Trabajo Fin de Grado

"The Ghostly Double: The Spectral Encounters in *A Christmas Carol* and the Psychodynamics of Identity"

"El doble fantasmal: Los encuentros espectrales en *Cuento de Navidad* y la psicodinámica de la identidad"

Autora

Sara Lorente Abad

Directora

Jessica Aliaga-Lavrijsen

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Grado en Estudios Ingleses

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In gratitude for,

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Abstract

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, first published in 1843, remains one of the most endearing Christmas stories from Victorian literature. The reason why this novel has entered the hearts of people worldwide is because of its wide range of human themes, bringing together the real and the fictional in a very relatable procedure. The purpose of this essay is to study the hidden background of the spectral apparitions in *A Christmas Carol* as expressions of the ghostly double, arguing that Dickens uses these apparitions to intensify the dramatisation of the character's double identity. By analysing the duties of Marley's Ghost and the three Christmas Spirits, this study explores the way in which the 'ghostly double' acts as a supernatural yet moral force and reflex, motivating Scrooge to confront his broken *alter ego* and move towards psychological transformation. As a final result, the tale exposes how they function as a means of dealing with guilt, memory and personal redemption in the context of Victorian culture and society.

Thanks to this work, sensational connections between the existence of the "double self" and the theories of various intellectuals in the field will be discovered. Among them Freud and his theory of the *uncanny* and the "double"; Bakhtin and his handling of time *chronotope* and *spatial chronotope* and Punter with his subliminal incorporation of the *gothic* world.

Thus one can conclude that the role of the ghostly doubles and the psychological insights these encounters provide. la relevance of *A Christmas Carol* today and how does Dickens' exploration of the double and spectrality continue to resonate in contemporary discussions of identity, transformation, and the self. Finally, the importance of *A Christmas Carol* as a tale not only serves as

an exemplification of Christmas spirit, but also as of psychological and moral redemption.

Resumen

Cuento de Navidad, de Charles Dickens, publicada por primera vez en 1843, sigue siendo una de las historias navideñas más entrañables de la literatura victoriana. La razón por la que esta novela ha entrado en los corazones de la gente de todo el mundo es su amplio abanico de temas humanos, aunando lo real y lo ficticio de una forma muy relatable. El propósito de este ensayo es estudiar el trasfondo oculto de las apariciones espectrales en Cuento de Navidad como expresiones del doble fantasmal, argumentando que Dickens utiliza estas apariciones para intensificar la dramatización de la doble identidad del personaje. Analizando las funciones del fantasma de Marley y de los tres espíritus navideños, este estudio explora el modo en que el «doble fantasmal» actúa como una fuerza y un reflejo sobrenaturales pero morales, motivando a Scrooge a enfrentarse a su alter ego roto y a avanzar hacia la transformación psicológica. Como resultado final, la obra expone cómo funcionan como medio para tratar la culpa, la memoria y la redención personal en el contexto de la cultura y la sociedad victorianas.

Gracias a esta obra, se descubrirán sensacionales conexiones entre la existencia del «doble» y las teorías de diversos intelectuales en la materia. Entre ellos Freud y su teoría de lo siniestro y el «doble»; Bakhtin y su manejo del cronotopo temporal y el cronotopo espacial y Punter con su incorporación subliminal del mundo gótico.

Así pues, se puede concluir que el papel de los dobles fantasmales y las percepciones psicológicas que proporcionan estos encuentros. la relevancia de Cuento de Navidad en la actualidad y ¿cómo sigue resonando la exploración de Dickens del doble y la espectralidad en los debates contemporáneos sobre la identidad, la transformación y el yo. Por último, la importancia de *Cuento de Navidad* como relato no sólo como ejemplificación del espíritu navideño, sino también como redención psicológica y moral.

1. Introduction

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas* (1843) has transcended its origins as a Victorian festival novella to become an enduring symbol of redemption, personal growth, and the transformative power of Christmas spirit by means of stylistic conventions, historical context, and narrative techniques. It further aims at dissecting how Dickens has captured and critiqued the social norms of the Victorian Era. The story's widespread appeal lies not only in its moral clarity, but also in its deeper exploration of identity, memory, and guilt. At the heart of the narrative is Ebenezer Scrooge, whose spectral encounters with the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, along with the haunting figure of Marley's Ghost, present a unique psychological drama. These apparitions, while central to the plot's supernatural elements, serve a much greater purpose—they manifest as expressions of the "ghostly double" and "psychoanalysis of identity". This references allude to the concept of the *Doppelgänger*, framing Scrooge's supernatural experiences as encounters with mirrored phantoms of his own individuality: Through these encounters, Dickens dramatizes the tension between Scrooge's broken self and his potential for redemption, making the novella a compelling study of the human psyche.

In examining these spectral figures as expressions of the "ghostly double," this essay argues that Dickens uses the supernatural to explore complex psychological themes such as guilt, memory, and moral transformation. Drawing on contemporary theories of identity, particularly the works of Freud, Bakhtin, and Punter, this analysis will highlight how the ghosts not only represent a moral force guiding Scrooge toward self-awareness but also reflect the social and psychological tensions. The ghostly doubles become mirrors of Scrooge's

internal struggle, allowing him to confront his hidden guilt and reshape his identity. This exploration of the spectral encounters in *A Christmas Carol* offers a deeper understanding of the novella's ongoing relevance in contemporary discussions of identity, transformation, and the self. By linking Dickens' portrayal of the "double" to these psychoanalytic and literary theories, we can see how the novella continues to resonate with modern readers, offering both a moral and psychological road map to personal redemption.

The main protagonist, Ebenezer Scrooge, the miserly and solitary protagonist of Charles Dickens' 1843 novella *A Christmas Carol*, is portrayed as an elderly businessman who despises both Christmas and human interaction. Driven by an insatiable greed, he mistreats his clerk Bob Cratchit, rejects charitable appeals, and mocks the festive spirit, fixated solely on accumulating wealth. These traits align with Freud's concept of "castration anxiety," which relates to a deep-rooted fear of loss and impotence that manifests in various forms of repression and control. Scrooge's refusal to engage with others or recognize the emotional and social needs of those around him underscores his defensive isolation, reflecting the kind of psychic trauma Freud identifies in his psychoanalytic theories. His repression is vividly illustrated in the novella's description of Scrooge's character:

> 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. (Dickens 34)

Here, Dickens emphasizes Scrooge's emotional coldness and impenetrability, portraying him as entirely resistant to external forces—whether warmth,

kindness, or societal expectations—which further highlights the internal conflict and fragmentation of his identity

On Christmas Eve, Scrooge's cold, self-centred world is shattered when the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, appears to warn him of the dire consequences of his selfishness. As Freud suggests in his discussion of *the uncanny* ("heimlich") the appearance of the spectral figures evokes a feeling of dread, "a creeping horror" (1). Interestingly, thanks to his study of the terminology of this term in a wide range of languages, it is probed that the meaning of this term is similar regardless of the linguistic background[1]. It is known to resonate with repressed fears and unresolved psychological tensions:

> It undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible—to all that arouses dread and creeping horror; it is equally certain, too, that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with whatever excites dread. (Freud 1)

[1] In order to demonstrate how the word "unheimlich" has a global prevalence, Freud examined the terminology in distinct languages.

"I wish to express my indebtedness to Dr. Th. Reik for the following excerpts: LATIN: (K. E. Gorges, Deutschlateinisches Wörterbuch, 1898). Ein unheimlicher Ort [an uncanny place]—locus suspectus; in unheimlicher Nachtzeit [in the dismal night hours]—intempesta nocte. GREEK: (Rost's and Schenki's Lexikons). Xenos strange, foreign. ENGLISH: (from dictionaries by Lucas, Bellow, Flügel, Muret-Sanders). Uncomfortable, uneasy, gloomy, dismal, uncanny, ghastly; (of a house) haunted; (of a man) a repulsive fellow. FRENCH: (Sachs-Villatte). Inquiétant, sinistre, lugubre, mal à son aise. SPANISH: (Tollhausen, 1889). Sospechoso, de mal aguëro, lugubre, siniestro. The Italian and the Portuguese seem to content themselves with words which we should describe as circumlocutions. In Arabic and Hebrew "uncanny" means the same as "daemonic," "gruesome." Let us therefore return to the German language. In Daniel Sanders' Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (1860), the following remarks i [abstracted in translation] are found upon the word heimlich; I have laid stress on certain passages by italicizing them. Heimlich, adj.: I. Also heimelich, heinielig, belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, comfortable, homely, etc. (a) (Obsolete) belonging to the house or the family, or regarded as so belonging (cf. Latin familiaris): Die Heimlichen, the members of the household; Der heimliche Rat [him to whom secrets are revealed] Gen. xli. 45; 2 Sam. xxiii. 23; now more usually Geheimer Rat [Privy Councillor], cf. Heimlicher. (b) Of animals: tame, companionable to man. As opposed to wild, e.g. "Wild animals . . . that are trained to be… ". Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny* (1919), pp. 2-4.

Through the visits of the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, Scrooge is forced to confront the sorrow of his past, the harm he inflicts on others in the present, and the grim future that awaits him if he remains unchanged. As Freud notes, this encounter with the supernatural, combined with Scrooge's own psychological crises, elicits a powerful sense of the *uncanny*:

> This phenomenon does undoubtedly, subject to certain conditions and combined with certain circumstances, awaken an uncanny feeling, which recalls that sense of helplessness sometimes experienced in dreams. (Freud 10)

By the end of his transformative journey, Scrooge's newfound embrace of the Christmas spirit and human connection marks his redemption. He becomes a living symbol of the potential for personal transformation, having learned the value of generosity, compassion, and community.

In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the spectral visitations of the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come provide more than just supernatural encounters; they function as critical catalysts for the transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge's identity. These ghosts are not merely figments of Scrooge's imagination, but serve as manifestations of his psyche, engaging with his unresolved past, his current moral decay, and his future potential. The spectral figures highlight a profound tension between what is and what could be, providing an unsettling yet necessary confrontation with the self. This project explores the psychodynamics of Scrooge's identity, particularly the way the four

spectral encounters mirror the psychological fragmentation and duality inherent in his persona.

Drawing on Freudian psychoanalytic theory on the "double", the study examines how Scrooge's encounters with the ghosts represent a confrontation with his 'ghostly double'—a symbolic alter ego that embodies his repressed fears, desires, and potential for redemption. This psychoanalytic lens allows us to interpret the ghosts not simply as external agents of change, but as internal forces that reveal the complexities of Scrooge's identity crisis. By understanding these spectral figures as projections of the unconscious, this project delves into the ways *A Christmas Carol* dramatizes the struggle between the conscious and unconscious self, providing a vivid illustration of how identity can be fractured, haunted, and ultimately reconstructed through psychological reflection and reconciliation.

In addition to its psychological depth, *A Christmas Carol* reflects as a critique dehumanization effects of capitalism, particularly its impact on the impoverished, within the context of an era marked by stark class divisions and rapid economic transformation. As Karl Marx contends, "the industrial age intensified class struggle, reducing individuals to mere commodities in the capitalist system" (Marx, xxvi). In this light, Ebenezer Scrooge emerges as a symbol of the moral decay Dickens observed in society. However, Scrooge's eventual transformation, driven by supernatural forces, underscores a message of redemption through empathy and generosity, echoing the moral philosophy of Adam Smith, who championed the role of sympathy in human relationships

(Smith 6). This moral arc parallels the psychological journey Scrooge undergoes, bridging the personal and societal dimensions of his redemption.

According to Freud, the *uncanny* arises when something familiar becomes unfamiliar, evoking a sense of discomfort or fear. In *A Christmas Carol*, the ghosts are both familiar and alien to Scrooge—they embody aspects of his past, present, and future, yet they also confront him with the stark, terrifying truths of his own repressed emotions and moral failings. Freud's concept of the *uncanny* thus helps illuminate how these apparitions are not merely external agents of change, but external projections of Scrooge's internal, unconscious struggles—manifestations of the fear and guilt he has long suppressed. Through these encounters, the supernatural forces in *A Christmas Carol* bring to the surface what Scrooge has denied, forcing him to reckon with his own double identity—the cold businessman he has become and the potential for warmth and generosity that lies buried beneath the surface.

The ongoing pursuit of Dickens to combine contrary emotions of polar sites (coldness and warmth sensations) indefinitely helped the novel to be unique in its style.

> Dickens skillfully blends social critique with a heartwarming narrative and memorable characters, using the story to promote the values of kindness, charity, and community that were central to the Christmas season. This combination of emotional appeal and social commentary made the novella an immediate bestseller, cementing its place in literary history. As J. Hillis Miller notes, "Dickens' works are special for the soulful fact that "the celebration of the qualities and emotions of community is the chief resource of the many Christmas stories which span almost all of Dickens' writing career" (96).

As regarding Scrooge´s complex psychodynamics of identity, he experiences moments that were so tragic that he even left his beloved job during all those years and began to look at life with a different perspective.

> Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than usual with him. (Dickens 39)

In this passage, Scrooge demonstrates a shift in his character, reflecting a moment of self-awareness and personal growth. After the gentlemen leave, he returns to his work with a renewed sense of self-worth, signaling a subtle but significant change in his mindset as he begins to reconsider his previously rigid worldview.

In the context of the Victorian era and its distinctive style of literature, this work proceeds to his analysis of *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens as the author of Victorian novels influenced literature through the scope of all his volumes. Furthermore, he extends to an analysis of characterisation, motifs, and other elements in his narrative techniques. Victorian literature has always had something to offer, so the analysis will cover its structure, methods of narration, major transcendental themes, evolution of characters, the general ideology of the novella and moral maxims contained in it. In relation to this, the essay will deal with the engagement of socio-political reality of the era, as well the interaction between the narrative, its historical context and modern day interaction.

The ghosts' role is not merely to haunt Scrooge but to serve as catalysts for self-examination, forcing him to traverse his past, present, and possible

future. This mirrors the idea of the ego in psychoanalytic theory, which is responsible for managing the unconscious and the external world. The supernatural figures propel him toward this moment of self-recognition, allowing for the restoration of his moral compass and leading to his eventual atonement. Dickens, therefore, not only uses these apparitions to advance Scrooge's personal evolution but also to critique broader societal issues of moral and social responsibility.

The essay unfolds across five distinct staves: Marley, associated with "The Ghostly Double" of Scrooge; The Ghost of the Christmas Past (nostalgia), identified with the inner conflict of the "double" (Scrooge/Ghost); Christmas Present (miserable reality), the Christmas Yet to Come (ill-fated future); and The End Of It (resolution of the "double" inner conflict).

The central basis of this study is based on achieving an analytical line of analysis of the most hidden and internal ideology of the apparently only Christmas tale; getting to entering until within the most magical and hidden aspects of Dickens. In addition, this section comprises the exploration of the main literary motifs of the era, then it introduces the main protagonist, Ebenezer Scrooge. The Dickensian style and his impact on literature also play a large part. In the first section be committed to **"**The Ghostly Double and The Uncanny". Moreover, the second section focuses on "Spectral Encounters and the Structure of Time". Then, the third section will be dedicated to "Spectral Encounters and the Structure of Time"; and the last section will be assigned to "The Transformation": "Redemption and the Reconciliation of the Self". The conclusion includes a compilation of the main role of the ghostly doubles and

the psychological insights of the encounters between the protagonist and the ghosts. Furthermore, there will be a reflection on the relevance of the novel nowadays together with an exploration of the double and spectrality identity and transformation echoes. Finally, yet equally important, an appraisal of the tale values: the Christmas spirit, the psychological and moral transcendence and complexity: “the duality” between Scrooge and the Ghosts and “the uncanny”.

Derrida revolves around *spectrality* as a disruption of linear time and the stability of the present. Derrida suggests that *spectrality*, represented by ghosts or memories, exists in a "disjointed time" where past and present are not separated. She establishes notions such as: “absence”, “non-presence”, and “virtuality”, challenging our understanding of what is real and what is not.

> If there is something like spectrality, there are reasons to doubt this reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be opposed to it: absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even the simulacrum in general, and so forth. (Derrida 48)

As suggested above by Derrida, the distinction between presence and absence is not as clear-cut as we often believe, suggesting that our reality is constantly haunted by the past and possibilities, making the "present" itself unstable and open to reinterpretation.

2. “The Ghostly Double” and “The Uncanny”

The concept of “the double” is a pervasive motif in both psychology and literature, offering a powerful lens through which to analyze the distorted,

disordered, and often troubling and blurred aspects of human nature in a novel: “The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities” (Bakhtin 321). This *duality* serves as a symbolic representation of the internal conflict between the conscious self and the repressed or denied elements of the psyche. As Freud notes in his exploration of the *uncanny*, there exists a compulsion to repeat certain patterns of thought and behavior, a dynamic rooted in the unconscious mind and driven by instinctual forces that often defy the pleasure principle. Freud argues that this repetition-compulsion, which is “powerful enough to overrule the pleasure-principle”, endows certain elements of the mind with a “daemonic character”, revealing the darker, more irrational forces that shape human experience (11).

Similarly, this motif of the “uncanny” and the psychological exploration of the “double” can be observed in another iconic Victorian text: Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Like Scrooge, Dr. Jekyll is confronted with the darker, repressed aspects of his personality through the creation of his monstrous alter ego, Mr. Hyde. In both texts, the duality of identity becomes a source of terror, with the characters struggling to reconcile their outward persona with the darker forces lurking within. As critics such as Punter note, Dickens's ability to “economically invoke terror” enhances the chilling effect of the supernatural in *A Christmas Carol* (Punter 194). In Jekyll and Hyde, the same fear of a fractured identity is central: Jekyll is physically transformed into Hyde, just as Scrooge is confronted by the supernatural appearance of the three spirits. Both Scrooge and Jekyll are haunted by their double selves—Scrooge’s hardened, miserly personality and his latent potential

for generosity, and Jekyll's respectable public persona and his monstrous, repressed urges. These "uncanny" transformations expose the tension between the conscious self and the repressed, unconscious elements of the psyche, ultimately creating a sense of horror that both puzzles and captivates the reader.

Beneath the introduction to Stevenson´s book, there are two pertinent passages: "The horror of my other self" and "Seek and hide". The first reports the mystery around Mr. Hyde (cruel and deformed) and his relationship with Dr. Jekyll. Then, the passing of time reveals the horrifying truth: they are the same person but with `two faces´. However, he loses complete mastery over his other self or *alter ego*, embodying the fear of fragmented identity, in which good and evil are disturbingly blurred.

> Edward Hyde is the embodiment of what Jekyll refers to as his lower elements', but he also makes clear that this hierarchical relationship is formed by Jekyll's excessive conformity to the codes of respectability and public opinion. (Stevenson xxii)

The second evaluates the meaning of the inner conflict between both entities. Jekyll seeks at all costs to release his frustration without remorse, experimenting with a potion to separate his moral self from his forbidden impulses. However, Hyde, the manifestation of his evil side, lurks in the shadows, acting cruelly and without remorse, like the Scrooge in his present life. As the story progresses, Jekyll struggles to maintain control, like Scrooge in his future to come, alternating between seeking redemption and the need to leave his old identity behind.

As it can be seen in the quote below, there is a clash of interests between subject and format due to the tension in narrative style and subject matter. The style is categorised as narrative-classical, while the content is sinister, about identity crises and doubles, philosophical motifs. The order is linear, but the background is totally uneven.

> Can we be sure they are presented unaltered or unedited? There appears to be a conflict of interests between content and form. The narrative attempts full revelation, the agents of its publication concealment. At the core of the text are silences, evasions, suppressions. (Stevenson xxx)

The importance of the double is central to understanding the psychological dynamics at play in literature and human behavior, particularly as articulated by Freud. He introduces the *uncanny* as a concept that transcends the mere *unfamiliar*, arguing that it arises when something familiar becomes disturbingly alien. According to Freud, the *uncanny* is not just the unfamiliar, but the repressed or concealed—what was once known but is now hidden, "charged with concealing the deepest and most sinister facets of a person." He clarifies that the notion of the *uncanny* should be viewed beyond just the unfamiliar: "It is not difficult to see that this definition is incomplete, and we will therefore try to proceed beyond the equation of unheimlich with unfamiliar" (Freud 2). The double, then, represents a reflection of the self that both mirrors and distorts, creating an unnerving intersection of the familiar and the foreign, revealing the hidden or repressed layers of identity.

The German word *unheimlich* is, quite literally, the opposite of *heimlich* or *heimisch*, which translates to "familiar," "native," or "belonging to the home."

This stark contrast leads us to the intuitive conclusion that what is "uncanny" is unsettling precisely because it is unfamiliar, not yet integrated into our sense of comfort and belonging (Freud 2). He suggests that the true source of unease arises in moments when our childhood fantasies and primal fears seem more real and authentic than our adult perceptions of the world. Taking this further, one might argue that there exists a complex, often unsettling relationship between the familiar things that comfort us and those that terrify us—those very elements that are embedded in our personal history.

> Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre´´s voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones. (Dickens 45)

The stingy main character Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* is an ideal illustration of the Freudian idea of the double, which examines the duality of the self and frequently shows up as a conflict between opposing elements of a person's psyche. Taking into account the characteristic personality of this old man, a close link can be established between Ebenezer Scrooge and the Freudian theories of “castration” and “the double”.

> In the pathological case of delusions of being watched this mental institution becomes isolated, dissociated from the ego, and discernible to a physician’s eye. [...] able to treat the rest of the ego like an object—the fact, that is, that man is capable of self-observation—renders it possible to invest the old idea of a “double” with a new meaning and to ascribe many things to it, above all, those things which seem to the new faculty of self-criticism to belong to the old surmounted narcissism of the earliest period of all (10).

Thus, Ebenezer Scrooge, the miserly protagonist of *A Christmas Carol*, serves as an ideal embodiment of Freud's notion of the double, a psychological duality often expressed as a conflict between opposing elements within the self. Scrooge's personality—marked by greed, isolation, and a deep distrust of others—offers a compelling lens through which to explore the Freudian theories of castration anxiety and the double. The first theory, rooted in the Oedipus myth, suggests that certain fears, particularly the fear of losing one's eyes or sight, are linked to deeper fears of castration. Freud notes, "In blinding himself, Oedipus, that mythical law-breaker, was simply carrying out a mitigated form of the punishment of castration—the only punishment that according to the lex talionis was fitted for him" (Freud 7). This idea extends to the fear of losing control, particularly in Scrooge's case, where his obsession with wealth and power stems from an anxiety about vulnerability and emasculation—metaphorically "castrated" by the potential loss of his wealth or status.

Hence, Scrooge's attachment to money and his belief that others envy or even seek to harm him out of jealousy further illustrate his internal conflict, deeply connected to the Freudian notion of projection. He is isolated not only by his wealth but by his own psychological defenses. Freud's theory of delusions of persecution offers insight into Scrooge's fear that others are "watching" or conspiring against him. As Freud explains in his analysis of the double, the individual becomes dissociated from the *ego*, capable of observing oneself as an object. This dissociation, in turn, allows for the projection of one's own fears and repressed desires onto external figures or situations: "The fact that man is capable of self-observation renders it possible to invest the old idea of a 'double'

with a new meaning and to ascribe many things to it" (Freud 10). In Scrooge's case, this manifests in the form of the spectral visitations that bring him face to face with his past, present, and future selves. They serve as manifestations of the double, forcing him to confront the fragmented aspects of his psyche. The ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come operate as external projections of his inner turmoil, reflecting his internal fears, regrets, and unresolved contradictions.

In a Freudian sense, Scrooge's ultimate transformation reflects the reintegration of the divided self. Through his encounters with these phantasmal figures, he is given the opportunity to reconcile the contradictory parts of his personality—the miserly, cold, self-preserving individual and the potential for empathy, generosity, and human connection that lies dormant within him. Scrooge's redemption thus represents a symbolic reintegration of the self, in which the opposing elements of his character are reconciled, allowing him to re-enter the world not as a fragmented, paranoid individual, but as a whole person, capable of love and compassion. Such an influence has this psychological breakdown had on the weak and tormented character that one might even say he was not mentally healthy. As David Punter pointed out, "Dickens, quite apart from many lesser writers, were quite profligate with scenes of physical and mental hardship […]"(162). Dickens can therefore be categorised as a dreamer of emotional turmoil. His intention is to awaken a feeling of conscience and affective responsibility.

The theory of the double encapsulates the psychoanalytic tension between a person's adult self, or the "miserable 'I'," and their repressed,

idealized childhood self, the "longed-for 'I'." According to psychoanalytic theory, the double emerges when an individual encounters a suppressed or alienated version of themselves, creating a disconcerting sense of duality. This tension manifests as an unsettling coexistence of the familiar and the foreign, where parts of the self—previously hidden or denied—suddenly resurface, evoking both recognition and dread.

Not every *new* or *unfamiliar* experience is inherently frightening; however, there is an important distinction to be made between what is simply novel and what is truly uncanny. Freud asserts, "We can only say that what is novel can easily become frightening and uncanny; some new things are frightening, but not by any means all. Something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar to make it uncanny" (Freud 2). This distinction is crucial to understanding the psychological impact of the "double", which emerges when the familiar is suddenly altered, revealing a hidden or repressed part of the self. Walpole is another thinker in the field who believes that drastic thematic clashes such as this (seemingly linear but unevenly shaped narrative) can cause an interesting visual and mental surprise effect on the reader.

As Ebenezer Scrooge embarks on his spectral journey, he is forced to confront the deepest divisions within his own psyche, experiencing this duality in the most visceral way imaginable. Each ghost represents a different aspect of this internal conflict. The Ghost of Christmas Past presents a vision of the innocent, loving child Scrooge once was, now buried beneath years of bitterness, greed, and emotional repression. This confrontation with his earlier, idealized

self forces Scrooge to reckon with the losses he has suffered and the ways in which he has distanced himself from his own humanity.

Freud's exploration of the double emphasizes that such internal tensions arise from a place of narcissism and self-love, rooted in both childhood and primitive man. Freud writes, "Such ideas, however, have sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which holds sway in the mind of the child as in that of primitive man; and when this stage has been left behind, the double takes on a different aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, he becomes the ghastly harbinger of death" (9). For Scrooge, the double manifests as both a symbol of the lost innocence of his youth and a terrifying reminder of his own impending death, a fate sealed by his egocentric, callous ways.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come brings the culmination of this psychic journey, forcing Scrooge to confront the stark reality of his lonely and forgotten death—an inevitable consequence of his choices. In contrast, the Ghost of Christmas Present reveals the extent of his indifference to the suffering of others, laying bare his moral and social disconnection. Through these supernatural encounters, Scrooge is not only forced to confront his repressed emotions but also to engage with the external manifestations of his psyche, which have long been estranged from his conscious self.

As Freud and Stevenson remark, the "double" does not simply fade away with the loss of primary narcissism; instead, it takes on a new function as the ego matures. The *ego* develops a critical faculty capable of observing and judging the self, a function we recognize as conscience. Freud writes, "A special faculty is

slowly formed there, able to oppose the rest of the ego, with the function of observing and criticizing the self and exercising a censorship within the mind, and this we become aware of as our 'conscience'" (Freud 10). Through the ghosts, Dickens portrays Scrooge's psychological breakdown as a necessary step in his reclamation of the self, leading to the eventual reintegration of his lost humanity.

> "You fear, I suppose, that it might lead to his detection?" asked the lawyer.
>
> "No," said the other, "I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde;
>
> I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character, which this hateful business has rather exposed". (Stevenson 27)

Both *A Christmas Carol* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* examine psychological fragmentation through supernatural encounters that force their main characters to confront hidden truths. Scrooge's breakdown reaches its peak when spectral visions alter his perception of time, forcing him to relive his past, confront his present and anticipate his bleak future, ultimately leading to redemption. Similarly, Dr. Jekyll suffers a breakdown when he loses the ability to handle his dual identity and Hyde transforms into an uncontrollable force that ultimately defeats him.

The next part will examine ideas like psychological complexity and breakdowns via a distinctive temporal panorama, demonstrating how Scrooge's metamorphosis is shaped by temporal structure.

3. "Spectral Encounters" and the "Structure of Time"

Two other concepts that potentially come into play in the narrative and the world of the novel are: spectral encounters and the structure of time. These two notions

will create a marvelous and deep panorama full of special temporal and mental disruptions for the reader; mixing past elements with present and future ones. So much so that as the work progresses, one can observe how the protagonist finds himself immersed in an amalgam of very diverse memories and recollections, which will even make him dissociate in time and doubt the very entity of his being, confusing or intertwining the real with the fictitious.

As Mikhail Bakhtin, a renowned historian and literary critic, has stated:

> [T]his term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Ein-stein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes, we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not en-tirely). (Bakhtin 84)

Bakhtin introduces the concept of the *chronotope* in his influential work *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981). He argues that each literary genre manipulates time and space in ways that serve its unique narrative needs, and that this manipulation is fundamental to the construction of meaning within any story. Bakhtin's analysis suggests that the relationship between time and space is not merely a structural component, but a dynamic force that influences how meaning is created and perceived in a text.

In his exploration of the literary artistic chronotope, Bakhtin explains that spatial and temporal indicators become fused into a unified, concrete whole.

> Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin 84)

This fusion creates a sense of both temporal and spatial depth, enriching the narrative and offering a more immersive experience for the reader. Time is not just a backdrop but an active, shaping element of the story.

Regarding time, Dickens skillfully manipulates it not only as a structural element but also as a moral and psychological lens through which the protagonist's journey unfolds. Situated within the tradition of the moral tale, the novella brings together the three temporal dimensions—past, present, and future—through techniques like analepsis (flashbacks) and prolepsis (foreshadowing). Time in the novella is not simply a chronological framework but a vehicle for Scrooge's emotional and psychological development. The past, filled with loss, innocence, and regret, sets the stage for Scrooge's moral decline. In contrast, the present reveals his deep isolation, misery, and envy, while the future casts a grim shadow over his potential fate, directly linked to his current actions. In this way, time becomes both a reflection of Scrooge's internal state and a force that drives the narrative toward his eventual transformation, as Dickens intertwines the moral lessons of the story with the temporal structure.

Space, in a similar way, reflects Scrooge's inner world and can be seen as a *spatial chronotope*, a disruption of linear time that mirrors the protagonist's psychological and emotional fragmentation. In this sense, space in the novel

represents the different identities Scrooge inhabits, each shaped by his shifting relationship to time and the world around him.

> They walked along the road; Scrooge recognised every gate, post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. (Dickens 57)

In examples such as the quote below, the spatio-temporal conception is clearly blurred. *The Goblin Game:* constitutes a subversion of the static, since the space of a cemetery is one of repose and permanence in contrast to the continuous temporal jumps of the story. The *chronotope of the Threshold* according to Bakhtin can therefore be supported here, since it is an instant in which the character finds himself on the boundary between two realities, nature (earthly life) and the supernatural (life after death). All of this accompanied by ambient light and music reinforce this spatio-temporal gap and magnifies the motif of transformation and distorted perception within the story.

> As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed for one instant a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones, never stopping for an instant to take breath, but overing the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. (Dickens 13)

Furthermore, the *chronotype* may also depict an inner and profound transformation, as in the case of Scrooge. The novel illustrates how time is not merely a linear sequence but a psychological and moral landscape through which Scrooge journeys. The ghosts function as manifestations of the "repressed" elements of Scrooge's psyche, forcing him to re-examine his choices and personal history. Each spectral encounter catalyzes the reawakening of memories, desires, and regrets long buried beneath his hardened exterior. The Ghost of Christmas Past unveils moments of lost innocence and love, reminding him of the warmth he once knew but chose to forsake. The Ghost of Christmas Present exposes the emotional distance he maintains from others, particularly highlighting the suffering he willfully ignores. Finally, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come presents a grim vision of his lonely demise, confronting him with the full weight of his actions. These temporal interventions dismantle his rigid worldview, allowing for a rebirth of empathy and human connection, underscoring the transformative power of reflection and redemption.

Scrooge's journey is deeply intertwined with a confrontation of different *chronotypes*, each structuring his perception of time and space in ways that force him to renegotiate his identity. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope*—where time and space shape narrative meaning—is central to understanding how Dickens constructs Scrooge's transformation through temporal intervention. He is taken back to the places of his early adulthood and youth by the Ghost of Christmas Past, whose visit is dominated by the *chronotope* of loss and nostalgia. An emotional temporality permeates these

areas, exposing his suppressed desire for interpersonal interaction: Fezziwig's warehouse, Belle's farewell scene, and the schoolhouse all capture poignant and heartbreaking moments, making Scrooge confront his younger self and the fallout from his disengagement.

The Ghost of Christmas Present he travels with reveals the chronotope of the present as a location of revelation. Here, time is fluid, condensing a day into observable seconds, while space is enlarged to show interrelated social realities. Fred's Christmas party and the Cratchit home are examples of places where happiness endures in spite of material adversity that Scrooge observes. Scrooge is forced to reevaluate his position within a larger social network as a result of this interaction, which calls into question his inflexible individuality. In the end, Scrooge is placed in a split, terrifying world where time is racing towards finality due to the chronotope of imminent mortality in the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come vision. A future without human connection is embodied by the pawnshop, the empty streets, and his own abandoned headstone. Time is irrevocable in this situation, and space reflects existential loneliness, forcing Scrooge to actively change who he is before it's too late.

Taking into account the journey, it serves as an example of how time-space interactions may be used in literature to promote moral and personal awareness. The psychological theme of *recognition/non-recognition* is also fundamental to Scrooge's destiny, especially in his experiences with the paranormal. When Scrooge first sees Marley's ghost, he rejects it as a hallucination brought on by indigestion. It is a reflection of his ingrained

rejection of spiritual and moral truths that he first failed to recognise. Scrooge reaches such a point of greed and desolation that he is a person who hates Christmas and the gatherings with people that go with it; he is in a continuous phase of denial and social detachment. Moreover, after Marley's disturbing entrance, the old man even finds it impossible to recognise himself because he is so absorbed.

> "I wish to be left alone", said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I doný make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry". (Dickens 39)

This denial represents an instant of resistance in the face of change, a milestone in his journey of change. In the context of the chronotope, it represents a temporal and spatial boundary where Scrooge is caught between his present self-centredness and the revelation of his past and future. His resistance is an effort to maintain the stability of his reality, yet the spiritual journey that continues evidences how the chronotope of search/discovery and recognition leads to the inescapable acceptance of his own transformation.

> Such motifs as *meeting/parting* (separation), *loss/ acquisition, search/discovery, recognition/non recognition* and so forth enter as constituent elements into plots, not only of novels of various eras and types but also into literary works of other genres: epic, dramatic, even lyric. By their very nature these motifs are *chronotropic* (although it is true the chronotope is developed in different ways in the various genres). (Bakhtin 97)

The three encounters throughout the book make him face truths he had previously shunned: poverty, human misery, and his own mortality. Dickens arranges these encounters as times of *self-discovery* and *recognition* across several *temporal levels*, as Bakhtin's explanation of *chronotropic* themes makes clear.

As well, the background of the visits has influenced many disciplines that prevail today in literature in conceptual and technical terms:

> The motif of meeting is one of the most universal motifs, not only in literature (it is difficult to find a work where this motif is completely absent) but also in other areas of culture and in various spheres of public and everyday life. In the scientific and technical realm where purely conceptual thinking predominates, there are no motifs as such, but the concept of contact is equivalent in some degree to the mott of meeting. (Bakhtin 98)

Additionally, the use of *unforeseen encounters* that influence Scrooge's metamorphosis also reflects the framework of the philosophical notion of the *Greek Romance*. Time functions by randomness rather than linear causation in *Greek Romance,* where events are frequently interrupted by chance *meetings*, *accidental separations, and unanticipated turns of events.* Similar to this, Scrooge's journey is characterised by sudden changes in time, as the ghosts disrupt his life's usual course to force him to face his past, present, and future. Scrooge´s love for Belle personifies Greek motives such as *separation* and *reunion* (*meeting/parting*). They suffered an intense separation from his past love, Belle, due to his maniac opulence obsession. When the Ghost of Christmas

Past shows him her later happiness with another family, it mirrors the motif of lost love and the consequences of one's choices, similar to how lovers in Greek romance struggle with external forces before reunion or irreversible loss. Other motives, such as search and discovery could be similar to Scrooge's journey through time. In this psychological and passionate journey, he delves into recognition and transformation till his redemption. The Three Spirits could be represented also as three ordeals, three trials that Scrooge must overcome.

Sovpdenie stands for Bakhtin specific narrative period marked by abrupt, unexpected interruptions and coincidences that alter the anticipated course of events. This logic of time characterises Scrooge's 'new being' is based on the appearance of spirits, who modify his existence at precisely the right moment, condensing past, present and future into a single revelation. Similarly, Greek romances are based on unforeseen discoveries, disasters and divine interventions that alter destiny. This kind of temporalism works outside realism, emphasising contingency and disruption over linear cause and effect.

> This logic is one of random contingency [*sovpdenie*], which is to say, chance, simultaneity [meetings] and chance rupture [non meetings], that is, a logic of random disjunctions in time as well. [...] a novel about. (Bakhtin 92)

Therefore, all of them constitute instances of adventure time, in which events are dictated by supernatural powers rather than Scrooge's own objectives. Similar to the *Greek Romance*, heroes who are thrown into unanticipated circumstances that cause them to reevaluate who they are, Scrooge must face several incarnations of himself, which results in significant epiphanies and

metamorphoses. Similar to the Greek Romance, the novel is based on the logic of chance, with each meeting having the capacity to reveal or cause a rupture that ultimately determines the protagonist's destiny.

The temporal disturbances are also typical of the *Greek Romance* by clearly contrasting Scrooge's real world with the various universes that the ghosts show. Time moves in a strict, rigid routine around his daily activities and financial goals. The ghosts' interventions, however, break this continuity by bringing Scrooge into the past and the future times where time no longer proceeds linearly but rather operates as a place of revelation and change. The future is shown as an unpredictable, flexible world created by his decisions, while the past, although appearing far away, is brought back to life before his eyes, compelling him to face long-buried memories. These appearances are supernatural forces in power of time control, they play with time at their convenience; they are the empowered active agent, while Scrooge is the passive agent who suffers the consequences.

> Moments of adventuristic time occur at those points when the normal course of events, the normal, intended or purposeful sequence of life's events is interrupted. These points provide an opening for the intrusion of nonhuman forces– fate, gods, villains. (Bakhtin 95)

Consequences of mismanagement are bound to the matter of “chance”. “Chance” as a toy with which supernatural forces change the order of events and the natural balance.

The matter of chance plays a symbolic role in this disruptiveness. Scrooge has not been forced by chance to remember all these memories and outcast his fatal destiny. Dickens has created the three different ghosts in order to gain a deeper and complete projection of Scrooge´s transgression and temptation. Dickens poses the intriguing and hesitation on the readers whether Scrooge will give up, conform or achieve the necessary will power to fight for a more desirable and hopeful life. “Thus both the initial and the final links in the chain of adventures lie beyond the power of chance. As a consequence the nature of the entire chain is altered”. (Bakhtin 117)

The idea of “the return of the repressed” has a deep connection to the concept of the supernatural toy, which functions as a catalyst for disturbing the natural and temporal order. Similar to ghosts, which in the mind are interpreted as reflections of suppressed memories or unresolved feelings, the toy becomes a medium for these covert contents. This seemingly innocuous entity functions as a channel through which the suppressed returns, modifying reality and the course of events. In this context, the toy not only provokes external disorder, but also represents the internal collapse of the individual, erasing the barriers between what is conscious and what is unconscious.

4. “The Return of the Repressed”: Ghosts as Psychological Projections

The three ghosts in the novel may be recognised as “Ghosts of Projections” in the sense that each one has its focal role in Scrooge´s point of view. As stated before, the Ghost of the Christmas Past exemplifies nostalgia and loss, while the Christmas Present and Yet to Come embody the harshest picture of the

protagonist lif: being the first the one responsible to show reality, and the last to show the irrefutable ill-fated destiny what lies ahead. With the help of the very real and natural dialogues that Dickens proposes in this work, we can see how a fine line will be drawn between rapprochement and estrangement between the spirits and the protagonist.

> “Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed," cried the phantom,
>
> “not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal crea-tures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”. (Dickens 49)

In order to get an in-depth analysis of the implication of spirits we must begin with the previously established association; spirits as *projection. Projection* in three senses: the ensemble and order of their appearances on stage is not randomly designed. It is necessary to see an evolution, to stir up all those regrets and traumas in order to understand his miserable and greedy life and to be able to reach a future vision full of joy, hope and change. “The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.” (Dickens 52).

The spectral figures dissolve into mist, symbolizing not just the supernatural nature of the ghosts, but also their intangible role in Scrooge’s internal journey. These apparitions are not only catalysts for personal reflection but also mirror Scrooge’s detachment from humanity and social consciousness.

In a similar vein, many people consider Henry James and his analysis on "consciousness, morality, and social dynamics". He delves into the "psychological complexity" and is known for his ability to capture the weaknesses of the human experience and his elegant storytelling technique. His masterwork, *The Turn of the Screw*, blurs the boundaries between the "supernatural"and the "psychological", as Dickens tends to do in *A Christmas Carol,* making him a crucial figure in the investigation of the relationship between the mind and eerie or ghostly visions:

> [A]n unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman privately bred; and the figure that faced me was—a few more seconds assured me—as little anyone else I knew as it was the image that had been in my mind. (James 27)

The ghosts represent the social and moral obligations Scrooge has long ignored, emphasizing that his transformation is not just psychological but also social. Scrooge's disconnection from society—a reflection of his lack of empathy and generosity—becomes the focal point of his redemption. The ghosts thus serve as both psychological forces and reminders of his social responsibility, guiding him toward a fuller understanding of what it means to be a member of a compassionate human community.

> Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! (Dickens 49)

Beginning with the analysis of the first spirit, Jacob Marley, it conforms to the multifaceted character of the carol. Parallels between *death* and *life*, the *recognition* (familiar) and *non recognition* (exotic) are resumed. “He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel” (Dickens 43). Scrooge enters into a deep *sense of denial* at the sight of the shadow of his former work and life partner. “You were always a good friend to me,” said Scrooge. Thank´ee!” (Dickens 50)

He enters a *phase of denial* and *shock* that blurs *reality*. He does not at that moment distinguish fact *(literal meaning*) from fiction (*metaphorical*), but truly, he is the vivid projection of himself in life, despite being a ghost:

> “You will be haunted,” resumed the Ghost, “by Three Spirits.”
>
> [...]
>
> “Without their visits,” said the Ghost, “you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls one.” (Dickens 50);
>
> “You see the toothpick?” said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision´s stony gaze from himself.
>
> “I do,” replied the Ghost.
>
> “You are not looking at it,” said Scrooge.
>
> “But I see it,” said the Ghost, “notwithstanding.”
>
> “Well!" returned Scrooge. “I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you—humbug!” (Dickens 47)

Marley as a physical and fictional, inscrutable *warning,* concerning the repercussions of living a life driven by selfishness and greed.

The weight of his *transgressions* in life is symbolised by his shackles, which he carries behind him. He explains that he is here due to his own failures in showing concern for others, and he issues a dire warning: Scrooge still has the opportunity to change, but if he doesn't, he will meet the same end. In this way, Marley's gaze is both real and symbolic; he stands for the anxiety that comes with living a life of cruelty and greed.

> Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.
>
> "Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me"
>
> "Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me or not?".
>
> "I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"
>
> "It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world-oh, woe is me! —and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!" (Dickens 30)

Marley as an *ambivalence* (literal and metaphorical double of Scrooge), Marley was as greedy and uncaring in real life as Scrooge. "In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley" (Dickens 45). Their collaboration is a mirror of each other's ethical shortcomings and represents two sides of the same coin. Marley also serves as a metaphor for Scrooge's potential future; if he does not reform, he might face the same fate as Marley, which is to be chained and condemned to roam the world in misery. In addition to warning Scrooge of imminent disaster, Marley also serves as a reminder that Scrooge is now on the same course.

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

“You are fettered,” said Scrooge, trembling. “Tell me why?”

“I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "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*?” (Dickens 47)

Besides, Marley is in the abyss of reality and fiction. Marley is literally a ghost who crops up for Scrooge as a character in a spooky story. He appears to be a dead man in chains, a character taken from out of Dickens's fanciful universe. Marley, however, has a deeper moral purpose in the narrative—he is there to communicate a moral truth. Dickens' ability to use the supernatural to impart life lessons is demonstrated by this combination of the real and the imaginary. Although Marley is a fictitious character, the moral teachings he teaches are based on fact.

“You don´t believe in me,” observed the Ghost.

“I don´t”, said Scrooge.

“What evidence would you have of my reality, beyond that of your senses?”

“I don´t know,” said Scrooge.

“Why do you doubt your senses?”

“Because,” said Scrooge. “a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. [...] There´s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!”(Dickens 45)

The second spirit, The Ghost of the Christmas Past is the manifestation of nostalgia and longing for lost innocence, it combines elements of youth and age, representing the dual character of memory. It is neither entirely young nor entirely old, reflecting the fact that Scrooge's memories are still there in him while being masked by the years and the tough façade of adulthood he has constructed. Moments of warmth and love that have long been hidden behind Scrooge's current cynicism are revealed to him as the spirit leads him through his history. At this point, Scrooge's lost innocence, his ability to love and fair perspective of the world as a younger man—is embodied by the ghost.

> And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed. (Dickens 68)

Indeed, it foreshadows the idealistic, youthful version of Scrooge. Scrooge was an enthusiastic and hopeful young man. He had happy connections, pursuits, and aspirations, like his love for Belle. Here, the ghost acts to remind Scrooge of the person he might have been.

> "The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still" Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed. (Dickens 57)

Finally, it confronts youthful idealism and adult cynicism: "what could have been" versus the "what is."

He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten!

"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost, "And what is that upon your cheek?"

The lines that follow exemplify Scrooge's emotional battle as he hesitantly follows the Ghost's instructions, signaling the start of his own resignation due to his internal struggle and fight against his impulses:

> Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimples and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would. (Dickens 57)

In sharp contrast to his earlier coldness, Scrooge now acknowledges a modest act of compassion he wishes he had shown, despite his continued reluctance and growing emotional state. His increased ability to empathise and reflect is demonstrated by this change from his prior opposition to the Ghost's advice.

> "What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.
>
> "Nothing," said Scrooge. "Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all."
>
> The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!" (Dickens 59)

Then, the Ghost of Christmas Present represents present isolation and inhumanity, confronting him with the real human cost of his selfishness and greed.

> "Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is.

> Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. (Dickens 82)

By means of the spirit's detailed depiction of the Cratchit family, particularly Tiny Tim's sickness, Scrooge is compelled to acknowledge the ways in which his unwillingness to distribute his money has made them suffer. This insight calls into question Scrooge's pessimistic outlook and encourages him to value human connection and compassion over financial gain. The ghost marks a turning point in Scrooge's journey towards atonement by making him face the repercussions of his deeds.

> Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked; and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. (Dickens 92)

By means of the role of the Ghost of the Christmas Yet to Come, Scrooge is made to realise how his unwillingness to share his money has led to the Cratchit family's misery by the spirit's realistic depiction of them, particularly Tiny Tim's sickness. This insight encourages him to value human connection and compassion over financial gain.

> Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked; and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. (Dickens 92)

Scrooge's journey towards atonement is reached when the ghost makes him face the repercussions of his deeds.

> Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. [...] Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal! (Dickens 102)

In Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*, the elemental theorist to psychoanalysis investigates "abjection" as a psychological tension that arises when there is a threatening encounter that blurs the boundaries of self, often manifesting as "disgust" and "fear". The "abject" (reject), like decay, but continually "returns", challenging identity.

> Abjection, on the other hand, is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you [...] (Kristeva 4)

"Decays in abeyance" refers to the temporary suppression of natural decay, creating a disturbing tension between life and death. Kristeva's idea of "phobic narcissism" shows how the subject's attachment to their identity is threatened by the abject, leading to fear and defensive reactions. Suffering and horror emerge when we confront the limits of the self, especially when death, decay, or disorder forces us to confront the fragility of our boundaries. For Kristeva, abjection is not just theoretical but an emotional, psychological, and physical experience that

reveals the constant negotiation of boundaries in the face of existential dread and contemplation.

> Is it the quiet shore of contemplation that I set aside for myself, as I lay bare, under the cunning, orderly surface of civilizations, the nurturing horror that they attend to pushing aside by purifying, systematizing, and thinking; the horror that they seize on in order to build themselves up and function? I rather conceive it as a work of disappointment, of frustration, and hollowing—probably the only counterweight to abjection. (Kristeva 210)

As Kristeva asserts, contemplation intrinsically means a moment of peace and purity, whereas in the case of Scrooge, contemplation leads him to an extended anxiety.

5. The Transformation: Redemption and the Reconciliation of the Self

The climax of the novel is based on Scrooge's final redemption, which undoubtedly represents the integration of his fractured identity. The panorama of ghostly encounters leads him to reconcile his past and present, making his moral and psychological transformation possible. A remarkable change can thus be observed: from scattered mental and social ashes to the personal union of soul and mind.

> “Now, I'll tell you what, my friend,” said Scrooge, “I am no. going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,” he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again: “and therefore I am about to raise your salary!” (Dickens 116)

Scrooge redemption is deeply tied to his confrontation with trauma and the creation of a new self. The emotional wounds from his past—such as the loss

of his sister, his failed engagement with Belle, and his growing obsession with wealth—have shaped his cynical, isolated persona. The visits from the ghosts force Scrooge to relive these traumas, confronting him with the pain he has suppressed for years. Rather than being consumed by this trauma, Scrooge faces it, acknowledges his mistakes, and understands the emotional needs he had long ignored. This painful reckoning allows him to heal and build a new identity, grounded in love, empathy, and human connection. His transformation shows that embracing and integrating trauma can lead to the creation of a more authentic and compassionate self.

> Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, [...] His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him. (Dickens 116)

As a final scene, the reunification of the double is established. Scrooge's ability to embrace kindness, compassion and human connection stands for the reunification of his ‘double’ and reintegration of the repressed, restoring balance to his psyche and his identity.”He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas wel, [...] Every One!” (Dickens 116)

David Punter, a literary critic on the theme of *gothic*, achieved a clear connection between the *gothic tradition* and *sentimentalism* to explain “the return of the repressed”, an assumption that that perfectly exemplifies the power

of living memory through the visits, “[...] sentimentalism, the aspect of the real which nevertheless underlies all this conventional paraphernalia [...]”(Punter 26).

Punter´s `social and political contexts´, `evolution of horror´were the forerunners for the gothic tradition begins in the eighteenth century in the hands of `the fathers of the gothic´: Horace Walpole and the introduction of supernatural elements, dramatic emotions; and Ann Radcliffe with the “sublime landscapes”:

> the sublime, as the very word ' sublimation ' suggests. That sublimity is a major feature of Radcliffe's works is obvious : all her descriptive material, and her notion of the relations between individual and landscape (Punter 75)

and *psychological terror* in narrative.

> ... psychological facts for which no rational explanation exists. There is also a movement, a movement of excitement : the sentence is broken, distorted by the pressure which feelings exert on the ordering of the mind (Punter 26)

Psychological fear in nature manifests inherent human fears, manifesting them in disturbing scenarios and unknown powers. This device not only enhances the atmosphere of the gothic story, but also represents the battle between the rational and the irrational. Its influence goes beyond literature, affecting cinema and culture today by probing the frontiers of the mind and worldview.

6. Conclusion: Implications and Transcendence

In conclusion, this End of Degree Project has explored the spectral apparitions in *A Christmas Carol* as manifestations of the “ghostly double,” a concept that

Dickens uses to highlight Scrooge's fractured identity. Through the roles of Marley's Ghost and the three Christmas Spirits, these apparitions serve as supernatural yet deeply moral forces, compelling Scrooge to confront the darker aspects of his personality and initiate a process of psychological transformation. By examining how these spectral encounters illuminate Scrooge's internal struggles, we gain insight into how Dickens uses the "double" to dramatize the tension between his character's present self and his repressed *alter ego.*

The concept of the "double" in the works of Freud, Bakhtin, and Punter offers a rich exploration of identity, transformation, and the self. For Freud, the "double" symbolizes the return of repressed or unconscious aspects of the self, often manifesting as the *uncanny* and unsettling confrontation with familiar yet strange elements of our psyche. Bakhtin, on the other hand, views the "double" through the lens of "dialogism*"* and the "carnivalesque", emphasizing the multiplicity and fluidity of identity as constantly in dialogue with others, challenging the notion of a fixed self. Punter, focusing on Gothic literature, sees the "double" as a symbol of fragmented or alienated identities, where characters confront their darker, repressed selves. Together, these theories highlight the "double" as a key mechanism for exploring the tension between the "recognition" and "non recognition", "self" and "the other", and how "identity" is always in a continuous phase of negotiation, shaped by both inner and external points of view. Few people dare to argue about this controversial concept, as it continues resounding today, mainly in contemporary crises of identity as emerging, fluid and multifaceted.

A Christmas Carol relates to modern ideas of the self as malleable, continuously negotiating between the past, the present, and the future in conversations about identity. Many people today are working on reinventing and altering who they are, whether it is via personal development, therapy, or facing previous trauma. While the future is flexible and influenced by our decisions, the past is never completely gone and continuously impacts the present, as symbolised by the ghostly characters. The novella's "haunting*"* premise might also be seen as a metaphor for the "ghosts" of inequity, greed, and selfishness that haunt society.

In this way, *A Christmas Carol* functions on two levels: as a literal story of Christmas spirit, and as a metaphorical exploration of psychological and moral redemption. While its Christmas message endures, the tale also offers a universal journey of self-discovery and transformation, one that speaks to the potential for growth and change in every individual who reads it. Whether viewed as a reflection of societal values or as a psychological exploration of the self, Dickens' novella continues to resonate, offering a timeless meditation on the power of redemption and the possibility of transcending one's darker, repressed sides.

> Haunting is a frightening experience. It always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present. But haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done. Indeed, it seemed to me that haunting was precisely the domain of turmoil and trouble, that moment (of however long duration) when things are not in their assigned places, when the cracks and rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving, when disturbed

> feelings cannot be put away, when something else, something different from before, seems like it must be done. It is this sociopolitical-psychological state to which haunting referred. (Gordon 16)

Haunting, explored in sociological terms, is a way of understanding how past injustices or social failures continue to shape the present. It reveals secrets or unaddressed harm in society and calls for social critique and moral duty.

In light of the theories of the "double" and the concept of "haunting", *A Christmas Carol* emerges not only as a personal salvation story for Scrooge but also as a broader meditation on social ethics and collective conscience. In addition to supplying as tools for Scrooge's personal growth, the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future also serve as catalysts for historical and ethical reckoning, pressing the reader and the character to face the harm inflicted by greed, indifference, and loneliness as well as the injustices of the past. Dickens creates a tale that highlights the need for social reform as well as the potential for personal growth—a reminder that, just as Scrooge must confront his darker, repressed self, we too must confront the shadows of our collective actions and their drastic consequences on the present. The novella, thus, continues to resonate today, offering an instructive yet promising reflection on the potential for redemption, both on a personal and societal level, and reminding us that memories, while haunting, holds the chance for renovation and prosperity, if we dare to face it.

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