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CHARLES DICKENS: THE FIRST (INTERPERSONAL) PSYCHOANALYST OR—A CHRISTMAS CAROL: A LITERARY PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Charles Dickens appeared on the British scene in 1812, approximately 300 years after Shakespeare. It may seem to some an exaggeration to connect him with the preeminent writer of all time, William Shakespeare, but I think not. Dickens was primarily a storyteller, not a playwright or poet. But in his understanding of character and society, in the variety, richness, and compelling nature of his storytelling, the comparison holds.

In addition to all his writer's gifts—his marvelous storytelling, use of humor, irony, turns of plot—Dickens offered a relentless social commentary on the pitiful plight of the poor and underprivileged of his time, and on the insensitivity and hypocrisy of the privileged. Just as Shakespeare presented hidden depths in his plays, offering the ethics and values of the society—often unnoticed, as they are in life—Charles Dickens did the same. His experience of having to work in a blacking factory at age 12 because his father was sent to debtor's prison, and early observations of London as a young journalist, led to social activism, as well as works such as "Criminal Courts," "A Visit to Newgate," "Little Dorrit," and "Sketches by Boz," the last reflecting the hypocrisies of middle-class life.

His work calls to mind those of a fellow Englishman of roughly a century earlier, William Hogarth, who satirized the London scene in painting and engraving, and also the work of the French artist Daumier. His novels such as *Oliver Twist*, *Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Hard Times* reflect his observations of society. Yet many of his novels as exemplified by *Great Expectations*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby* deal with the young and have a happy ending—perhaps to encourage readers, but also perhaps as a wish-fulfillment to make unbearable suffering endurable, offering hope.

Unfortunately there is little time for further biographical anecdote, except to say that he married Catherine Hogarth, who may have been a

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descendant of the artist; he was not as good a husband as one might have expected; and he lived a very rich and full life.

Dickens developed the habit of writing Christmas tales. Today, Christmas tends to be synthetic with its major emphasis on drinking and gifts—a recent trend being the extending of lists of preferred gifts, leaving the giver the task of shopping and paying, but eliminating the true meaning of gift giving—and it is a custom dangerously close to a kind of extortion. In Dickens' time, when life was simpler and families were together, surely the joy and warmth he portrayed were more consistent with reality, even though he acknowledged that his Christmas tales were somewhat sentimental. Of course, in *A Christmas Carol* exaggeration of the joys of Christmas serves as a foil to emphasize Scrooge's character.

So, it is on *A Christmas Carol* that I base my contention that Dickens had the understanding of a psychoanalyst and was perhaps the first. *A Christmas Carol* was started between *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist* in 1843, the idea coming from his participation in a panel on social injustice in Manchester, along with Disraeli and others. It was the first of his series of yearly Christmas stories. It was read by thousands and celebrated repeatedly at Christmas time—perhaps more for its surface pleasure than for its profound insights. *A Christmas Carol* is more than a story or satire—it is a literary psychoanalysis, largely of the interpersonal variety though with a hint of the Freudian as well.

A Christmas Carol is a story of character disorder and alienation. It is also a story of redemption through insight and willingness to expiate one's sins, which in this case are also the symptoms of cruelties and failings. The organization of this tale offers a deep and touching parallel with psychoanalytic understanding and treatment, with emphasis on the interpersonal, on anxieties aroused by interaction, on lack of self-esteem and character distortion caused by early wounds.

In paraphrasing this tale, Dickens becomes "Dr." Dickens as the patient "consults" him because his alienation has become intolerable, and because he suffers from unbearable nightmares. As with all patients, Scrooge initially has no or little insight into his own behavior, but due to the skill of his analyst he becomes aware and changes. In this case, insight, change, and reform go hand in hand.

In Dickens' study and development of the principal character, Ebenezer Scrooge, he details the traumata that led to his character distortions, describing the so-called "anal character" explored by Freud (1916), Abraham (1921), Fenichel (1945), Arieti (1974), among others. Early toilet-training problems are only the first causes of an attempt to gain power by holding on to something—what Arieti considered "the problem of volition"—that

is, the refusal to give up either feces or the child's own autonomy, later becoming after many "give up—hold on" struggles, a hatred of others (where the insistence on the child yielding has been too great) and a refusal to be generous in any way, which are part of a long line of anxieties and defensive strategies of a particularly damaging type. This is the situation of poor Scrooge, although the novel contains nothing about toilet-training.

Now in paraphrasing the novel into a psychoanalytic situation, there is no doubt that Scrooge is the patient, but Dickens, although frequently "Dr. Dickens," also takes on other roles that I will mention. The novel starts with the current situation of the patient—Scrooge's "chief complaints" so to speak, and the nightmares, which, unbearable, bring the patient to Dr. Dickens, and of course to the attention of the reader or listener. These are fascinating creative nightmares that present the horrible ghosts or spirits of the past, the present, and the potentially dreadful future that awaits—if Scrooge does not change.

Dickens describes the treatment (though not exactly as we might think of it today in psychoanalytic terms) and the development of "insight" as well as the *empowerment* that comes with change—life opening up and becoming somewhat more bountiful in spite of all that has been lost. Of course, the damaged life can never be in old age what it might have been if change had come earlier. At the outset, the spirits of the three nightmares are delegates of the psychoanalyst "Dr." Dickens confronting the patient Scrooge with his unfortunate early experience, his actions in the present, and the painful future that awaits him unless he develops insight and changes. (Let me observe at this point that I have used Dickens' language wherever possible, to convey the flavor of his wonderful writing and his depth of thought.)

The stage is set with the background of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's partner, who was in every way like him (after all, who else would work with him?) and who died seven years before, leaving everything to Scrooge, who was his *sole* executor, *sole* administrator, *sole* assign, *sole* residual legatee, *sole* friend, and *sole* mourner. This was the plight of Marley and it is also that of Scrooge. Dickens appraises him saying: "Oh, but he was a tightfisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner . . . hard and sharp as flint from which no steel ever struck out generous fire . . . secret, self-contained and solitary as an oyster." Thus, Dr. Dickens makes an accurate first appraisal: Scrooge is *an alienated man*. Before continuing let me acknowledge, as Dickens did himself, that there are exaggerations and sentimental elements in this tale. *But these could be related to the exaggerated feelings that the patient has.*

There are also exaggerated contrasts: Everybody is good/Scrooge is mean. These exaggerations are often found in patients' beliefs and expressions—there is often no room for gray.

Starting out on this psychoanalytic journey, Scrooge, well beyond being able to tolerate his life, shows up at Dr. Dickens' office (his habitat, his mind). Dr. Dickens observes his patient: He is poorly dressed, quick to make sour comments, full of complaints about the allegedly false gaiety or happy demeanor of those around him. Asked about his symptoms or complaints, Ebenezer pours out a story filled with woe about people, but even more about the terrible nightmares he has had lately. Dr. Dickens ignores the latter for the moment, and questions further: Does Mr. Scrooge eat well? The fearfully thin and bony Scrooge replies that it would be absurd and wasteful to eat more than necessary, or consume expensive or fancy food. He launches into a familiar complaint: "This business of a goose for Christmas—what nonsense." He observes that his assistant Bob Cratchit insists on having one, even though he is as poor as a churchmouse. And he adds gratuitously, "I don't believe in wasting money on a fire, either—who needs a place to be warm—it's just burning up money."

Dr. Dickens does not question him about his bowel habits, but I think we all know where to place him, because Scrooge is obviously one of those tight, constipated people. In thinking about Scrooge, Dickens comes up with a metaphor, which the patient provides, as is often the case in regard to how patients view their life conditions. Scrooge's house is haunted! Haunted by his early traumata, his alienation, his hatred of people—especially *happy* people. As writer and psychoanalyst, Dickens is clear that Hell is not "devils and pitchforks" but living with the ugliness of one's own attitudes and actions. And evil is not just what you do but what you *don't do*—the neglected and omitted kindnesses from which we all suffer, to some degree, on both sides of the equation.

Dr. Dickens "questions" Scrooge now. Ebenezer is annoyed because, as usual, his nephew has come to invite him to Christmas dinner. Scrooge's response was the overworked "Bah, Humbug" (the sour phraseology sums up his views of people) and he complains about all of the demands made on him in the name of Christmas. He threatens to fire his clerk for daring to request Christmas day off; he refuses a request for a contribution to help the poor. A caroler approaches singing, "God rest you merry Gentlemen, let nothing you dismay . . .," leading Scrooge to pick up a ruler to attack him. These are the "annoyances" Scrooge has to contend with.

But there is one further symptom leading Scrooge to consult Dr. Dickens: He is beginning to "see things" (they are perhaps *illusions* rather than *delusions*, but troublesome nonetheless): He sees Marley's face in the old door-knocker. He also hears things: echoes from the rooms above and the wine

merchants' casks below. He sees a locomotive hearse going before him in the gloom. He feels threatened; he double-locks himself in. Dickens appears to recognize that a certain paranoia is setting in. Sullivan (1956) would have considered this the start of the "malevolent transformation." A hanging bell long unused begins to peal. The cellar door flies open and a transparent creature appears—it is Marley's ghost. "I won't believe it" Scrooge has insisted to himself, but he cannot continue to deny it, because he saw a figure passing through the heavy closed door of the cellar and into the room. "I know him! Marley's Ghost!" he shouted. It appears that Ebenezer *has* been hallucinating.

Such was the state of affairs that led him to consult Dr. Dickens. Now, Dr. Dickens turns to the nightmares—the symptoms that finally led Scrooge to seek help. He reports that there were three of them. But before they appeared, he encountered a Ghost. Confronted by the Ghost, Scrooge repeats his shibboleth, "I want to be left alone"—an oft-repeated phrase that contains the crux of his alienation. It is clear that any stranger is viewed by Scrooge as threatening because his response was to pull out a toothpick—the only weapon he had on him. Scrooge had asked the Ghost if he saw it. "Yes," the Ghost replied. "But you are not looking at it," Scrooge countered. "But I see it notwithstanding," replied the ghost. This is fascinating because it is a complaint that patients may make. Dr. Dickens as a good psychoanalyst indicates by this that we do not need to stare at something directly to be quite aware of it. He also offers the recognition that in spite of unconscious processes, or in keeping with Sullivanian language (1956) in spite of selective inattention, we are to some extent aware of things we prefer to ignore. Also the psychoanalyst's gaze takes in many things.

Scrooge continues to report on his encounter with the Ghost, who is really the therapeutic spirit of Dr. Dickens, and who challenges him with, "Do you believe in me?" Scrooge replies, "I *must*—but why do spirits walk the earth?" "I *must*" implies that things have gotten out of hand for Scrooge—he has no choice but to believe in him. The Spirit replies that, "It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men . . . and if it goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death." In this sequence Dr. Dickens combines with the unconscious processes of the patient to speak of Scrooge's isolation and alienation: Something that haunts the patient in life is likely to continue into the "afterlife"; his spirit cries out at wandering unconnected to anyone, and is forced to witness what he cannot share, especially the warmth he cannot share. Scrooge wrings his hands in anguish.

Scrooge reports to Dr. Dickens an observation he made at his encounter with the Ghost, when he shouted to him: "You are fettered. Tell me why?"

And brilliantly, Dr. Dickens has his Ghost in the guise of Marley reply: "I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it 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. Is its pattern strange to you? Would you know the length and weight of the strong coil you wear yourself?" He adds: "You now weigh everything by gain," implying that he did too. In this, the Ghost, a fusion of Marley with Dr. Dickens, is perhaps a bit confrontive. It is his way at the outset of telling the patient he is responsible for his life; he has created it himself. This highlights a problem the psychoanalyst often faces: Patients come for comfort—it is often a major problem to lead them into the recognition of their own role in their difficulties. In fact, Scrooge continues to assume that the Ghost is old Jacob Marley and implores him to "Speak comfort to me!" This request, often unspoken but sought by the patient, is particularly likely to come from those who have no recognition of their own role in what has befallen them. The Ghost replies: "I have none to give," adding that in life Scrooge's spirit never moved beyond the confines of their money-changing role. Here, Dr. Dickens seems well aware of the danger of being too sympathetic to the patient.

Dr. Dickens, with his questions, seems to be leading Scrooge to assess his own role in his terrifying life. Scrooge ventured the thought that the Ghost must have been very slow in his 7-year travels; he is countered by the statement that the Ghost traveled on the wings of the wind; and the phantom further exclaims: "Oh, Captive, bound and double-ironed; and not to know that ages of incessant labor by immortal creatures for this earth, must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Oh, not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere will find its mortal life too short for the vast means of usefulness . . . yet such was I! Oh, such was I."

Scrooge protests that Jacob was always a good man for business. "Business!" cried the Ghost. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business. Charity, Mercy, Forbearance and Benevolence were all my business." He holds up his arm and flings his chain about. So in this way we learn from Dr. Dickens that Scrooge's worst problem is his mean, uncaring, niggardly character. It reflects Dr. Dickens' recognition that many patients, immersed in their self-preoccupied suffering, feel no concern for others and are sometimes filled with misplaced rage at strangers.

The Specter—at this point mainly Scrooge's alterego—attempts to fling his chains down and observes that this time of year is hardest for him. Why did that blessed Star leading the Wise Men not lead him to a poor home—the implication being that he might have brought comfort. The Ghost then implores Scrooge to "Hear Me" and speaks of the fact that he does not understand why he is now visible to Scrooge, since he has sat beside him

invisible for many a day. With this question Dr. Dickens has made the observation that often while symptoms are longstanding, they must reach a certain intensity to become noticeable. Yet where they may then lead is not clear. But through the Apparition we learn that he is there to warn Scrooge that he still has a chance of escaping Marley's fate. Scrooge observes that Marley was always a good friend. And yes, Dr. Dickens *is* a good friend, as surely all therapists try to be.

But when Scrooge is informed that he will not see the Ghost again but will be haunted by three spirits (delegates of Dr. Dickens), his countenance falls and he demurs. The Ghost prepares him to expect the first Spirit the next day. He will appear "when the bell tolls." Here one cannot resist the temptation to notice the familiarity of these words. Dickens followed by about three centuries the poet John Donne, whose lines, "Do not ask for whom the bell tolls—it tolls for thee," are so well known. Perhaps Dickens is expressing the feeling that all individuals are vulnerable, all are summoned to responsibility—and especially patients with character disorders! Scrooge asks if that is the chance and hope mentioned before, and is told that it is. Scrooge is told that he can expect the second spirit the next night, and the third on the next. Scrooge is terrified by the thought of these three visitations, and asks if he cannot take them all at once—he wants to get it over with quickly. Dr. Dickens avoids an answer, as if it is beneath notice. We all know that too much medicine at once can kill, no matter how excellent it is.

The Ghost warns Scrooge that he will see him no more, but that for his own sake he must remember what passed between them. This can be translated in many ways: that the initial consultation is different from the ensuing treatment; but also, that the eruption of the symptoms into first awareness will never be repeated, yet for the Spirits to be understood the symptom cannot be forgotten. The Past, Present, and Future are linked together and must be remembered and understood if the problem is to be overcome. In leaving, the Specter took his wrapper from the table and bound it around his head—a symbolic statement, one might suppose, of where the problem was located. He walked backward, toward the window, presenting his image to Scrooge to the very last, rising a bit with each step and raising his hand in warning that Scrooge should come no closer. All kinds of sounds filled the air—of lamentation and regret, wailings that were sorrowful and accusatory. The Specter listened a moment and then floated out the window.

How ingeniously Dickens arranged to leave mixed sounds of Scrooge's self-recognition and emotional state. And following the sounds the air was filled with phantoms, many of whom were people known to Scrooge in the past—moaning, also chained, and one with a monstrous iron safe attached

to his ankle, thus leaving him unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant. Here Dr. Dickens cleverly states that this is one with whom Scrooge is quite familiar (no doubt, Scrooge in an earlier day). Whether these are illusions, hallucinations, or some type of reverie is hard to say—and perhaps it does not matter. But then all faded, and Scrooge closed the window trying *unsuccessfully* to give voice to his usual comment, “Humbug.” And being fatigued from all he had been through, Scrooge instantly fell asleep. Or perhaps he fell asleep in relief at having taken the step to undertake treatment, and having acknowledged his problems to the doctor.

But as Dickens made clear, ghosts live in haunted houses where there are clanking chains that bind. Scrooge’s house is haunted by his ugly actions, and he is chained to them. Indifference to others is seen as perhaps the prime sin. At least so it was with Scrooge.

So, we come to the nightmares—the nightmares relating to early life, current life, and potential future life, the examination of which provides weighty basis for considering Dickens *Dr. Dickens*. He does not do “dream interpretation”—no. But more in line with current concepts of “dream exploration” he has a ghost—*his* spirit—introduce Scrooge to three delegates of his, not lesser spirits but spirits divided according to time and phase, and leading the exploration. The purpose is *change*, the basis of psychoanalytic treatment. Scrooge expresses reluctance to accompany the spirits as Dickens has suggested. But the Ghost (Dr. D.) tells him that without these visits he cannot hope to “shun the path I tread,” the “I” being the Ghost as Marley. So the nightmares begin with the tolling of a bell, “waking” the sleeping Scrooge.

NIGHTMARE I (6 SCENES)

Scrooge is led by a Spirit who seems childlike but has white hair, yet not a wrinkle on his face. Perhaps he suggests the appearance of one who has not matured in life.

1. Scrooge and the Spirit are on a country road—the place where he was bred. Thousands of odors float in the air, in addition to thoughts, hopes, and joys long forgotten; ponies; farmers; boys. Scrooge experienced a long-forgotten joy.

2. They are in a school where a boy sits reading alone; his only friends are book characters: Ali Baba, Robinson Crusoe, the Green Parrot. A great sob bursts from Scrooge; he cries in pity for the boy he was. And then treatment appears to begin working, because he wishes he could give something to the Carol Singer he earlier encountered; he wishes he could change.

3. Scrooge is older. They visit another school—a darker, dirtier place

with cracked plaster and broken windows. A boy sits alone. His little sister runs in and tells him that father has relented; he can come home for Christmas. So we learn in this way how cruelly his father treated him, and how lovingly his sister—whose son, his nephew, invites Scrooge to Christmas dinner every year, only to be rejected with “Bah, Humbug!”

4. They are at the Fezziwig party, where all have a great time. Scrooge is older but enjoys himself. When the Spirit imitates Scrooge and asks how the party can be a good one, since Fezziwig hasn’t much money, Scrooge steps beyond himself and says: “He has the power to make us happy—quite as great as if it cost a fortune!” This is the first sign of his relinquishing his greed.

5. Scrooge is in a room with a young girl in mourning dress, who breaks their engagement, saying, “A golden idol has displaced me, while your nobler aspirations have fallen off one by one.”

6. In this last scene Scrooge is in a room with a girl, now motherly, very like the last, and a young girl who is obviously her daughter. Scrooge is filled with longing. A man comes in—they rush to greet him and there is much excitement. Belle, the older woman, is told by her husband that he has seen a friend of hers. They laugh—it is obviously Scrooge. Oh, the loss! Scrooge begs to leave the scene, saying, “I cannot bear it!”

Review of Nightmare I

When Scrooge questions the Ghost of Christmas Past about what brought him, he replies, “Your welfare.” In this way Dickens indicates the significance of the nightmares. He shows a past time when Scrooge was lighthearted, capable of friendship and joy; and then his pitiful boyhood, his isolation, his cruel treatment by his father, and his turning as a young man to money as a source of self-esteem. He shows the turning point in Scrooge’s life as his fiancée breaks the engagement because he has found another idol—gold—and because of his subsequent increasing miserliness, devotion to money, and alienation from his society.

NIGHTMARE II (5 SCENES)

1. Scrooge is called to a nearby room with walls hung with living green and a great feast of Christmas goodies on the floor. A giant sits on a couch and invites Scrooge in. (He is the Ghost of Christmas Present.) A changed Scrooge says: “Conduct me where you will—if you have ought to teach me let me profit by it.”

2. Scrooge clutches on the Ghost’s robe and they appear in the street in early morning, witnessing the good-humored bustle of shops and people;

the enticing foods and aromas; the parties starting; the happiness at Bob Cratchit's house in spite of poverty and the concern about Tiny Tim.

3. Scrooge and the Ghost are on a bleak moor where miners live, yet in the bowels of the earth all are cheerful and gaily decked.

4. At a lighthouse near thundering water, men are sitting at a table happy and laughing. Scrooge's nephew Fred and his wife are there and drink a toast to him, even as they acknowledge what he is like. The family plays a game: "Guess the wild animal." Of course, it is Scrooge.

5. The Spirit is visibly older and bent—his time on earth is nearly over. He pulls a boy and girl from under his robe—two wretched children. They are the ones Scrooge railed at in the past, saying that the world was overpopulated, and asking: "Are there no prisons, no workhouses for them?"

Review of Nightmare II

In the course of these nightmare visitations Scrooge begins to "see" his ugly behavior and makes beginning efforts within the dream to change. He sees the Ghost of Christmas Present as one who is there to help him and willingly proceeds with him, saying: "Conduct me where you will. Last night I learned a lesson which is working now. Tonight if you have ought to teach me let me profit by it." He has become a collaborative patient and he is aware of the compassion of his nephew who continues a friendly feeling even as he states that his uncle's offenses carry their own punishment.

NIGHTMARE III (5 SCENES)

1. The last Spirit is shrouded in a black gown with only one outstretched hand visible. He does not speak (one could say, Death does not speak) and he leads Scrooge to the Exchange where men are talking about someone who has died and will have few, if any, people attending his cheap funeral.

2. They visit a miserable den where women who have plundered a dead man's room have brought his things to sell.

3. They are in a plundered man's room with a body on the bed. A couple expresses relief that he had died—it means they will have an extra week to avoid foreclosure on their home.

4. Scrooge asks the Spirit to show him tenderness in relation to death—and in Bob Cratchit's house, his children comfort him over the death of Tiny Tim.

5. The Spirit leads Scrooge to a cemetery, where he sees his neglected grave. Scrooge pleads with him and says he is no longer what he was and

will be a different man. In agony he catches the Specter's hand, which repulsed him.

Review of Nightmare III

Following the dreadful Ghost of Christmas Future, Scrooge sees the contempt that people have for him, and his unmourned death. He promises to change. He begs for another chance and awakes full of the terror that nightmares bring, and the relief upon finding they were not actual reality.

As the dream ends, Scrooge awakens and is relieved to find himself in his own bed—giddy, frisky, and laughing. For a man out of practice for many years, his laugh was quite splendid. It is clear that Scrooge has been depressed for many years, and he typically overreacts to change, going from depression and a kind of mourning for himself to hypomania.

He does everything he can to make amends for his past behavior. Finding it was Christmas day, he sent a boy to buy the prize turkey that had been hanging in the butcher's window and sent it on to Bob Cratchit. He ran into the man who had requested a contribution for the poor the day before, and stunned him with the size of his contribution. He went to his nephew's and asked if he might be let in (something requiring considerable courage after turning the invitation down so many times and ridiculing the whole idea). He received a hearty welcome. The "reentry" into society is a difficulty patients often have to face with the problem of undeveloped social skills. The next morning he teased Bob Cratchit a bit for being late—and then gave him a substantial raise and offered help for the treatment of Tiny Tim. And as Dr. Dickens observed: "He cared not if people laughed at him—his own heart laughed." Yes, a sentimental tale, but what a tale!

CONCLUSION

Dickens recognized that character and emotional and psychological problems are built on the foundations of past experience—a key psychoanalytic principle whether it is attributed to Instinct or Interpersonal Exchanges. He recognized further that it is necessary to develop insight before change can occur. He was aware of the serious problem of alienation, and of variations in mood. It was a principle of this work that guilt be eradicated by changes in behavior rather than simply lip service. His explorations of the metaphoric and symbolic meaning of the nightmares of Scrooge's life were remarkable—the fact that they were devices to create a fascinating story in no way detracts from their brilliance.

Finally, his use of the orality of Christmas, which perhaps has a regres-

sive quality but is at the same time innocent and lovely, served as a wonderful contrast to the anality of a misanthrope—Ebenezer Scrooge.

Dickens' interpersonal approach could stand comfortably beside the work of Harry Stack Sullivan. It deals with the defensive operations caused by anxiety and the character warp from early childhood wounds causing a warped development. He carefully details the damaging interactions that ensue. To be able to offer all this in an endlessly fascinating tale of greed and misanthropy and its consequences and social effects, is truly a noteworthy achievement. Dickens rightfully deserves the title of: the first interpersonal psychoanalyst!

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