois spirit is nothing but the rejection of Christ" (25). The solution to social ill, to the potential death of Tiny Tim, is not, as our modern consciousness supposes in the new film *Scrooge,* to find the right doctors; "no material means," Berdyaev continues,

> will avail. It is not a material or economic phenomenon, industrial development as such is not bourgeois. This does not mean that the material structure of society is indifferent and cannot assume a bourgeois character, but that the bourgeois structure of a society is merely the expression of a bourgeois spirit, of a false direction of the will. It is a wrong conception of life, the concupiscence of the temporal, which transforms life into an inferno. In its finite and vivid type the bourgeois is an apocalyptic image, a figure of the coming kingdom of which the sacred scripture has spoken. (28)

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> [Unitarianism is] the idea of an unity which lies beneath all other unity; of a love which is the ground of all other love, of Humanity as connected with that love, regarded by it, comprehended in it. —F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*

Dickens was, in Dostoevsky's familiar words, "that great Christian." His contemporaries, as Philip Collins shows, admired him for his mimetic powers, his unparalleled capacity to show the features of his age to itself, and to posterity.[62] Religion was a preeminent concern for most Victorians. But it is not necessary to suppose that because Dickens could serve so well as special correspondent to posterity, he could be doing nothing else at the same time. It is not necessary, to reclaim him as a great novelist, to assert that he was an incorrigibly "lowbrow ignoramus," coarse and insensitive to finer feelings, who only exhibits a "limited degree of intellectual development," that he was a "popular entertainer" showing "little spiritual development," who somehow unknowingly created symbols that reverberate beyond the "dully literal."[63] The parable concerning the uses of time which underlies the *Carol* appears again and again in Dickens' work: men of business vie with men whose business is mankind; the wisdom of the head, to use a pervasive Victorian trope, contends against the more potent and lasting wisdom of the heart. The complexity of Dickens' religious views has seldom been acknowledged, though most pay passing tribute to his advocacy of a social Gospel. But, Walter Pater observes in his essay on Coleridge, "The faculty for truth is recognized as a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and fugitive detail."[64] The extent of Dickens' Christianity emerges only after the ontological and metaphysical implications of his action are minutely examined.

In reviewing the journey we have made, it is worth remarking that we have been forced again and again to employ variations of three linguistic formulae in "distinguishing and fixing delicate and fugitive detail." First, sentence constructions using forms of the verb "to be." Much of Dickens' art is concerned with establishing identities. It is the effort which many of his characters make, on psychological and social planes, through the plot; it is also the effort which his novels make, through personification, abstraction, identification. Second, these identities are established in context, confirmed, and elaborated through association and connection. "As . . . so" constructions abound in this exegesis, the verbal structure for underscoring and understanding Dickens' metaphorical and analogical relationships. Eliade observes that "analogical terminology is due precisely to human inability to express the *ganz andere;* all that goes beyond man's natural experience, language is reduced to suggesting by terms taken from that experience."[65] Dickens' self-identified "infirmity," his capacity to perceive relationships obscure to most people, is, as Forster cogently remarks, the source of his humor: it relates persons, places, things, words and ideas (most concisely through pun—grave and gravy), and so discovers

> the affinities between the high and the low, the attractive and the repulsive, the rarest things and things of every day, which bring us all upon the level of a common humanity. It is this [power of perceiving relations] which gives humour an immortal touch . . . the property which in its highest aspects Carlyle so subtly described as a sort of inverse sublimity, exalting into our affections what is below us as the other draws down into our affections what is above us.[66]

The characteristic Romantic procedure seeks to create unity out of fragments, connection where only division seems to exist, transcendent reality out of appearance, an archetypal way of the soul from disjointed soiled fragments in separate paper bags. Space and time, the two radical media of human experience, are, for Dickens as for Carlyle, interrelated: the past world is a country world, the Ghosts come for a "space of time." In this conception of the total connectedness of things, much more firmly held in earlier fictions, perhaps, than apocalyptic later ones like *Bleak House,*[67] Dickens is at one with his age: "the exploration of discontinuity," observes the foremost commentator on "Modernism as a Literary Movement," Monroe K. Spears, "is as characteristic of the twentieth century as the elaboration of continuity was of the nineteenth."[68]

The third formula repeatedly employed in this essay is verbs like "manifest" and "enact." Dickens' art is so unitary that not only is there often no discrepancy or discontinuity between symbol and thing symbolized, as John Holloway shows in a discussion which E. D. H. Johnson declares "should remove many misconceptions about the function of [symbolism] in his fiction,"[69] but also there is no way of distinguishing act from signification. What happens *is* what the story means: for John Butt, the *Carol,* a turning point in Dickens' career, was the first work in which Dickens discovered "a

plot sufficient to carry his message, and a plot coterminous with his message."[70] The *Carol* is about time, depicts time, relates Past, Present, and Future, literal, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical, into an ever-present, incarnated Christian human unity, and takes place in a time that is contiguous to the reader's own.[71]

Something else wonderful can come of the story Dickens relates, if we the readers believe in it, if we really believe that Marley was dead. Something more wonderful, Dickens assures us, than if we believe Marley, or Hamlet's father, was merely "rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot . . . to astonish . . . [a] weak mind" (7). The *Carol* is in many ways a slight piece, operating like the water from Christmas Present's torch "to awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts, never out of season in a Christian land," and to make its readers happy. To explicate so elaborately, and to employ such portentous terminology, may appear to register sheer insensibility to the tone and comedy of Dickens' Christmas book. Were it not for the wide conviction that there is nothing profound about Dickens' religious views, a more delicate treatment of these themes might be persuasive. But Dickens' humor is always serious, at bottom; because he takes the world with such passionate seriousness, he can laugh, and make us laugh too. Chesterton, more than any other critic after Forster, recognizes this; and probably more than any other critic of Dickens Chesterton was profoundly, and passionately, Christian. But his caution is well worth remembering: "The moment our souls become serious, our words become a little wild." Despite the slightness and playfulness of the *Carol,* the conversion it enacts is serious and permanent. To suppose Dickens had anything less at heart, to suppose that Scrooge will relapse when the merriment is over, return to moroseness, vindictiveness, suspicion; that he will reveal himself as a very uncomfortable person, and the victim of a manic-depressive cycle, not only mocks Dickens' entire strategy, but also denies the words of the story, and what lies behind them, the Word. The most wonderful thing that could happen, in a century in which art replaces religion, is that the *Carol* would convert its readers into keeping Christmas too, all the year round: "May that be truly said of us, and all of us."

is "the single explicit reference" to this theme, for there is the bird of paradise in the wrapper design.

[32] The words, "a long time," originally appeared inserted above the line.

[33] The word, "check," originally appeared inserted immediately above bracketed "check."

[34] Cf. Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes,* p. 101.

[35] *The World of Charles Dickens* (London, 1970), p. 178.

[36] The article, "a," originally appeared inserted above the line.

[37] For a critical discussion of the importance of this relationship in the novel, see my article, *"Martin Chuzzlewit:* Pinch and Pecksniff," *Studies in the Novel,* 1 (1969), 181-88.

[38] Browne's drawing for the frontispiece is reproduced in Thomson, *Life and Labours,* facing p. 66, and it is remarkably close to the etching—the Latin inscriptions are there, and only Young Bailey has been added in the final etching. The drawing is the reverse of the etching, though the lettering of the mottoes is not reversed.

[39] Graham Everitt, *English Caricaturists and Graphic Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1886), p. 347.

[40] "Charles Dickens and his Illustrators," *Retrospectus and Prospectus: The Nonesuch Dickens* (Bloomsbury, 1937), pp. 33-34.

[41] "Dickens and his Illustrators," in *Charles Dickens: 1812-1870,* ed. E. W. F. Tomlin (London, 1969), p. 216.

JOSEPH GOLD: *"Living in a Wale"*

[1] Preface to the Cheap Edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit,* 1849.

[2] Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (London, 1951), xxvi, 413. Future references to this text will be placed in parenthesis after the quotation.

[3] Jonah 2:5-6.

[4] George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," *An Age Like This, 1920-1940, The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell,* 1 (New York, 1968), p. 526.

[5] *Fearful Symmetry* (Boston, 1947), p. 210.

[6] Ibid., pp. 281-82.

[7] "Herman Melville's *Moby Dick," Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York, 1964), p. 160.

[8] *Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey* (New York, 1965), p. 219.

[9] Rollo May, "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy," *Existence: a New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology,* ed. Rollo May, Ernest Angel and Henri F. Ellenberger (New York, 1958), p. 76.

[10] Eric Berne, *Games People Play* (London, 1966).

[11] John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London, 1873), II, 59.

ROBERT L. PATTEN: *Dickens Time and Again*

[1] Charles Dickens, Author's Preface to the Cheap Edition of the *Christmas Books,* dated September 1852. A shorter version of this paper was read at Literary Forum II, "Charles Dickens Now," MLA Annual Convention, 29 December 1970. I am especially grateful to Professors Wesley Morris and John Parish, who made several helpful suggestions which strengthened my argument.

[2] Edmund Wilson, "Dickens: The Two Scrooges," *Eight Essays* (1939; rpt. New York, 1954), p. 59.

[3] Ibid., p. 60.

[4] For convenience, I quote from the Oxford Illustrated Edition of the *Christmas Books,* p. 8. All quotations from the *Carol* following any cited one are taken from the same page.

[5] Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph,* 2 vols. (New York, 1952), I, 489. Hereafter cited as Johnson.

[6] Michael Slater, "Dickens's Tract for the Times," *Dickens 1970,* ed. Slater (London, 1970), pp. 99-123.

[7] Johnson, I, 484, 489.

[8] Kathleen Tillotson, Introductory, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (1954; rpt. Oxford, 1961), esp. pp. 125-37.

[9] Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist,* ed. Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford, 1966), p. 367. Cf. my article, "Capitalism and Compassion in *Oliver Twist,*" *SNNTS,* 1 (1969), 207-21.

[10] For Wesley and Maurice, see Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850* (Princeton, 1961); for Émile Durkheim, see *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* trans. J. W. Swain (London, 1915).

[11] *Carol,* p. 76; John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens,* ed. J. W. T. Ley (New York, 1928), IV, i, 299.

[12] Preface to *Christmas Books,* Cheap Edition.

[13] Kathleen Tillotson, in her Memorial Lecture on "The Middle Years from the *Carol* to *Copperfield,*" Supplement to the September *Dickensian* (London, 1970), 14, says that "possibly the most important contribution of the Christmas Books to Dickens's later novels . . . lies . . . in their treatment of time." She emphasizes the psychological aspects of Dickens' experimentation, his "breaking through the barriers of ordinary experience." She concludes, without pressing her point as far as I, that "the *Carol* can be translated out of fairy tale, into an experience whose truth strikes deep." Her subsequent elucidation of the importance of time and memory in the immediately succeeding novels confirms and extends George Ford's discussion of the same subject in "Dickens and the Voices of Time," *NCF,* 24 (1970), 428-48.

[14] At the end of August 1843 Dickens had a curious dream, elements of which reemerge a few weeks later when he begins to compose the *Carol.*

> *A propos* of dreams, is it not a strange thing if writers of fiction never dream of their own creations; recollecting, I suppose, even in their dreams, that they have no real existence? *I* never dream of any of my own characters, and I feel it so impossible that I would wager Scott never did of his, real as they are. I had a good piece of absurdity in my head a night or two ago. I dreamed that somebody was dead. I don't know who, but it's not to the purpose. It was a private gentleman, and a particular friend; and I was greatly overcome when the news was broken to me (very delicately) by a gentleman in a cocked hat, top boots, and a sheet. Nothing else. "Good God!" I said, "is he dead?" "He is as dead, sir," rejoined the gentleman, "as a door-nail. But we must all die, Mr. Dickens, sooner or later, my dear sir." "Ah!" I said. "Yes, to be sure. Very true. But what did he die of?" The gentleman burst into a flood of tears, and said, in a voice broken by emotion: "He christened his youngest child, sir, with a toasting-fork." I never in my life was so affected as at his having fallen a victim to this complaint. It carried a conviction to my mind that he never could have recovered. I knew that it was the most interesting and fatal malady in the world; and I wrung the gentleman's hand in a convulsion of respectful admiration, for I felt that this explanation did equal honour to his head and heart. (Walter Dexter, ed., *The Letters of Charles Dickens,* 3 vols., The Nonesuch Dickens [Bloomsbury, 1938], I, 536, hereafter cited as *NL.)*

It may be that Dickens never did dream of his fictional creations after he had realized them, but this episode suggests in several ways that his fiction, springing from unconscious sources, may work out his own inner tensions and anxieties. Without attempting to indulge in parlor analysis, I would point out the similarity of the deceased to Fagin, the physical and spiritual despoiler of childhood, who commits the one "fatal malady" in Dickens' world, and Dickens' inability, in his dream or subsequently, to identify this person, "a private gentleman, and a particular friend." Scrooge avoids an analogous confrontation with his old self until the last minute.

[15] Michael Steig, "Dickens' Excremental Vision," *VS,* 13 (1970), 339-54, esp. p. 341.

[16] John Butt, "Dickens' Christmas Books," *Pope, Dickens, and Others* (1951) pp. 127-48.

[17] Cf. my article, "The Art of *Pickwick*'s Interpolated Tales," *ELH,* 34 (1967), 349-66.

[18] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* Trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1959). The distinction goes back at least to Durkheim.

[19] Dickens' spiritual world is spatially lateral, rather than vertical, in the *Carol,* though elsewhere *(The Old Curiosity Shop,* for instance) the church as vertical axis figures more prominently. His concern in the *Carol* is to show how spiritual powers manifest themselves on the human plane: even the church bell which "was always peeping slily down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window" becomes invisible in the fog and darkness, "and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there" (13).

[20] Matt. 6:19-21 is a favorite text for Trollope too; he uses it in describing Archdeacon Grantley in *The Warden.*

[21] Johnson, I, 489.

[22] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (New York, 1967).

[23] Lawrence Durrell, *Clea* (London, 1960), p. 14.

[24] Johnson, I, 489. I cannot agree with the learned and perceptive John Butt, either when he dismisses the goblins that visit Gabriel Grub as "meaningless agents of Grub's transformation," or when he identifies the Ghosts in the *Carol,* a "welcome advance," as "moral agents with an ulterior, though very obvious, significance. They resemble the allegorical figures in a newspaper cartoon, who bear their names clearly printed on their garments" (p. 146). This last remark is useful in reminding us of the iconographical tradition from which some elements of Dickens' art derive, but as I have tried to show elsewhere ("Portraits of Pott: Lord Brougham and *The Pickwick Papers," Dickensian,* 66 (1970), 205-24), neither the tradition, nor Dickens' adaptation of it, is simple.

[25] Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time,* trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore, 1956), pp. 33-34.

[26] See Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* 2d ed. (New York, 1963), chap. 7, and his "Identity and the Life Cycle," *Psychological Issues,* ed. George S. Klein (New York, 1959), pp. 1-171.

[27] The psychosocial modality of Erikson's third stage includes "to 'make like' (= playing)"; Scrooge's appropriate radius of significant relations, the basic family, does not exist, so he substitutes from fiction models for his Ideal Prototypes. For Erikson, this stage occurs between three and six, but Scrooge seems somewhat older, being already in boarding school (Erikson, *Psychological Issues,* p. 166).

[28] *Household Words,* 6 (1 January 1853), 361-63. Cited by Philip Collins, " '*Carol* Philosophy, Cheerful Views,' " *ES,* 23 (1970), 158-67, an article that offers a useful corrective to this one, emphasizing the hearty, demotic, and celebratory aspects of Dickens' notion of Christmas.

[29] "A Christmas Tree," *Household Words,* 2 (21 December 1850), 295.

[30] Quoted from *The Knoxville Journal* in "Varieties," *Dickensian,* 65 (1969), 112-13.

[31] In graduate seminars given at Rutgers, the State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

[32] Georges Poulet, Introduction, *The Metamorphoses of the Circle,* trans. Carley Dawson and Elliott Coleman (Baltimore, 1966).

[33] Dickens becomes a bit self-conscious about the complexity of these temporal identities: the Ghost refers to his brothers, "the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years" (p. 40).

[34] Steig, *VS,* pp. 342-43.

[35] Dickens' response here is very "primitive": eating or sex in primitive cultures "is, or can become, a sacrament; that is, a communion with the sacred" and an imitation of the Divine vitality

originating the universe (Eliade, *Sacred and Profane,* pp. 14, 97-100, et passim).

[36] Dickens recognized that Sabbatarianism was a social weapon, used by the upper classes to keep down the lower, "another means of . . . enforcing the 'prudence' and economy already advocated by the Malthusian politicians" (Humphry House, *The Dickens World,* 2d ed. (London, 1942), p. 124. See section 6.

[37] It is testimony to the effect of this feast on Dickens' readers that Ian Watt recently recalled it as being one of abundance ("Oral Dickens," Centenary Conference, University of Alberta, 2 October 1970).

[38] Tillotson, *Dickensian,* p. 14.

[39] Cf. the familiar identity of space and time in Carlyle, who calls them both "Thought-forms" of our earthly life.

[40] John Henry Raleigh, "Dickens and the Sense of Time," *Time, Place, and Idea* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1968), p. 136.

[41] Eliade, *Sacred and Profane,* pp. 8-9.

[42] Quoted in Davies, *Worship and Theology,* pp. 194-95.

[43] I am grateful to the Rev. John D. Worrell and Professors T. D. Kelly and R. S. Cox for their help in the succeeding discussion.

[44] See Forster, *Life,* IV, i, 298, and Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ,* passim, quoted in Davies, p. 293.

[45] Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time,* trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia, 1950), p. 27.

[46] Richard Leighton Greene, ed., *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), No. 322, pp. 221-22. The nineteenth-century versions were recorded in North Staffordshire, Derbyshire (the one quoted), and Scotland, the latter by James Hogg, *The Mountain Bard and Forest Minstrel,* whose mother used to recite it. See Greene's notes, pp. 411-12, and his Introduction, pp. liv-lvi,xciv, for discussions of the poem's origin and meaning.

[47] See Percy Dearmer's Preface to *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928; rpt. London, 1950).

[48] Edmondstoune Duncan, *The Story of the Carol* (London, 1911), in Appendix D lists printed collections of carols in various English libraries: between 1833 and 1841 four different collections were published (p. 241).

[49] T. S. Eliot notwithstanding, this is a more usual conception; see Eliade, *Sacred and Profane,* esp. pp. 85-88.

[50] Quoted by Kermode, *Sense of an Ending,* p. 121.

[51] Jean Mouroux, *The Mystery of Time,* trans. John Drury (New York, 1964), p. 76.

[52] Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time,* p. 21.

[53] For the Eucharist, see Cullmann, *Christ and Time,* p. 74; Hymn 231 for Holy Communion.

[54] Kermode, *Sense of an Ending,* p. 46.

[55] Erich Auerbach, " 'Figura,' " *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York, 1959), pp. 11-76. For this and references to Victorian attitudes toward theology, I am indebted to Miss Kay Pope, who has just completed a doctoral thesis on "Religion in *Martin Chuzzlewit*" at Rice University.

[56] Eliade, *Sacred and Profane,* p. 21.

[57] The point is partly made by David Elkind, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man," *New York Times Magazine* (5 April 1970), 25ff.

[58] An amused Dickens reported to Forster that the organ of the philosophical radicals, the *Westminster Review,* took a dim view of Scrooge's gift, considering it "grossly incompatible with political economy" *(NL,* I, 632 [October 1844]). The reviewer complained that Dickens' story obscured the fact that somebody had to "go without" for the Cratchits to regale themselves (quoted by Butt, *Pope, Dickens, and Others,* p. 138, from a review of R. H. Horne, *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844), in the *Review,* 41(1844), 374-76). Equally defiant of sound utilitarian practice, Bradbury and Evans had on at least one occasion presented Dickens with a Christmas turkey (cf. Madeline House and Graham Storey, eds., *The Let-*

ters of Charles Dickens [The Pilgrim Edition, Oxford, Vol. I, 1820-39; Vol. II, 1840-41; pub. respectively in 1965 and 1969], II, 1; 2 January 1840).

[59] The "evangelical press attacked Dickens . . . for . . . the almost total absence of church-going of a proper public kind" (House, *The Dickens World,* p. 119).

[60] "If this were a book on adulthood, it would be indispensable and profitable at this point to compare economic and psychological theories (beginning with the strange convergencies and divergencies of Marx and Freud) and to proceed to a discussion of man's relationship to his production as well as his progeny" (Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* p. 268).

[61] Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Bourgeois Mind and Other Essays.* (1934; rpt. Freeport, N.Y., 1966), p. 11. *(Essay Index Reprint Series)* Further citations appear in the text.

[62] In his Introduction to *The Critical Heritage: Charles Dickens* (London, 1971).

[63] A. O. J. Cockshut, *The Imagination of Charles Dickens* (New York, 1962), pp. 183-86, a book which Steven Marcus, for some curious reason, praises as an "excellent study [which] will take its place among the growing body of intelligent commentary on Dickens" (dust jacket, quoting *The New Statesman).* Cockshut subscribes in less temperate language to House's verdict, that Dickens' "work shows no indication of any powerful feeling connected with a genuinely religious subject" (p. 131).

[64] Quoted by Monroe K. Spears, *Dionysus and the City* (New York, 1970), p. 22.

[65] Eliade, *Sacred and Profane,* p. 10.

[66] Forster, *Life,* IX, i, 721, referring to Carlyle's 1827 *Edinburgh Review* essay on Jean Paul Richter.

[67] See J. Hillis Miller's remarks on discontinuity in his Preface to the forthcoming Penguin English Library edition of *Bleak House.*

[68] Spears, p. 21; T. E. Hulme's *Speculations* opens with a similar observation.

[69] John Holloway, "Dickens and the Symbol," *Dickens 1970,* pp. 53-74, reviewed by E. D. H. Johnson, *Dickens Studies Newsletter,* 1 (1970), 6.

[70] Butt, *Pope, Dickens, and Others,* p. 137, paraphrased with one alteration ("his message" to "the theme") on p. 140.

[71] Instructive parallels and differences are to be found in the first half of Browning's *Christmas Eve and Easter Morning,* published in 1850 along with two other poems Mrs. Tillotson cites (p. 19) as being centrally concerned with "the eternal landscape of the past" and "the ties / That bind the perishable hours of life / Each to the other."

JANET H. BROWN: *The Narrator's Role in* David Copperfield

[1] The Dickens Fellowship Forty-third Conference at Broadstairs: from the principal toast of the conference banquet, by Mr. Richard Church. The *Dickensian,* 45 (1949), 193-94.

[2] G. Armour Craig, "The Unpoetic Compromise: On the Relation Between Private Vision and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century Fiction," *Society and Self in the Novel,* ed. Mark Schorer (New York, 1955), pp. 30-31.

[3] J. Hillis Miller, for example, sees *David Copperfield* as significant because it illuminates the way Dickens' imagination dealt with his own memories. See *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 151.

[4] See John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens,* ed. J. W. T. Ley (London, 1928), p. 553.

[5] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1967), chap. 6: "Types of Narration," pp. 149-65.

[6] Ibid., p. 160.

[7] David tells us in chapter xlii that he has always been "thoroughly in earnest" when setting out to do something: surely the present task qualifies.