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A “Time-Conscious” Christmas Carol

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

A “Time-Conscious” Christmas Carol

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Shortly after Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* was released in 1843, a tradition of adaptation began which has continued seemingly unabated to the present day. Consequently, the tale has become so widely known that one is arguably as likely to have first encountered the iconic miser Scrooge through any number of audio-visual adaptations as through the original work itself. Significant critical attention has been paid to the nature of Scrooge’s drastic change from miser to philanthropist. Many would argue that the change, happening both literally and figuratively overnight, is not representative of a genuine psychological transformation.

On Christmas day, 2010, Stephen Moffat, Show-runner of the popular sci-fi series *Doctor Who*, became the latest adapter of the classic tale, with a Christmas themed episode of the series titled *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*. This paper addresses the Scrooge Problem, or the debated legitimacy of Scrooge’s transformation. A study of *A Christmas Carol* and *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* reveals that Dickens in fact represents a genuine transformation based on one primary concept, time as a cyclical journey. This concept accommodates Dickens’s belief in the transformative power of childhood memory and the nature of sympathy. Scrooge’s transformation is brought to pass in part through his evolving understanding of the nature of time, a phenomenon which becomes even more apparent in *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*.

Keywords: Time, Childhood, Memory, Dickens, Scrooge, The Scrooge Problem, Metaphysical Innocence, *Doctor Who*, *A Christmas Carol*.

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A “Time-Conscious” Christmas Carol

The wildly popular British Science-Fiction series *Doctor Who* first aired in the early 1960s. With a brief hiatus during the 90s, the show began again in 2005 and is now recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest running Sci-fi program (“Dr. Who ‘Longest’”). In 2013, the show celebrated its 50th anniversary. The show features “The Doctor,” a time-lord and a genius time-travelling alien whose sole purpose is to explore the endless dimensions of time and space in a craft called the TARDIS. Throughout his adventures he encounters, and thwarts, malicious and bizarre alien creatures bent on conquering Earth (and beyond). The show’s eleventh leading man, Matt Smith, became the first actor to portray the Doctor to be nominated for a BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) for the role (“Doctor Who Takes”).

On Christmas day, 2010, *Doctor Who* aired its yearly Christmas special. This particular episode, *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*, borrows heavily from the iconic Charles Dickens text, *A Christmas Carol*. While this would not necessarily be considered a direct adaptation, *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* rejects the fallacy that “Fidelity is the most appropriate criterion to use in analyzing adaptations” as discussed by Thomas Leitch (161). Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins contend that a novel to film adaptation is never a matter of “sameness” but rather one of “difference” (16). Furthermore, cinematic responses to literary texts are “always interpretations,” often with particular attention to intertextuality (18-19). The move from a nineteenth-century “ghost” novella to a twenty-first-century Sci-fi/Fantasy television show is a move that deals, primarily, with verbal and visual metaphors of time and transformation. Intertextuality means that an interpretation/adaptation of a primary text draws upon multiple sources—i.e. other works by the author of the primary text and their era as well as cultural

allusions familiar to the intended audience. Perhaps mostly significantly, the interplay between Dickens's *Carol* and Stephen Moffat's *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* resolves what critics have referred to as the "Scrooge Problem," or the improbable transformation of an iconic misanthrope into a philanthropist after a single night of ghostly visitations. Dickens hoped that representing such a change would contribute to "the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition" (qtd. in Harrison 263). The significance of this transformation stems in part from Dickens's insights into the human psyche.

The transformation of Scrooge is brought about through visions of alternate times. This phenomenon suggests the possibility for the human psyche to understand past, present, and future as concurrent in the mind. *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*, notably through the mechanism of time-travel, demonstrates that Dickens's text in fact represents genuine and believable change based on one primary concept: time as a cyclical journey. This negotiation of time allows for the transformation of one of literature's most well known misers. Scrooge's experience defies critics who feel his change is unbelievable and demonstrates important ideas underlying this concept, particularly the power of childhood memory and the nature of sympathy. Inherent in these concepts is the idea that Scrooge must embody a time-conscious approach to understanding his experiences. Scrooge must consciously consider memories of his past, his present situation, and a concern for the future if he is to genuinely change. This approach means that Scrooge must re-evaluate who he is, who he was, and what led him to his present predicament. This discussion of the origin of *A Christmas Carol* will provide the foundation for Dickens's philosophy of change, and how this affects his purpose for this work. *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* will be situated within a brief history of *Carol* adaptations to illuminate Dickens's insights into the human psyche.

Dickens's concern for the wellbeing of children stems in part from his encounters with children in difficult circumstances. In September of 1843, disheartened by reports of "child labor and the sanitary conditions in the slums," Dickens visited a London school for children (Glancy, *Student Companion* 9). In a letter to Angela Cloutts, Dickens reveals this school to have been "held in three most wretched rooms on the first floor of a rotten house" in which "every plank, and timber, and brick, and lath, and piece of plaster . . . shakes as you walk" (*Selected Letters* 122-123). These scenes caused his heart to sink so far that Dickens almost "lost the hope of ever seeing them changed" (123). Thoroughly distraught about the welfare of the children, Dickens was "ready to draw attention to their plight" (Glancy, *Student Companion* 9). In October of the same year he delivered a speech to the Manchester Athenaeum where he was reportedly moved by the "goodwill in the faces of the working people" and "stirred to write a Christmas story" (Paul Davis 5). Dickens, as a way to convey his concerns to the masses, struck upon the idea for *A Christmas Carol*. The concept of the book so delighted Dickens that he was said to have "wept, and laughed, and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner" (Glancy, *Student Companion* 58). The book was completed in rapid fashion, taking "just six weeks to write" (58).

A Christmas Carol was published on December 19, 1843, with favorable reviews among Dickens's literary peers. Thomas Carlyle was said to be so moved by the tale that he "rushed out to buy a turkey with which to entertain his friends" (Glancy, *Student Companion* 58). William Thackeray referred to the *Carol* as a "national benefit, and . . . a personal kindness" (qtd. in Glancy, *Student Companion* 59). The *Carol* was said to be a "uniquely attractive book" with "hand-colored prints by the famous artist John Leech and a reddish-brown cover with gold lettering" (58). Fred Guida says that the book was intended as a special "personalized gift to

[Dickens's] public . . . complete with eight illustrations—four of them hand colored” (33). The “detailed attention to and elaboration of surfaces” alongside “its construction as a series of scenes” prompts Audrey Jaffe to contend that the *Carol* is “arguably Dickens’s most visually evocative text” (254). Sergei Eisenstein, a Russian film director, “describes literature in general and Dickens in particular as cinema’s predecessors because of their evocation of visual effects” (254). The visual quality of Dickens’s text perhaps lends the *Carol* to visual adaptation, a phenomenon which has dramatically increased Dickens’s audiences and has firmly established *A Christmas Carol* within the minds of the masses.

Becoming acquainted with the character “Scrooge” does not seem to require reading even a word of Dickens’s texts. Neither is it necessary to know the name *Dickens* to have heard Scrooge’s most popular phrase, “Bah! Humbug!” Indeed, for Paul Davis, author of *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, “acquaintance with Scrooge feels preliterate” (3). The modern reader is arguably as likely to have first encountered one of the countless incarnations of Scrooge through audiovisual representations of the classic tale as to have first read the *Carol* itself. Davis comments on this phenomenon, arguing that the *Carol* has been “adapted, revised, condensed, retold, re-originated, and modernized more than any other work of English literature” (4). The *Carol*’s unique draw has led to the work being “acted, animated, mimed, marionetted, choreographed, and puppeteered” (4). Adapted versions of the *Carol* appeared almost from the very beginning.

The tide of adaptation and piracy began immediately after the *Carol*’s publication. Within weeks “a pirated edition of the *Carol* was selling in London for just a penny” (Guida 39). By the 6th of January, 1844, “the first installment of . . . *Christmas Ghost Story*” became one of the first of many unauthorized versions of Dickens’s work (Paul Davis 9). Dickens, worried that

such piracies would affect his own sales, “filed suit” against “Richard Egan Lee and Henry Hewitt” (9), the writers of another piracy, *Ghost Story*. Nevertheless, within a few months, “eight theatrical companies had mounted [on-stage] productions, some of which Dickens himself attended (9). Edward Stirling’s production “at the Theatre Royal” claimed to be the only sanctioned version of the *Carol* (9). However Dickens himself was disheartened, calling the production “better than usual . . . but heart-breaking” (qtd. in Paul Davis 9). Sanctioned or not, adaptations would continue and Dickens soon learned that a process had begun which “he could not control. Almost from the day it appeared the *Carol* was literary public property” (5). Some of the book’s pirates insisted that their endeavors benefited Dickens by “making his work available to an audience that it otherwise would not reach” (10). Consequently the book’s popularity was so rapidly established that *The Illustrated London News*, reviewing an adaptation of the *Carol* mere months after the original was released, commented that the work on which the production was based was “too well known to enter into particulars of it” (12). Davis agrees that piracy of the *Carol* dramatically increased the popularity of the original, in part lifting “the pages of the book” so they could then be “lodged in the cultural memory” (12).

Even Dickens himself eventually became an adaptor of the *Carol*. When Dickens performed public readings “he edited and re-edited the text to suit” different audiences (12). Dickens recognized that the story became “new in each performance” (12). Even Dickens, claims Davis, eventually “joined in celebrating [the *Carol*] as culture-text” (12).

Speaking on the popularity of *Carol* adaptations, Guida presents a seemingly-unbroken stream of film and television adaptations from 1901-1998 (172-230). Guida contends that nothing in the “Dickens canon . . . can boast even a fraction of its powerful hold on the popular consciousness. It has been adopted and adapted by virtually every medium imaginable, and with

a rate of frequency that makes it far and away the most popular (and pillaged) Dickens story” (12). Paul Davis suggests that one could certainly separate the “authentic from the inauthentic” among these countless adaptations to find “faithful versions that maintain the spirit” of the original, while disqualifying the rest (5). However, he explains that the *Carol* is the sum of all its versions, of all its revisions, parodies, and piracies,” a collaboration which has created “a culture-text of remarkable diversity” (5). On Christmas day, 2010, *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*, and the show’s lead writer, Steven Moffat, became the latest of Dickens's collaborators. Whether or not Dickens would have sanctioned this collaboration, his tale was yet again distributed among the masses on such a large scale that Dickens’s story was experienced anew in ways he never could have imagined.

According to BBC NEWS, over 10 million people viewed *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* the first night it aired (“EastEnders Wins”). The interplay between the *Carol* and *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* demonstrates Dickens’s insights into his philosophy of change. The *Carol* portrays a man’s reformation through what Dickens believed to be genuine principles. Through the metaphors of ghostly visitations and time-travel, these tales present a character who, (thanks to a time-conscious perspective), can consider multiple periods of his own history simultaneously, learns to reconnect with his childhood, and becomes a blueprint for transformation.

Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol quickly establishes a connection with Dickens's classic. The planet Ember is an Earth Colony, home to Sardicktown, a Victorianesque city of the future. The action begins *in medias res* with typical *Doctor Who* flair. It’s Christmas Eve and a ship containing 4,000 passengers is approaching the planet during an ice storm which threatens disaster. The ship is at the mercy of a man named Kazran Sardick (the Scrooge character), a

wealthy businessman who operates a debtor's prison and who owns a weather machine capable of providing a passageway for the ship to land safely. If Kazran does not act, the ship and its passengers will be destroyed.

The debtor's prison is almost certainly a nod to Dickens's own life. His father, not particularly responsible with money, was sent to debtor's prison along with the family, as was the custom of the time. Dickens, who was still a boy, was sent to work at a shoe-blackening factory to avoid the experience of living in prison, though at the cost of being separated from his own family. Ronald Meldrum says of this experience that "Dickens's six month stint in the blacking factory made such a profound impression on him that he had a recurrent nightmare throughout his adult life about being incarcerated" (95). Glancy argues that Dickens kept his fancy alive during these days through the tradition of storytelling ("Dickens and Christmas" 54). Moffat implicitly links his Scrooge character, Kazran, with a source of Dickens's ire and consequent concern for the wellbeing of the downtrodden.

Unfortunately, Kazran is much like Scrooge, for whom "External heat and cold had little influence . . . No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty" (*Christmas Carol* 34). Weather would relent sooner than the iconic miser. Kazran's lack of sympathy is suggested in the opening narration. Concerning the Christmas season, Kazran says (as the narrator) "On every world, wherever people are, in the deepest part of the winter . . . everybody stops and turns and hugs as if to say 'well done! Well done, everyone!'" ("Doctor Who"). However, Kazran, echoing Scrooge's sentiments, believes that the Christmas spirit is really a time for "expecting something for nothing!" ("Doctor Who").

An early scene in *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* features a visit by a poor family to Kazran's mansion on Christmas Eve. The family is seeking mercy for their relative, a woman named Abigail, who is an inmate of Kazran's debtor's prison. The prison is a chilled facility beneath the mansion, the inmates of which are frozen in stasis pods. The facility evokes Scrooge, who "iced his office" and "didn't thaw it one degree" even "at Christmas" (*Christmas Carol* 34). Kazran will not release Abigail even for Christmas day, explaining to the family simply that they "took a loan . . . and [she] is my security" ("Doctor Who"). Amid the refusal, The Doctor (our hero) suddenly arrives through the chimney in dramatic and comic fashion (perhaps the hallmark of the series) to the surprise of everyone in the room. He quickly locates Kazran's weather machine, learning that it controls the sky by rearranging particles in the clouds. He explains that this "console is the key to saving that ship" ("Doctor Who"). Unfortunately, the Doctor cannot operate the console because the "controls are isomorphic" meaning they only respond to Kazran, and he refuses to help ("Doctor Who").

The Doctor is suddenly distracted by Abigail, who stands motionless within her stasis pod. Noticing the Doctor's interest in the woman, Kazran exclaims that she is "nobody important" ("Doctor Who"). Echoing the spirit of the *Carol*, the Doctor tells Kazran that "in 900 years of time and space I've never met anyone who wasn't important" ("Doctor Who"). Pressed by the emergency at hand, he tells Kazran that "there are 4,003 people in a spaceship trapped in your cloud belt. Without your help, they're going to die" ("Doctor Who"). Kazran had previously explained, however, that the colony has "a surplus population" which it cannot support ("Doctor Who"). The Doctor offers an ominous warning, knowing that Kazran must drastically change if disaster is to be averted: "whatever happens tonight, remember, you brought it on yourself" ("Doctor Who"). A young child, who is part of the family which came to

seek Abigail's release, throws an object at Kazran. Kazran motions as if to hit the boy but recoils before landing the blow. The Doctor is puzzled and observes, "A simple life. But you didn't hit the boy" ("Doctor Who"). Kazran calls out angrily, "Well I will next time!" ("Doctor Who").

The Doctor notices a painting of Kazran's late father, Eliot Sardick, which he notices cannot be seen from any chair in the room. He has gained an insight into Kazran's character, explaining "There's a Christmas tree in the painting but none in this house on Christmas Eve. You're scared of him, and you're scared of being like him and good for you, you're not like him . . . Do you know why . . . because you didn't hit the boy" ("Doctor Who"). The Doctor motions for the exit and says as he is leaving "Merry Christmas, Mr. Sardick" ("Doctor Who"). The stubbornness of Kazran would not be so recognizable without the iconic hard-headedness of Scrooge.

The tone of Scrooge's miserly disposition is similarly established from the beginning of Dickens's narrative. When two gentlemen come to solicit donations for the poor they explain to Scrooge that there are "thousands . . . in want of common necessities" and "hundreds of thousands . . . in want of common comforts" (*Christmas Carol* 38). Unmoved, Scrooge asks "Are there no prisons?" and suggests the "Union workhouses" as a viable solution (38). The gentlemen warn that many may die without aid to which Scrooge replies "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population" (39). Scrooge had already denounced Christmas as "a time for paying bills without money" and "a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer" (36). He soon learns that this line of thought bodes ill for him. He is visited by the ghost of Jacob Marley, his former business partner, who is fettered by a chain "made . . . of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel" (44). The ghost

reveals that his burden stems from “the chain [he] forged in life” (47). He laments that “no space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused” (49). Marley then warns Scrooge that he still has a chance “of escaping [this] fate” (50). Scrooge will be visited by three spirits without which he “cannot hope to shun the path” Marley now treads (50). That Scrooge could change seemingly because of these visits has called into question Dickens’s representation of the man’s psychological journey. Consequently, this concern may also obscure Dickens’s intentions for the *Carol*, which was (in addition to monetary concerns) to prompt action among his readers.

R. D. Butterworth discusses the unique catalyst for Scrooge’s reformation, ghostly visitations, arguing that this “supernatural apparatus enables the writer to present the reclaiming of Scrooge as a process that takes only a night rather than a long time” (67). Dickens himself commented on the relatively brief character development, explaining that the “narrow space within which it was necessary to confine these Christmas Stories . . . rendered their construction a matter of some difficulty, and almost necessitated what is peculiar in their machinery,” further stating that he “could not attempt great elaboration of detail, in the working out of character within such limits” (qtd. in Glancy, *Student Companion* 59).

Dickens was speaking to what Elliot Gilbert would later call “the Scrooge Problem.” This issue concerns the debated legitimacy of Scrooge’s change of heart, asserting a “disparity between the way in which moral and psychological mechanisms operate in the story and the way in which they seem to” work in real life (Gilbert 22). Many critics feel “a discontent” about the “unconvincing ease and apparent permanence of Scrooge’s reformation” (Gilbert 22). G. K. Chesterton humorously addresses this discontent, explaining that the *Carol* is a story about a change “as sudden as the conversion of a man at a Salvation Army meeting” (112). Edmund Wilson expresses doubt about Scrooge’s fate “beyond the frame of the story,” arguing that

“unquestionably, he would relapse . . . into moroseness, vindictiveness, suspicion” (qtd. in Gilbert 22). For these scholars, the psychological transformation Scrooge demonstrates is not warranted by the speed, or means, by which it was brought to pass. They think Scrooge simply cannot believably learn to sympathize with others in so short a time. The nature of the term *sympathy* itself casts more doubt upon this change.

Mary-Catherine Harrison discusses at length the importance of sympathy to Dickens, who placed a “critical premium on emotional response” to literature (262). She links the terms *empathy* and *sympathy*, explaining that “early accounts of sympathy—empathy’s conceptual ancestor and etymological cousin—assume that our emotional response to characters in a tragedy is no less universal than our response to the suffering of other men” (257). Harrison notes that the term *empathy* was coined in the nineteenth century to explain the “union between psychology and aesthetics” (256). Early accounts of the term and its German equivalent *emfühlung*, describe how a person might respond to art (256). Eventually, the term came to describe interactions between people and is now “commonly understood as the act of imagining oneself in another’s place” (256). Adam Smith explains sympathy as a degree of correspondence of feelings with another person, defining the term as “our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever” (5).

The importance of sympathy/empathy and Dickens’s ethical goals were apparent throughout his career. In the “Preliminary Word” to the first edition of *Household Words*, Dickens stated the periodical’s intended purpose: he hoped that it would contribute to “the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition” (qtd. in Harrison 263). Dickens hoped that exposure to such stories would cause his readers to act on the emotions the tales inspired. This ethical goal was apparently also in force for the *Carol*. Harrison explains that Dickens’s “primary methodology was to generate empathy: he asked his

readers to imagine suffering and consequently feel with his characters in distress” (263). Smith discusses the potential to approximate another’s feelings, explaining that through “imagination we place ourselves in his situation . . . and thence form some idea of his sensations” (2). For example, if Dickens’s readers “could vividly imagine the suffering they did not themselves experience, he believed, then they would be moved enough to intervene” (Harrison 263). For such a thing to happen, the sympathy demonstrated in the narrative would need to be significant enough to generate an ethical response. What better way to do this than to show a return to sympathy by an avowed miser such as Scrooge?

Scrooge’s reformation therefore seems aimed at inspiring an ethical response in Dickens’s readers. However, the move from literature to ethical response is paradoxical. How can a reader respond ethically to a fictional character’s experiences? And by extension, how can Scrooge himself respond ethically to the scenes he witnesses with the Ghosts of Christmas? After all, Scrooge has reason to doubt the reality of his perceptions; Scrooge asks of these visions: “Was it a dream or not?” (*Christmas Carol* 54). Harrison quotes the Philosopher Jerrold Levinson, who explains that “since fictional characters do not exist, and we know this, it seems we cannot, despite appearances, literally have towards them bona fide emotions” (qtd. in Harrison 257). While a reader’s response to literature (or Scrooge’s response to scenes far removed from him) may not constitute the same emotions derived from actual experience, Harrison remarks that “most readers have had the sensation of being moved by fiction” (257). However, even if Scrooge, or Dickens’s readers, could indeed be moved to sympathize with others, would they naturally be prompted to an ethical response?

Nancy Yousef builds on this discussion on sympathy. She explains, drawing on David Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, that to sympathize with another is not necessarily to wish

them well or to demonstrate an ethical response. Hume explains “there is no human creature, to whom the appearance of happiness . . . does not give pleasure . . . This seems inseparable from our make and constitution. But they are only the most generous minds, that are thence prompted to seek zealously the good of others” (qtd. in Yousef 57). In short, sympathy “is not necessarily a moral phenomenon” (57). Neither is the capacity to understand what another is going through automatically tied to any kind of desire for their well-being. By this logic Scrooge, who is certainly not among the most “generous minds” Hume referred to, would not likely demonstrate an ethical response no matter the visions of his ghostly theatre.

To illustrate this point, Yousef applies Humean sympathy to Dickens’s *Bleak House*, where charitable deeds performed do not lead to the betterment of the “neediest characters” who are shown to be “intractable, unimproved—as desperate as ever” (60). The setting of *Bleak House* is familiar. The fog “‘everywhere’ with which *Bleak House* famously begins” is anticipated by the earlier Christmas tale: “The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without” (Yousef 60; *Christmas Carol* 35). Yet, as Yousef argues, *Bleak House* corroborates in part the Humean concept of a sympathy that is no basis for moral response, an idea that seems to contradict the moral of the *Carol*. If Hume argued that sympathy is not necessarily a basis for an ethical action, Yousef explains that sympathy in *Bleak House* often amounts to naught. Applied to Scrooge this would suggest that while an ethical response is unlikely, his charitable deeds might not even have a significant positive impact anyway. Using this logic, a supernatural explanation may seem warranted to show the reformation of a man like Scrooge, who is so unwilling to empathize with others that he warns “all human sympathy to keep its distance” (*Christmas Carol* 35).

Gilbert explains that for critics and readers a supernatural explanation may obscure psychological development and may render “the story not more intense and significant, but less so” (23). Gilbert notes that the perceptive reader understands that men who spend a “lifetime in miserable offices . . . bullying their clerks, grinding the faces of the poor,” and “reveling in misanthropy” do not simply change overnight (22). Implicit in this insight is the assertion that Dickens failed to represent the transformation with sufficient complexity while positioning the ghostly visitations as a kind of shortcut to plausible character development. Joseph Gold adds to this assessment, saying that “by writing a fairy or ghost story, Dickens deliberately avoids dealing with the question of psychological or spiritual growth” (qtd. in Gilbert 22). However, Carl Jung, to the contrary, provides a psychological basis for Scrooge’s visitations, explaining that “there is in the unconscious an archetype of wholeness which manifests itself spontaneously in dreams” (*Portable* 648). Jolande Jacobi further explains that the dream, according to Jung, “is thus the main instrument of the therapeutic method . . . the psychic phenomenon which offers the easiest access to the contents of the unconscious, and its compensatory function makes it the clearest indicator of hidden relationships” (71). *The Carol* and *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol* feature a change brought to pass by the ability to re-acquire one’s own innocence and genuinely sympathize with others. The mechanisms within these tales, including visitations, refute the fundamental error underlying the Scrooge Problem, which, according to Gilbert, is

the critic’s assumption that life consists . . . of events serially and even causally linked; that human beings are products . . . of such events, developing inexorably toward ends ever more remote from their beginnings; and that fiction ought to be the more or less literal record of that development . . . through time and experience. (23)

The Scrooge Problem, valid as it may be in its own right, subtly overlooks the actual catalysts for Scrooge's change, focusing instead on the obviously unrealistic. Certainly people do not easily transform after a lifetime of miserly self-interest and selfish disregard for others. However, to reduce the story to this supposed shortcoming "is to distort a work that is in fact constructed along very different lines" (Gilbert 23). Gilbert laments that if readers and critics could trust the insights available to them they might have "less difficulty accepting Scrooge's reformation as credible" while also "justifying the emotional response it evokes from them" (23). This response can in turn shed light on the very reasons for Scrooge's change. Smith explains that we can sympathize with another "by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (2). This idea provides an insight into Scrooge's psychological journey. The ability to sympathize with others is key to his transformation.

The point of the *Carol*, according to Gilbert, is a concern with aspects of Scrooge, including sympathy, which constitute the "essence of a human being" which "predate[s] all the moral, social, and psychological character mechanisms a man acquires through the process of living, and that are always there waiting to be rediscovered" (23-24). Scrooge's journey in part, as will later be discussed, causes him to consider aspects of himself buried within his own childhood and looming within his potential future. Scrooge need not create something of nothing, but must rediscover characteristics and sympathies which he already has. Smith, speaking of sympathy, explains that even "the greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it" (2). Even Scrooge, unprompted, offers his clerk a day off for Christmas, if begrudgingly, "but I suppose you must have the whole day" (*Christmas Carol* 41).

If the *Carol* fails to comprehensively represent a timeline of development and transformation from miser to philanthropist, as some have suggested, it is successful as a “metaphysical study of a human being’s quest for, and rediscovery of, his own innocence” (Gilbert 24). Gilbert uses the phrase “metaphysical innocence” as a “permanent characteristic of human life” which “can never be lost” (24). The term contradicts a typical understanding of innocence as a progression from “youth to age and from innocence to experience,” commonly represented as a “linear journey” from which there is no “possibility of return” (24). Metaphysical innocence denotes an attribute which “is immutable, retaining its original strength” despite or perhaps because of experience, and which situates life as a “cyclical journey” (24). Scrooge himself suggests the key concept behind one’s reclamation of metaphysical innocence when, having successfully reformed, he exclaims: “I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future” (*Christmas Carol* 110). His transformation is not a matter merely constrained by his own weaknesses in the present, but a phenomenon which requires Scrooge to be time-conscious. Scrooge must understand that he is not simply bound to the present, but can reclaim the positive character traits of his past. By learning to consider different time periods in life he can then better shape the events of his future. For Scrooge to fully reform, he must indeed become time-conscious.

This process offers what Philip Davis calls “a different space-time” or “a form of getting outside the self before returning back inside it again” (27). Looking through the eyes of experience, Scrooge must gain a unique perspective on his former innocence and current dilemma. However, if Scrooge seems to require ghostly intervention on the surface, his transformation is actually brought to pass by innate characteristics rediscovered as a spectator of

his past. The first time period which Scrooge must therefore consider is his own childhood, a time period which is essential to Dickens's philosophy of change.

Dickens's philosophy of change likely emerged out his own childhood. As a child, Dickens "read . . . tales like *The Arabian Nights*, wrote and acted in small plays, and enjoyed magic lantern shows and pantomimes" (Glancy, *Student Companion* 2). He and his sister were known for their talent for singing, and would "entertain at home and at the local inn" (2). Paul Schlicke argues that Dickens's love for entertainment, including the "circus, theatre and pantomime is consonant with his attachment to the values and experiences of childhood" (14). Consequently Dickens "perceived childhood as a state peculiarly responsive to the appeals of entertainment" and was "eager to retain such attitudes in adulthood . . . both in the memory of his own past and in his concern for present and future children" (15-17). These beliefs shaped Dickens's writing. For Dickens, "a child's outlook" was "integral to" the narrative's "artistic vision" (14). Schlicke further explains that Dickens was among the first, if not the first, to place a child at the center of a story, an achievement that is "one of his significant contributions to literature" (14). Indeed, according to Schlicke, Dickens often "focused his exploration of moral, social and psychological themes upon the image of the child" (14).

This approach is also explored in psychology. Jung discussed themes of psychological development in conjunction with a departure from the child psyche. He outlined a danger of mankind's "getting lost in one-sidedness . . . deviating further and further from the laws and roots of his being" (*Archetypes* 163). He suggests the need to connect with one's childhood in order to become whole. The child motif, according to Jung, is "not just a vestige but a system functioning in the present whose purpose is to compensate or correct . . . the inevitable one-sidednesses and extravagances of the conscious mind" (162). The danger of one-sidedness, for

Jung, is a legitimate concern with dire consequences. It is natural, he argues, to exclude important concepts from consciousness in favor of “relatively few contents,” such as Scrooge’s fixation with wealth and his exclusion of virtually everything else. This tendency brings about an incomplete form of the psyche (162). Because of this, Jung contends that mankind’s “consciousness is in continual danger of being uprooted” (163). Caught in such a dilemma, mankind risks a fate which Jung argues is self-inflicted, “inasmuch as man has, in high degree, the capacity for cutting himself off from his own roots, he may also be swept uncritically to catastrophe” unless the mind is allowed to become whole by “compensation through the still existing state of childhood” (163).

Dickens's understanding of the child archetype anticipates Jung's psychological observations. According to Schlicke, Dickens believed that “the relation between childhood and age is harmonized . . . by the mediating power of memory” (26). Dickens introduces this idea in “A Christmas Tree,” a short story written for *Household Words*. In this tale the narrator travels back to his childhood through the medium of memory: “Being now at home again, and alone, the only person in the house awake, my thoughts are drawn back, by a fascination which I do not care to resist, to my own childhood” (*Christmas Stories* 4). The story explores “the associations of fancy” which shaped the narrator’s “spiritual growth” as a child (“Dickens and Christmas” 59). Glancy explains that in the story Dickens “re-creates the imaginative springs of his childhood” such as “the toys, fairy tales, and pantomimes which had transformed the everyday world” (59). Considering these youthful joys, the narrator has an epiphany that in these memories “there was everything, and more” (*Christmas Stories* 4). The tale concludes with the theme invoked at the beginning: “Encircled by the social thoughts of Christmas-time, still let the benignant figure of my childhood stand unchanged” (*Christmas Stories* 23). Dickens's tale

“What Christmas Is, as We Grow Older” suggests that memories should be re-captured because memories constitute “time and all its comforting and peaceful reassurances” (*Christmas Stories* 32). These concepts are apparently lost on Scrooge, who must re-learn them if he is to become whole.

When Scrooge encounters the Ghost of Christmas past, or rather, his own past, the specter appears “like a child: yet not so like a child as an old man . . . diminished to a child’s proportions” (*Christmas Carol* 55). The Ghost introduces himself and essentially announces that his purpose is to re-write Scrooge's history. He beckons the misanthrope to follow him through time to visions of the past, leading first to “an open country road” that Scrooge immediately recognizes from his childhood. He exclaims “I was a boy here!” (*Christmas Carol* 56). The specter asks Scrooge if he knows the way, to which the miser enthusiastically replies, “I could walk it blindfold” (55). The ghost tellingly remarks, “Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!” (55). The Ghost is leading Scrooge to actively participate in the memory, building bridges back to his childhood. This strategy is the beginning of Scrooge’s implementation of the lessons of time as a cyclical journey. Indeed, Philip Davis contends “that the Spirit, like a therapist, must return Scrooge, making him remember and feel again what insecurities, repressed, led him to his apparent lack of feeling” (26). As part of this process, the pair soon arrives at Scrooge’s old school, which the Ghost notices “is not quite deserted” (55). The lone occupant is the young Scrooge, “a solitary child, neglected by his friends” and engrossed in reading (55).

Old Scrooge soon realizes the boy is reading *Ali Baba* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Recollections of these stories cause him to speak earnestly “in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying” (59). His delight in these fanciful tales suggests a convergence

upon the child of values “Dickens associated with popular entertainment” such as “spontaneity, freedom, fancy and release, as opposed to life-denying forces of . . . hard-heartedness” (Schlicke 14). Exposure to the fancy of his youth momentarily overwhelms Scrooge. “For a moment he becomes that boy again, and then with ‘rapidity of transition very foreign’ to what has become his usual character, he finds himself saying in something other than mere self-pity, ‘poor boy!’” (Phillip Davis 26). Seeing his younger self swept away by the tales he was reading affects Scrooge almost immediately, despite the sorrow of his lonely circumstances. As if to underscore the importance of time, time abruptly shifts to a meeting between young Scrooge and his sister, who had come to the school to bring him home. She alludes to a less than charitable father who she explains “is so much kinder than he used to be” (*Christmas Carol* 60). The reunion is disturbed only by the schoolmaster “who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind” merely “by shaking hands with him” (60). Commenting on the scene, the Ghost addresses a painful memory for Scrooge, saying of his sister “Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered . . . But she had a large heart.” Scrooge’s sister, the mother to his nephew, had sadly “died a woman” (61).

The vision shifts yet again to reveal the scene of Scrooge’s apprenticeship to Mr. Fezziwig, who allows Scrooge and his colleague Dick to close down the shop early to make way for a Christmas Eve party. Scrooge, now a young man, nevertheless still demonstrates faculties Dickens attributed to children, whom he felt to be “endowed with special capabilities of sensitivity, wonder and imagination,” qualities which found “outlet in activities of play and amusement” (Schlicke 14). Watching the vivid scene of dancing and youthful joys unfold before him causes the elder Scrooge to act “like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed

everything, and underwent the strangest agitation” (*Christmas Carol* 64). But as the scene shifts yet again, now to Scrooge as an adult, the innocence of childhood has presumably been lost. He sees “a man in the prime of his life. His face [had] begun to wear the signs of care and avarice” (65). Scrooge stands as a spectator to the end of his relationship to his fiancée Belle, who remarks painfully on the young man’s “changed nature” and “altered spirit” (66). She tells him, “I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you” and laments concerning their relationship that her hope was “at its great end” (65, 66). The Scrooge of the vision has succumbed to one-sidedness and yet the pain at seeing his former love vanish before his eyes deepens only when the vision shifts again, and he sees Belle in a household with a loving family. Scrooge gives voice to his pain, begging the Ghost “No more. I don’t wish to see it. Show me no more!” (67). These memories more vividly illustrate Dickens’s philosophy of self-improvement, which necessitates confronting both painful and pleasant memories.

In “What Christmas Is, as We Grow Older,” Dickens uses the concept of memory to engage childhood emotions. According to Glancy, the narrator in this tale learns an important aspect of memory (an essential lesson for Scrooge), namely that it “can re-create the imaginative innocence of childhood, but it can also recall past disappointments and losses . . . which can be the source of greater compassion” (“Dickens and Christmas” 59). Indeed, Dickens’s narrator suggests that childhood memories can bring about future enlightenment, explaining that “it is in the last virtues . . . that we are, or should be, strengthened by the unaccomplished visions of our youth” (*Christmas Stories* 29). Childhood memories represent a kind of hope that Dickens believed could be reclaimed, seemingly despite one’s age. Furthermore, these memories, as Dickens presents them, fall in line with the ethical goals he has stated for some of his works.

Smith argues that “the sentiment or affection of the heart from which any action proceeds” depends in part upon “the effect which it tends to produce” (20). As such, the relationship between a feeling and “the cause which excites it . . . consists the propriety or impropriety . . . of the consequent action” (20). In other words, the emotional tone of Scrooge’s experience bears a strong correlation to his subsequent actions. When Scrooge encounters his own youth, the memories cause him to sympathize with himself, a process that subsequently extends to those around him. When Scrooge sees his young self “a lonely boy . . . reading near a feeble fire” he weeps to “see his poor forgotten self as he had used to be” (*Christmas Carol* 58). Philip Davis remarks how this experience leads Scrooge “to make another connection of more recent memory,” as different points in time begin to cycle through his mind (26). His sorrow calls to memory the boy who had sung a Carol at his door. Perhaps recognizing a similarity of experience with himself, he suddenly wishes he had given the boy something, but unfortunately it “was too late now” (*Christmas Carol* 59). For Dickens, then, childhood memories represent a tool for affecting change and a means to rekindle one’s hopes. The narrator of “What Christmas is” further demonstrates this concept by vowing to embrace “old aspirations, glittering creatures of an ardent fancy . . . old projects and old loves” and “all that was ever real to our hearts” (*Christmas Stories* 29).

The text demonstrates that Dickens suggested a permanent link to youthful innocence into adulthood. Schlicke explains that Dickens himself believed that the “pleasures he enjoyed as a child” could (maybe even should) also be enjoyed as an adult (17). For Scrooge, this concept entails confronting the pains of his past. When Scrooge sees his former fiancée Belle in her home, he sees “a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort” despite being “perfectly tumultuous” owing to an abundance of children (*Christmas Carol* 67). It is a house

where the innocence of childhood and the concerns of age are not mutually exclusive. When Belle's husband arrives bearing Christmas presents and other surprises, he is met by the children who scale him "with chairs for ladders, to dive into his pockets" to "despoil him of brown-paper parcels" to "hug him round the neck" and to "kick his legs in irrepressible affection!" (68).

Scrooge recognizes the scene for what it is: a modest home where the innocence of youth and adult responsibility exist in harmony. Most poignantly for Scrooge, it represents what he might have had. The pain these experiences elicit in the old miser advances his reformation. Later in the narrative, when Scrooge has just met the Ghost of Christmas Present, he remarks, "conduct me where you will. 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" (74).

Phillip Davis believes that by appealing to these childhood emotions as *Carol* does, it offers "the opportunity to have feelings about your own feelings, vicariously, as if you were looking back at yourself as another person who was also you" (25). This phenomenon is consistent with Smith's discussions on sympathy, which in part entails gazing at oneself from the outside. Smith explains that even as a spectator of another person's suffering is "constantly considering what they themselves would feel, if they actually were the sufferers" so too is the sufferer "led to imagine in what manner he would be affected" as a spectator "of his own situation" (28). If the fellow-feeling of a spectator leads one to compassion for another's plight, it is because compassion has arisen "altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if . . . reduced to the same unhappy situation . . . and . . . at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment" (8). The Ghosts of Christmas invite Scrooge to reconsider his childhood, far removed as he may be, through the lens of his present circumstances. The

result is that Scrooge encounters his own memories as an outsider, a spectator who can then conceive of how another might view his own situation.

The force of these encounters for Scrooge demonstrates Smith's explanation of the circumstantial nature of sympathy, which is not derived so much from "the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it" (7). For example, Scrooge's initial refusal to help the poor at the request of the two visiting gentlemen is consistent with his inability to sympathize with their plight. However, when Scrooge sees the ghost of his former associate Marley weighed down by chains, Scrooge remarks, trembling "You are fettered . . . tell me why?" (*Christmas Carol* 47). Marley wears a chain "the weight and length" of which Scrooge had already labored with "seven Christmas Eves ago" (48). Observing the misery of his former associate, Scrooge places himself in Marley's situation: "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob" (49). If identification with another's feelings is indeed "in proportion to the vivacity or dullness of the conception" as Smith explains, Scrooge's own childhood figures to encourage sympathy to a greater degree (7). Such memories can be ever-present for Scrooge, diminished as they may become through time. Philip Davis argues that Scrooge is learning "to look both ways: at the past scenario before his eyes and at the person who is doing the seeing," an insight into introspection which Davis believes renders the *Carol* "a central Victorian work" (25). Looking through a time-conscious perspective, as opposed to one restricted by linearity, Scrooge "feels his own feelings: at one time he feels the same again as he did in the past and forgets his present self; at another, he has feelings excluded from those expressed in what he sees, in regret for what became of him" (25). Scrooge therefore learns to consider who he is, who he was, and what factors led to his present circumstances and will determine his foreboding future. Experiencing anew the joys and disappointments of his youth as a spectator facilitates this process. According

to Phillip Davis, Scrooge is then able to see his own self “not just confusedly and uncertainly within his own head, as though the past were unreal or over or ignorable, but objectively, externally, in time again” (26-27).

Alongside the Ghost of Christmas Present, Scrooge’s visions again feature the theme of childhood. The vision reveals his nephew Fred, and his friends, “young and old,” who spend Christmas Eve playing games during which everyone participates (*Christmas Carol* 90). The group pokes fun at Scrooge, perhaps unable to feel sympathy for a man whose behavior they cannot abide, and whose life experience they do not know. Fred criticizes Scrooge for calling Christmas a “humbug” and for his irritable disposition, which “offences carry their own punishment” (87). The group’s criticism of Scrooge’s behavior demonstrates Smith’s explanation of embarrassment one might feel for the “impudence and rudeness of another . . . because we cannot help feeling with what confusion we ourselves should be covered, had we behaved in so absurd a manner” (7). Fred demonstrates a degree of sympathy, viewing Scrooge as a sufferer of sorts, and remarks that while “I am sorry for him; I couldn’t be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always” (*Christmas Carol* 87). Scrooge observes this expression of sympathy, simultaneously seeing his own situation through his nephew’s perspective, and through his own, as a spectator. Smith explains of achieving a correspondence of feelings with a sufferer, that “as their sympathy makes them look at it [suffering], in some measure, with his eyes, so his sympathy makes him look at it, in some measure, with theirs” (28). Fred demonstrates for Scrooge the joy of the season and represents a connection to childlike enthusiasm and joy. The merry scene continues as “Scrooge’s nephew reveled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off . . . his example was unanimously followed” (*Christmas Carol* 88).

Despite the group's criticisms of Scrooge, he is delighted. Scrooge experiences what Smith explains, that "Society and conversation, therefore, are the most powerful remedies for restoring the mind to its tranquility" (29). He is so engrossed in the proceedings before him, "wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears" (*Christmas Carol* 90). Scrooge begs the Christmas Ghost to allow him to remain at the scene, saying, "Here's a new game . . . One half hour, spirit, only one!" (90). The nature of the scene affects Scrooge profoundly. Despite Scrooge's rude treatment of his nephew earlier in the day, the young man nevertheless proposes a toast to the old miser, saying "it would be ungrateful not to drink his health . . . A merry Christmas and a Happy new Year to the old man, whatever he is!" (91). Fred's example noticeably impacts Scrooge, who had "imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time" (91). But the Ghost has other plans for Scrooge, whose reclamation of metaphysical innocence had begun in earnest.

If the importance of time is implied Dickens, it is explicit in *Doctor Who*, a feature which draws attention to this aspect of the Dickens tale. Uniquely suited to alignment with the *Carol*, *Doctor Who* frequently asserts that "time can be re-written" ("Doctor Who"). The phrase is a natural aspect of the show's primary feature, time-travel. The statement typically entails some type of necessary action required to prevent an undesirable and otherwise certain future outcome. In this context the phrase could have been uttered by any one of the Ghosts of Christmas, who anticipate Scrooge's fate if he doesn't change. Indeed the ghost of Jacob Marley explains to Scrooge "you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate" (*Christmas Carol* 50). In other words time can be re-written.

The Doctor plans to re-write time for Kazran through a different kind of ghostly visitation. Following his initial visit to Kazran, The Doctor again appears in the man's house, which he has entered uninvited and unseen. He introduces himself as "the Ghost of Christmas Past," analogous to the specter which shows Scrooge visions of his own childhood: his sister, his former fiancée, and a Christmas party with his old boss, Mr. Fezziwig. The vision of the past begins when the Doctor projects one of Kazran's home videos upon the wall—a vignette in time of Kazran as a child. A startled Kazran watches a theatre of memories unfold before his eyes. Like Scrooge, Kazran becomes a spectator of his own past. He has the opportunity to experience his own feelings as if looking on from the outside. Kazran observes himself as a child talking to the camera. The Boy introduces himself, "My name is Kazran Sardick, I'm twelve and a half, and this is my bedroom" ("Doctor Who"). The boy, inspired by fancy, plans to record what he calls a "top-secret special project" which requires going outside into a potentially dangerous environment ("Doctor Who"). This environment includes an atmosphere conducive to a species of fish which occasionally "swim" near the city (an admittedly strange *Doctor Who* plot device). When Kazran's father Eliot enters the frame, he chastises young Kazran as a "ridiculous child" for his foolish and unproductive plans, explaining that "there's a fog warning tonight" ("Doctor Who"). To emphasize his point, Eliot strikes his young son, eliciting a grimace from the old Kazran. Kazran, like Scrooge, has the unique experience of becoming both the observer and the observed, playing the role of sympathizer and sufferer. The theatre of time the Doctor has exposed him to prompts Kazran to simultaneously experience, and imagine, his own suffering as a spectator. Smith notes that by imagination "we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments" of the sufferer, entering "as it were into his body" to "become in some measure him, and thence form some idea of his sensations" (2). As the young Kazran recoils in pain after

being slapped by his father, the elder Kazran mirrors his reaction, demonstrating what Smith explains, that for every observed emotion, “an analogous emotion springs up . . . in the breast of every attentive spectator” (4). Presently, the Doctor asks the old man if he ever did catch a glimpse of the fish, to which Kazran coldly replies “what does that matter to you?” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor responds, motioning to the dejected boy on the still running home video, “look how it mattered to *you*” (“Doctor Who”).

As the Doctor and the elder Kazran continue to watch the film unfold, the crestfallen child, unaware of his audience, inadvertently elicits an angry outburst from his older self. The old miser, experiencing anew the disappointment in the face of his youth, explains to the Doctor that he learned a valuable lesson that night, that “nobody comes” (“Doctor Who”). The elder Kazran demands the Doctor leave his house immediately. The Doctor agrees, saying “Okay! I’ll go, but I’ll be back . . . way back” (“Doctor Who”). Kazran turns again to the home video and is soon shocked to see the Doctor enter the frame of the film, having traveled through time to that very point as imperceptibly as a ghost. New memories now unfold alike in Kazran’s mind and on the screen.

If Scrooge’s ghosts prompt him to comment on his visions, the Doctor actively shapes Kazran’s visions of his own childhood, enhancing channels of memory and imagination by way of time-travel. New experience and revised memory exist simultaneously as Kazran watches the Doctor interact with his young self. As Phillip Davis explains of Scrooge, Kazran encounters his own history “not just confusedly and uncertainly within his own head, as though the past were unreal or over or ignorable, but objectively, externally, in time again” (26-27). In particular with *Doctor Who*, time almost never entails finality, past is not past. The young boy is startled at the Doctor’s sudden arrival and asks “Who are you?” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor jokingly claims

to be the new babysitter. The child replies, “but Mrs. Mantovani is always my babysitter” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor subtly invokes his purpose, looking directly at the camera to say “times change,” and with a nod to the *Carol* “see? . . . Christmas Past” (“Doctor Who”). By appealing to the child Kazran, the Doctor evokes Jung, who explained “the child paves the way for a future change of personality” (*Archetypes* 164). The Doctor seeks to implement, albeit in reverse order, the Jungian insight that “The child is potential future. Hence . . . the child motif in the psychology of the individual signifies . . . an anticipation of future developments, even though at first sight it may seem like a retrospective configuration” (164). Just as with time for the Doctor, according to Jung, “life is a flux, a flowing into the future, and not a stoppage” (164). This concept, which accommodates the *Doctor Who* phrase “time can be re-written,” evokes the cyclical approach to time which Gilbert explains is essential to reclaiming one’s metaphysical innocence.

As the Doctor continues to interact with the young boy, young Kazran mentions the fish which occasionally approach the city, explaining that his father had “invented a machine to control the cloud belt” (“Doctor Who”). Immersed in wonder, the child shares a story he heard at school about a shoal of fish which entered the city limits. He says “no one was hurt, but it was the most fish ever seen below the mountains . . . It’s all anyone ever talks about now. The day the fish came. Everyone’s got a story” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor responds tellingly, noticing the disappointment upon the child’s face, “but you don’t” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor then boasts that he could show young Kazran a fish. But the boy says “aren’t you going to tell me it’s dangerous?” (“Doctor Who”). After all, his father, Eliot, already quelled his plans to see the fish, telling his son: “Don’t be stupid, you’re far too young” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor, contrasting Eliot’s hard-heartedness with his own appeal to spontaneity, freedom, and fancy

says: “come on, we’re boys! And you know what boys say in the face of danger!” (“Doctor Who”).

Not only does the Doctor summon a fish, using his “sonic screwdriver” (an advanced device which, among many other things, allows the Doctor to emit a sonic pulse, drawing the fish to Kazran’s window), he also accidentally lures a shark into the bedroom. He tells Kazran, who is temporarily safe in an adjacent room, “well, concentrating on the plusses, you’ve definitely got a story of your own now” (“Doctor Who”).

After a few tense moments, the Doctor subdues the shark with another pulse from his sonic screwdriver, losing a piece of the device to the shark in the process. Unfortunately, unless the shark is taken back to the cloud belt, it will die. Kazran is worried and asks what can be done to save the creature. The Doctor believes that the shark would survive if they brought it back to its natural habitat, a procedure that would require some sort of stasis pod. The boy indicates that his father’s debtor’s prison contains such devices.

The boy’s concern with the creature, in conjunction with the elder Kazran’s role as a spectator, demonstrates another aspect of Smith’s theory of sympathy, the impartial spectator, “an eternal principle of general perception that is able to counteract our egotism” (Chandler 561). The impartial spectator, which James Chandler explains in part as the “ideal man or archetype within,” involves a kind of imitation of an ideal self (565). For someone to have embodied this ideal, according to Smith, “he has been in the constant practice and, indeed, under the constant necessity, of modeling” both “his outward conduct and behavior” and “even his inward sentiments and feelings, according to those of this awful and respectable judge” (qtd. in Chandler 565-566). Perhaps in simpler terms, this principle entails living according to the tenets of one’s conscience, as the younger Kazran seems to demonstrate with his concern for the injured shark.

The elder Kazran, as a spectator, is potentially able to perceive and apply this phenomenon, which Chandler explains “carries the force of recognition, the sense of truly seeing ourselves, for example, in our own littleness within the world” (561). This concept takes on new meaning when the Doctor interacts with the young Kazran, enabling his entire future capable of being changed. Certainly this is the intent of the Doctor, who wants the elder Kazran to reflect on the joys, the pains, and the lost innocence of his childhood.

Upon arriving at the prison, a chilled facility beneath Kazran’s mansion, the pair immediately encounters a locked door with a key pad, triggering an alarm in the process. The Doctor frantically asks the young child if he knows the pass-code, which he does not. Kazran the elder calls out the number, yelling at the screen before him as if he could be heard, seemingly attempting to help shape his own revised past. As he calls out the number a third time, the Doctor re-enters the frame, having travelled again through time to that moment, and thanks him, saying “Just what I was after!” (“Doctor Who”). When the pair enters the door, they recognize the large stasis pods arranged neatly in rows. The pod they decide to use contains the woman Abigail (whose family had appealed to old Kazran for her Christmas release earlier in the show). Once the shark is secured in the pod, Kazran and Abigail accompany the Doctor for the trip back into the atmosphere, where they safely release the creature.

The scene embodies a cyclical approach to time. Upon their return Abigail hopefully requests of the Doctor, “if you should ever wish to visit again...” to which the young Kazran enthusiastically replies “he comes every Christmas Eve!” (“Doctor Who”). The Doctor, apparently reluctant, nevertheless agrees to return the next year. During the subsequent holiday visits he brings Kazran and Abigail on previously unimaginable journeys throughout time and space. The now-yearly visits last well into Kazran’s young-adulthood, allowing the youthful

Kazran to re-imagine his own childhood as his adult (the elder Kazran watching the home videos) memories change in real-time. The scene functions as a montage, with young Kazran visibly aging each time the Doctor returns on Christmas Eve. As the trio visits locations throughout the world they take pictures at recognizable landmarks and encounter famous individuals in history. The older Kazran simultaneously experiences memories of adventures as his young self encounters them. As the adventures are still in progress for the Doctor, the young Kazran, and Abigail, the elder Kazran rifles through drawers, locating now old photos of his childhood and adolescent adventures with Abigail and the Doctor—photos which he has now seen for the first time. For Abigail, who only leaves her stasis pod for these adventures, every day is the same day, Christmas Eve, and time is in a continuous loop. Her experience in time is analogous to Scrooge whose life, “with the exception of . . . the brief prologue . . . and epilogue . . . is actually lived in the course of one night” (Gilbert 28). Each time she is awakened, it is as if no time passed, and yet she can see the effects of age upon the young Kazran. Just as it is with Scrooge (who encounters the past, present, and future within one night), “chronology, in short, is an illusion” (Gilbert 28).

Meanwhile, the Doctor’s hopes align with the narrator of Dickens’s “What Christmas Is, as We Grow Older”: as with the narrator of this tale, the future, for Kazran, “stretches out . . . brighter than we ever looked on” (*Christmas Stories* 29). The purpose of young Kazran’s journeys through time and space mirror what Dickens’s narrator explains of the wonder of memory, that it embodies “everything! . . . what has been, and what never was, and what we hope may be” (30). Because of time-travel, Kazran’s entire life experience is altered in a somewhat retrospective arrangement. As Jung explains of the child motif, the young Kazran represents his own “potential future” (*Archetypes* 164). For the Doctor, who appeals to Kazran's

childhood, seeking to actively shape the old Kazran's character, "the psychology of the individual signifies . . . an anticipation of future developments" (164). These scenes embody the Dickensian approach, exploring the psychological development of the child, playing on "the eager curiosity . . . to novelty and energy . . . the sense of absurdity, in which delight and terror are never far apart" (Schlicke 14). If Kazran's father stifles his son's creativity and fancy, the Doctor appeals directly to these faculties. Much like Dickens, the Doctor is evidently "convinced . . . of the beneficent effects of entertainment" upon children, and is "indignant at the thought of anyone tampering" with these effects—such as "parental disciplinarians" who "left no room for a child's natural graces to flourish" (Schlicke 15). The images of Eliot Sardick, and Scrooge's schoolmaster, who spoke with a "terrible voice" and "glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension," suggest this stifling of childhood fancy which Dickens so abhorred (*Christmas Carol* 60).

Kazran observes and re-experiences the joys and hardships of childhood as a spectator, as he watches himself interact with the Doctor. This is particularly evident when he views the disappointment on the face of his youth and when he rifles through photographic evidence of his adventures with Abigail and the Doctor. When the Doctor motions to open the window in order to summon a fish, the old Kazran is engrossed in the proceedings. Caught somewhere between terror and delight, Kazran calls out to the screen, forgetting that he could not be heard, and exclaims "No, Doctor, you mustn't!" ("Doctor Who"). And yet, as the scene unfolds simultaneously upon the screen and in his mind, he marvels: "New memories, how can I have new memories?" ("Doctor Who"). Just as Scrooge has done, Kazran has begun to reclaim his "metaphysical innocence." Unaware as he may be, he has embarked on a cyclical journey, "Setting out from the innocence that, paradoxically, is to be the goal" (Gilbert 24). As Gilbert

describes of Scrooge, the Kazran at the beginning of the tale has circled away from his former “innocence for the purpose of achieving, by way of contrast, a better view of it,” allowing himself to circle back yet again (24). Kazran has achieved what Smith mused was perhaps impossible. Smith explained “the compassion of the spectator” arises “from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation . . . and . . . was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment” (8). Acting as a spectator, Kazran re-imagines his own childhood feelings. The ideal result is a perspective which benefits significantly from insights that otherwise would have been lost had he remained shackled by a linear mindset. Achieving this perspective is exactly what Philip Davis suggests needs to happen for Scrooge. Davis explains that he must “live in the present, past and future together and not just in the linear flight of a life” (25). The importance of time and memory, as it appears in *Household Words* and *A Christmas Carol*, has led critics to categorize such works as “time conscious” (“Dickens and Christmas” 60).

George H. Ford provides insights into the concept of time and the heroes of Dickens’s time-conscious works in particular, saying “Action is halted, and into the hero’s consciousness there floods an awareness of a past to which he must try to adapt before he can confront future experience” (qtd. in “Dickens and Christmas” 60). Scrooge and Kazran learn to “remember and feel again what insecurities, repressed, led him to his apparent lack of feeling” (Philip Davis 26). Davis cites Doris Lessing, who explains the concept of “real remembering,” which entails “if even for a flash, even a moment, being back in the experience itself. You remember pain with pain, love with love, one’s real best self with one’s best self . . . That is what *A Christmas Carol* is after” (qtd. in Phillip Davis 27). This process is facilitated by visions and time-travel for Scrooge and Kazran respectively. The key to their experience is the ability to have “real

dynamic remembering, *when what has happened to you is felt by you . . . nothing . . . is more vital*” (27). Davis feels that time, for the *Carol*, is paramount to the aims of the narrative. When Scrooge’s visions end, he is shocked to learn that it is still Christmas. He exclaims, “I haven’t missed it. The spirits have done it all in one night” (*Christmas Carol* 112). Davis explains that the key concepts behind Scrooge’s change had been applied to Scrooge’s character “so quickly and so utterly, that no time has been lost” (27). Although the change happens rapidly, as the Scrooge Problem accuses, the ideas behind the change shouldn’t necessarily be discredited. Davis argues, “we are not missing ideas if we find and use them in the midst of feeling; we are not belittling ideas if we have them not in apparently large abstraction but, quickly and emotionally, in time” (27). The true catalysts for Scrooge’s change, after all, already existed.

Near the conclusion of the *Doctor Who* tale, Abigail reveals a secret to the now young-adult Kazran. When she first entered the Stasis pod, she had only eight days left to live. If she spends another day outside the pod she will die. Devastated, Kazran refuses to accompany the Doctor any longer, choosing instead to focus on working with his father. The Doctor’s plan to reform the man has evidently failed. The old Kazran, later musing on Abigail’s unfortunate plight, explains that “this is what the Doctor did to me. Abigail was ill when she went into the ice, on the point of death . . . All those Christmas Eves with me. I could release her any time I want and she would live a single day . . . So tell me . . . how do I choose which day?” (“Doctor Who”). Despite his bitterness, compassion is evident. Kazran further laments, however, “I would never have known her if the Doctor hadn’t changed the course of my whole life to suit himself” (“Doctor Who”). His feelings echo Scrooge’s own anguish at seeing his former fiancé with her family, when he demands of the Ghost of Christmas Past “Remove me! . . . I cannot bear it!” (*Christmas Carol* 68). But Kazran’s journey through time is not yet complete. Gilbert

contends that time, understood in linear terms, can be “one of the illusions man suffers from” (29). He suggests that this illusion “can be defeated by a phenomenological insight into the simultaneity of all experience,” as suggested by Scrooge’s promise to live with the past, present, and future concurrent in his mind. Gilbert also suggests that it is only the “immediacy . . . of material reality . . . that distracts men from the greater reality of their inner lives” (28). For example, the Ghost of Jacob Marley explains of the chain he is fettered by, “I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it” (*Christmas Carol* 48). However, to think beyond these manacles, and to embrace time as a cyclical journey is to be free of such chains. To fully embrace such a journey includes considerations of the future.

After his attempts to reform Kazran have evidently failed, the Doctor again appears within Kazran’s debtor’s prison. The Doctor explains to the surly man why he has come, saying “Because I’m not finished with you yet. You’ve seen the past . . . and now you need to see the future” (“Doctor Who”). Kazran is unmoved. He speaks of a fate promised for an unchanged Scrooge: “Fine . . . Show me. I’ll die cold, alone and afraid. Of course I will, we all do. What difference does showing me make?” (“Doctor Who”). But the Doctor is already showing him the future, the child’s future. The old Kazran looks to the side to see his younger self, observing the man he could become. The Doctor asks, “So what do you think? Is this who you want to become, Kazran?” (“Doctor Who”). The scene briefly enrages the elder Kazran, who lunges at the child, intent on striking him. The child recoils in fear, exclaiming “Dad?” (“Doctor Who”). The elder Kazran sees the same terror in his young face that only his father could elicit. The younger Kazran in turn sees the promise of a future he would certainly regret. He had appeared to become the person he most feared as a child, his father. As George H. Ford says of Scrooge, “Action is halted, and into the hero’s consciousness there floods an awareness of a past to which

he must try to adapt before he can confront future experience” (qtd. in “Dickens and Christmas” 60). Kazran embraces his younger self, saying, “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. It’s okay to be frightened” (“Doctor Who”). Kazran has at last experienced a particular aspect of sympathy as explained by Smith. Smith explains, “that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature” that “can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments . . . which consists their whole grace and propriety” (32). Finally allowing for his benevolent affections to assert themselves, the reconciliation of the elder Kazran to his younger self equates to harmony between the past and present. As the clouds of an uncertain future will dissipate for Scrooge, so will it be for Kazran, who has likewise demonstrated the ability to reclaim metaphysical innocence.

That Kazran exists simultaneously with his young self emphasizes the concept of a cyclical journey, and underscores the importance of time to the *Carol*. According to Gilbert, this idea is demonstrated throughout the *Carol*. For example “Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come . . . exist simultaneously between the stroke of midnight and the stroke of one” (28). Gilbert contends that this device is favored by Dickens. He explains that *Dombey and Son* features “the use of a child and an adult together in a story to represent the same character at different stages of his life, but with the two existing—as if to underscore the metaphysical point of the story—simultaneously” (28). In the *Carol*, Gilbert argues that Tiny Tim and Scrooge also function in this way. If Scrooge does not reform, his future promises to include a premature death mourned by no one. Tiny Tim would also be dead in this scenario. However, a future which features a reformed Scrooge also means that Tiny Tim will live. Gilbert says that with Tiny Tim, “the rejected child of Scrooge’s memory of

himself” is actualized (28). He represents a potential form of Scrooge himself.

The final piece of Scrooge’s reformation is brought to pass when The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come leads the man to a solitary grave, representing a future scenario. Scrooge demonstrates his evolving understanding of time and asks the ghost: “Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?” (*Christmas Carol* 108). Scrooge answers his own question, “Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead . . . But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!” (108). The spirit, intent on his companion coming to his own conclusions, remains motionless. The old man kneels upon the ground before the tomb; “Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE” (108). Desperate now to avoid this fate, Scrooge exclaims, “I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach” (110). These lessons, Scrooge hopes, will allow him to “sponge away the writing on this stone!” (110). In other words, he hopes that time can be re-written.

The vision fades and Scrooge is once again in his room, “The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!” (*Christmas Carol* 111). Gilbert argues that once “Scrooge decides to live simultaneously in the past, present, and future, time loses all its terrors for him” (28). He explains further, “as the master of time now, he can move freely through it in any direction” (28). He is no longer the man who had lost his innocence, and who could no longer feel compassion. On the contrary, Scrooge now demonstrates, through his subsequent charitable deeds, that he has reclaimed his

metaphysical innocence. Consequently, for a man who had just experienced ghostly visitations, the transformation literally and figuratively happens overnight. However, Jaffe argues that “if Scrooge learns his lessons with astonishing quickness, he does so because what is represented as learning in fact demonstrates that in his heart he knows them already” (259). Through the visitations “Scrooge gains access to his former, feeling self and to a community with which that self is in harmony . . . not incidentally, he saves his own life” (255). In his exuberance, he exclaims to anyone within earshot “Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!” (*Christmas Carol* 112). He has learned that “metaphysical innocence is immutable, retaining its original strength behind the gathering clouds of experience” (Gilbert 28). Indeed, such clouds seem to have dissipated for Scrooge. Looking out the window, he sees “No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring . . . Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky” (*Christmas Carol* 112). This favorable turn of weather also figures prominently in the conclusion of *Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*.

The reformed Kazran attempts to operate his weather machine for the benefit of the ship of 4,003. Unfortunately, the machine will no longer work. The Doctor determines that their only chance is to release Abigail from her pod for what would be her last day alive. The Doctor’s plan requires Abigail’s specific talent for singing. He explains that “her voice resonates perfectly with the ice crystals . . . it will calm the sky” (“Doctor Who”). In other words, it will function as the weather machine. When Kazran releases her from the pod, she chides him: “hoarding my days like an old miser?” (“Doctor Who”). Kazran protests that she could not live beyond another day outside the pod, but Abigail explains “we’ve had so many Christmas Eves, Kazran, I think it’s time for Christmas Day” (“Doctor Who”).

If Kazran’s transformation mirrors Scrooge’s, whose new understanding of time brings about a striking change, the show must conclude as only *Doctor Who* can. Luckily, a part of the

Doctor's sonic screwdriver had been lost within the shark he had summoned to the young Kazran's bedroom. Using machinery from Kazran's mansion to amplify the signal, and a part of his sonic screwdriver to broadcast Abigail's voice, the Doctor explains as the song begins that the "singing resonates in the crystals . . . feeding back and forth between the two halves of the screwdriver . . . one song filling the sky. The crystals will align and I'll feed in a control-phase loop and the clouds will unlock" ("Doctor Who"). The ship is saved, a tangible example of Kazran's own redeemed character. However, the saved ship also means that Abigail and Kazran will be spending their last day together. Pondering this unfortunate truth, the Doctor somberly remarks, "Everything's got to end sometime, otherwise nothing would ever get started." Asked where Abigail and Kazran will go, the Doctor simply explains "Christmas . . . yeah, Christmas. Halfway out of the dark" ("Doctor Who"). Kazran's actions demonstrate the existence of positive qualities still within him. As Gilbert explains of Scrooge, "by a penitent act" the miser has discovered "that metaphysical innocence in man . . . can be obscured but never destroyed . . . which is . . . the theme of *A Christmas Carol*" (30).

Paul Davis, speaking of the *Carol* and its countless adaptations, says that the "meaning of any literary work emerges from the dynamic interaction of text and culture-text" (13). In the case of the *Carol*, this interaction has been repeated over and over since the very beginning. As discussed above, Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins explain of adaptations that many "have believed, either explicitly or implicitly, that works of literature ought to be perfectly translated to the screen" (15). Using this criterion alone would certainly disqualify many, if not most, of these adaptations, rendering their unique insights invalid. However, adapters cannot simply "transfer a novel, or even another film, to the screen" (16). The very process includes the need to "interpret, re-working the precursor text and choosing the various meanings and sensations they find most

compelling” (16). To hold an adaptation accountable merely for its deviations to its source material is simply to make the analysis of such works “an exercise in negativity” (16). More appropriate perhaps is the concept of adaptations as a “complex analogy” wherein a particular work, “rather than being handicapped by their movements away from the earlier text, are often enabled by those differences” (16). Operating within this premise refutes the implicit assumption of fidelity as the primary qualifier of an adaptation, asserting on the contrary that “difference, in fact, makes art possible” (16).

While it is not the purpose of the present discussion to qualify *Doctor Who* as a piece of art, it is to suggest that the interplay between this adaptation and the *Carol* reveals significant insights into Dickens’s philosophy of change. Gilbert explains of Scrooge that it was necessary for him “to make his cyclical journey” (29). Having mastered time, Scrooge “returns to the state of metaphysical innocence from which he started, and his history comes to an end” (29). Edmund Wilson asks what Scrooge “would actually be like if we were to follow him beyond the frame of the story?” (qtd. in Gilbert 22). Paul Davis cites Edward Wagenknecht, who considers this question a “glaring example of critical irresponsibility” insisting that we “cannot follow Scrooge ‘beyond the frame of the story’” (15). However, both statements miss the key concept of the tale, time. Davis explains that “the history of the *Carol* since 1843 would suggest that we can follow the iconic miser beyond the tale, for Scrooge exists in the Anglo-American consciousness independent of his Dickensian origin” (15). Dickens undoubtedly established the *Carol*, “but the Carol is rewritten each Christmas, and Scrooge, an altered spirit, appears anew with each retelling” (15).

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