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ADAPTING THE DICKENSIAN *CAROL*:
Filmic Realism in Film Adaptation

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the LMD
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that my PhD dissertation entitled "*ADAPTING THE DICKENSIAN CAROL: Filmic Realism in Film Adaptation.*" is the outcome of my own original work and investigations except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged in the text. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree, diploma, or other qualification at the University of Algiers 02 or other institutions.

Date: June15th 2020

Signed: Ms. Zakia Yousfi.

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To My Beloved Mother, Father, and Sister

...

To

~The Inimitable~

Mr. Charles Dickens

ABSTRACT

Literature and cinema have always been an integral part of culture. Both art forms are interrelated through an unbreakable bound that joins shared origins, means, and purposes. Art begets art which explains how literature, theatre and photography beget the cinematic medium. Adaptation studies is a discipline that explores the literary-cinematic connection. The Victorian English novelist Charles Dickens offered the literary sphere a highly optical fiction that triggers picturing. This dissertation examines the cinematic qualities in Dickens's most adapted text *A Christmas Carol*. The Dickensian *Carol* has appealed to all performing art forms, particularly cinema. The chapters in this work develop logically to introduce film adaptation and the art of the films in relation to literature, and investigate the cinematic features of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and its cultural and historical significance. Through the *Carol,* this dissertation aims to provide a new insight into the Dickensian realism as a faithful portrayal of Victorian reality that transcends its narrative form and topical setting due to its universal themes and photographic qualities, and cinematicity. Dissecting the *Carol* and its adaptations triggers new readings which nurture the literary-cinematic debate and enhance the film experience for the viewers and the readers among them. Charles Dickens's ghostly little book *A Christmas Carol* is culturally and historically packed, and cinematically inviting that cinema has revisited constantly throughout its history and transitional phases from the silent era, the talkies, to the digitally animated motion capture. It is a longevity that the inimitable Dickens has sustained through his immortal *Carol*.

Key Words:

A Christmas Carol, Film adaptation, Cinema, Literature, Realism, Victorian Literature, Charles Dickens.

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INTRODUCTION

To write is to imagine, to read is to picture, to picture is to imagine seeing. Literature offers stimulation for picturing which attracts filmmakers and viewers likewise. Literature is an art form that is rich in cinematically amenable information. Literature and cinema conjure up illusions; both optical and imagined. While books use the words as a vehicle to carry the story to the reader and transport it through imagined picturing, cinema uses the illusion of motion picture. Different forms of narration result in different perceptions. Adapting literature in cinema is a traditional practice that survived every era ever since the invention of films. It continues to thrive in today's visual, aural, and digital world of cinema.

Adaptation can never reproduce the same effect generated through literature from reading. This presumption is applicable on the novelization of films, for adapting a film into text would still produce a less captivating version of the film. However, what adaptation can do in both cases is to generate new effects that can be as equally impressive as the original ones allowing the expansion of new perceptions and possible interpretations. Adaptation studies have always joined literary and cinematic spheres in what seems to be an infinite debate fuelled by the challenges both mediums face whenever cinema attempts to adapt a text. Theorists, with either literary or cinematic backgrounds, have presented their ideas and defended them while moving from the fidelity argument which seems to have dominated the debate for a long period of time. The issue of fidelity promotes a hierarchical approach to the arts. Such hierarchy treats the adaptive form as inferior to the adapted form.

As cinematic adaptations grew more popular, criticism grew more objective; considering the mechanism and potential of both literature and film. Theories started identifying the similarities and the differences between the mediums in an attempt to assess the adaptability of texts and the assets of films, treating them as equal complex artistic forms with two communication systems that derive from one another and other arts as well. Such new approaches aim to understand the literary medium, cinema, and the process that connects them together that is adaptation, instead of defining

adaptation and how it ought to be. They welcome an interdisciplinary approach to adapting literature which considers the factors that shape and control the cinematic production, such as cultural, political, and financial determinants which not only expand the sphere of adaptation studies but accentuate the rhetorical purposes that tend to be present in words and images. These factors can shift the main focus of the text in its cinematic retelling, and sometimes change it entirely to meet the purpose of the film in a specific framework.

Charles Dickens has always been associated with performing arts, be it theatre, or cinema. Showing great interest in theatrical art, Dickens canalised that interest through his literary pictorial work. Becoming a writer in Victorian London, Dickensian literature embodied the theatricality of the era through its specificity to enhance a vivid imagination and the illusion of realness. Entertainment, just like social rhetoric, was a priority for Dickens who insistently emphasised the importance of entertaining fiction, for realistic or not, fiction is meant to be primarily read for the amusement it must provide. The element of entertainment is crucial in performing arts like cinema. Charles Dickens was an animator of fiction and a re-animator of Victorian realistic literature with a prosaic style that proved to be irresistibly alluring for the cinematic medium.

Observation is an art for artists. Dickens was an observer of reality, carefully discerning the Victorian society. His journalistic experience must have influenced his literary career through multiple debates which enriched his political vocabulary, and inspired themes for his novels. As a realist, Dickens captured his concerns for the Victorian reality so vividly and pictorially. From child labour, to social protests, and the laws and acts aggravating poverty which resulted in the evil of ignorance, Dickens's literature is a Victorian photography projector, a call for awareness, and a generator of hope. Nevertheless, his fiction captured the Victorian joyous times, games, and philanthropic acts in attempt to preserve the authenticity of the Dickensian literary photograph.

A Christmas Carol is Dickens's most adapted text. Its cinematic features and universal themes are forever accurate and relevant a-temporally, a-culturally, and a-

geographically. From the different meanings he attributes to inanimate objects, to the detailed description of every scene that stimulates all the senses, and the way he orchestrates the events and stages the scenes, the *Carol* has imbedded itself in culture as a classic that is known to, read and seen by every generation; silent, heard, black and white, coloured, and computerised. Its realistic purpose revolves around an aspiration to attain true prosperity which is best defined by French author Victor Hugo as "man happy, the citizen free, the nation great". For such a quest, Dickens defended his strong convictions that education can establish that, and persisted in criticising what usually breeds ignorance at the expense of education such as the Poor Laws and the Corn Laws which caused a communal impoverishment leading to an ignorant - underage- labouring population.

Dickens's ghostly little book; as he liked to call it, is another realistic prosaic photograph of a Victorian utilitarian society. The curious thing about this realistic Christmas book is its harmonious meld of what *has been*, what *is*, and what *might be*. As an appreciator of the arts and a strong believer in their entertaining purpose, Dickensian realism portrayed reality and questioned the real. Regardless of its possible explanations, the supernatural is a curious phenomenon sewing the pieces that make up the immortal story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Dickens gives multiple hints that could explain the supernatural manifestations without spoiling their mysteries. The *Carol* reflects the Victorian society through objective lenses that still capture the subjectivity of the artist. It accompanied cinema in almost every major era that cinematic evolution can be studied through the *Carol.*

The Victorian literature proved its adaptability mostly due to the rise of the realistic novel as a popular affordable narrative form due to serialization which is more performance-amenable than poetry. Victorian realistic literature demonstrated cinematic origins and features such as the photographic portrayal of reality and the increased popular incorporation of illustrations. Moreover, the theatre was revived during the Victorian era welcoming audiences from different social classes to experience the theatrical world where plays of different sources staged and performed. The theatricality of the era turned the novelistic writing into a visual craft that can be

seen and heard by the readers. Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* displays all of those qualities, for it is a Victorian illustrated novella packed with physicality and vivid narration which tend to effortlessly assemble the mise-en-scène in a cinematic adaptation.

A Christmas Carol became part of the Christmas celebration while adapting it became a seasonal cinematic tradition. Adaptations from major cinematic eras welcomed the *Carol*, from the silent film *Marley's Ghost* (1901), to black and white talkie *Scrooge* (1951), and Disney's computer-generated *A Christmas Carol* (2009); the immortal moral story extended its longevity for generations yet to come. The major questions that this research will try to answer revolve around the adaptability of *A Christmas Carol* as a cinematically suitable literary fabric, and the extent to which its cinematic adaptations capture the spirit of the text along with its realistic purpose and social, political and biographical dimensions. This research aims to identify the challenging visual features in the *Carol* that could not be properly adapted in non-cinematic adaptive forms such as theatre, as they can be in cinema, along with other cinematic elements that still challenged films before the digital evolution of the medium over the years which introduced new technologies such as computer generated imagery i.e. CGI and motion capture i.e. MoCap. Furthermore, it questions the extent to which an excessively adapted text like the *Carol* is still adaptable.

The purpose of this research is to shed light on the relevance of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* as a text, and the importance of adaptation studies in cultural studies due to its multi-disciplinary nature which covers different spheres such as history and culture. The Dickensian ghostly little book offers universal themes, relevant in modern times due to their a-topicality. This doctoral dissertation offers a cultural experience through an interdisciplinary approach that relies on a formal shot-by shot analysis of the *Carol*'s selected cinematic adaptations. Studying films is crucial to acquire an analytical approach to these cultural products which overlap with different fields such as literature and history, and help shaping the perception of the world and its dynamics and increase thoughtful enjoyment of films and texts.

This study focuses on Brian Hurst's adaptation of the *Carol* entitled *Scrooge* (1951), and Robert Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) while referring to other major filmic versions of the Dickensian ghostly little book such as *Marley's Ghost* (1901) by Walter Robert Booth, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) by Brian Henson, and Richard Donner's adaptation *Scrooged* 1988 which is a retelling of Dickens's *Carol* in an alternative modern framework. The selected adaptations carry different particularities from different cinematic eras which, to some extent, trace the progressive evolution of cinema. This doctoral dissertation is divided into four chapters that tackle the literary cinematic connection that is summoned through adaptation, the major theories in the adaptation studies debate, and how Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is a vivid, concrete example of a filmic realism which does not merely carry historical data but permits cinematic ingenuity to make films that capture *reel* Victorian history.

The significance of this research lies in its contextualization of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* which inspects the impact of industrialization during the Victorian era and the legislation it introduced which aimed to cope with the new Victorian needs but created serious social problems nonetheless, that mostly affected the working class which faced the four major lethal threats of impoverishment, illness, ignorance and crime. It is a study that covers different disciplines through Dickens's investigative *Carol* and its adaptations to underline the artistic tangled web of dependency. Through adaptation, this research approaches literature and films as cultural spectrums that meld artistic and rhetorical purposes through entertainment. The cinematic adaptations of the *Carol* are approached as artistic case studies for filmic background, economic and historical knowledge. Through *A Christmas Carol*'s adaptations, this dissertation aims to provide cinematic familiarity, a close-up of Dickensian literature, and a cultural approach that offers a solid filmic experience that joins innocent enjoyment and a proper understanding of the medium.

The first chapter *Adaptation: The Literary and The Cinematic* attempts to define adaptation as a field and examine the cinematic dependency on literature which seems to establish fidelity as a dominant criterion in film adaptation criticism. It also

tries to provide a short introduction to cinema through a chronological tracing of films from the silent black and white era, to the talkies, colour films, and the digital age. This chapter approaches adaptation both as a mechanical and an artistic process that answers to different artistic and rhetorical purposes using the theories generated by theorists with different backgrounds like George Bluestone and Brian McFarlane. Moreover, it discusses the interrelation between reading and seeing in an attempt to highlight certain innate cinematic features in the wordily art of literature. Furthermore, the chapter investigates the forces surrounding the production of the cinematic adaptation which shift its focus and main themes; hence its meaning and the audience reaction and perception of the cinematic experience, using an interdisciplinary approach that interrelates historical, ideological and political criticism in a cultural mould of ideas. Similar to literature, films are the products of their cultural context which gathers ideological, rhetorical, economic and historical components. *A Christmas Carol* is a realistic Victorian text; hence it is a fictionalised literary version of an authentic photograph that carries Victorian cultural data. Similarly, adapting the *Carol* is subject to cultural influence which makes the filmic version of the story another cultural product that explores the text according to the surroundings of the production. The *Carol* and its adaptations will always be segments of their realities and of their cultural spectrum.

The second chapter *Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol: Reel History through Dickensian Aperture* explores the Victorian realistic literature and investigates Realism as a literary movement and as a cinematic feature in an attempt to understand the affiliation of Victorian realistic literature to films. This association calls for the depiction of reality in films which questions the extent to which Auteurism is feasible whenever realism as a movement in its obvious and broad sense is attributed to the cinematic medium, for auteurism authorises unlimited control of the filmmaker over his film including adaptations. This chapter familiarises the reader with *A Christmas Carol* by unravelling its dominant themes and original inspiration which revolve around Dickens's personal experiences and Victorian witnesses. In addition to that, it assesses the adaptability of the *Carol* through Charles Dickens's cinematic writing that can be seen through his verbosely descriptive style, gestural dialogue, and animated

scenery. It retells the Dickensian seasonal classic through its early adaptations from the black and white silent era to the talkies while providing an insight into the evolution of cinema through those adaptations as well, such as Walter Robert Booth's silent film *Marley's Ghost* (1901). The main focus of this chapter is the analysis of Brian Desmond Hurst's adaptation *Scrooge* (1951) starring Alastair Sim as a case study to discuss the cinematic techniques used in this adaptation and how they shaped, and reflect meaning in relation to its direction and focus. It also uncovers important data about Dickens's life, his social consciousness, and the Victorian reality for a better understanding of the text; truths that were communicated both by Dickens in his text and Hurst through images.

The third chapter *Disneyfying the Carol: Fuzzy Muppets and Human Puppets* takes a leap into the digital cinematic era while shedding light on the progressive development of filmmaking from black and white to colour films. It tackles animated cinema as a new popular form that welcomes *A Christmas Carol* to offer new possibilities for new cinematic adaptations. Animated films can be studies through the kingdom of Walt Disney; hence the chapter provides a short history of the Disney Empire and the development of animation only to introduce the animated cinematic adaptations of the Dickensian *Carol*. Brian Henson's popular retelling of Dickens's *Carol* in his animated feature *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) de-familiarizes the familiar through refreshing the dialogue, the narrative point of view and the characters which have been exhaustively adapted for the silver screen prior to this adaptation. The selected animated adaptations are highly faithful to the literary source; hence their analyses draw attention to the potential of animation in capturing certain challenging cinematic aspects of the *Carol*. However, it questions the text's adaptability between limitations and repetitiveness and the new readings of the *Carol* that can still be offered by this type of cinema.

Additionally, this chapter examines the new technologies used in digital cinema. Motion capture i.e. performance capture grew popular with time; it was no wonder to have a MoCap adaptation of *A Christmas Carol.* While Realism seems distant from the new form of cinema, the interesting aspect about such technologies is

their potential and limitation, for performance capture places actors in a stage-like space with minimal equipment to stimulate their imagination and shape the mise-en-scène, bringing back acting to its theatrical origins. The American director Robert Zemeckis is a pioneer in the field of digital cinema, for he is an inquisitive explorer of new technologies. His collaboration with Disney in 2009 produced one of the most visually faithful adaptations of the *Carol*. Analysing this adaptation seeks to consider MoCap technology as a suitable tool to capture the fantastical dreamy elements in the Dickensian literary fabric and its acting skills demands which usually rely on traditional theatrical forms such as pantomime for plausible performance. This chapter does not merely introduce performance capture technology and investigate its complexity for both animators and actors, as it uses Zemeckis's adaptation to explore the Victorian reality, the Dickensian biography, and introduce multiple cinematic techniques that can be derived from Dickens's text.

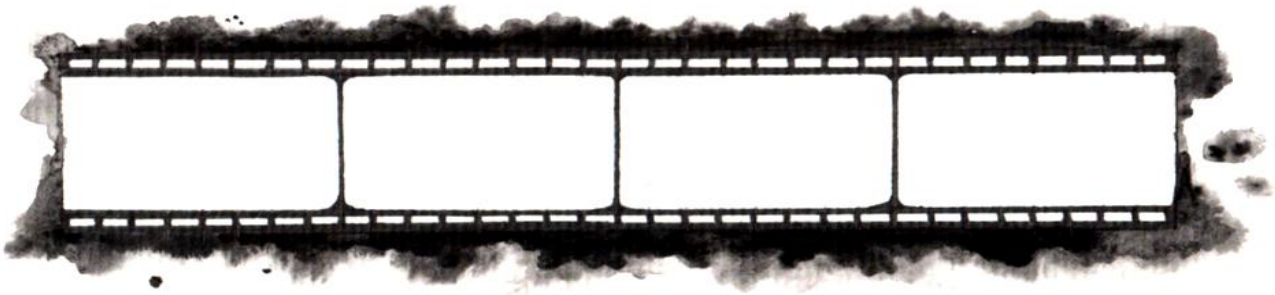
The fourth and last chapter *A Writer's Peculiarities: Dickensian Realism and Cinema* investigates Charles Dickens; the writer, the humanitarian, and the performer and how such qualities fuelled his literary cinematic tendencies. To verify this idea, this chapter examines Bharat Nalluri's semi-biographical film *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) which can be identified as an adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* as well. Nalluri's film which is also an adaptation of a nonfiction book of the same name by Les Standiford, demonstrates the Dickensian writing process of the *Carol* and its memorial and visual triggers in relation to its cinematic adaptable qualities. This chapter inquires about the association of Christmas and the supernatural to mould the immortal *Carol*. Furthermore, it questions the Victorian obsession with the supernatural and its association with dreams, two concepts that this chapter investigates in relation to Nalluri's film and John Leech's illustrations in the *Carol*, in order to unravel the physiological explanation to Ebenezer Scrooge's spectral journey and its needfulness in the *Carol* as a realistic circadian Christmas ghost story.

Moreover, the chapter provides an overview on realism, cinema and the Dickensian *Carol* all together through the Russian theorist Sergei Eisenstein's perspective and French theorist André Bazin's ideas which come from two different

schools of criticism. It also displays Dickens's optical qualities and cinematic influence supported by Eisenstein, and Bazin's views on the film's obligation to trace reality as photographic machinery. Both views explore the *Carol's* adaptation as a challenging task torn between its realistic nature and the filmmakers' yearn for cinematic auteurism. This chapter questions the essence of art and tries to identify the literary cinematic dependency through adaptation. This reliance is assessed using Brian Desmond Hurst's adaptation of the *Carol* in 1951 and Robert Zemeckis's in 2009. The final section of this chapter re-examines the adaptability of the *Carol* while looking into the context of both the text and its adaptation and questioning its purpose.

Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Caro*l grew more popular with time and matured through different artistic mediums like cinema to become an adaptable cultural text. Its literary and biographical roots collided with its political, economic and social roots along with its realistic and unrealistic aspects to sustain a transcendent longevity. Due to its photographic background, Dickens's phantasmagorical story of Ebenezer Scrooge is a Victorian social photograph that can still mould itself according to the context surrounding its cinematic adaptation. Nevertheless, most of the filmic retellings of the *Carol* adhere faithfully to the textual origin. Such repetitive fidelity raises questions that revolve around the constant adaptability of the *Carol* and the extent to which filmmakers are allowed or capable to become the *auteurs* of the *Carol* alongside the inimitable English author; Charles Dickens.

A reproduction of John Leech's illustration of Marley's Ghost



CHAPTER I

ADAPTATION: THE LITERARY AND THE CINEMATIC

"There is a story called 'Reading.' We all know this story.

It is a story of pictures, and of *picturing*."

-Peter Mendelsund

Art, in all its forms and shapes tend to provide new meanings to life. Artists combine skill and knowledge to produce a certain awareness among the people. Literature and Cinema are two art forms that managed to meld their forces for an aeon of time. Looking back at the relation that these two art forms have, one must but notice that sometimes, if not most of the times, art is used as a tool of propaganda. Having an influence that determines the direction of the work of art is almost inevitable, for the artist can never completely detach himself from his ideology. Literature and cinema had always been known for their power to contribute, to influence and to manipulate. Cinema appears to originate from a form of writing which probably explains the intensive interest in book-to-film adaptation.

Cinema is dependent on established art forms such as photography, literature, and theatre. What art forms have in common, including literature and cinema, is their solid connection to the artist, the audience, and the universe. All works of art have a complex affiliation with the three variables previously mentioned, even when only flecks of their influence appear to a puzzled audience.

Arts are constantly changing. The relation found between all different types of arts creates a certain flexibility that permits change to occur to a specific artistic form. It is important to understand that what one art may offer differs from what another form might offer to the same treated subject. The difference is substantial; therefore adaptation is a tricky subject to deal with, and a challenging craft to master. Studying an art form and its mechanism is fuelled with challenges and difficulties, so adaptation presents an even more intense challenge that affects both the artistic and textual essence of the art being adapted into another.

Cinematic adaptation is about adapting the text of all sorts into in a different art form. It is a field which seems to have attracted many artists throughout history. Adaptation has always welcomed theories and theorists' ideas that aim to provide a definition that covers every essential aspect about it; both as a procedure and as an art from its essence, its angles, possibilities, limitations and misconceptions. Defining adaptation is problematic, and analysing it is fraught with difficulties; British author Salman Rushdie defines it as "translation, migration and metamorphosis, all means by

which one thing becomes another" (qtd. in Griggs 13). Rushdie's definition gives a broad perspective in viewing adaptation since it tends to be a tangled field that holds several components. However, if one only focuses on the 'form' when approaching adaptation through the public naked eye, then Salman Rushdie's simplistic definition is valid.

The cultural interrelation between literature and motion picture is rather a popular interesting subject for discussion than the nature of their connection. It is a mode of exploration that tends to have many theoretical models that examine the literary fabric being adapted on screen which stresses limitations and breeds a pyramid approach to literature and cinema.

1. Adaptation: Fidelity and Beyond

Adaptation is an interdisciplinary field that covers film, literature, visual arts, and music. Fidelity and faithfulness of the film to its original textual fabric and genre dominate the discussion when it comes to adaptation. Critics who focus on the two dominant aspects mentioned previously tend to position the adaptation forms of the adaptive text hierarchically. Most theories are flawed, yet they usually pave the way for a delicate, productive debate that simplifies and clarifies the complex relation between the literary fabrics and the various media platforms.

The evolution of adaptation theories witnessed a range of static phases, mainly before the mid-fifties, based on rigid methods to approach everything adaptation-related while merely revolving around the issues of fidelity. In his book *Novels to Film* George Bluestone[1] explains how comparison is inadequate since between two aesthetically different art forms such as the wordy and the visual, which represent "different aesthetic genera, as different from each other as ballet is from architecture." (Bluestone 5). After the seventies, a new school of thought emerged to support the idea that the spirit of the text and its essence are both flexible and transferrable. In his book *The novel and the cinema* 1975, film critic Geoffrey Wagner's division of adaptation offers three types; the transposition, the commentary, and the analogy.

[1] An author, theorist and Professor Emeritus of film at Boston University.

Geoffrey Wagner's classification of film adaptation should be taken into consideration by both adapters and critics, for identification is crucial for accurate critiques, otherwise the evaluation of any cinematic adaptation would be invalid. Wagner's transposition, commentary, and analogy are similar to film theorist J. Dudley Andrew's fidelity, intersection, and borrowing. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker gave another close classification to Wagner's which is "fidelity to the main thrust of the narrative, [the preservation of] the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly reinterpreting or, in some cases, deconstructing the source text" (qtd. in McFarlane 11). All of which question the extent to which the cinematic adaptation is faithful to the text. Most of the models generated to debate *what is* and *what is not* adaptation give great importance to the issue of fidelity and is significance both willingly and unwillingly up to the late nineties when new approaches were brought to the table of constructive discussion and debate in adaptation studies.

Earlier studies of adaptation seem to give the text; known as the "source" a privilege over its cinematic adaptation. As it labels it as the source such superiority of the text over film tends to limit the discussion in the field of adaptation. Therefore, some theorists have used a comparative narratology as an approach to both value and understand the relationship between text and film without marginalization. The narratological approach sought transferable elements in literature which once again place focus on the source text. Hence, it is important to use American literary and film critic Seymour Chatman's identification and differentiation of the '*what* 'i.e. the story, and the '*how'* i.e. the discourse, in other words; the story from the process of transformation. Moreover, it helps defining cinematic literature and comparing between the text and its adaptation, hence comprehending the mechanism of adaptation.

In *Palimpsests: literature in the second degree* French theorist; Gerard Genette uses narratology to discuss the transportation of the text to a different media platform describing the process by using the agricultural horticulture terminology. For Genette the text is hypotext which is the source that transforms itself to the hypertext through a metamorphosis that allows it to stand on its own. Film adaptation theorist, Brian

McFarlane[2] provides models that steer the focus towards the mechanism of the process of adaptation, and its essential elements, and how they can be transformed to a new art form.

McFarlane suggests three ways of looking at cinema "as an invention, as a leisure pursuit, or as a means of expression" (McFarlane 12) while French film theorist Christian Metz insists that cinema will forever be a tool to tell stories, just like literature, he argues that if narratives are regarded as "a series of events, casually linked, involving a continuing set of characters which influence and are influenced by the course of events, one realises that such a description might apply equally to a narrative displayed in a literary text and to one in a filmic text "(McFarlane 12).

Most approaches give the text supremacy by always placing its adaptations second in a hierarchical structure. American film theorist, Robert Stam[3] believes that the moralistic discourse used in adaptation studies is filled with negativity due to its narrow fidelity-based perspective which is usually adopted by theorists whenever adaptation is discussed. Author of *Adaptation Revisited* 2002, Sarah Cardwell[4] compares 'cultural adaptation' to the biological one linked to the concept of evolution, she argues that adaptation is not a product of evolution but an aid to help the original source survive, which might explain the timeless popularity of Charles Dickens's novella *A Christma*s *Carol* throughout the years. However, this is not to limit the power of cinema and what it can elaborate on the text. Cardwell sees adaptation as "the gradual development of a 'meta-text'"(qtd. in Griggs 4), a new form connected to both the text and its prior forms of adaptation, with an identity linked to a set of cultural elements that "relate to its own era of production…industry structures and…issues based agenda" (Griggs 4).

Ever since the late nineties the contextual influences on adaptation both culturally and industrially speaking started to be examined. The context surrounding

[2] An author, adaptation studies researcher and an associate professor of English at Monash University, Australia
[3] An author and Professor in Cinema Studies at New York University, USA.
[4] An author, researcher in adaptation studies, and Honorary Fellow in the School of Arts, University of Kent, UK.

the film production seems to be as influential on adaptation as the context surrounding the novelistic literally fabric is on the story being adapted. These influences affect both the reception and perception of the cinematic adaptation. Simone Murray[5] focuses his critical lenses on the industrial significance of the cinematic adaptation rather than its aesthetic artistic value, and calls for a redefinition of the field "as a material phenomenon produced by a system of interlinked interests and actors" (Murray 16). In her book *A Theory of Adaptation,* Linda Hutcheon's[6] main concern is the undeniable intertextuality that brings all narratives and other artistic forms together. She stresses the invalid origin of the text due to the interdisciplinary nature of adaptation which Robert Stam defines as "an endless process of recycling, transformation, and mutation, with no clear point of origin" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity" 66), thus intertextuality is inevitable in both cinema and literature. It is rather the links connecting the different art forms that should be examined to unravel the complexity of art and its multidimensional meanings and interpretations.

Defining adaptation should not strip it from its creative nature, for it is due to its creative aspects that narratives come to be recycled while enjoying a timeless popularity and a constant presence in culture, and insure the everlasting rebirth of literature within different platforms and cultural contexts. While the origin remains unclear, the shapes that any cinematic adaptation can take are highly related to numerous elements such as the climate surrounding the production, and the adapter's vision, theme, and focus.

'Can a cinematic adaptation top its original narrative form?' is a frequent question that tends to haunt filmmakers and authors who yearn to adapt or see their literary works on screen. According to J. D Andrew, adaptation is "the appropriation of a meaning from a prior text" (qtd. in McFarlane 21). However, appropriation of meaning i.e. the spirit can be a challenging task to achieve due to the context surrounding the production of the cinematic adaptation. The adaptive processes that the text undergoes before being reincarnated in a new art form are complex and tied to

[5] A Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor in Literary Studies at Monash University, Australia.
[6] A Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto, Canada and a former president of MLA.

a tangled web of cultural and industrial practices. This relationship between cinema and its context has been the core of many cinema-related debates.

The art of adaptation consists of a text, a vision, an idea and a perspective, yet it takes more than that to capture the essence of a text. Fidelity was never the most important criterion for a film adaptation to be considered as pervasive, for it is not the sole component to ensure the success of a film adaptation. What film adaptation usually does is reproducing the filmmaker's interpretation, understanding, and reading of the text hoping to receive a positive response. Achieving such perfection is unlikely; therefore, critics used to return to fidelity to either value the cinematic adaptations of literature or doom them to failure, for "no matter how the screen adapter processes the canonical text, the end product will always be measured as a failure: it is either too reverential or too radical…in its attempt to remain faithful to the novel it fails to establish its own identity" (Griggs 100). Such excessive attempt to recreate a cinematic replica of a text is artistically poisoning which viewers can notice in Dickens's London in most film adaptations of Dickens's works.

Being authentic to the plot, setting, and characters in film adaptation is a desirable goal which critics used to encourage film makers to achieve in the early years. Excluding the filmmaker's vision and artistic talent is one of the major issues resulting from the limits of extreme fidelity, and that plays a major role when screening what is written. Creativity does not reduce the greatness of a novel. Brian McFarlane argues that 'there are many kinds of relations which may exist between film and literature, and fidelity is only one and rarely the most exciting' (McFarlane 11). The art of adaptation goes beyond all the technicalities and the restrictions imposed by the concept of fidelity. Any film adaptation is usually rooted in a specific industrial context, the reputation of a book, a genre, and an idea. All of which are elements that modern approaches take into consideration. Such approaches focus on adaptation as an art, its intertextual relations, and rhetorical purposes rather than the mere relation between what is film and what is text.

In an attempt to identify the essence of a narrative, French intellectual and theorist Roland Barthes distinguishes two major narrative functions in his article *An*

Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative: distributional i.e. function proper, which revolve around the doings like events and actions which tend to be horizontal and linear which are likely to be transferable. If Barthes's idea is to be projected onto the field of cinematic adaptation, the distributional functions are flexible to change form from text to film, The second function is integrational i.e. indices proper which revolve around the being like psychological information that is essential to meaning, which tend to be vertical, pervasive and present throughout the narrative. Barthes presents other functions which he termed the cardinal functions i.e. nuclei or catalysers; known as kernels in Seymour Chatman's words, they group the hinge-points; the variables that need to be recognizable for reader-viewers, for the film to establish itself as an adaptation, and to evoke their memory of the text. Such functions are cinematically transferable; hence adaptation is not required, for they are naturally suitable for the visual medium as they manifest themselves equally, both verbally and visually. Such functions must be dominant in *A Christmas Carol* to explain its adaptability and transferability through the preservation of dialogue and course of events. Nonetheless, such functions accept deformation through reformation that filmmakers use to construct a solid cinematic body and help the audience construct a meaning from the story.

Deforming the distributional functions is welcome, neglecting them, however, is not permitted. Preserving such functions of a novel in its adaptation protects the filmmaker from needless critiques related to fidelity, a concept that most filmmakers try to avoid. Such preservation can be done either verbally or audio visually. The integrational functions, however, tend to be more "individual" and rather less complex when changing form. They are subdivided into indices and informants. While the informants; even when they do not always communicate the same effect, still present transferable data that can be part of the direct characterization of the characters such as their professions, or even shop signs and places-names, the indices present adaptable data, for they are more related to the character's psyche and personality.

Brian McFarlane uses English film critic Robin Wood's words to summarize Barthes's idea and explains that "the critic has the right to appropriate whatever s/he

needs from wherever it can be found, and use it for purposes somewhat different from the original ones" (McFarlane 15). According to McFarlane, in order to distinguish the transferable from the adaptable, one must know the difference between the story and the plot. The story can be transferred, the plot however, cannot. The story is the events which are told that can summarize the story without diving deeper in the psychological elements and the unsaid; hence film adaptation can still preserve the story. The plot on the other hand revolves around the strategies and means that are used to de-familiarize the story and shift its emphasis. Moreover, it is important to differentiate between distributional and integrational functions because "the first level of fidelity in relation to the film version of a novel could be determined by the extent to which the film-maker has chosen to transfer the cardinal functions of the precursor narrative" (McFarlane 24). It is the cardinal functions i.e. hinge points, preserved in the adaptation that indicate the extent to which the film is *faithful* to the text and what modifications or alterations were made by the adapter. The transferability of the cardinal functions lies in their affiliation with verbal language. Furthermore, the characters' functions must be identified, for to know their functions is to know how crucial they are to the narrative, and how fit they are for the adapter's vision and the type of adaptation. Last but not least, it is important to know what McFarlane calls the psychological and mythic patterns which are not attached to their original form, since they are embedded in the story and not the style, hence the narrative not the narration.

Even when the adapter chooses to preserve all of the functions, the adaptation can still have a different response among the viewers, for preserving the functions can still change the experience and the effect it has on the audience. This difference can result from the verbal essence of literature, and that of film along with its visual and aural qualities. McFarlane explains, "the verbal sign, with its low iconicity and high symbolic function, works *conceptually*, whereas the cinematic sign, with its high iconicity and uncertain symbolic function, works directly, sensuously, *perceptually*", thus if the director relies on the narrative sign then he "failed to find satisfactory visual representations of key verbal signs" (McFarlane 26-27)

Adaptation seems to be both a process and the product resulting from this process. As a product of a cinematic adaptation there is the film, as a process, however, cinematic adaptation is the innovative imitation and interpretation of a literary fabric that provides new opportunities to approach and understand a text through a new reading via new sign system which is rather visual than wordy. This process leaves the adapter torn between choosing to be a skilled interpreter or an authentic creator, thus it takes a cinematic genius to embody both qualities by subtracting and contracting the original text. Failing, when adapting, occurs when the final product; which is the film, lacks creativity and cinematic skills. Eventually, many theorists seek to solve the most frequent questions about adaptation such as the literary cinematic qualities instead of assessing the extent to which the visual form succeeded to produce the same effects as the adapted text.

Among the different literary forms, the short story has always attracted filmmakers. This does not mean that adapting short stories is less complex and easier than adapting longer narratives; the former however might offer a larger space for creativity, and artistic freedom to create new possibilities and dimensions for the text to be approached differently. Choosing a story to adapt on screen was never done randomly, for there are economic, political and artistic reasons that collide together before selecting a text.

A Christmas Carol is Charles Dickens's most adapted work. When it comes to retelling the story, the ability to provide a new interesting addition to a successful popular book is limited. Audiences can easily grow tired of the same story being told and retold annually, thus filmmakers try to create films which are simultaneously good, innovative and recognizable. Films became the visual textbook for the modern generation. Just two weeks after the *Carol*'s publication, pirated editions and adaptations started spreading which proves how popular and captivating the story was, not merely for the readers but for stage artists as well. Adaptations never ceased to be present on stage, the small and the big screen, each December of every year; *A Christmas Carol* made its way through silent films, to the talkies such as Brian Desmond Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951), and Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009). It is the

most adapted English literary work. The *Carol* is still inspiring different artists in different fields; filmmaking, theatre, music, and television via modern TV series, for it provides endless opportunities for new efforts and revisions.

In about six weeks, Dickens finished writing his holiday classic in what can be perceived as a strange mystery as Dickens admitted in one of his letters. He wanted the *Carol* to be a gift to humanity, and he made sure it looked like one as well. The peculiar mixture of horror and comedy along with the realistic portrayal of the Victorian society seem to accommodate cinematic adaptations. "Apart from Dickens", Robert McCrum wrote for *The Guardian* "far too many cinematic adaptations of novels will disappoint you" (McCrum), which might be true as the material in *A Christmas Carol* is as literal as it is theatrical and cinematic. Dickens forged the association of Christmas with ghosts along with the cinematic adaptations that help the continuous popularity of the Dickensian *Carol*.

2. A Brief Introduction to Films: a Transition

The concept of cinema existed in the prehistoric times and can be mapped via the drawings on the walls around the world that tell stories of the ancestors to make them more vivid, imaginable, and believable. Cinema had been established through *The Arrival of the Train* at la Ciotat Station by Auguste and Louis Lumiére in 1896, a short silent black and white film. Prior footages of motion pictures, however, were realised before les frères Lumiére; and cinema witnessed progressive but tremendous changes ever since.

Starting with the silent age, the possibilities offered by the moving picture were explored and put to the test by those interested by photography. The thirties and the forties were the golden years of cinema. Movie stars emerged as a new concept that designates the starring actors such as James Stewart in Frank Capra's Christmas film *It's A Wonderful Life* in 1946. The fifties witnessed new filmmakers who created acclaimed masterpieces such as *Rebel Without a Cause* by Nickolas Ray. Later on in the sixties, a new generation broke, presenting new models for filmmaking which paved the way for today's digital films using high technology.

The beauty of films lies in the opportunity given to the individual to look at them and love them differently. It is this blissful immersion that brings cinema closer to the people. Italian art critic, and author of the *Manifesto of the Seven Arts*, Riciotto Canudo labelled cinema as the seventh art which combines the previously established arts together such as music and literature. Multiple arts such as photography and theatre are within the seventh art of cinema. Therefore, watching films is one experience that embodies different art forms; a collection that carries meaning in every detail.

Charting the evolution of films shows major shifts, from silent to sound films known as the talkies; from black and white to colour films before digital cinema established itself as a popular cinematic mode. Cinematography has evolved along with filmmaking. Tracking the changes in cinema can only mean one thing, and that is studying its history. History is a vital element that needs to be taken into consideration when approaching arts, for studying film is studying its history. Therefore, dealing with history is inevitable in film studies and since cinematic adaptation uses film as a vessel, then this assumption applies to it as well.

Films and history are connected on so many levels. Films tell history, the one of its makings; in addition to the one it tells on screen. One of the reasons people feel connected to this art form is the various things it communicates with each individual, for film means different things to different people. However, cinema remains a communal experience since it addresses a crowd in a packed movie theatre; it is an unchangeable fact that seems to be constantly proven when every new film hits theatres.

Films were viewed and approached differently over the years. While the silent era presented films as a novelty, the Talkies were fuelled with glamour to eventually turn into a business in the new millennium. Looking at films as a moneymaking business has somehow stripped cinema from its artistic nature and made it harder for filmmakers to create what is valuable and bring the viewers to value it, for filmmaking is an art but what counts is what the filmmaker can add that nobody else can.

Films are part of culture. They have tremendously evolved with time. Most of the early filmmakers were photographers who used the techniques of photography as the basics for their cinematic creations. Directors such as George Melies and Edwin S Porter entertained the masses with beautiful films which later on paved the way for the modern blockbuster film. Even though the French directors such as Melies and the English cinematic figures Charlie Chaplin pioneered Cinema, it was Germany that initiated Cinema as an art form after the mayhem resulted from the Great War , which helped film production to flourish.

*2.1.**Silent Films***

The Silent era is packed with glorious filmmaking. It was established as a dominant cinematic form until the twenties producing a great deal of iconoclastic features. The camera knowledge of cinematographers had constantly improved the moving picture. Even with the arrival of the Talkies, some filmmakers such as Charlie Chaplin chose to make silent films purposely. Silent films are classics that hold special place in people's hearts even nowadays.

In his book *Literature and Cinematography*, Russian formalist literary critic and film theoretician Viktor Shklovsky argues that silent cinema offers artistically complex and valuable films, for they exclude the verbal conflict present in the talkies which he consideres to be but a simple commentary on action. Silent films help the audience become involved both mentally and emotionally in every sequence of the plot which requires attention, awareness and an enhanced sense of art that the masses seem to have acquired with time after many silent films were made. The talkies; however seem to have made the audience lazier and dependent on the sound to fully experience, comprehend, and appreciate films.

Silent films' actors showed great acting potential. American filmmaker Joseph Cornell argues that "among the barren wastes of the talking films there occasionally occur passages to remind one again of the profound and suggestive power of the silent film to evoke an ideal world of beauty, to release unsuspected floods of music from the gaze of a human countenance in its prison of silver light " (qtd. in Guida 63). Unlike the Talkies where the actor's lack of skill might be compensated by the sound through

words and music, Silent films' actors relied chiefly on action which leaves no room for tacky performances. This is one of the many reasons why Shklovsky believes that the Talkies cannot be compared to the depth of a silent film.

What is interesting about silent films is that they were never truly silent. Music has been present in almost every silent film; therefore, the "sound" existed during the supposedly silent film era. The musical accompaniment can offer an effect which aims to intensify the power of the scene and its impact on the viewers. Moreover, it was the silent era that established the norms of filmmaking which underwent the process of change, a continuous process which paves the way for constant progression and discovery. Therefore, everything films are able to transmit today magnificently, they owe it to the source; to the Silent Film.

*2.2.**The Talkies: Black and White, Coloured, and Digital***

The Talkies were officially introduced to cinema through the 1931 cinematic masterpiece *M*, a thriller film by German director Fritz Lang who did not merely use the sound but experimented with it to create effect that serves the genre. The Talkies opened a new door for many actors to emerge as new movie stars, but they ended the journey of many others in cinema simply because they failed the "voice test". The sound formed a new challenge for filmmakers, for it did not serve some films, as a result they were kept silent. However, the industry succeeded to overcome concerns that even during the Second World War, films kept gaining a mass appeal which grew every day offering both escapism and glamour.

Viewing a film that is both visual and aural was fascinating at that time. Nevertheless, the talkies were sometimes acclaimed; not because of their powerful content, but because they spoke louder than the silent films. It is easier to think of the sound as a camouflage for tacky performances, just like digital special effects are, for tacky cinematic productions. Nevertheless, the sound film offered major films and witnessed the birth of iconic filmmakers who used the sound in a visionary way to create a timeless effect.

Cinematic adaptations of well acclaimed literary works thrived. Many literary masterpieces found their way to cinema which used literature to fulfil its quest for entertainment. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens was one of the masterpieces that never ceased being revisited and reproduced ever since its publication, and even before novelistic adaptation became a popular. The *Carol* is now part of the people's collective memory and consciousness, for it did not only find its way to the people's bookshelves but also succeeded to find a spot among the Silent films and the Talkies to eventually grow within the cinematic sphere and survive during the digital era.

3. Adaptation: A Process of De-familiarization

Reading books and watching their film adaptations are two different experiences based on comparable senses and processes. Even though both experiences are equally important, it is quite unfortunate to choose the later over the former in popular culture. Cinematic adaptation helps commercializing literature regardless of how authentic, innovative, and faithful it is to the text. This commercialization guarantees a certain longevity for the text. Due to the seemingly endless adaptations of the *Carol* one cannot but come across some dreadful ones which surprisingly still have an audience because they somehow could partly captivate the essence of the Dickensian Christmas novella. Captivating the essence of any adapted text is never the product of a pure coincidence. The *Carol* holds a cinematic nature within its pages that even a cinema newbie cannot entirely spoil.

On the mechanism of films, Viktor Shklovsky argues that only through breaking down a film that it:

> Becomes a sign system because of the conventionality of film motion synthesised by our consciousness out of motionless photographs. Simply said, a film does not move but appears to do so because motion cannot be reproduced therefore we have cinematography which only deals with the motion sign that is the semantic motion. Cinema relies on action which moves unexpectedly from a stunt to another. A stunt is the basic unit of action which the plot is required to organise into a cohesive form. (Shklovsky and Sheldon ix)

Shklovsky views the film as an inferior branch of art due to its limitations. One of these limitations is the issue of continuity. He argues that art is continuous for it cannot be broken to segments just like thoughts and movements. Film, which relies on the action to create effect, is however discontinuous but it relies on the viewer's eye to perceive rapidly moving motionless objects as continuous. For Shklovsky "cinema can never attain real motion but only its simulacrum which make it a primitive form of art". (Shklovsky and Sheldon x)

Cinematography is essential to the seventh art, for it is the art of capturing the essence of the story on screen. The director of photography i.e. the cinematographer does not only capture motion pictures but whose responsibility ensures both artistic and technical qualities of the screen image in the process of filmmaking. It is a delicate art of visual storytelling. Cinematographers must have a natural innate skill for writing since their job is to properly interpret a form of writing visually by properly using the camera. No matter how technical the skill of a cinematographer must be, it becomes useless if he lacks vision, a good understanding and appreciation of the text, and the ability to interpret it visually.

Literature offers plot to cinema. The most suitable plot for the cinematic would be the Riddle which is an inverted form of writing. The chronological displacement, simply put, is cutting and displacing a piece of film from the beginning and attaching it to the end. Films have the ability to successively show quick images without disturbing the audience while literature cannot. The chronological displacement offers suspect and speculation by delaying the denouement i.e. the falling action that unravels the end of the plot, which is known as the technique of retardation without exaggeration that prevents needless extensive development of the character. In order to avoid such film limitations caused by the chronological displacement, some directors choose to create a stock[7] character which is a conventional type of character that belongs to a specific form of art, it becomes familiar to the audience; hence the emphasis on motifs and action does not negatively affect the film.

[7] A conventional type of character that belongs to a specific form of art.

According to Shklovsky De-familiarisation is what all arts revolve around, and sound is but an obstacle standing in the way of new developments due to its popularity among the masses. De-familiarization is a term coined by Victor Shklovsky which is changing perspective to make the familiar become unfamiliar. Narrative de-familiarisation known as Ostranenie is used in order to create a sense of divergence through placing the stock character in different backgrounds. Skilful cinematographers tend to use the concept of de-familiarisation when dealing with a literary fabric that has been adapted on screen, so many times, for so long, to create divergence but also distinctiveness and originality. De-familiarising the *Carol* for the audience with every adaptation must not affect its essence that is now part of a cultural heritage.

A plotless film was an impossible thing to have in cinema according to Shklovsky. However, just like semantics and form coexist beautifully in the prosaic literary sphere and poetry, cinema offers plotless films when its technicality is prioritized over its semantic elements i.e. the material needed and used in filmmaking. Contradictions are essential for the plot, for it intrigues creativity, and cinematography shows how these contradictions and imperfections breed innovative creations. Artists express the content of a work by using methods which serve as the form of the work; the content being the 'what' and the method being the "how" both present in different art forms. Those who want art to be of direct use to mankind choose the 'what' over the 'how', whereas the aesthetics choose the 'how' over the 'what'.

According to Shklovsky; interpretation through changing form is impossible. He argues that when the reader's pronunciation of the words is different from that of the writer's, one must foresee how dissonant the final art work will be when "translating the material of one into the material of another" (Shklovsky and Sheldon 24). Cinematography offers new possibilities for creative ways of expression that filmmakers, who constantly attempt to make films out of literature, can adopt. Adaptations, however, tend to have a greater purpose than creating a bigger cinematic artistic work out of an already big wordily artistic one. Some critics argue that if it is impossible for a literary work to be perfectly expressed in the words of its writer, than it is very unlikely for a filmmaker to achieve what the writer failed to do in a cinematic

adaptation. Nevertheless, this does not stop the attempts of the film industry and the filmmakers who constantly try to create the next big *Carol* revival. Anyone can use a camera, but the result will either be funny or offensive when its holder is not a camera-savvy. In fact, it takes more than a camera savvy to make a successful adaptation of a cultural, popular literary fabric especially when it has been adapted on screen almost annually in different cinematic frameworks.

4. What We See When We Read, What We Read When We See

What we see when we read and what read when we see differ from one reader to another, and from one viewer to the other, for the audience approach what is artistic differently. The true cinematographer swings swiftly out of a great understanding between the two in order to eventually form a concrete idea that pleases the eye and preserves the essence of the adapted text. Films are discontinuous; they do not move but only appear to move. Cinematography reproduces that movement and motion from the real world to the world or cinematic art and while doing so, cinematography upgrades its definition from the tools of filmmaking to the visual language of films.

When reading literature "the reader, one might say, is constantly forced to pass through several foregrounds before he can make out clearly what is looming in the background" (qtd. in McFarlane 19) this is a cinematic quality in literature that pushes the reader to visualise the mise-en-scene the way viewers do when watching a film. McFarlane argues that "film simply favours what can be shown (i.e. appearances, behaviour, actions) over what has to be told" (McFarlane 133) this idea is pronounced in Richard Donner's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol, Scrooged* 1988 which sheds light on the role of regular and accessible visual forms of entertainment and expression through the medium of television.

Whereas reading involves a linear process of visualising the scene through following a certain gradual order of events and scenery, watching films involves a complex consumption of multiple signifiers in one scene that requires an instant grasping by the viewer even though it is a frame by frame, prioritizing spatiality over linearity. In simpler terms, literature is to tell, cinema is to present. To watch a film is to read a film in order to understand it, hence the viewer must pay attention to the

cinematic and what McFarlane calls the *extra-cinematic* codes such as the nonverbal but audible features which carry meaning.

Images and words have an educative value because of their ability to communicate thoughts and emotions. Therefore, reading a book and watching its cinematic adaptation are two experiences that provide both entertainment and enlightenment. Reading a literary fabric usually excites the reader and stimulates his imagination, re-reading it however, tends to trigger the reader's mind to think and question the ideas and situations communicated by the author; which results in a certain awakening and a deeper understanding of the literary work. The cinematic adaptation of literature offers a quite similar experience of re-reading a book because it retells the story as it stimulates the senses through a different mode of communication.

Realism is mostly associated with the nineteenth century fiction, and just like Victorian Realism helped paving the way for other movements to emerge, the Victorian fiction provided both rejuvenation and revival. Victorian realistic writers used the concept of photography as artists, and not merely as reformists with a sense of duty to make change within society, since they used the photograph as a concept for its craftiness rather than a plain reflective object. Just like the photograph; realistic fiction was not solely a place where the real is recreated, but an arty atmosphere where creativity takes place. The 'photograph' of the city is present in the Victorian novel, many authors have tried to wordily sculpt it. Charles Dickens was no exception to them; his ghostly little book *A Christmas Carol* displays a clear photograph of Victorian London in the most authentic way of description, proving that Dickens was among the best sculptors of the city, and other Victorian reality components in novelistic form.

Since arts are not an inscription, they always welcome innovation and interpretation. The *Carol* cinematic adaptations provide different readings of the novella which consequently expand and offer new meanings to the text. The various adaptations made on this Dickensian work rely on the interaction between the two mediums to skilfully "raise the Ghost of an Idea" (Dickens 6) which Dickens had definitely succeeded to raise.

4.1.Intertextuality and Interrelation

The competitive aspect in any comparative study must be overlooked in order to view the relationship between the literary and visual forms as an intertextual one, be it purposeful or non-purposeful. Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as the "transposition of one (or several) sign- system(s) into another…if one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated" (Kristeva 111). This type of intertextuality is rather unintentional, natural and inevitable which can be noticed in the literary canon. Purposeful intertextuality, however, is melding texts for a specific reason which might range from creating a certain effect, to referencing a text due to a simple literary admiration for the work. Both types are present in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Such intertextuality can be found in films, for filmmakers leave inheritable traces that shape the characters of future filmmakers.

The interrelation between films is but an outcome of a cinematic tradition. This tradition embodies the different elements that are present in all movies such as character types. Intertextuality in both literature and cinema is deeper than just a mere matter of imitation, recycling or influencing an art form, and so is adaptation. The concept of adaptation breeds on the concept of intertextuality which is applicable not merely within one medium but between mediums as well such as literature and film. Films and books are cultural products; they arise from a culture, they promote a culture, and they help reshaping a culture.

4.2.Film Adaptation and Literature: Efficiency in Learning

Adapting the *Carol* on screen became a Christmas tradition which, if used wisely, can prove to be effective when teaching the Dickensian seasonal classic, for using visual non-printed media as a tool to communicate Victorian values, reality and a variety of data would freshen the academic sphere and help the establishment a common ground for both teachers and students for an effective learning process. Using adaptation,

when teaching literature, might facilitate the learning process by making it more accurate and suitable for different types of learners.

It is always interesting and encouraging to discuss a good book that had been made into film, what is even more interesting is to be able to discuss it critically without the interference of personal preferences. Learning about cinematic adaptation and using the material it offers to approach literature might vacuum the humdrum in any literature or history class. All the questions that will be brought up in class will not only fuel the discussion of film and literature but also breed their critical thinking. Teaching cinematic adaptation expands the dimensions of literature, therefore it broadens the understanding and the knowledge one might accumulate from just one subject.

Most readers choose books over their cinematic adaptations, mostly because they approach adaptation from a fidelity perspective which views the text from an hierarchical approach as a superior form to cinematic adaptation, a hierarchy which treats the film as a simplistic replica of its original source. Author Mary. H Snyder justifies this preference and argues that “reading a book is a private, almost intimate experience. Viewing a film is seen by students as a more public experience. We as humans tend to defend what is private and intimate” however, cinematic adaptation studies come to help reshaping this way of thinking by shedding light on how “both reading and viewing a film can be both private, thus individual, and public, thus collective.” (Snyder 262).

The cinematic adaptation of literature must be viewed and used as an effective tool to accomplish effective learning, for whatever draws the students’ attention to be unconventionally involved in class will always provide a new experience for them to find interest in what has been traditionally approached for years before. It is quite essential to use adaptation to teach literature in order to meet today’s learners’ highly visual requirements.

5. Filmmaking: Challenging Texts

Cinema and literature are not very different, for after all they both tell stories. They use different narration forms to make their audience see, feel, and think; an idea which the British writer Joseph Conrad admitted how accurate it is in the preface of his novella *The Nigger of The "Narcissus"*, he wrote, "my task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to you feel, it is before all to make you see" (Conrad 8). This idea was allegedly adopted and used by the American film master, director of the cinematic masterpiece *The Birth of A Nation* (1915), David Wark Griffith. Ultimately, both arts help their audiences visualize the nonvisual narrative. The beginnings of cinema relied greatly on the novel, more precisely, the nineteenth century English novel which proved its great effect on its audience over the ages, according to Brian McFarlane, "mainstream cinema has owed much of its popularity to representational tendencies it shares with the nineteenth century English novel" (McFarlane viii). *A Christmas Carol* is but one of the many instances found in the world of cinematic adaptations, for it outlived all the cinematic eras; the silent, the talkies, and the digital. It is another validation of the filmic literary origins and dependency.

The early cinematic adaptations show a high sense of selectiveness of narrative material. Victorian literature offered tremendous variety that has both interesting subjects to treat and filmic adaptable and transferable elements. The genius behind the Sherlock Holmes mysteries; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tops all Victorian writers when it comes to being adapted on screen in silent cinema. Dickensian fiction offered strong memorable figures that became engraved in the people's collective memory. Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and many other characters impacted cinema which had unceasingly recreated them when adapting Dickens, and sometimes by de-familiarizing what they symbolize in other films.

The beauty of literature lies in its possibilities. As an art, literature gives multiple opportunities for filmmakers to make multiple adaptations out of one literary fabric; it only depends on the creativity of the adapter to use the fabric unconventionally while preserving the author's idea behind the text. This process

requires both skill and vision, for the rhetoric of literature differs from the rhetoric of film and it is the adapter's responsibility to provide a stupendous influence through adaptation that lives up to the one of the text being adapted especially when dealing with a popular, influential book such as Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Even though fidelity is an archaic argument to study, validate, and approve adaptations, it is a standard offered by the text that should be used to relatively analyse and critique filmic adaptations.

*5.1.**Iconography and Iconology***

Erwin Panofsky, the art historian and a leading figure in the studies of Iconology and arts defines Iconography as "that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form." (Panofsky 3) which is, in a nutshell, the study of content and meaning of motion pictures along with the motifs which indicate the genre of the film. Iconography deals with the imagery in the visual arts, whereas Iconology focuses on the interpretation of an artwork in relation to its social-historical themes and influences, hence perceiving the visual art as a documentary of a certain era rather than a standalone artistic creation. Whereas iconography is rather descriptive, Iconology tends to be interpretive by contextualizing the images and symbols.

The incorporation of iconographical and iconological approach helps in developing an engaging way to view what is visually artistic. *A Christmas Carol* loads an abundance of symbols that its film adaptations choose to either include or exclude. Symbols carry meaning, therefore, the cinematic adaptation affects meaning based on what it chooses to portray. British author and art historian, and Charles Dickens's great-great-great granddaughter, Lucinda Hawksley notes, "[Dickens] wrote in the weekly paper *The Examiner*,…'in England, Ignorance is always brooding, and is always certain to be found'…to Dickens [Ignorance and Want] were two of the most important characters in the [*Carol*], but sadly most adaptations pay scant –if any- attention to these pivotal figures" (Hawksley, *Charles Dickens* 70-71), Ignorance and Want from the *Carol* are but one example of the many symbols that tend to be either

adapted or excluded depending on the filmmaker's vision and his perception of the text along with priorities and the factors surrounding its production.

Adaptation maximises the effect books that can have on people, but in the case of adapting Victorian texts such as Dickens's *Carol,* adaptations tend to recreate and reinforce the link between text and audience, specifically that which has been long forgotten. Regardless of the universality of the essence of a story, people tend to be forgetful, for that is part of the human nature. Film adaptations come as a reminder of the link that once existed between the authors, the text and the audience, mainly when the latter is historically detached from the adapted texts. Hence iconographic and iconological considerations are essential for the reestablishment of this relation between the three. Adaptation is both challenging and complex as it takes different factors into consideration while trying to cope with the cinematic qualities of the text, a process that is fraught with difficulties.

*5.2.**Adapting the Fantastic***

Adapting fantastical elements on screen can be challenging, for imagination is personal, and so is fantasy. The reading process involves a lot of imagination As readers read, they tend to picture the characters and the scenes. Reading is seeing and seeing is reading since readers visualise what is wordy, when viewers read what is visual. Ideas come in different shapes after all. Fantastical elements involving the Supernatural can either turn out ridiculous or pleasantly effective. Adapting such elements on screen must preserve the effect they should have on the viewers, more importantly the effect they originally had on the readers. The fantastic offers filmmakers an opportunity which they must seize to put their adaptation savvy into practice.

Charles Dickens's works have always attracted filmmakers. *A Christmas Carol* is one of the many Dickensian works that were publically read to the people, and for the people. Public reading adds vividness to the story; Dickens's public readings summoned the ghosts and characters of his *Carol*. As an admirer of theatre, Dickens was not only used to rehearsing his dialogues and characters' lines, but he had also

embedded theatrical aspects in his writings; offering a particular appeal with a magnetic effect on adapters; both theatrical or cinematic.

6. Changing Form

According to scholar and writer Paul Schlicke[8], adapting Dickens is about introducing newness to the Dickensian work. Newness includes the insight of the adapter such as the director or the cinematographer that can remodel the original story by introducing new characters or plot twists. Dickensian works are popular among filmmakers; therefore reproducing works like the *Carol* on screen tends to become more challenging over the years, McFarlane argues "the kinds of complaints directed at film adaptations of classic or popular novels, across a wide range of critical level, indicate how rarely the 'appropriation of meaning from a prior text' is fully achiever- even when it is sought" (McFarlane 21).

Many theorists in the field of adaptation, who focus on fidelity as a key element for a successful adaptation, believe that film is but a simplistic visual retelling of a narrative. It is a false perception of what cinematic adaptation is about simply because cinema as an art form, in Snyder's words, "has its own qualities, its own elements, that are used to put together a narrative meant to have an impact, to move its audience. And it is this fact that scares most authors when their work is adapted to film. They know it will be interpreted by someone else, and the process of making their text into a film will be carried out in a way that is beyond their control, and at times beyond the control of the director as well." (Snyder 138) this is one of the most frequent and solid arguments of the new age adaptation theorists who believe in the complexity and the importance of the visual form of film.

For La nouvelle Vague or The New Wave, a French cinematic movement that emerged in the 1960's, directors are viewed as the authors of what is visual, simply put, the director takes the position of the original author of the story being adapted on screen by using the camera instead of a quill pen, to become the creator and the narrator of the same narrative only in a different platform. This idea is drawn from the

[8] An Honorary Professor and Dickens scholar at the University of Buckingham, UK.

Auteur Theory coined by American film critic Andrew Sarris in the forties which treats the director as an ‘auteur’ of the film, and the cinematic adaptation.

Auteurism strikes more as a method than a theory to appreciate the films of appreciated filmmakers. One of the major figures of auteurism is Andrew Sarris who argues that the theory aims to provide criticism, hence guidance to viewers in order to consider and think about certain films and filmmakers similar to genre criticism which dictates what genres to value and what genres to marginalise. Theories tend to teach the art of film appreciation rather than film comprehension of its potential. However, such methods and criticism used and offered by film studies and theories to value individual films, are needful to generate extensive film theories that can be applied on multiple films. It is a systematic approach to film that animates the cinematic debate and film discussion, for it makes the film theorist not a mere connoisseur but a scientist who might experiment on one film only to generate an applicable theory to use and study other films.

On auteurism, McFarlane argues “the issue of authorship, always complex in film, is especially so in relation to the film version of a literary work.” (McFarlane 35) not merely between the director and the author, he observes, but the screenwriter as well. For the director to maintain his authorship in the process, McFarlane suggests, “the style of a director and his control over other collaborators must always be significant in governing the nature of an adaptation” (McFarlane 131). However, such theory promotes hierarchical views and fuels the literary-cinematic tension, for adaptation is a collective-based process that produces communal experiences.

Adopting this theory while working as a director might result in a well-made adaptation that lives up to the text by creating effect and reaching the viewers in ways they were probably not expecting. Similarly, when an incompetent director chooses to view himself as an auteur, the visual form of what was once written might turn out to be but an egoistic outcome of lacking expertise. Therefore, many directors choose to work along with the authors of the stories they choose to adapt in order to create an impressive harmonious adaptation and prevent a dismal reproduction of what is praised in the literary sphere.

*6.1.**The Impact of Change***

Changing form is a concept that must be carefully approached, for one must not forget that it is rather a combination of two forms, two different forms. Adaptation refers to this change resulting from an interesting fusion of literature and film. Mary H Snyder, author of *Analyzing Literature-to-Film Adaptations* uses what she termed "marriage of media" to discuss adaptation which according to her **"**would be the purposeful combination of two distinct and unique mediums that can stand alone quite effectively, but that can also merge their qualities in a way that each is enhanced by the other while at the same time they form a "dyadic" union of sorts that extends its own benefits."(Snyder 144).

However, for such statement and metaphor to be accurate, the film adaptation must be neatly executed to establish such complementary dynamic relationship between literature and film. Consequently, Snyder argues that:

> The most viable way of viewing lit- to- film adaptation from an analogical perspective would be to see it as parent and child, not that I don't realize this relationship has been considered many times before. However, viewing the parent as the source text, and the child as the adapted text, makes the most sense to me. It also lends much more freedom to the adapted text than if considered a partner in the relationship. A child must move beyond its parent, grow out of and possibly even subvert its parent. Yet it is without a doubt that the child has as its source that parent. A child is based on the parent. (Snyder 150).

Critics should stop treating adaptation studies as a battle field where the two mediums compete against each other, but rather as a platform where inspiration and creation meld into one unit.

Literature and cinema can impact their audiences differently. For multiple reasons, both cultural and historical, people seem to have an easier access to films than they do to literature. As a process, reading tends to require a bigger investment than that of watching a film, therefore on a large scale the masses tend to choose films over books due to the direct visual stimulation that films offer to the viewers. Books offer

stimulation through an indirect, complex procedure that involves the reader's grasp of the written material, and process it to eventually form an imaginary motion picture.

Both photographs and words are stimuli of the human imagination, and since Victorian realistic fiction attributed an intense photographic effect to its language, the Dickensian *Carol* never ceased stimulating directors to adapt it on screen. What cinematic adaptation offers is a new life to what is literary; a new receiver, and a new reception. The latter reception is but the outcome of the reformulation of the original form; the written form.

6.2. When Cinematic Adaptation Tells History: A Cultural Historical Approach

Cultural criticism approaches the work of art from a unique perspective that takes into consideration the historical context that produced it. According to American literary scholar and author Michael Meyer "the basic strategy of literary historians is to illuminate the historic background in order to shed light on some aspect of the work itself" (Meyer, 2090) even though arts transcend their contexts due to their artistic significance and universal concerns, this approach is meant to examine the environment in which the artwork was created in, in order to unravel the relations between art and context which might provide a better understanding of both what is artistic and what is historic as long as it is available and doable. Using the cultural approach to study literature and film can expand the understanding of the material being studied. The art of cinematic adaptation is undeniably affected by its context which can shift the director's focus and themes.

Films do not merely tell us stories, but history as well. Just like any art form, films are fuelled with historical hints that can either be seen through the story or the production itself. While Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* tells the story of a utilitarian businessman within an industrial Victorian context vividly, its adaptations place Dickens's vividness and specification within a new framework, if not through the narrative, then production wise.

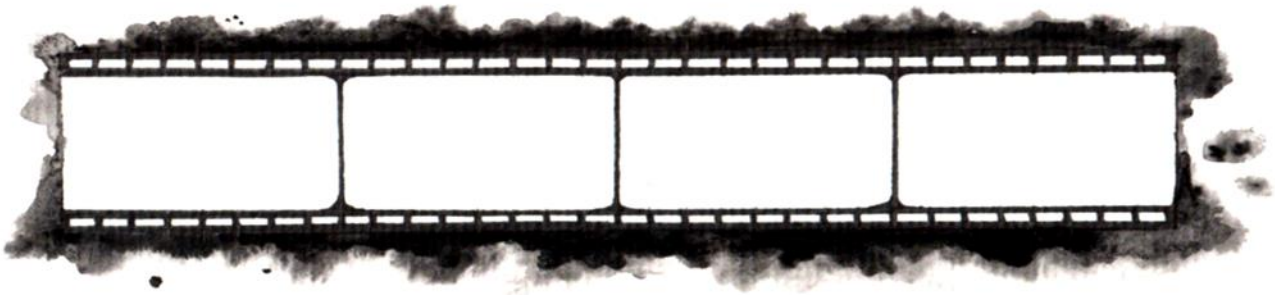
Films help moulding what is imaginary about writing and reading, and transform it into something concrete for the viewer to maximize his appreciation and understanding of the work, and while literature fictionalizes history, films de-fictionalize it by placing the viewer in a spectacular believable context. The cinematic adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* have always made sure to bring the Victorian streets, the factories, the slums, and the festivity of Christmas, to life. Only the adaptations which mostly focus on the historical aspect attributed to the novella, tackle the issues and concerns that inspired and shaped the Victorian society such as the Sunday Observance Bill which Dickens discusses in his work.

Many adaptations were made out of Dickens's 'little ghostly book'. *A Christmas Carol* succeeded to survive through time and transcend different contexts and boundaries, for the universal message it bears within. The adaptations of the novella have not ceased ever since its publication in 1843. Some of them were fully faithful to the text and to the message it conveys, some were more flexible with it, other ones were flawed while few were almost flawless. However, many of them were forgotten whilst others remain unforgotten. Brian Desmond Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951) starring Alastair Sim, Brian Henson's *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992), and Robert Zemeckis's Disney motion capture adaptation *A Christmas Carol* (2009) starring Jim Carrey, are but few of those films through which different generations experienced the Victorian Christmas by excellence. It is a story that continues to inspire different people due to its long lasting relevance for different reasons that might be linked to the Christian concept of Christmas which is annually celebrated in England and many other Christian communities, the Supernatural which is one of the most admirable aspects by readers throughout the history of time which Dickens displayed in his novella, and the Universal theme of goodwill, peace on earth and togetherness which Dickens presented and promoted in his work.

Famous writers along with their stupendous literary works have always interested different cinematographers and filmmakers. Charles Dickens is one of those precious writers within the Film Industry, whose famous Victorian seasonal classic *A Christmas Carol* is cinematically inviting. It is a Dickensian novella that has made its

way to the people's hearts, for it gave the Victorians exactly what they needed; fiction to read, a story to enjoy, and a sense of oneness as well as a nudge for people to redeem themselves. Gradually thereafter the novella became part of the English heritage and transcending different contexts to become a cultural text and the most adapted English literary work. The Dickensian *Carol* provides social criticism on industrial England with an attempt to regulate the conditions of the working class, such social universal concerns transformed the *Carol* into a cultural text which, according to writer Paul Davis, connotes an existing reality, forever present in every culture.

A reproduction of John Leech's illustration of the Spirit of Christmas Past



CHAPTER II

CHARLES DICKENS'S *A CHRISTMAS CAROL:*

REEL HISTORY THROUGH DICKENSIAN APERTURE

"Not everybody trusts paintings but people believe photographs."

- Ansel Adams

Victorian realistic literature has found its way into cinema due to multiple reasons. Even though the reasons may vary, the nature of both cinema and realism as a literary movement is probably a major one. Realism in literature is a movement based on purposeful imitation; mimicking reality to create change.

Realism primarily refers to the faithful representation and portrayal of reality. The Victorian realists did not limit their writings to a straightforward verisimilitude but made sure they combined curious concepts such as the supernatural in order to unusually deliver the usual. Victorian realistic writers such as Charles Dickens regarded themselves as reformists with the duty to make change within Victorian England. In order to change reality they ought to portray it, thus they used the concept of photography to craftily depict reality due to its authentic unmodified technique in revealing the truth. As a result, realistic literature tends to be photographic due to its reflective nature which triggers the imagination to allow multiple possibilities for interpretation.

The mimic nature of realism is borrowed from photography which authentically captures the real. Still photography in realistic literature does not limit the author's creativity. Recreating reality in fiction can still be achieved in an artsy creative atmosphere. Charles Dickens is a Victorian realist whose works sculpted Victorian England in a wordily but a neat way. *A Christmas Carol* displays multiple photographs of the Victorian city through authentic description, proving that Dickens was one of the best sculptors of different components of the Victorian reality in novelistic form. Cinema is established on moving photographs, thus photographs can be regarded as a similarity that realistic literature shares with films. Literature and cinema are both symbols of life.

Cinema depends on photography and other established arts to find its own language and methods of representation before it developed its own complete expressive form. French film scholar André Bazin[9] views the film as a centrifugal force which diffuses towards the context surrounding it. It makes cinema a medium of

[9] A leading figure of cinematic realism and a co-founder of Cahiers du Cinéma.

the world. However, the photographic nature of cinema and its portrayal of reality might damage its artistic nature. According to German film theorist Rudolf Arnheim, for the film to be artistic it must untie its photographic origins to lose its mechanical reproduction of reality which the camera is responsible for.

Victorian realism is associated with mechanised industrial England and its negative outcomes such as child labour, and the plight of London's poor communities which bred ignorance, hence misery, prostitution and crime. Victorian realistic writers focused on producing a reflective literary material while aspiring to alter the people's reality, but they have not decided upon a sole way to do it. Therefore, reflecting reality differs significantly from one realistic work to the other. Professor Caroline Levine[10] describes it best by equating it with 'medical diagnosis' for according to her "a text may qualify as realist if it manifests several of the symptoms, but it does not have to show everyone" (David 85). The different ways, which writers such as Dickens used in order to portray reality, paved the way for unusual fusion of multiple features to create fiction which proved to be effective.

Depicting reality can be a challenging task considering its limitations that realistic writers were willing to accept. Producing a convincing, truthful portrayal of Victorian England with the purpose of creating effect for change required neat methods and innovative polished techniques of storytelling, including those which are used in teaching morality. Realism has to be experimental; thus it takes different shapes.

Realism might be approached differently from multiple perspectives but its reformative purpose remains hardly questionable. Hungarian Marxist literary critic György Lukàcs regards Realism as both a natural and needful response to the massive transformation caused by the Industrial Revolution, not to promote fear but to highlight the dehumanizing behaviour that resulted from it, which is used by industrialists as an argument for a successful profit-making business. Charles Dickens was not an anti-industrialist but he despised the social disharmony which many

[10] An author and Professor at Cornell University College of Arts & Sciences specialised in Nineteenth-century and world literatures, art and politics, and literary and cultural theory.

industrialists encouraged in the name of utilitarianism. Realistic literature voiced the concerns of the unfortunates among the Victorians who were voiceless, overworked, underpaid, living in decaying, urbanized areas.

The artist's work is the outcome of the human natural instinct for imitation. This imitation is what the audience looks for, something to connect with, find pleasure in, and respond to. Both realistic literature and cinema work accordingly, for their creators are artists and having a responsive audience is crucial for both platforms to flourish. Imitating reality in literature and Cinema must preserve the entertaining element. Instruction and entertainment should both be under the scope of books and films simply because readers will not grab a book to read, and moviegoers will not buy a ticket to the cinema unless the material provided offers a certain type of entertainment. Moreover, if the artist is willing to attribute a non-aesthetic purpose to his artwork; it is important to keep art appreciators interested in the art through the element of entertainment. Hence, public consumption of what is artistic will grow delicate.

Communicating thoughts and reality is carried out differently in literature and cinema. While literature most often uses language solely[11]; Cinema possesses multiple choices and possibilities, however, it is the artist's responsibility to properly use the material in order to communicate and create the needed effect. Even when reflecting reality, the artist is still reflecting himself. The relationship between the artist, his universe, his work, and his audience is undeniable. His experiences affect his choices and his views. Therefore, imitating the real is metaphorically actual rather than factual.

What Victorian realistic writers such as Charles Dickens, did was describing reality by holding up a mirror to industrial London and present it in a descriptive narrative form. This description is not entirely objective, for what the writer chooses to mirror in the first place is driven by a subjective personal force. Charles Dickens chose to mirror what he connected with as a Victorian and as an artist, which explains why reading the author's biography tends to uncover the possible reasons behind his

[11] Literature tends to rely on language alone but the use of the image such as illustrations as a visual enhancement seems to be increasingly popular ever since the Victorian times.

literary choices. Therefore, the connection between the writer and his work is inevitable and hardy disputable. Moreover, the universe is reflected in all work of art; more obviously in realistic literature which can be viewed as a type of adaptation; as it adapts the real narratively. Hence, disconnecting the text from its context in Realism is scarcely possible. Readers, on the other hand must feel included within the story through the context and the characters, which even if they do not share the author's views, they are still given the opportunity to form their own.

1. Realism and Cinema

Similar to literature, Cinema interacts with the same variables. Films are connected to their universe; as they tend to provide what might appear to be interesting to the viewer rather than what the viewer is interested in. This relationship does not make of cinema a simplistic reproduction of what is real. However, it is intriguing how the film is aesthetically approached before literature lurks in. The film seems to stand as an artistic aesthetic medium when it does not serve as a cinematic adaptation. This was accurate before the emergence of the talkies which shifted the filmic acting style from being entirely reliant on the actor's craftiness, to having the sound available for actors to use, allowing verbal dialogue which facilitates acting as a craft.

Reality produces art in different forms. Literature, cinema, and reality have a complex unbreakable connection. In his book *What is Cinema?*, André Bazin viewed the relation between cinema and reality as being delicate. According to Bazin reality is the "medium raison d'être", however, the artist's interpretation is a burden on the image which makes the faithful interpretation on screen almost mythical; a myth which cinema cannot reproduce or offer, for the artist's interpretation is present when reflecting reality. Therefore, what cinema offers is a dramatized reality that preserves the realistic part fictitiously. It is an idea which Bazin, as one of the theorists who inspired Auteurism, insists on.

Filmmaking is a collective process. Filmmakers who see themselves as 'auteurs' are denying the collectiveness of filmmaking, for although filmmakers choose 'what' to present and 'how' to present it; there are different variables and

people who affect their decisions such as cinematographers. Treating a filmmaker as an auteur preserves the ambiguity of reality due to the freedom that is given to the filmmaker for interpretation. According to Bazin this realistic way of remaining truthful to what is real is damaged by the one technique cinema experts believe to be the core of film, which is 'montage'. Bazin regards montage as the filmmaker's way to polish non-perfected shots, which those with real cinematic talent do not use out of respect for the craft and photographic mastery. Furthermore, chopping the universe into little fragments is as remote as it can get from what is real.

Films portray reality regardless of its genre, from real context, to real human feelings, to its means of communication. They communicate through the use of concrete material such as props, decoration and actors. The use of what is real to stimulate the audience directly and visually might be used as an argument to promote cinema as an immediate medium than literature, which offers a direct involvement of the audience. The reason why cinema seems to get the audience more involved in the story it tells, lies within the human nature which tends to trust evidence, and what is more evident than what the eye can see?. It is this realistic lifelike form of storytelling which makes films easier to believe, to grasp and to enjoy.

Film and literature provide a mimetic experience that the audience and the readers choose to believe. Reacting to film might not be significantly different from literature. Literature wordily objectifies reality, the same reality which readers try to imagine while reading. The narrative takes a visual form in the reader's mind, those images are re-enacted by the filmmaker in the film adaptation.

The auteur theory places the film in the hands of its creator. However, it is rather about having adequate control to make a meaningful adaptation than ultimate control, and a purely original one that lacks meaning. Total originality is too romantic to be real. When influence is discussed in film and literature, it means different things. Somehow in literature influence is nicely welcomed, however, in cinema it is synonymous with a lack of originality. Hence, while influenced writers are praised for it, filmmakers are accused of being uncreative.

It is crucial to recognize filmmakers as ‘auteurs’ of their cinematic adaptations as it is equally crucial to preserve the author’s voice in the adapted text. Viewing the adapter as an auteur does not mean denying the significance of the author behind the literary fabric. What the auteur theory does is shifting the authority from author to filmmaker. Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* has been on screen in almost every cinematic era in the history of films. Dickens’s voice and touch were never denied in those adaptations but rather filtered through the filmmakers’ artistic views and personalities. On the other hand, maintaining the text’s tone along with the author’s does not deny the filmmakers’ originality as long as it fits their vision and highlight the meaning they want to convey.

2. Victorian Literature and Cinema: Affiliation and Development

Literature should welcome films mainly because it is hard to separate adaptation from literature. Most popular works are adapted on screen which allows the expansion of different novelistic dimensions. Studying literature seems to be gradually dependent on the medium of film since most of the classics have been adapted to cinema. Moreover, English literature majors find interest in this seemingly quintessential medium.

Film and literature tend to be more similar than different. Using their own devices, both fields provide mimic experiences that are relatable to the people; therefore, their significance should be equally admitted. The significance of books and films does not lie in the medium itself but in how the artists expand their use of both fields. The relationship between cinema and literature tightens up when the visual abilities and cinematic features are found in literature. Such features are always present in the literary canon which is why literature is an appealing source for filmmakers who are willing to detect them. For this reason, novels should not be conceived as imperfect films just like films should not be conceived as imperfect novels.

Andre Bazin agrees with George Bluestone on the idea that films and novels are both autonomous, however even though adaptation disturbs the text’s stability, the

creativity of the filmmaker reconstructs it on a new balanced level offering by that an equal equilibrium. The notion of finding a new equilibrium is what makes adaptation possible, for even if they possess two different systems of communication; of words and images, they do share common features such as narration through referentiality i.e. films and novels tell stories while referencing pre-existing materials; language and everything captured and recorded on camera. Hence comparison is feasible.

Cinema can be seen as an interpretive reading of literature instead of a visual reproduction of it; an interpretation that is essentially influenced by the filmmaker's background. Only then, cinema becomes a medium for diffusing and expanding the critical quality of literature. A tool that refreshes but also stimulates new possible understandings and readings of the text and unravels the connection between the context that produced the text and the cultural circumstances that appropriated it. Cinema fuels Dickens's criticism to establish a new understanding of his works and their cultural power in Victorian and modern times.

Since interpretation is shaped by the context, it is preferable to rely on a historical social cultural approach when studying adaptation in order to establish a plausible comprehension of the film and the text, and maximize the possible interpretations which contribute to the vitality of both mediums. The examination of films takes two forms; one that focuses on the structure whereas the other focuses on the deep structure. The first examination deals with the means of communication; it examines the language of film i.e. the visual system which is used to communicate through shots[12]. The second form inspects the narrativity that both screenwriters and authors seem to revolve it around fictitious events. Fiction is imaginative, what is imaginative is imaginable thus possibly portrayed in writing and in film.

The human imagination is an outcome of lived experiences, including those found in films and novels. The creation of literature and films is, in one way or another, based on the notion of influence; the artist's recollection of his own influences. Novels and films share traditional elements such as setting, characters, and

[12] A shot is a series of frames i.e. still images captured at 24 frames a second.

events. These elements, however, are not essential due to artistic freedom. The artist is free to exclude them and base the artwork on minimal elements which can be challenging to still come up with an important, thrilling work, but it might produce something progressive that contributes to the genre and the medium.

Dickensian Realism revolves around being truthful in portraying the Victorian reality using a unique mixture of novelistic features. With Dickens, Victorian realistic fiction was not a mere photograph of a monolithic social-class system, or a ruthless economic philosophy, it was also about the beliefs and obsessions of the Victorians. Therefore, *A Christmas Carol* does not merely embody the Victorian society which was fuelled by the overworked, poor labourers, and how society owed them a decent share of the economic triumph, but the strange beliefs and the supernatural as well which conquered the Victorian mind state. Although the Victorian era is often associated with scientific and technological progress, many Victorians were interested in the paranormal and the supernatural which took different forms and shapes. Christmas has always been associated with ghostly apparitions, a connection that survived through the Victorian times and was revived in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, for "the tale of supernatural horror provides an interesting field. Combated by a mounting wave of plodding realism, cynical flippancy, and sophisticated disillusionment...Yet who shall declare the dark theme a positive handicap? Radiant with beauty, the Cup of the Ptolemies was carven of onyx" (Lovecraft 1098). The novella offers three apparitions; the Ghost of Christmas Past, Present and future which give illustrations of a cultural and social mould which make the readers invested both emotionally and mentally. They also give worldly photographs that teach morality while emphasising the importance of unity, for collectiveness is one of the many enduring themes Charles Dickens tried to tackle in *A Christmas Carol.*

A Christmas Carol tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miser whose business consumed his soul and distanced him almost entirely from everything humane. On Christmas Eve he is visited by four apparitions to find himself in what seems like an unsolved riddle of madness and confusion, transcending times and places, roaming

freely from the past, to the present, and the future. The journey aims to teach Scrooge about what truly matters in life so that he can alter his unpromising future. Scrooge's miraculous change of heart by the end of the novella might seem unbelievable for a realistic work, but as English author and Charles Dickens's biographer Claire Tomalin views in her book *Charles Dickens: A Life*, the combination of the real and the unreal is brilliant since the fearless interventions added by Dickens were his forte after all. It is a combination that perfectly serves the circadian[13] novel form which Dickens has adopted for his *Carol.*

The Victorian novel has inspired the cinema's social purpose in terms of accessibility and impact. According to French film theorist Christian Metz who believes that the two mediums are substantially different, it is uncinematic to have verbal and wordily narration in films which normally require quick and dynamic methods unlike reading literature. It is however, almost impossible to break the connection between art forms.

American filmmaker David Wark Griffith claims to have developed montage from Victorian literature, an argument that literary critics use to overlook the significance of films in adaptation studies, while film critics consider cinema as a glorious development of what Victorian literature offers and use it as an argument to favor films over literature. It is unfair to believe that cinema owes its capacities solely to Victorian literature especially when both mediums have always shown a ceaseless influence by other art forms and a deep connection to them such as theatre, photography, painting and public reading.

Montage borrows its techniques from the Victorian novel which, like montage, tends to cause instant breaks in the plot which can be exemplified by the Victorian Dickensian work; *A Christmas Carol* in which the time complexity offers multiple shifts. It helped freeing the film from its origins as a plain photographic recording procedure by upgrading it to its fully artistic self. It created a new visual syntax that aimed to diminish the constant need for narrative support.

[13] A story where all its events take place within twenty four hours.

Silent films witnessed the use of the intertitles which are text cards edited into the film to explain what images fail to transmit and offer a transition between them. Traditional film critics never welcomed the use of intertitles in silent films, for to them it was a literary method which the filmic art does not recognize and therefore should not use. The editing techniques such as montage were viewed as the visual syntax needed to finally liberate cinema from any literary dependency. It is ironic however, that the late era of silent films; when cinema had supposedly developed a visual non-verbal syntax of its own, witnessed a considerable use of intertitles. It demonstrates how cinema and literature are entwined, for the essence of film editing can be found in literature, just like intertitles allowed the early practices of editing. The intertitles of settings such as "London, 1843" which contextualize specific scenes[14] are still widely used in films today.

Figure 1 *Marley's Ghost* (1901).

[14] A scene is an action that takes place in one location and time, with specific setups, a beginning and an end.

Consequently, a compound of visual and verbal sentences was developed through interposed shots between intertitles (Figure 1) where the dramatization of the scene is given a bigger share of the meaning while the words set the general effect. Discontinuity and continuity editing might use the same devices but not share the same purpose. Continuity editing aims to create coherence for the narrative while discontinuity editing disturbs it. This disturbance mostly aims to unravel some information about the psychology of the characters, the ideology of the film, or emphasise some connections. It breaks continuity to explore the human complex nature and uncover new meanings.

Films build on films just like texts beget other texts. Julia Kristeva introduces intertextuality as means of revealing meaning of a text which lies in its relation with prior texts. Intertextuality is based on the concept of influence from which Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on communication originated. According to Bakhtin, communication is dialogic, for originality is a reformed tradition resulting from conversing with the familiar. Films are means of communication; hence, their meaning perceived by the audience is mostly influenced by the preceding filmic creations and cinematic experiences. Adaptation presents a twofold intertextuality because it melds the one found in adapted texts, and the one found in films. Intertextuality is more than an elementary influence and recycling, it is as complex as literature and films combined.

Cinema and literature emerge from culture, interact with it, and contribute to it. It seems that intertextuality is inevitable especially in adaptation studies, for an adaptation influences the next one, especially when a text like Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* has been adapted multiple times which might restrict any possible creativity. However, "the artistry is in making something that strikes an audience as new and distinct" (Edgar 75) that is when de-familiarization stands out as an effective tool to establish such needed newness.

Genre is a mode of classification with recognizable features that prepare the audience for what to expect by concreting their expectations. To offer expectations

through genre; is to orient the audience to find what they are looking for while preserving the element of surprise. In adaptation, offering expectation for a literary fabric that has been repeatedly reincarnated requires skillful innovation that captures familiarity and still arouses curiosity. Charles Dickens offered expectation in his *Carol* by making it Victorian, Dickensian, Christmassy, and realistic. Dickens's element of surprise and amazement lies in borrowing features from other literary genres such as the concept of the supernatural. In cinema, many films tend to blend multiple aspects from different genres that it became difficult to find a film that is purely made out of its genre's features. Such coexistence can be efficient as long as it does not interfere with the meaning of the film. It is important for the genre to set limits in order to allow the element of surprise in both cinema and literature.

3. Ideology in Literature and Cinema

The *Carol* became a vehicle of ideas, and ideologies. Ideology in cinema is naturally shown to the audience. Just like Dickens's ideology is embedded in his *Carol*, the filmmaker's ideology is embedded in his film. It is important for filmmakers to produce films or film adaptations that permit them to convey their ideologies. It is, however, concealed either willingly or unwillingly, for ideology is the collective values and views that are consciously and unconsciously rooted that it becomes inseparable from the artist and his work. It is a contextual type of determinism that art in general reacts to.

Realism can take different forms and shapes. *A Christmas Carol,* which is based on social realism, aims to give a voice to the voiceless from the working class and legitimately display their reality which significantly exhibits features from Dirty Realism[15] in Stave four through the undertakers' scene. It highlights the clash between the social classes and their realities while maintaining a realistic depiction through dialect and accent, which is a Dickensian criterion that is present in Dickens's canon. In cinema, social realism witnessed different developments such as Kitchen Sink Realism which is derived from Charles Dickens's social engagement and concerns.

[15] An artistic movement which focuses on the bleak and dismal aspects of reality.

The form of the film tends to go unnoticed which makes it suitable to communicate ideologies that are meant to be invisible. For instance, the audience is likely to root for the protagonist even if he appears to be a notorious character due to his somber sympathetic back story regardless of what the film promotes such as the 1951 cinematic adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* which tries to provide a plausible reason that could explain Scrooge's ruthless nature.

Claire Tomalin wrote an article for *The Guardian* entitled *A letter to Charles Dickens on his 200th birthday*; in which she explains how *A Christmas Carol* "with its pointed message that a decent society depends on the rich learning to be generous and the poor being saved from ignorance and want" and its celebration of the "strength and resilience of disabled people" (12.Nov.2012) gives a panoramic view of the Victorian era. Dickens would be pleased to know that London's street children number has decreased, but he would be shocked to know that the same gap between the rich and the poor remains present in modern times as it "extends Dickens's long-held concern that his stories proposed imaginative solutions existing in print alone that he could not rely on his readers to effect in real life" (Tyler 106). In fact, Dickens would be surprised that the gap had survived all the historical changes the world has witnessed since the 1840's just like his *Carol*.

4. The Inspiration behind the Carol: Observation, Writing, and Reform

A Christmas Carol, the most popular Christmas work of England's most popular Victorian novelist, was destined to survive and become part of the western culture and heritage. It is a venerated book that acknowledges and breeds the humanism of what Christmas is truly about. It aimed to revive goodness and charitable attitude in Victorian high stages. Utilitarianism[16] discouraged Christmas celebrations in an age that required and cherished hard work but neglected nonprofitmaking enjoyment.

Dickens wrote the *Carol* in a difficult year. He faced critical assaults on *Martin Chuzzlewit* but the financial and artistic failure along with the deeply rooted fear of

[16] A system of ethics which judges human conduct in relation to the extent to which it conduces the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. Charles Dickens was a lifelong opponent of this system.

poverty were soon to be conquered. For a writer who writes too fast too often like Dickens, to write the *Carol* within six weeks was not an impossible task. Persuading his acquaintances from the high circles to appreciate his outspoken characters, social criticism and the vividly vulgar scenes, was however daunting.

The Victorians were tantalized to read the new Dickensian ghost story which promised to be seriocomic in the most pictorial way, and so they did. By 1844, there were multiple translations of the *Carol* which paved the way for its international success, a success that Dickens's literary rival William Thackeray could not deny claiming that "no skeptic, no Frasers's Magazine [where his review was being run] - no, not even the gold-like and ancient Quarterly itself…could review it down" (qtd in. Standiford 136). Dickens melds the simplicity and depth of expression with the Victorian interest in a vivid ghost story that proved to be immortal by transcending its topicality and seasonal festivity.

The inspiration for the *Carol* was drawn from Dickens's real life experiences and social savvy. Interested in social welfare and concerned about child labor, *the Report of the Children's Employment Commission* and *the Ragged Schools* of Field Lane; one of the poorest alleyways in Holborn district, London, where the ragged children were provided with free education, Dickens felt the need to address these topics and trigger social and education reformation. He prioritized charity in his *Carol* as a Marxist idea delivered in a capitalist manner mainly because Dickens did not ignore the effectiveness of Capitalism to achieve economic triumph; not criticizing Scrooge's way of doing business could be used as a validation. The *Carol* turned out to be reverenced for its morality and truthfulness.

Charles Dickens would have been remembered even if the *Carol* was his only literary creation due to its Victorian social significance and its universal message constantly echoed in modern times. It is a story that Dickens wrote passionately and urgently to bring about social change. Whereas it might seem as a mere heartfelt story which encapsulates the spirit of Christmas, it does in fact shed light on a Victorian society that blurred the impoverished laboring Victorians and the lack of education which can easily breed great danger, for instance the Hungry Forties which caused an

economic decline in Britain hence a high rate of unemployment and poverty, hence ignorance. In a speech given to support the Manchester Athenaeum institution, Dickens had spoken about how the penalty of hanging criminals was considered to be dangerous which he fought to diminish, yet they had a lot of it whereas learning which was considered equally dangerous by the authorities had to be entirely abolished. It is quite astonishing how uncommon common sense is in the supposedly rational, systematic Victorian society.

Dickens cared tremendously about education and how the laboring children were deprived of it, a deprivation that will ultimately breed ignorance; the consuming evil of society and the prolific father of misery, violence, and crime like theft, and prostitution. Dickens, being a laboring child of an imprisoned indebted father, a writer who could never escape the haunting specters of his own past, and a Victorian man saddened by everything he witnessed in the streets, the ragged schools and jails, has chosen to speak on the behalf of the poor and the poor man's children.

A Christmas Carol brought a Christmas renaissance that highlighted its true charitable essence and encouraged a new tradition along with the Christmas card. The Ghost of Christmas Present depicts the hypocrisy of the middle class men. According to Dickens, the children who were born and raised in the workhouses were doomed to become as vicious as Fagin; the Dickensian notorious villain and figure of the criminal low life from *Oliver Twist,* or meet the same fate as Little Nell from the *Old Curiosity Shop* if they were lucky enough, either way for the representatives of utilitarian men like Scrooge "if [these children] would rather die…they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." (Dickens 14).

Films appear to be real even though they are unreal in nature, yet the audience still chooses to perceive them as instances from life. Film is a form of storytelling using cameras and a bundle of cinematic techniques. Understanding its tools of communication is both informative and essential to raise awareness about the meaning of film which is shaped by different factors surrounding the film production. In Marxism, the base refers to the economic base of society whereas the superstructure

refers to the social cultural context that surrounds the base. Therefore, it is important to consider such elements when viewing all cinematic productions and the art of cinema, which remains a medium that is constantly controlled by the base i.e. finances. Ignoring the context in which a film was produced is as alarming as ignoring the context that produced a literary fabric, for the context is crucial to the meaning of any art form.

5. Dickensian Cinematic Writing

Cinema reproduces reality through an amalgam of pictures and words. It is important for adapters to carefully select an adaptable text to create a coherent meaningful visual entity. What makes the Dickensian little ghostly book so cinematically adaptable lies in multiple elements. Characterization and evocative imagery are two standards that make the *Carol* strongly visual. It has always been associated with images through John Leech's illustrations which inspire the *Carol*'s adaptations. Seemingly, it was part of Dickens's plan for his work to be visually adapted.

After the publication of the *Carol*, Dickens faced imitations by those who found his text an irresistibly attractive source. Still, they have all contributed in the canonization of the work. Many literary works seem to be quite similar to the *Carol* as far as the literary essence is concerned such as *How the Grinch stole Christmas* by American author and cartoonist Dr. Seuss which unfolds over Christmas as well to tell the story of the Grinch; another miser like Scrooge. Ironically, both characters are now English words that connote cynicism even though both characters redeemed themselves eventually.

Linda Hutcheon notes that "the Victorians had a habit of adapting just about everything" (Hutcheon xi) Dickens himself was the first to adapt his own work to different artistic forms, notably through illustrations and public reading tours. Dickens's public readings brought him closer to his love for theatre through the specific annotations and spontaneous modifications that characterized his reading performances which show how adapting a text exceeds the limits set by fidelity in adaptation studies.

A Christmas Carol is a text that has faithful, loose, and modernized cinematic adaptations. The most acclaimed and popular adaptations seem to be more or less faithful to the text such as Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951) and Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) by Robert Zemeckis. One of the challenging aspects about adapting the *Carol* uncinematically is the supernatural element that logically puts the story together; otherwise Scrooge's redemption would seem unbelievable. The theatrical translations of the work tend to exclude Marley's ghost's face on the doorknocker, for it does not seem to be visually practical without disturbingly breaking the transition.

Preserving the bleak and almost terrifying atmosphere is ignored sometimes by adapters who consider the *Carol* to be a holiday story that solely aims to entertain and teach morality, overlooking its social and historical significance. The *Carol* was written to ultimately bring social change in Victorian England which makes it an informative source of the Victorian social reality and the outcomes of utilitarianism. Therefore, portraying its context in cinematic adaptation is essential to the spirit of the *Carol,* its original meaning and purpose.

Dickens's mode of writing plays a major role in making his *Carol* cinematically fit. In his book *Dickens and the Dream of Cinema,* Professor Grahame Smith describes Dickens's writing as "proto-cinematic" (G. Smith 58) which Russian film theorist and director Sergei Eisenstein believed that it influenced the development of narrative cinema. It is a style that aims to create cinematic visual and vivid qualities through words.

Furthermore, the first person narrative seems to present itself as another predicament for filmmakers. The narrator in *A Christmas Carol* has a hybrid nature as he presents himself as an authorial character and a host addressing the readers directly to enhance an intimate relationship between Dickens as a writer and his readers. Therefore, adapters chose to emphasise his presence through introducing him as a personal character in adaptations such as Brian Henson's *The Muppet Christmas* (1992) in which the narrator is presented as Charles Dickens, portrayed by the puppet Kermit the Frog, or in Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) where the narrator is only

introduced by the end of the film as Bob Cratchit to recite the closing lines from the book.

Cinema forges the collective memory and popular consciousness. The Dickensian cinematic adaptations are still thriving during the twenty-first century as part of popular consciousness. The popularity of the *Carol* was gained through its publication, its theatrical stagings and cinematic adaptations. What makes Dickens's *Carol* alluring for the cinematic medium is the method used by Dickens which makes his characters seem to be made for impersonation with their flamboyant characterization and theatrical quality. Dickens used to publically read his stories, including the *Carol*, which proved to be stage performance material. Dickens acted out his characters in front of his precious mirrors; no wonder they project such vividness. From their physical appearances, their tag catch phrases and names, Dickens promotes cinema attractive characters.

The Dickensian prose evokes certain effects that can only be transmitted on screen. The physical details Dickens provides to delineate his characters are essential to capture the meaning and essence of the story. It is a prose with a camera trait that possesses the ability to animate the unanimated which makes the inimitable, a writer with filmic qualities. D.W Griffith refers to Dickensian work as a provider of techniques from which he originated cinematic montage.

Dickens had always been influenced by theatre from an early age which attributed a performing quality to his realistic photographic literature. The opening line of *A Christmas Carol* "Marley was dead to begin with" (Dickens 9) is a close up[17] from which Dickens cut to other images to establish the tone, which is one of the many cinematic optical qualities that fortify the *Carol'*s plasticity to be easily moulded for the cinematic medium. Films have a natural tendency to deal with reality; hence cinema is suitable to capture realism in the *Carol*. Whereas filmmakers use cinematic methods to transmit the profundity of reality in a visual form, Dickens uses his

[17] Similar to cinema, it is a shot taken from a close distance of the subject to focus and emphasise its importance.

journalistic experiences and skills to develop his ability to capture reality in an observant, photographic yet literary way, which is why his writings are cinematic.

The *Carol* owes its wide appeal to its novelistic depth and profound social significance. Dickens created the story to deliver the message he had dedicated almost his entire canon for. He made sure his ghost story appeals to all social classes, for the poor to find their voice and some hope for a better future, and to knock some sense into the rich men in order to nudge a twinge of conscience to make a change. It is a cultural text which captured the concerns of the Victorians, revived Christmassy overtones, and reshaped a tradition forever. The *Carol* is another proof of how influential literature can be on culture, but most importantly how few are those texts that could survive in the digital era while remaining accurate and relevant.

What *A Christmas Carol* did in 1843 was reviving a forgotten tradition through its nostalgic tone which made Dickens a figure that is forever associated with the holiday. His name became synonymous to Christmas. Dickens created a new trend and a new industry through a ghost story that aims to make Christmas a season for charity. To the appreciators of Dickensian literature, Dickens is the man who invented Christmas that upon hearing of Dickens's death, there was a line reportedly heard by the English reviewer and critic Theodore Watts-Dunton and attributed to a young female street vendor 'then will Father Christmas die too?' (Schlicke, *The Oxford Companion to C.D* 99). *A Christmas Carol* is not merely a protest against the Victorian social ills, but a story of a lonesome man who saves himself by saving others, which reminds readers that they are not alone unless they choose to be, and that when they help others, they are in fact helping themselves. It is impossible to imagine Christmas without its Victorian heritage, a heritage with *A Christmas Carol* embedded in it. The novella revived the holiday in a way that the world has now inherited Dickens's version of Christmas. *A Christmas Carol*, being a circadian novella, might be viewed as a compressed the story, but time travel and the supernatural, along with the inimitable Dickensian artsy style, have guaranteed its immortality.

A Christmas Carol has thrived ever since its publication. It has been read, revisited, adapted, reshaped and modernised more than any other English literary text. With such popularity comes great criticism. The peculiar mixture of horror and comedy along with the realistic portrayal of the Victorian society seems to accommodate adaptations. When it comes to retelling the story, the ability to provide a fresh, interesting addition to a successful book seems limited. Audiences can easily grow tired of the same story being told and retold annually, thus filmmakers try to create films which are simultaneously good, fresh and recognizable. Films became the visual textbook for the modern generation. Just two weeks after the novella's publication, pirated editions and adaptations started spreading. Adaptations never ceased to be present on stage, the small and the big screen, each December of every year; it made its way through the silent films, to the talkies, black and white, coloured, and digital cinema.

The *Carol* is still inspiring different artists in different fields; filmmaking, theatre, music, and even modern television series, for it provides unceasing opportunities for new efforts and revisions. The essence of *Carol* manages to shine through all adaptations including the dreadful ones. Amidst the social significance and historical context, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the *Carol* is a stupendous story; a chilling, yet stupendous happy story. It is an entertaining piece of fiction which explains why film and television addicts can spot the good features even in dismal productions.

The canonical status of the *Carol* makes it difficult to readapt innovatively for those who take fidelity as a classic critical standard. To forego fidelity seems easier when the audience has nothing but prior adaptations to compare the *Carol*'s adaptations to, it is rather more difficult to overlook it when the audience has read the book, for they will not merely compare the cinematic *Carol*s but the Dickensian literary work as well. Adapting Dickens's little ghostly book has never been a simple translation of the text itself, but that of the culture-text. In his book *The Lives & Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, Paul Davis argues that the *Carol* has been around since 1843 that it became a culture-text; a text that combines Dickens's imagination and the people's.

It is a text that ensures both recognition and an audience, thus consumption is guaranteed regardless of the adaptation's critical response.

A Christmas Carol is popular because it is a Christmas story and Christmas is an annual celebration that permits annual occasions to revisit the Dickensian text which along with its universal purpose and meaning helps the canonization and ritualization of the work and its adaptations. The universal message of the *Carol* transcends its topicality, for it is a story of self-improvement and redemption, love and caring, giving and receiving, all of which breed a sense of collectiveness and togetherness which Dickens calls for. It is the optimal message to attribute to a Christmas ghost story since Christmas aims to bring people together and breed a spiritual tonic while the supernatural naturally calls for companionship to amass it.

The secret components that make the *Carol* revered as a text, vary from its repetitive quality to its characters tag names and phrases. *A Christmas Carol* was to Dickens a real Christmas carol. He wrote it to be remembered and retold for as long as carols have lived. Dickens had openly entitled his story *A Christmas Carol* which he divided into five staves, a musical terminology instead of chapters to emphasise its musical repetitive nature and longevity. It was meant to become an everlasting carol that celebrates what Jesus Christ stands and calls for. The Dickensian text ritualized itself long before the culture-text, and its adaptations reaffirm its value and significance.

It seems like Dickens had devoted much effort in naming his characters which is a typical Dickensian literary trait. From *Hard Times*' Mr. Gradgrind who grinds every creative possibility in his school's grads, it is no surprise for the *Carol*'s characters' names to carry meaning that is essential to introduce their realities and personalities. Scrooge became synonymous with miser due to the *Carol*; just like Bob Cratchit connotes financial insufficiency, for Bob means a scant amount of money; a shilling. Scrooge's 'Bah Humbug!' and Tiny Tim's 'God bless us, every one' much like the infamous line "if they would rather die…they had better do it, and decrease the

surplus population" (Dickens 14) instantly summon the Dickensian *Carol* every time one reads or hears them.

A Christmas Carol narrates the story of Ebenezer Scrooge "a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, self-contained, and solitary as an oyster" (Dickens 10). Scrooge is a Victorian utilitarian businessman. He does not produce goods, he simply deals with money. His partner in life was Jacob Marley; an evenly good businessman, and equally bad as a human. Dead for seven years, Marley visits Scrooge on Christmas Eve, as a ghost with good intentions as he offers hope and a chance for Scrooge to escape the dreadful fate that awaits him. Scrooge is promised the spectral visits of three spirits; the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come.

Dealing with the Dickensian *Carol* realistically can be challenging for its mix of realistic topicality, universal message, and fantastical elements. It is a complex tangled web of realism and the supernatural that joins characters to serve as social emblems from the Victorian era, and spectral entities. The linearity of the plot is broken due to the spectral visits which add an unrealistic dimension to the story as they create a spatiotemporal swing in the setting from present time in the Victorian era to the past, to the present again then to the future, before going back once again to the present. It is a time trinity with the complexity of the concept of time travel which not merely shows different social realities in three different periods of time, but also demonstrates the social and cultural moulds of times that have been and those that could prevail in times yet to come, which make the readers both emotionally and mentally invested.

6. A Christmas Carol Black and White Film Adaptations of the Carol: Silent to Sound

The industry of cinema emerged in 1890's offering a variety of moving pictures that grabbed the people's attention, cultivated their curiosity, and stimulated their appetite for the art form. The industry, however, could not cope with the increasing demand for films due to a shortage of scripts, therefore cinema turned to literature for filmic

material. Adapting well known literary works guaranteed the audience's familiarity and recognition to find meaning, and facilitated film making through limiting the excessive use of intertitles. In the Silent Era of film adaptation, it was important to produce brief sequences[18] that quote the major scenes from the literary text. The sequences might lack coherence which is why familiarity is a key element that helps the audience gather and find meaning through contextualizing the sequences according to the knowledge accumulated from the original source; the literary fabric.

*6.1.**Marley's Ghost (1901) and Other Adaptations***

The Victorian popular classic *A Christmas Carol* made its first appearance in cinema the same year Queen Victoria's reign ended, through the British cinematic production *Scrooge* or *Marley's Ghost*[19] in (1901); a silent black and white film produced by Robert William Paul[20], and directed by Walter Robert Booth. Two film pioneers, with Booth being also a magician, succeeded to create fascinating optical illusions to adapt Dickens's most popular work. The only surviving footage of this cinematic adaptation is 206 seconds long. *Marley's Ghost* seems to borrow from the theatrical adaptation of the *Carol* by English actor J.C Buckstone which proves how arts are intertwined and that intertextuality is inevitable. Theatrical adaptations used to ignore certain supernatural elements due to their complexity for a stage performance, same with early cinematic creations as long as there were alternatives that do not essentially affect the meaning. *Marley's Ghost* relies primarily on Marley's ghost to take Scrooge on his journey for redemption.

Marley's Ghost consists of twelve tableaux[21] i.e. shots which visually translate the major fragments of the Dickensian ghost story. They are connected together by intertitles to form one coherent film of 620 feet long which was exceptionally impressive during the early silent era. It was a remarkable adaptation that successfully

[18] A series of connected scenes edited together to form a unified event or part of the plot.
[19] 35mm, 620 feet, 380 seconds long.
[20] The first Englishman to project a film in Britain before a paying audience, and an earliest adapter of Dickensian literature.
[21] A French word for "shot"

told a detailed novella and featured the earliest form of editing and special effects such as the superimposition of Marley's face over the knocker (Figure 2).

Figure 2 *Marley's Ghost* (1901).

Marley's ghost is associated with number seven; the traditional number of magical abilities including good and bad omens, and fatality as well. Willingly or not, Dickens's protagonist's name Scrooge consists of seven numbers; a number that foreshadows a frightful fate similar to Marley who has been dead for seven years. Ironically, the American writer and psychoanalyst Zelda Tepliz has revealed in her article *A Psychoanalytic Study of A Christmas Carol* that number seven is mentioned seven times in the first stave throughout the book in reference to Marley's death; "Mr Marley has been dead these *seven* years…he died *seven* years ago…his *seven*-years dead partner…Marley, *seven* years dead…*seven* Christmas Eves ago…*seven* years dead…*seven* years" (Dickens 13, 16, 18, 22, 23).

Marley's ghost seems to be an image of the unredeemed Scrooge, hence his effect is greater than any other ghost, for it is scarily powerful to see a ghost, but even scarier to see one's own ghost. Marley and Scrooge have been close in life on so many levels; they appear to be identical; Dickens wrote "the firm was known as Scrooge and

Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but [Scrooge] answered to both names. It was all the same to him" (Dickens 09)

Scrooge is not a provider of goods, he merely deals with money, such jobs were of little importance to Dickens who showed and gave no recognition to. Dickens insisted on drawing a picture of Scrooge's business "Scrooge's name was good upon Change" (Dickens 9) Change being an allusion to London's financial centre; the New Royal Exchange. To emphasis the business nature and rigidity of Scrooge, Dickens uses specific terminology such as "his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee" (Dickens 9) which is but one instance of Dickens's financial terminology and knowledge that he accumulated from his experience at Ellis and Blackmore; the law firm where he worked as a teenager. For any filmmaker who is interested in adapting Dickensian literature; it is important to look for the details that support the meaning that is pronounced in the story. Such details might be found in Dickens's earliest works such as *Sketches By Boz* in which he described the counting-house, similar to where Scrooge works, as being minimalist "a wainscoted partition, a shelf or two, a desk, a couple of stools, a couple of clerks, an almanac, a clock, and a few maps"(Dickens 235). *Marley's Ghost* delivers a basic image of a counting house office with light but familiar equipment.

In the first tableau, Scrooge seems to be furious because his clerk Bob Cratchit has left the office before extinguishing his candle; which according to utilitarian businessmen like Scrooge is an immature, irresponsible act. During the Victorian Era, the salaried clerks were usually underpaid that everything they said or did was carefully selected, for it might not be what they are paid for and might cause them their salaries. Dickens learned about clerks and their difficult lives from his own father John Dickens; a clerk in the Navy Pay Office whose debts forged and nurtured the nightmarish experiences from Charles Dickens's childhood. For an audience which is familiar with the popular Dickensian story, it is easier to interpret Scrooge's exaggerated reaction over a burning candle as a statement on Christmas celebration which according to Scrooge is "but a time of paying bills without money, a time for

finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer…every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart." (Dickens 11).

The second tableau is connected to the preceding one by an intertitle which appears in the thirty sixth second and reads 'SCENE II. Marley's Ghost, shows Scrooge Visions of himself in, CHRISTMASSES PAST.' the scene shows Scrooge as he was looking for his keys to unlock his door when suddenly the knocker transforms to Marley's face which in this adaptation preserves its dead-like motionless state that Dickens describes in the original work as "not angry or ferocious, but [it] looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead…and though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless" (Dickens 17). Associating Scrooge's first ghostly encounter with a door knocker is intentional, for according to Dickens, knockers are but a reflection of a human fraction; he notes in *Sketches by Boz* "whenever we visit a man for the first time, we contemplate the features of his knocker with the greatest curiosity, for we well know, that between the man and his knocker, there will inevitably be a greater or less degree of resemblance and sympathy." (Dickens 58). Scrooge and Marley were almost identical in their way of being, living and doing business. Hence, transforming the knocker into Marley's face foreshadows the supernatural events and reflects the great resemblance between the two businessmen and characters.

In the third tableau Scrooge seems to be eating from what seems to be an unheated soup from a bowl in the dim light of a dip, a cheap unmoulded candle, which is a reflective detail to capture the "little saucepan of gruel" (Dickens 18) from the book on screen. For a businessman, gruel is but the crumbs of a dinner. It is boiled oats in the consistency of water; a folk remedy for cold and the kind of food prisoners used to have in prisons, and the poor used to eat in workhouses. Therefore it is not surprising for Scrooge to think of prisons and workhouses as useful and suitable alternatives for the poor. However, the lifestyle Scrooge chose for himself was rather similar to the one which most of the poor people among the Victorians were obliged to adopt, for they had no choice in a cruel industrial England.

The bell that hangs in the room appears to ring through its movement when Scrooge leaps to his feet to encounter the ghost of his long dead partner Jacob Marley. Marley's ghost is introduced in a traditional, stereotypical way; draped in white sheet, to take over the roles of all the remaining ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Christmas Yet to Come. For a short black and white silent film, dispensing the Christmas ghosts preserves the core of the story to a certain extent without confusing the viewers, especially those who are unfamiliar with the Dickensian *Carol*.

In the third and fourth tableaux, Marley's ghost displays two scenes from Scrooge's past, one of a boy and a woman, and another of what seems to be a young couple in love. Both scenes are projected on a black background. At first, Scrooge's acting reveals astonishment and disbelief but a great remorse thereafter, for lost memories from the past were recalled and revived. The first vignette shows a woman, and a boy who appears to be Scrooge for the actor mouths "it's me, me!" (Booth 00:01:47-00:01:48) at what seems to be a school, his love for reading books as a kid echoes Dickens's love for reading as well. Dickens cherished reading which he considered to be a source of escapism and pleasure. Books supply knowledge and nurture fancy, the latter was to Dickens a crucial thing to breed in a child's mind. Utilitarian education, however, viewed fancy as a distraction that prevents children from seeing what is important in life and that is, as Thomas Gradgrind from *Hard Times* who affirms facts as the one thing needful. Dickens thought very little of utilitarianism and the children it produced, for according to him change and boundless possibilities are only created through a creative imagination that is stimulated by reading and the fancy it promotes and nudges in readers.

The female from the first scene in *Marley's Ghost* appears to be much older than the boy whereas in the *Carol* the girl is much younger than him. She is Scrooge's little sister Fan; a talented young girl who presumably is inspired by Dickens's older sister Fanny whose interest in music convinced her parents of her need to attend the Royal Academy of Music, while twelve year old Dickens was sent to Warren's Blacking factory to stick labels on shoe polish pots. It was where Dickens witnessed

the nightmarish reality of the Victorian working class members Claire Tomalin explains:

> In the spring of 1823 Fanny was awarded a place at the royal academy of music…She was twelve...The fees were thirty-eight guineas a year and although Dickens maintained that he never felt any jealousy of what was done for her, he could not help but be aware of the contrast between his position and hers, and of their parents' readiness to pay handsome fees for her education, and nothing for his. It is such a reversal of the usual family situation, where only the education of the boys is taken seriously, that [his] parents at least deserve some credit for making sure Fanny had a professional training. (Tomalin 21-22)

It then cuts to the second scene which shows Scrooge as a young adult and his fiancée Belle before they break apart abruptly. This immediate cut is present in the *Carol* where the Ghost of Christmas Past displays separate moments and experiences from Scrooge's life. It is one of the many elements that make Dickens's writing visual as it offers such cinematic effects. This scene is agonizing for Scrooge to see and experience so vividly over again because it reminds him of the sacrifice he had to make in order to pursue his unfulfilled ambition and thirst for money. It was a thoughtless sacrifice blinded by a utilitarian ambition that marked the death of the last remaining part of Scrooge's humane nature.

Dickens insisted on the idea that life is a journey in which every individual's journey affects the other, and that people's destinies are linked as they are "fellow-passengers to the grave" (Dickens 12). This adaptation excludes many scenes from Scrooge's past to shed light on what might have forged the cruel Scrooge is to awaken the long forgotten sentiments that could make him humanely human again.

The next intertitle reads 'SCENE III. VISIONS OF Christmas Present. Bob Cratchit and Fred drink, "TO MISTER SCROOGE!"'. It is followed by a scene of Bob Cratchit's family gathered around the table for a minimal Christmas dinner. Like most of Dickens's characters' names; Bob Cratchit carries important information about his life and reality. Bob is the slang word for a shilling, while Cratchit is probably derived

from the scratching of his pen as a clerk. In an article for the BBC News, business reporter Sarah Treanor notes that during the Victorian era, a minimalist Christmas dinner would cost fifteen shillings; seven shillings for a goose, five for a Christmas pudding, and three for some vegetables, fruits and a drink. “Think of that! Bob had but fifteen shillings a-week himself” (Dickens 48) the Cratchits’ Christmas dinner cost them about Bob’s weekly wage, yet the family still showed affection for one another and celebrated Christmas in a blissful way.

Tiny Tim is Bob’s younger child, he seems to animate the atmosphere regardless of his feeble health. The Victorian era was fraught with dangers that threatened the labouring children which increased mortality among the youth. Tiny Tim is believed to be a fictional reincarnation of Dickens’s nephew Harry Burntt Jr. who suffered from tuberculosis and died at the young age of nine. Tiny Tim’s famous line ‘God bless us everyone!’ is written above the door to reflect Tiny Tim’s gratitude for Christmas day. Dickens understood the sufferings of sick children, more importantly, the sufferings of those who were poor as well, that he chose to write about them and defend their rights. Scrooge seems to be moved through his facial expressions and gestures that show empathy with Bob Cratchit’s family and sympathy for Tiny Tim.

The following scene captures Fred’s Christmas party. The party scene, however, is interrupted to show Fred, surrounded by family and friends, proposing a toast to his absent uncle. Scrooge seems happy to see his nephew as he shares a lovely time with his family which marks a remarkable change mainly because Scrooge never liked the idea of marrying for love which according to him and most utilitarian men is “the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas.”(Dickens 12). Utilitarianism discouraged the sentimental concept of marriage unless it was supported by financial sufficiency which explains why Scrooge abandoned his fiancée Belle as a young man.

Fragments of Dickens himself are reincarnated in both Scrooge and his nephew Fred. Dickens’s experiences bred a constant fear from poverty and its implications which haunted him even as a famous writer whose fiction projects it. From his father’s

imprisonment to his childhood experiences at the Warren's Blacking Factory, Dickens never outgrew the pain of being deprived. Therefore, he shared the same concern as Scrooge, and to which he lost his love for Belle. Fred, however, is an embodiment of the jollity that characterized the Christmas celebration at Charles Dickens's house. Along with his friend John Forster, Dickens had invested himself to fully celebrate the Christian tradition until the Twelfth Night when people got to see their favourite writer become a conjurer. Dickens wrote to his brother Fred Dickens "I want to higher for Twelfth Night, a Magician's Dress- that is to say a black cloak with hieroglyphics on it- some kind of doublet to wear underneath- a grave black beard- and a high black sugar-loaf hat and a wand with a snake on it, or some such thing. Forster wants a similar set of garments in fiery red." (qtd. in Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas* 88).

The next intertitle which reads 'SCENE IV, The Christmas that might be, Marley's ghost shows Scrooge his own Grave and the death of Tiny Tim', is followed by a scene that opens with two male figures dressed in black as they pass by a tombstone that Marley's ghost points at for Scrooge to see it. It reads the name of Ebenezer Scrooge who bends on one knee crying next to his own grave. The snow covering the edges of the tombstone is an embodiment of the coldness of Ebenezer Scrooge and an indicator of his loneliness in both life and death. The scene cuts to the Cratchits' family's house where a kid, who seems to be Tiny Tim, is lying motionless, under a sign with Tim's famous saying written on it. This is the last scene from the remaining footage of this adaptation. *Marley's Ghost* disorganises and rearranges Scrooge's visions from Christmas yet to come while omitting two important ones from Christmas present; such as the Cornwall miners' scene and Ignorance and Want.

Many silent movie adaptations were made later on. Two American productions entitled *A Christmas Carol* were produced; one in 1908 and another in 1910. The 1910 American adaptation of the *Carol* was produced by Thomas Edison Studios. It is a thousand feet long adaptation directed by James Searle Dawley. Unlike *Marley's Ghost*, this American adaptation introduces a spirit that embodies the Christmases of past, present and future, and relies on a static camera to show Scrooge's visions from different times instead of transporting him to different locations through a spectral

journey. It relies on multiple narratively rich intertitles that facilitate the understanding of the plot for the viewers even when they are not familiar with the original text. Edison's *A Christmas Carol* displays certain important details such as Marley's ghost chains, want and misery, and the undertaker from Scrooge's funeral. In spite of the alterations suggested by Edison's adaptation, such as Fred's beloved's rejection due to financial difficulties, or altering Ignorance for Misery, this adaptation still captures a more extensive part of the story than the earliest adaptation of the *Carol*.

An Italian adaptation entitled Il *Sogno Del Vecchio Usuraio* which translates to Dream of Old Scrooge or Old Scrooge was produced in 1910, followed by two successive British productions entitled *Scrooge* (1913) and *A Christmas Carol* (1914) and two American adaptations entitled *The Right To Be Happy* (1916), and *My Little Boy* (1917). The last two silent film adaptations of the *Carol* were British productions entitled *Scrooge* in both 1922 and 1923. The silent era witnessed a remarkable transition in terms of length which proved to serve cinema and filmic adaptation of literature. The growing interest and demand for longer films to satisfy the cinemagoers' appetite for the new art, and the filmmakers' need to properly and justly adapt a literary work cinematically, nudged the necessity of longer films starting 1912 which marked the transition from regular length films of one or two reels[22] to longer multi-reel films which developed to what is known as featurette[23] and feature-film[24] thereafter.

The silent era in cinema was not entirely silent, for the mechanical projectors that were used, generated loud sounds which the audience could hear. More importantly experimentation with sound started with Thomas Edison's Kinetophone. The first major sound addition was the synchronous sound on disc system known as the Vitaphone which conformed its impracticality for many reasons such as the insufficient volume and a considerable risk of easily becoming damaged which called for a better alternative. Then, the Phonofilm was introduced to the world of cinema to

[22] A reel is a spool which the film is wound around.
[23] A traditional popular term before the 1970s which refers to a 20 to 45 minutes film, and an equivalent of a trailer.
[24] A full-length film; equal or greater than 60 minutes long.

record sound on film known as optical sound which relies on recording sound waves on films in 1922 after proving to be useful during the Great War. Cinema released its first entirely talking film *The Lights of New York* in 1928. Sound cinema or the Talkies seemed to focus on the sound more than the narrative of the film in its early years which is normal for an experimental phase that produced hybrid films that were partly silent but reliant on intertitles. However, by the thirties; the Talkies succeeded to evolve to their balanced form which uses the sound as a transitional or a plot device to serve the narrative and the filmmaker's vision, and purpose of the film. If the Talkies were to promise anything to their early audience, then they surely proved Alan Crosland's *The Jazz Singer* star Al Jolson[25] right, for the world 'ain't heard nothing yet!'.

The Great War shifted the balance for cinematic global hegemony that used to be European before the First World War which later on positioned America as an authoritarian force in the film market. Hollywood emerged as a new power that shaped the industry forever due to the American neutral policy which prevented the wreckage caused by the war on every aspect of life including the art of cinema. Development did not cease, photography, editing and sound kept improving, and so did the art of filmmaking. The first talkie adaptation of the C*arol* was entitled *Scrooge* made in 1928, it was followed by *A Dickensian Fantasy* in 1933 and *Scrooge* in 1935, all of which were British productions. Various cinematic adaptations were made thereafter, including American production *A Christmas Carol* in 1938 and the Spanish version Leyenda *De Navidad* in 1947. The forties introduced the new medium of television, but cinema still preserved its position.

*6.2.**Scrooge (1951): Alastair Scrooge!***

In 1951, cinema introduced what is widely considered by critics to be the best cinematic adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* up until this day and age, and that is *Scrooge* starring Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge. This *Scrooge* is a black and white, eighty-six minutes long feature film, directed and produced by Irish filmmaker Brian

[25] An American actor and star of the first official talkie *The Jazz Singer* 1927.

Desmond Hurst. The film is cleverly made, for it faithfully respects the structure of the adapted text while exploring new dimensions and possibilities.

The film starts by displaying a collection from the Dickensian literary canon before pulling *A Christmas Carol* and opening it to present the title of the film along with the opening credits[26] accompanied by the Christmas carol *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* which is slightly modified melodically to evidently project the darkness and evil that is embodied by the protagonist. The opening readies the audience for a faithful adaptation that might not offer newness. The audience is then introduced to the story through the *Carol*'s first page displayed on screen that reads 'Stave I Marley's Ghost' which serves as an intertitle, and a narrator to sculpt the context of the first scene as if the visual image-based syntax was not developed enough to stand on its own, thus verbal narration is needful.

The scene opens with Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge at what seems to be the London's Royal Exchange where he is questioned by two businessmen who presume that he is leaving to celebrate Christmas, and even though they share the same utilitarian views as Scrooge, they did not mind celebrating the holiday, in fact, they believe they are entitled to do so more than others mainly because they think highly of themselves as those who toil for the greater good. Therefore, they choose to look down on the working class but join their carelessness and laziness once a year; for they have earned it after all unlike the poor, a businessman notes "it's the nature of things that ants toil and grasshoppers sing and play" (Hurst 00:02:03-00:02:06). Scrooge, however, chooses to detach himself from anything and everything that might associate him with the working class members and replies by saying "an ant is what it is, and a grasshopper is what it is, and Christmas, sir, is a Humbug!" (Hurst 00:02:07-00:02:10).

This cinematic adaptation reinforces Scrooge's characterization via dialogue which empowers the novelistic tone that the readers of the *Carol* can still find in the book. Alastair Sim uses his voice and facial expression to impeccably phrase Scrooge's utilitarian philosophy, for instance, as he leaves the building, Scrooge is

[26] The text that appears on screen to show the names of those who took part in the making of the film.

approached by a man whom he does not recognize, thus instead of calmly asking him about his identity, Scrooge abruptly says “who are you?” and lowers his voice once he realises that the man is indebted to him. Such change of tone indicates hostility towards humanity unless there is a form of business involved.

The man who is named Samuel Wilkins asks Scrooge for more time to pay back his debt but Scrooge relies on logic to defend his standpoint and says “did l ask you for more time to lend you the money? Then why should you ask me for more time to pay it back?” (Hurst 00:02:40-00:02:44), it is a clear statement about the way Scrooge conducted business. His way does not seem brutal or inconsiderate; it is simply logical and lawful. This scene is strange to the readers but wisely chosen and used by the adapter to convey utilitarian logic in a logical way, for Scrooge was never portrayed as an unethical man of business by Dickens after all.

Mr Wilkins then says “can't take my wife to a debtors' prison!” thinking he might have Scrooge’s sympathy; instead Scrooge suggests an alternative “then leave her behind. Why should she go to a debtors' prison anyway? She didn't borrow the twenty pounds, you did!” (Hurst 00:02:45-00:02:50). Purposely or not, the adapter reflects Dickens’s personal experience as a Victorian labouring lad. To shed light on Dickens’s childhood is to shed light on the *Carol*’s true meaning and purpose. Dickens‘s father was arrested for debt leaving his entire family behind including Charles Dickens; a kid with big dreams soon to become haunted by nightmares manufactured in Warren’s Blacking factory.

The next scene shows Bob Cratchit in a fairly portrayed businessman’s counting house using a lit candle to warm his cold hands. To keep the focus on Scrooge’s philosophy of conducting business, this adaptation repositions the visitors, for in the book Scrooge is firstly visited by his nephew Fred, whereas in this adaptation the two gentlemen collecting provisions for those in need are Scrooge’s first visitors. “Scrooge never painted out Old Marley’s name. There it stood…Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him” (Dickens 9) the

two gentlemen must be new to the business, for they are clueless about Scrooge's notorious partner Jacob Marley

The discussion Scrooge has with his visitors is faithful to the Dickensian text. The rhetoric used by the visitors was more than anything Scrooge could tolerate, hence he asks about prisons, the Union workhouses, the Treadmill and the Poor Law, for they were to utilitarian men both useful and fair enough for the poor. Utility, however, must have been defined differently for every Victorian social class. During the Victorian era, such institutions as the treadmill; previously a criminal punishment, were infamously known for the abuses and hard labour that those who were forces to go there faced and experienced. It is a destructive philosophy that grinded the children's dreams and smashed the working class hopes. If there is anything to prove the failure or the success of any governing philosophy, it would be the type of Man it produces.

Alastair Sim delivers the rhetoric of the utilitarian businessmen, such as Scrooge, neatly and superbly in a contemptuous tone through his uncaring expression and response when he says "why?" (Hurst 00:04:46) as to why would his visitors concern themselves with the poor and the need to provide food and clothes for them. It is a natural, effective way that shows how an actor masters his craft by properly getting into character. If there is one most known line from the *Carol*, it would unquestionably be Scrooge's infamous line "if they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides –excuse me –I don't know that. It's not my business" (Dickens 14). Alastair delivers this line while flipping papers and fixing the tip of his quill, an act that connotes indifference and disinterest. The line was inspired from the English laissez-faire[27] economist Thomas Robert Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* in which he expressed his concerns about how the surplus population would cause food insufficiency, for the surplus means more labourers whom the country does not necessarily need, hence if the labour is not needed by the government, the labourer has no right to claim for alleged rights. This

[27] The economic system which grants the freedom of private economy from the absolute governmental control.

cinematic adaptation highlights the essence of the *Carol*, thus it reinforces the dialogue, for instance the charity gentlemen's rhetoric question "isn't it [your business] sir?" which foreshadows one of the major themes that Dickensian literature has always tackled and that is "Mankind" (Dickens 23) the true business of every human.

The next visitor is Fred; Scrooge's nephew who seems to embody Dickens's jolliness and spirit during Christmas. Unlike Scrooge, Fred views the holiday as a good time for benevolence and family similar to Charles Dickens who, in his daughter Mamie Dickens's words:

> Loved Christmas for its deep significance as well as for its joys, and this he demonstrates in every allusion in his writings to the great festival…Our house was always filled with guests…My father [Charles Dickens] himself, always deserted work for the week, and that was almost our greatest treat. He was the fun and life of those gatherings, the true Christmas spirit of sweetness and hospitality filling his large and generous heart. (M. Dickens chap. 2)

Scrooge is a loner with no interest in strengthening family ties, not any time of the year, especially not on Christmas. Therefore, he refuses to join his nephew for dinner and strays from the topic to discuss Fred's marriage to a penniless woman which according to him was the "the ruin of [his nephew]" (Hurst 00:05:58-00:05:59). According to Scrooge, marriage is a humbug, but if someone is fool enough to get married then it must be for some economic profit. Dickens despised the financial aspect which can be attributed and bounded to a sacred thing such as love and marriage which utilitarianism supports, for marriage among the poor would only mean an increase in the poverty rate, consequently, an increase in child labour, hence ignorance, crimes and death. Dickens did not approve, which made him accused of using irrational and irresponsible rhetoric by neglecting the threatening consequences of marrying for sentimental reasons solely. However, Dickens was calling for the change of the utilitarian philosophy instead of banning people from enjoying their

lives and accomplishing their aspirations; he surely wanted to fight the illness not the symptoms.

Figure 3 *Scrooge* (1951).

It is interesting how this adaptation clearly advocates the hopefulness of realistic literature which aims to reform, thus promote hope for a better future through Bob Cratchit's line "We're in high hopes [Tim] is getting better" (Hurst 00:06:49-00:06:50) when Fred asks about Dickens's beloved character Tiny Tim. The scene then dissolves[28] to reveal another sequence of Tiny Tim gazing at a shop front of a Victorian toy store admiring the variety it exhibits. Tim seems healthier than he should be but his reaction to a boat that was removed by the vendor could only mean that Tim was among the unfortunate Victorian kids who were deprived of Christmas treats.

[28] A traditional transitional technique

For all Dickensian readers, the argument Scrooge has given to his clerk Bob Cratchit on the inconvenience of Christmas is quite unforgettable. Alastair Sim's discontent is apparent through words and gestures. Scrooge argues "you'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose…It's not convenient and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used and yet you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work" (Dickens 16) it is an argument that Alastair animated neatly by bitterly putting on his scarf and snatching his gloves from Bob's hands. The dialogue remains almost unaltered in this film which is probably why it is viewed as a highly faithful adaptation to the *Carol,* but the additions such as "Yes, l know it is [more generous of me] you don't have to tell me" (Hurst 00:10:00-00:10:02) along with Alastair's superb acting skills, make familiarity and recognition freshly enjoyable.

Scrooge's line "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, ad a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam" (Dickens 13) associates merriment with Bedlam; the madhouse. Such association with Scrooge in a ghost story such as the *Carol* implies unbelievable events. After having a "melancholy diner in his usual melancholy tavern" (Dickens 16) where Alastair beckons to the waiter for more bread but cancels for the extra money it would cost him; his line "more bread...no more bread!" sums it up. Therefore, it is natural for Scrooge to have his gruel at home, the poor man's diet. The 'More bread, no more bread' (Hurst 00:10:47-00:10:55) scene explores a possibility why Scrooge had to have gruel at home, which is what adaptation is truly about; to remain faithful to the essence and skilfully capture the exquisite details, but expand and explore new possibilities. To mark the transition between sequences, this film uses dissolve as a technique repeatedly, thus the previous scene seems to fade and a new one comes into focus. In the following scene, the lighting and sound emphasise Scrooge's loneliness and alienation of his surroundings, for he walks alone; protected in his social fortress of multi layers of clothing, as the wind howls with nothing but his shadow accompanying him to his even lonelier house.

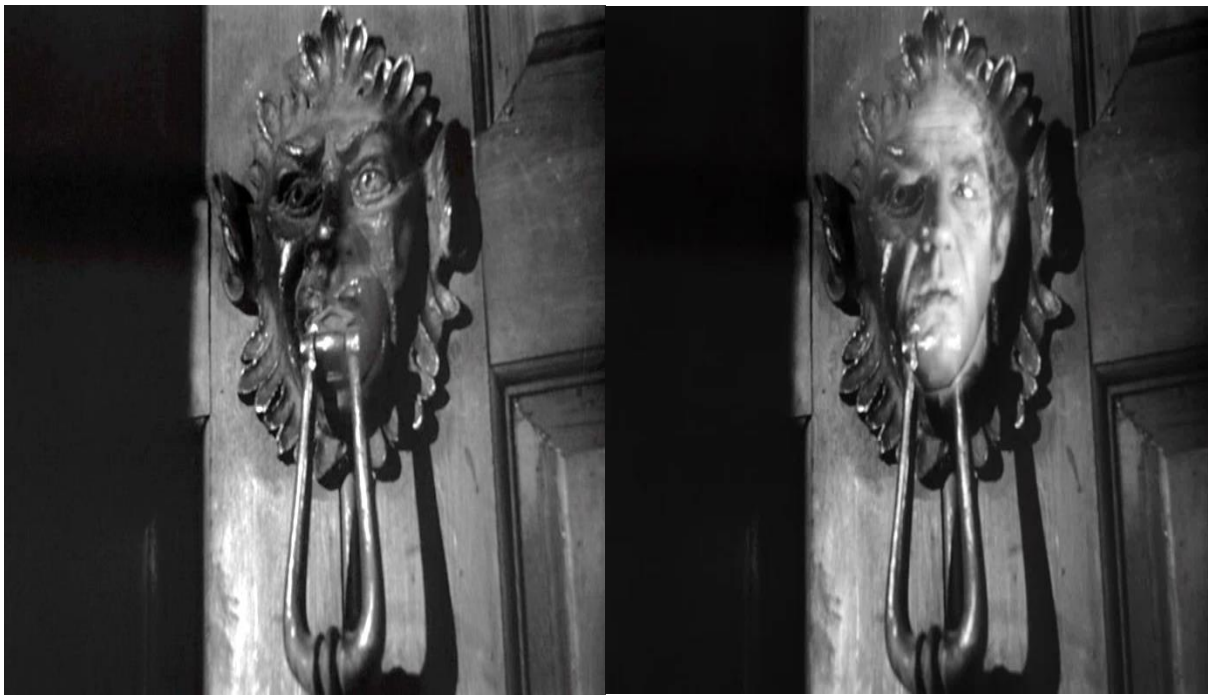


Figure 4 *Scrooge* (1951).

It is witty to use a doorknocker with features that serve the embodiment of Marley's first ghostly appearance (Figure 4). The motionless of the eyes of the knocker served the portrayal of Jacob Marley's 'perfectly motionless' eyes that Dickens refers to in the *Carol*. Scrooge moves into the house with great astonishment and disbelief but he fastens the door, and sticks his fingers in his ears to purge them of the sound of the bells in denial when doubt and fear started lurking in. It is when the ghost of Jacob Marley is standing in front of him that Scrooge's reaction communicates a great confusion as he avoids eye contact even though he insists on denying what he is seeing. Marley's ghost comes in his pigtail waistcoat he wore in life, similar to John Leech's illustration from the book. "Scrooge had often heard that Marley had no bowls, but he had never believed it until now" (Dickens 19) this line asserts the death of Jacob Marley which accentuates the supernatural element in the story. However, the human body parts were in fact synonymous to certain affections in the pseudo-science of phrenology, for instance the heart is the seat of love, whereas the bowls are the seat of pity and compassion "but whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"(1Jn. 3.17). Just like Scrooge, Marley lacked that affection for his fellow men.

Jacob Marley is reportedly a reincarnation of Dr Miles Marley[29] whom Dickens knew and considered to have an interesting name that might justify the scientific tone attributed to the conversation that Scrooge had with his long dead partner's ghost Marley. This idea is more evident when Marley questions Scrooge "what evidence would you have of my reality, beyond that of your senses?...Why do you doubt your senses?" Scrooge gives a scientific argument to justify his doubt "because 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 21).

Scrooge does not believe in the supernatural, thus he tries to find answers in science for inexplicable things to reduce his confusion and fear. "There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" (Dickens 21) is a humorous line that attributes a comic tone to such a terrifying experience, and exemplifying the sensitivity of the senses, for anything can affect them and cause hallucination. In the psychology of dreams, nightmares can be stimulated by things *seen* or *heard* during the day, just like they can be stimulated by pain or bad food digestion. Ironically, Dickens owned Robert Macnish's book *The Philosophy of Sleep* in which he examines sleeping as a phenomenon, and had personally experienced something very similar to Scrooge's supernatural encounter. Dickens had supposedly seen the ghost of his dead beloved sister in-law Mary Hogarth a year after publishing his *Carol*, the night he suffered from a severe back pain due to his rheumatism, he wrote to his friend John Forster "I wonder whether I should regard it as a dream, or an actual Vision!" (Schlicke, *The Oxford Companion to C.D* 511)

Michael Hordern as Marley, who appears to be more frightened than frightening, maintains motionless eyes by keeping them open without losing focus or blinking except one time during the entire dialogue. Marley is fettered with the chain he "forged in life [and] made it link by link, and yard by yard" (Dickens 22) as a symbol of one's evil deeds in life. Associating Marley's ill doings in life with chains

[29] A London physician whom according to Cornish historian Barry West had inspired Dickens's character Jacob Marley.

was also an indicator of solitude; similar to the one devouring the prisoners in their cells and haunting their minds to conjure up nightmarish thoughts; ghosts included. Marley's ghost is a vessel that canalizes the true meaning of business that Dickens promotes in the *Carol*, Hordern's diction when uttering Marley's famous line with a cry "Business! Mankind was my Business! Their common welfare was my Business!" (Hurst 00:17:23-00:17-28) conveys the regret and torture which the dead can no longer escape as it is shown again via the roaming yowling ghosts outside Scrooge's window, unable to help the poor.

The following scene shows the first of the three spirits; the ghost of Christmas Past. Dickens refers to it as an almost shapeless bright mass, both young and old, a mixture of the two opposing stages of life; the early and the late stage of one's lifespan; a duality that symbolizes memory. Hurst's adaptation portrays it as an old man with a soft voice, dressed in white; a representation that echoes innocence of childhood. The ambiguousness of the spirit presents a challenge but offers boundless possibilities of interpretation for artists. Filmmakers have interpreted it differently; as a man, a woman, young, or old and even though they tend to rely on John Leech's illustrations for inspiration, this particular spirit was a problematic for Leech himself who abstractly drew it as a luminous mass. As the ghost asks Scrooge to follow him, Alastair Sim transmits his annoyance through a distinct but natural way of getting out of bed early after a disturbing night. Alastair relies on natural, completely relaxed and realistic acting to properly capture Scrooge which gives his performance credibility and makes it believable. Scrooge's fantastical journey starts with a scene from his past. The mise-en-scene[30] captures the elements Dickens referred to in the book such as the bridge, the river, and the church.

Naming is revealing. *Scrooge* (1951) uses the protagonist's name as a title to place focus on the perspective and the journey the film will follow, and that is Scrooge's, reason why it shed light on his past to unravel what might have forged his character and fractured his nature. A much younger Scrooge is later shown to be alone

[30] Staging or the setting in scene including the lighting, subjects and objects before the camera within the frame of a film.

and forgotten in a classroom that depicts certain details from the book such as “the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes”(Dickens 33), before his sister Fan comes to tell Scrooge about how “home is like Heaven” (Dickens 33) but Scrooge answers “for you perhaps, but not for me” (Hurst 00:22:39-00:22:41) which echoes the misery Dickens has experienced as a kid at Warren’s Blacking warehouse while his sister Fanny attended the Royal Academy of Music. Fan, along with the ghost, provide a plausible explanation that is missing in the *Carol*. What differentiates this adaptation from the previous ones is the way it stretches the text to answer one important question that haunts the *Carol*’s readers; that is why has Scrooge grown up to be the miser everyone demises in the world of literature?. Fan’s line “everyone loves you very much [Ebenezer]. You must forgive papa and forget the past.”(Hurst 00:23:33-00:23:38) is explained when the audience is informed that Fan died giving birth to her only son Fred, which cultivated the grudge Scrooge bears against his nephew similar to the grudge Scrooge’s father bears against him. Fan is originally younger than Scrooge; however Hurst’s adaptation introduces her as Scrooge’s older sister to support his backstory; the ghost explains “your mother died giving you life, for which your father never forgave you as if you were to blame” (Hurst 00:24:07-00:24:12) providing by that an explanation for the *Carol*’s appreciators, as it enhances the credibility of the character and the believability of his redemption, for evil is mostly made than born.

The next scene is of Fezziwig’s Christmas ball where his clerks and apprentices celebrate Christmas while dancing to Sir Roger de Coverley; played by a fiddler as it is one of the most known dances in the nineteenth century. The scene is as vivid as Dickens described it; happy and energetic, Victorian and Christmassy in every way possible. Through this memory, Scrooge realises that even though the ball cost Fezziwig but a slim amount of money “the happiness it gives, is quite as if it cost a fortune.”(Dickens 37). The scene cuts to Scrooge and his beloved Belle, just like Dickens cinematically cuts to it in the *Carol*. “Quick...it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself” (Dickens 37) this abrupt shift is more cinematic than it is novelistic, for the reader’s imagination is disrupted by new unexplained images and dialogue. The film however, provides a clarification with one line “turn and see

yourself in love Ebenezer Scrooge" (Hurst 00:25:43-00:25:45). Scrooge and the characters from the past such Fezziwig and Belle, who is named Alice in this film adaptation, are given a rich texture through backstories that highlight their ways of being and philosophies in life. Fezziwig's philosophy is surely articulated through his line "it's not just for money alone that one spends a lifetime building up a business…it's to preserve a way of life that one knew and loved…there's more in life than money" (Hurst 00:27:28-00:27:58), it is a philosophy that utilitarian businessmen such as Mr. Jorkin do not seem to grasp.

The next scene is of Fan on her deathbed, where young Scrooge is sitting next to her trying to comfort her and showering her with hopeless promises. The scene offers the audience a powerful argument to explain Scrooge's rigid character, and a lost hope that could have freed him from the chain he forged around himself. "Forgive me Fan, forgive me, forgive me Fan!, forgive me Fan"(Hurst 00:31:12-00:31:18) Scrooge says sobbing; which indicates a sense of regret and somehow hints that if he had heard Fan's last wish for him to take care of her boy after her death; he would have respected it, and that would have altered everything.

The industrialisation of the Victorian era has continuously inspired different art forms and movements such as Steampunk which revolves around a pseudo Victorian setting and a futuristic scientifically complex reality, a curious mixture that recognises and emphasises the strong affiliation between the past and the future. The next scene tackles the subject of machinery which the industrial revolution swept the world with, and changed it forever. "Marley: The world is on the verge of new and great changes. Some of them, of necessity, will be violent...Scrooge: one must steel oneself to survive it and not be crushed under with the weak and infirm" (Hurst 00:32:23-00:32:37) is a thought provoking addition by Noel Langley; who was responsible for the screenplay of this film adaptation; as it successfully captures the dehumanizing attitudes which resulted from industrialisation and were highlighted by Dickens in the *Carol*. Hurst's *Scrooge* contextualises the *Carol* for the cinemagoers to fathom the environment that inspired the story and produced the utilitarian philosophy to eventually shape humanly distant machinelike men such as Scrooge.

The following scene is of Alice and Scrooge last meeting. Alice, originally named Belle, might be a personification of Dickens's lost love Maria Beadnell whose family rejected him for being too poor for their riches. Belle whom in the story appears to be wearing black, for she is "a dowerless girl" (Dickens 38) symbolises the death of Scrooge the human, for his heart is forever changed, hardened and replaced with gold as Alastair Sim presses his hand on the left side of his chest to physically mark the connection. Scrooge appears to be an embodiment of evil in a human form which Sim communicates with his eyes while sinisterly smirking at his partner's burial which he would not have attended if it was not for the "undoubted bargain" (Dickens 9) he aspired to strike and succeeded to do it.

The ghost of Christmas present leads Scrooge through the streets of Victorian London. The Victorian Christmas that the film demonstrates is faithful to Dickens's; however, the 1840's Christmases were warm compared to the frigid Christmas day that Dickens described in his work. Consequently, it was rather unusual for the Victorians to read about a Christmas that resembles those from their childhood. *A Christmas Carol* started a new tradition by associating Christmas with snowy wintery days. Although this adaptation feebly conveys the powerful imagery of Cornwall's miners from the *Carol* through a minimal scene of a Christmas gathering, it still demonstrates Ignorance and Want; Dickens's major concern about society, and prime message of his ghostly little book. The boy and the girl look rather weak than monstrous, but as menacing as Dickens described them to make the story's strongest statement on the destructive power of ignorance and its irredeemable consequences.

The Cratchits' family and house might be inspired from Dickens's own family and their residence on Bayham Street, Camden Town, one of the poorest suburbs in London at that time, Claire Tomalin explains:

> Camden Town, where the Dickens family had installed itself, was one of the areas of expansion. They fitted tightly into a narrow terraced house, Bayham Street: three floors, basement, ground and first, an exiguous garret above and a wash house out at the back. Into this small space went the six children,

> including the new baby, Alfred, their nameless maid and their lodger James Lamert. Where and how they slept is hard to work out, and a further mystery is that, when two-year-old Harriet fell ill with smallpox later that year and died, the others escaped infection. (Tomalin 18).

Nevertheless, the family ties of the Cratchits were stronger than the ill treatment which the working class and the children suffered from in mechanical London.

The last spirit, the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is simply portrayed, yet effectively frightening for a symbol of death and hopelessness, entirely covered in a black sheet save the ghost's sole communication vehicle; its hand. The future of the Cratchits is sorrowful; a credible reflection of every house where a child has died which, due to the Victorian infant mortality rate, was but a foreshadowed certainty. Dickens has always aspired for his literature to reform the ugliness triggered by industrialisation; embodied in cruel philosophies, child labour, ignorance, poverty and the resultant want, therefore preserve the lives of those who could shape a promising, hopeful future for England.

The scene from Joe's illegal looking pawnshop; mostly known as rag-and-bottle shops, is dreadful for the rags and the grime but mainly for the hideous image of ill children working in such unsanitary places under the supervision of an immoral man like Joe who deals with all kind of items; stolen or not. This adaptation communicates the dreadfulness of the shop even through details such as the creaks of the door, as it was visited by the poor to sell or trade their items for money. The undertakers' scene is tremendously powerful and well executed, for it shows the degradation of a society that seems to have lost its humanity. "You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache, but you won't find a hole in it" (Dickens 69) this line is but a believable prophecy for a Victorian society that is too economically ambitious, yet too socially idle to prevent the poor and the ignorant from adopting Joe's line "you were born to make your fortune" (Dickens 69) as a slogan.

The last vision is a lively depiction of John Leech's illustration of the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, with Alastair Sim on his knees begging for a chance he earlier assumed to be beyond all possible realms (Figure 5). Through the technique of graphic match cut (Figure 6) which is a transitional technique used in both continuous and discontinuous editing in which two shots are visually joined to emphasise a specific relationship between the objects or the subjects involved, the scene transitions to Scrooge in his bedroom. Alastair Sim; melding different emotions and carefully plotting them as he faces himself in the mirror , depicts a natural believable reaction of a man who was given a chance for redemption in the most unbelievable Dickensian way. Scrooge and his maid form a comical duo through a bundle of emotions delivered rapidly and abruptly that stupendously conveys the festivity of Christmas day.

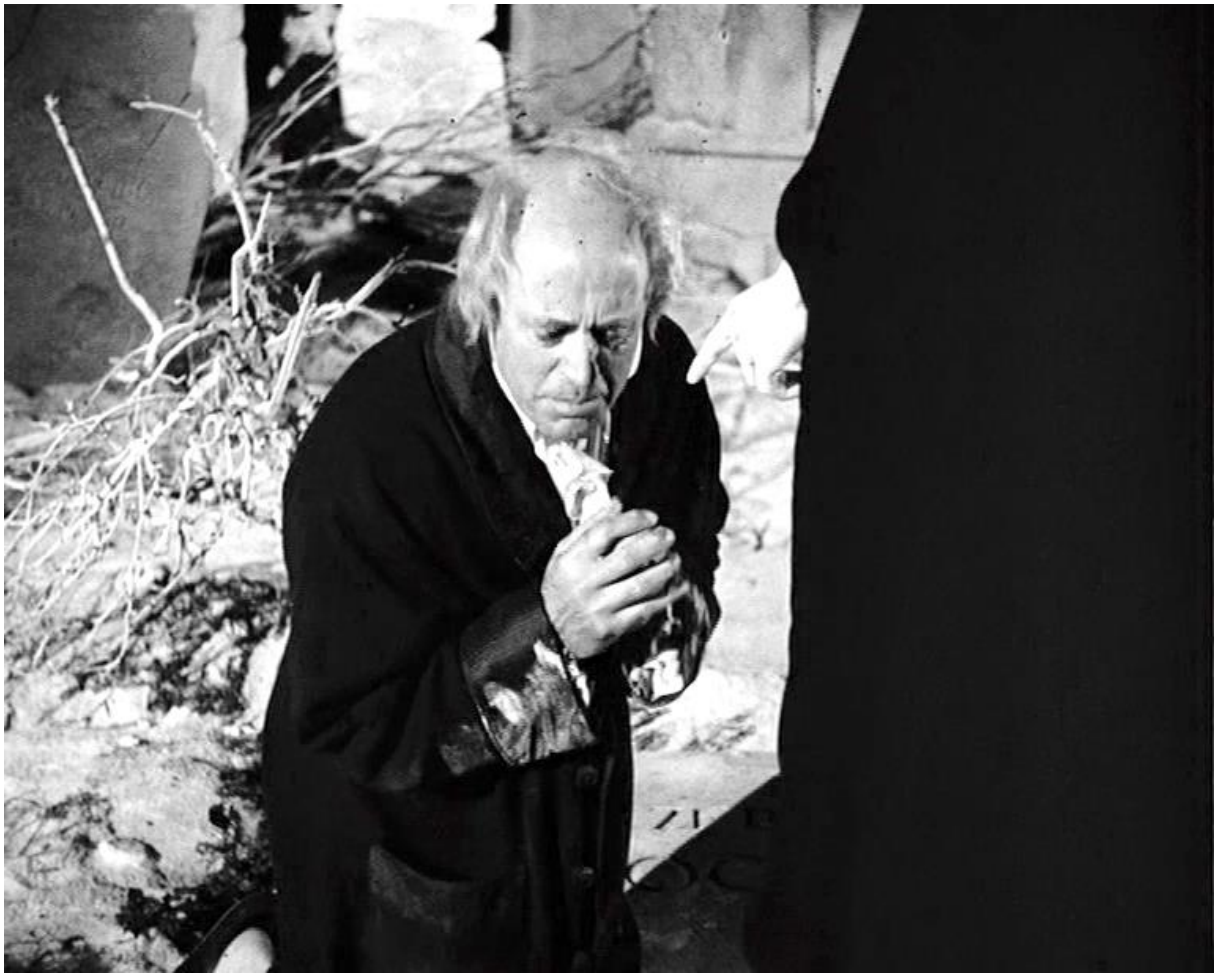


Figure 5 *Scrooge* (1951).

Figure 6 *Scrooge* (1951).

The musical score by Richard Addinsell captures details from Dickens's life such as integrating the polka dance at Fred's party; the Slovenian Stoparjeva Polka, a dance that the famous English author was fond of. Mamie Dickens notes:

> My father [Charles Dickens] insisted that my sister Katie and I should teach the polka step to Mr. Leech and himself. My father was as much in earnest about learning to take that wonderful step correctly, as though there were nothing of greater importance in the world. Often he would practice gravely in a corner, without either partner or music…he diligently rehearsed its "one, two, three, one, two, three" until he was once more secure in his knowledge. (M Dickens chap. 2)

Whether it is Scrooge's backstory and his father's irrelevant blame which he laid on him, Fan's death, or Sim's spontaneous, unforced acting, his euphonic voice and the use of filler words, this cinematic adaptation explores the psychology of Scrooge by implying what might have harboured his grudge and its association with Christmas.

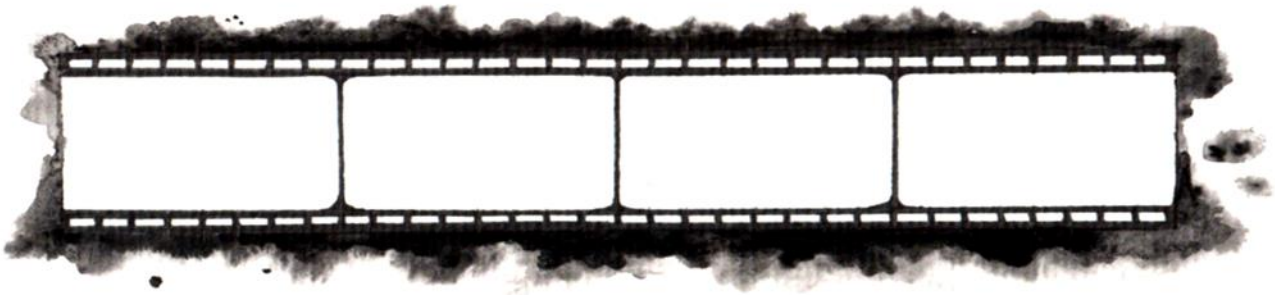
In a period of time when the world was anxious about the Cold War and its implications, *Scrooge* (1951) seems to unwillingly promote an ideology that speaks to all parties due to the text's universality. *A Christmas Carol* tends to focus on what brings people together instead of what makes them different to grow apart; it is however the director's responsibility to choose what to put emphasis on in an adaptation that offers entertainment and intellectual humanistic stimulation. To adapt is to de-familiarize the familiar in a recognizable way. It is a more challenging task to picture an overly adapted text anew. Therefore, auteurism is artistically needful, for to see it authored by the director is to renew it. Art is innately special; but it is what one can bring to it that no one else can which makes one an artist.

With the rise of television, cinema started losing its audience that even *Scrooge* (1951) which is acknowledged as the best adaptation of the *Carol*, did not receive the recognition it has today, formerly. The French New Wave replenished cinema and occasionally displeased the audience with its realistic approach to the seventh art. With Hollywood's new forms of films and genres, the seventies introduced a new money making machine known as movie franchises such as *Star Wars*, which like adaptation, guarantee a wide audience with every sequel. Ironically, Hollywood's early blockbuster franchises were cinematic adaptations of literary productions such as Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972)*;* an adaptation of a novel of the some name by Italian American author Mario Puzo, and Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), the first Event Movie[31]; based on Peter Benchley's novel *Jaws*. The eighties introduced the video home system i.e. VHS, another competitor that the world thought it would extinguish the blazing light of the movies that proved to be inextinguishable.

[31] A blockbuster movie largely promoted by marketing campaigns, its release is considered to be a major event.

Scrooge's story is more than that of a man who embarks on a journey beyond all realistic possibilities to encounter apparitions from to past, present and future times. It is a story of everyone, anywhere, and anytime. In adaptation, only a filmmaker who knows the work and the creator behind the work too well along with its stimulating context is entitled and has the ability to create the proper adaptation of a literary fabric like the *Carol*. Cinematic adaptation is not about producing replicas or faithful representations of everything about the work, it is about remaining true to the work in order to preserve its essence and glory through cinema while exploring new dimensions through new readings.

A reproduction of John Leech’s illustration of the Spirit of Christmas Present



CHAPTER III

DISNEYFYING THE *CAROL*:

FUZZY MUPPETS AND HUMAN PUPPETS

"The mission of animation is to express things impressively, strongly, deeply, and extremely simply."

- Kitayama Seitaro

Moviegoers are offered a variety of holiday films to watch throughout the year. Halloween and Christmas films are probably the most popular to make. *A Christmas Carol,* the most adapted Christmas story of all time seems to join elements from both traditions to lively draw the Victorian social conditions. The Dickensian *Carol* had been on screen for over a century; an adaptation for every generation, and yet it still succeeds to inspire redemption and sympathy. It seems that Dickens and his *Carol* have always had that affinity with the visual art.

Can a cinematic adaptation serve as a re-examination of the original work? Yes, it can but is that possibility still applicable on the *Carol*? That is hard to tell, for remediating a popular classic is challenging since it must preserve what readers admire about the work and hopefully correct the text or voice a particular aspect or scene louder than the literary fabric. Since humans are visual creatures who often remember a book through its filmic adaptation just like they recall memories, a good adaptation can overtake its original literary source as long as it is not widely popular. Dickens was a prolific writer whose books are widely known yet rarely read outside the English literature circle. Due to its powerful influence, the art of cinematic adaptation has the ability to influence the masses to take interest in reading the Dickensian canon. This does not mean that cinema is more powerful than literature by no means, or vice versa, for it takes a reader to be an adapter to cinematically adapt literature.

Even though Hurst's adaptation seems to remain the eternal urtext for all succeeding adaptation, the *Carol* witnessed various ones in colour. Encyclopædia Britannica Films i.e. EB Films *A Charles Dickens Christmas* 1956 by John Barnes was the first Dickens colour film and Christmas story colour adaptation from his first published novel *The Pickwick Papers.* Adaptations never ceased in the colour era starting with British productions *A Christmas Carol* in both 1960 and 1984, to the musical *Scrooge* in 1970 starring Albert Finney followed by American colour adaptations *The Passions of Carol* 1975 and Walt Disney Productions' *Mickey's Christmas Carol* in 1983 to Richard Donner's loose adaptation *Scrooged* in 1988 starring Bill Murray. The latter seems to confirm how relevant the *Carol* still is by re-contextualizing it in a modern setting. Donner's adaptation modernised the Victorian

setting and introduced Frank Cross as a protagonist; a television executive whose childhood trauma nurtured his bitter personality that he became humanly numb. Similar to the 1951 adaptation, *Scrooged* investigates the psychological possibilities to explain Frank Cross's character.

The doubled representation of the *Carol* via Cross's own experience and his attempt to televise the Dickensian work to finally redeem himself and show pride in his change by becoming part of his own televised version of the work, shed light on the connection between art and life which Oscar Wilde asserts in his essay *The Decay of Lying* "life imitates art far more than art imitates life" (Wilde 943). The cynical tone in this adaptation can be overdone, along with the singsong voice of the melodramatically temperamental Carol Kane as the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the weirdly looking Ghost of Christmas future. It is a combination that harms the seriousness and significance of this particular adaptation. However, it satirises the influence of television on culture by emphasizing the superiority of previously-established art forms.

It is a Dickensian trait to manipulate time which appears to be un-cinematically impossible. Scrooge travels through time both backward and forward to re-experience his journey and see his future forecasted in front of him. To adapt such scenes on stage is hardly doable especially those from Stave III the second of the three spirits, and Stave II when only one actor is cast as Scrooge. It is one of the many aspects that make the *Carol* too visual for its medium, stage, even cinema before literature inspired its basic techniques.

1. The Magic Kingdom of Walt Disney

The origins of animated film go back to 1906 with motion picture pioneer James Stuart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces,* a silent animated cartoon which presented drawings in motion. It was a splendid creation which sparked many ideas for animated adaptations like the American artist Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo* in 1911. Animation is an art that can render the impossible possible, but in order to achieve that, multiple skills and techniques were required but proved to be impractical with

time. From the hand drawing of every single detail on every frame to Earl Hurd's call for the use of celluloid[32], to stop-motion[33] photography technique, and Mark Fleischer's invention and use of the Rotoscope[34] to meld live-action and animation in *Out of the Inkwell series*, the system adopted to create animation has gone through multiple developments to save time and improve the art of animation.

Meanwhile the *Carol* continued to interest the film industry and Disney was no exception to that. Starting with a small animation studio, American animator Walt Disney succeeded to build the empire that is now known as The Walt Disney Company which shaped the American culture and the world's conception of it. From animated features to live action films, theme parks, Disney has done it all to build and finance an entertainment empire. The animated films biggest organization emerged in the twenties and grew ever since to become the powerful competitor organization the world knows today due to the genius of Walt Disney and his team known as the Nine Men who created timeless animated classic features along with the talented animators who preserved his legacy.

The company owes a great deal to its founder, Walt Disney who proved to be a pioneer and a leading figure in animated cinema. He gained both experience and a sense of artistic economy making short animated films such as the well beloved *Silly Symphonies*. Disney is also known for producing politically packed cartoons and propaganda animated short features such as *Education for Death* (1943) which exhibits a sinister dramatized imagery of the Nazi ideology. Walt Disney Productions did not stop; they kept on making animated features such as *Cinderella* (1950) which received a tremendous success, and the first 3-D animated cartoon entitled *Adventures in Music: Melody* in 1953. Creating animated features was time consuming; hence artists dedicated themselves to develop a good and believable animation over the

[32] Animation cells is every sheet used in animation, on which artists draw all the elements needed to create an image separately, hence they make background cells, characters cells, etc. layers of cells make one frame. Multiple frames are then put together to create motion.
[33] It is to take photographs of manually manipulated physical objects and figures in different poses and positions, frame by frame to create the illusion of movement.
[34] A motion tracking device used in animation to achieve rotoscoping which aims to create motion by tracing over real motion images to produce a realistic 2d motion action.

complexity of the narrative. New technologies and devices were needed, provided, then used to help the development of animation both technically and narratively.

Disney became synonymous with family films. Just when it established that, Disney started making films that appeal to different moviegoers and expanded its audiences on a larger scale in order to survive and compete with Hollywood biggest film studios such as Paramount and Warner Bros. Therefore, Disney invested in new animators including the famous director Tim Burton. The new talents refreshed the studios and provided a sense of direction and development. Walt Disney's legacy was preserved by his nephew Roy. E Disney, Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg, a golden trio who believed in the art of animation and mastered it stupendously to produce unforgettable and forever admired animated features and adaptations like *Beauty and the Beast* 1991 which contributed in the studios' renaissance and still continues to inspire new adaptations in the digital age like the live-action animated version *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) starring Emma Watson and Dan Stevens.

Melding live action and animation was always an intriguing concept for Disney studios. American filmmaker Steven Spielberg was one of the first directors who welcomed the idea as long as the final product was made believable for "toons could visit our world and that humans could visit Toontown" (Finch 275) with no limitations. American filmmaker Robert Zemeckis who is known for making renowned films like *Back to the Future* in 1985 and Disney's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* in 2009, shared Spielberg's opinion about this fusion by prioritising shooting live action and make animation realistically fit into it, thus "the live action would be shot first, and the animated characters inserted later" (Kagan 99). It seems that the idea of melding real actors and animation sparked a greater concept of computer generated films i.e. CGI. Computer generated images were originally based on modelling the figure, before rigging a flexible skeleton to animate it properly; it is a technique which Computer Animation Production System i.e. CAPS has facilitated in the film industry.

When it comes to adapting the classics, Disney shows a tremendous interest and a constant ambition to make the Disney adaptations surpass the books that inspired them by invading the audiences' collective memory. The American film critic and author Richard Schickel argues that Disney "came as a conqueror, never as a servant" (Schikel 239) making films that have always revolved around central themes of morality, magic, innocence, and optimism which the *Carol* seems to incorporate in one literary fabric.

2. The Muppet Christmas Carol: the Weird and the Familiar

American puppeteer Jim Henson collaborated with Disney studios and so did his Muppets. *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) is an eighty-six minutes long adaptation by Walt Disney Pictures from Jim Henson Productions, directed by Brian Henson, it reinvented the Dickensian *Carol* by de-familiarizing the familiar through the Muppets. This adaptation comes after forcefully establishing the *Carol* as an oral tradition due to the numerous filmic adaptations transcending by that its literary origins. The 1992 Muppet version of the *Carol* starring Michael Caine, offers recognizable literary Dickensian and Muppet characters such as Kermit the Frog as Bob Cratchit which creates an illusion that the Kermit is a standalone character and not a mere puppet; an illusion which is emphasised by interviewing the puppet instead of its puppeteer in different interviews, Hugh H. Davis notes that it "illustrates the nature of the suspension of disbelief which must occur for the film to succeed. The puppets create a surreal atmosphere initially, but once the movie starts, the audience is captures by the story and accepts Kermit the Frog as a character different from "just" Kermit" (H. Davis 98).

The film opens with a top view of what is supposed to be a recreation of Victorian London, foggy and snowy with red bricks houses, chimneys and snow covered rooftops. In this film the narrator is presented as Charles Dickens played by The Great Gonzo; the Muppet who along with his partner Rizzo the Rat welcome the viewers to the Muppet adaptation of the Dickensian Christmas story and say "welcome to The Muppet Christmas Carol. I am here to tell the story [says Gonzo]. And I am here for the food [says Rizzo the Rat]" (Henson 00:03:51-00:03:56). The dialogue

between Ganzo and the Rat only emphasises the idea that the film is in fact no more than an act, a reality which the Muppets have no intention to conceal via the script, Rizzo the Rat notes “wait a second! You’re not Charles Dickens! a blue, furry Charles Dickens who hangs out with a rat? Dickens was a nineteenth century novelist. A genius! Why should I believe you? Well [said Gonzo] because I know the story of "*A Christmas Carol*" like the back of my hand.” (Henson 00:04:01-00:04:21) this argument suggests the immortality of important texts and their creators, and how adaptation helps promoting them. Breaking the fourth wall in this adaptation establishes a direct connection with the audience and the literary source, for the narrator in the *Carol* does the same things as he directly addresses the readers when he says “as close to you as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow” (Dickens 28).

The portrayal of the ghosts remains considerably faithful to the *Carol* except for Marley’s ghost which, in this adaptation, is paired with another Marley played by the famous Muppet duo Statler and Waldorf. The ghost of Christmas Past appears to be as confusing as the one from the book, portrayed as a small infant like figure with a soft voice captured in soft focus which is a photography technique that implies dreamlike effect similar to Scrooge’s experience. The ghosts, however, might seem incoherent to some viewers; from the bizarre ethereal child-like looking ghost of the past, and the short ghost of the present, to the extremely large and ridiculously rigid ghost of the future, along with the comic duos of Marley and Marley, the fuzzy Dickens and the rat are qualities that make the adaptation a visual parody of the *Carol*. Cinema is an art that requires creativity; unfortunately, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* with its overreliance on the text offers a typical Muppets show saved by the musicals.

From *The Little Mermaid,* to *Beauty* and *The Beast,* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* music has constantly accompanied Disney’s movies; *The Muppet Christmas Carol* is no exception to that. The songs in this Muppet adaption deliver the literary characterization melodically. The protagonist is introduced through a song which summarises his personality and traits; the Dickensian literary description of Ebenezer Scrooge as a “squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous,

old sinner!...Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts" (Dickens 10) takes a lyrical form:

> The most hated and cursed Is the one that we call Scrooge
> Unkind as any, and the wrath of many, this is Ebenezer Scrooge
> Old Scrooge, he loves his money 'cause he thinks it gives him power
> If he became a flavour you can bet he would be sour!
> There goes Mr Skinflint There goes Mr Greed
> The undisputed master of the underhanded deed. (Henson 00:05:40-00:06:23)

Another example is set via Jacob Marley whose traits are presented through a song as well. Dickens's line "I wear the chain I forged in life, I made it link by link, and yard by yard…would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? …It is a ponderous chain!" (Dickens 22) is musically and lyrically delivered as:

> We're Marley and Marley, our hearts were painted black
> We should've known our evil deeds would put us both in shackles
> Captive bound we're double-ironed Exhausted by the weight
> As freedom comes from giving love so prison comes with hate
> Doomed, Scrooge You're doomed for all time
> Your future is a horror story written by your crime
> Your chains are forged by what you say and do
> So have your fun when life is done
> A nightmare waits for you. (Henson 00:27:02-00:27:59)

The Muppet adaptation speaks to the young audience with its musical qualities and educational hints. From Gonzo's line "Storytellers are omniscient. I know everything" (Henson 00:22:56-00:22:58) and "that's scary stuff! Hey. Should we be worried about the kids in the audience? asks Rizzo the Rat, "Nah [Gonzo replies]. That's all right. This is culture" (Henson 00:29:14-00:29:19) to "if you like this [adaptation] you should read the book" (Henson 01:21:10-01:21:12) *The Muppet*

Christmas Carol serves its educational mission regardless of the forgettable unimpressive portrayal of Scrooge by Michael Caine.

3. The Art of Animation: Puppeteering Actors

Whereas animation had always has a technical connotation due to its reliance and intensive use of technology which seems to detach it from the art of film while animated features are instantly associated with American cartoon; more specifically, Disney films and kids' entertainments, it is in fact an art form on its own that evolved through time. Even though defining animation can simplistically be associated with Disney cartoons, minimising its artistic importance and contribution to the film industry; it continues to evolve similar to its definition which continues to be adjusted according to technological developments.

To animate is to give life to the inanimate, however, what animation tries to give life to can sometimes be already alive. Therefore, animation is usually an animator but when it comes to adaptation it becomes a mere re-animator. Animation appeals to different literary sources from the canon to the comics. It is a provider of endless possibilities. Ever since its existence, animation has been associated and disassociated with multiple concepts to define it, from a technical process, to non-live action features only associated with digital and graphic arts, animation seems to resist limitations.

Similar to Bazin's thoughts on how connected films and reality are and should be, Alexander Sesonske argues that in cartoons; which traditionally define animation, "there is a world we experience here, but not the world…it exists only now, when I see it; yet I cannot go to where its creature are, for there is no access to its space from ours except through vision" (qtd. in Buchan 17) which marginalises animation as a minimal cinematic creation.

In live action films, reality is both presented and used to capture action whereas in animation reality seems distant, for action is created in a virtual world through virtual cinematography. Animation is the illusion of motion and movement that evolved to become a cinematic genre in a digital era where most films are animated.

However, according to Italian animation historian Giannalberto Bendazzi, animation is not a genre per say but rather an art form, a style of filmmaking "the twin to live action cinema" (Bendazzi 1: 21) since it embraces almost all film genres with probably feeble exceptions. Films that appeal to a wide audience in the digital era tend to be heavily dependent on what digital techniques have to offer such as computer generated images i.e. CGI and special effects i.e. VFX, hence familiarizing the viewers with the new digital way of filmmaking as a preserver of credibility and realism regardless of the genre.

Similar to animation, defining Motion Graphics; also known as typographical animation, depends on the perspective used to approach it. Fields that are related to animation tend to be technically oriented which minimises its artistic value, motion graphics is no exception, for it is collectively known as a commercial tool that uses both graphic design and animation to promote information, firstly used by technicians who lacked artistic background but used new technology creatively. While animation is a frame by frame narrative form that utilises characters to entertain; motion graphics is key-frame based that works with typography to rather communicate and promote certain ideas. Motion graphics have been used to present film titles and opening credits to provide an introduction, and convey information about the film in a memorable way which one can vividly recall from the opening titles of the iconic franchise *Star Wars*, *Back to the Future* (1985), as well as recent films from the Marvel Cinematic Universe like *Spider-Man* (2002), *Thor* (2011), and *Venom* (2018). The technological advancements which revolve around computer graphics paved the way for Computer Generated Imagery and Motion Capture i.e. MoCap; two marketing materials and technologies used in the digital mainstream cinema. MoCap and CGI became ubiquitous in the digital era and the entertainment industry blockbusters. Moviegoers today are accustomed to this fusion; they are familiar and appreciative of it. Hence, realism is fairly preserved in the virtual world.

Motion capture is a form of hybrid human computer interaction which seems to conquer the film industry (Figure 1). Simply put, it is a method that captures the actor's movements in a 3-D space before transferring and mapping them onto CG

characters to stimulate action and create the illusion of animation using different techniques, systems and software. It is a complex process that tracks the actor's body movements and facial expression via the use of markers, and captures his performance as a whole. This interaction nurtures the artistic nature of motion capture to overlook its technical origin and generate the new proper term that is performance capture[35].

Figure 1 four different phases of Motion Capture.

Acting evolves along with filmmaking; from the device to the method, actors learned how to use their talent and craft accordingly, for "the changing technologies of stage and screen continually prompt actors to rethink how they use their body and voices in the service of their art"(Carnicke 322). However, it might seem that motion capture takes over the actor's auteurism and ability to fully control his performance since characters are brought to life and modelled in post-production, for in motion capture performance is greatly influenced by the animators who polish it and bring it to life digitally that the film loses its traditional phases of production and post-

[35] A term that emphasises the artistic use of motion capture technology when used artistically to capture actors' performance.

production which are entwined in the world of animation. Consequently, animators have been required to understand acting and use their craft to carefully create a sophisticated credible illusion of life.

The actor's performance in motion capture is as important as it is in live action. The actor's presence is evident and his performance is fraught with difficulties and challenges. The actor seems to control the actions, expressions and emotions of his character, hence his embodiment of the character gives him back his original authorship and control, that animated films tend to restrain from actors. Therefore, it is safe to say that when it comes to acting, motion caption becomes a mere performance recording technology allowing CGI characters to exist on their own and maintain their longevity. It is difficult for characters like Ebenezer Scrooge to have a long-lasting impact on the audience when motion capture is used to cinematically adapt a popular classic like Dickens's *Christmas Carol,* for the character has already acquired an immortal presence in both literature and cinema which makes its Motion Capture representation hardly memorable to some extent. Ultimately, filmmaking is a collective procedure that requires multiple skills to properly capture the actor's performance using motion capture is indispensable; hence the actor is in every bit as important as the animator.

Whereas Motion Capture is technologically and technically packed, it offers minimal environment for actors to work in and elements to work with. MoCap cameras are designed to keep track of the actors' body movements by capturing and recording their generated data; which later on is transferred to the computers in order to digitally create and animate the CG models and the environment, for the scenography[36] is barely reliant of physical objects and props. Therefore, actors are required to exploit their theatrical qualities to construct the environment for their characters by envisioning the space where scenes take place and imagining themselves into it. MoCap film settings are not entirely deserted, for even if pantomiming the movement of taking a hat off for instance to mark the presence of an object can be added naturally in the post-production, some actors prefer to have a sense of

[36] The components needed to make a scene and the mise en scène.

orientation and interaction to preserve a naturally, realistic flow of movements. Thus, MoCap intensifies the challenges of acting for actors to deliver a plausible effective performance. Yet, some directors might consider the lack of concrete material and references as a source of creative flexibility, and use it in order to test and stimulate the actors' body language, acting skills, and ability to maintain focus on recreating the reality they have to create. It is still a new technology that calls for neat acting by good actors who need to adjust their methods and work accordingly.

Motion capture sees actors as data to be rendered as performances in postproduction which in this case is production itself since the director with his virtual camera, the cinematographer, and the animators get to frame the recorded date captured on MoCap cameras on stage, along with the imaginative environment incorporated by the actors. It expands the capacities of traditional camera used in live action films, and gives filmmakers a wide range of shots and angles to capture, explore, control, and select from. It is a technology that allows the combination of the real and the unreal in the most realistic way. It is important to know that the digital syntax of MoCap will always carry an emotional significance attributed by the actor regardless of the manipulation and interpretation of the animators in postproduction, for even in the virtual artificial realm of motion capture; the actor's performance is forever vivid and real.

It is the story that determines the needful techniques for the film to be credible, for using the technology solely to remain visually relevant and appear to the masses can doom the film to failure. While motion capture struggles to be taken seriously by the Academy, film makers continue to explore the interactive systems offered by MoCap and use them in making cinematic masterpieces. The American director and producer Robert Zemeckis has been a leading figure in the field of digital cinema by exploring the technology to introduce new cinematic trends and deliver innovative timeless films such as *Back to the Future* (1985), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), *Forrest Gump* (1994), *The Polar Express* (2004), and *Disney's A Christmas Carol* (2009).

4. Dickens's Carol through Virtual Camera

Robert Zemeckis challenged normalities *'for what does normal mean anyway?'* which he skilfully delivered through his movies, with humour occasionally, for if one does not have *'a good sense of humour'* one is *'better off dead'*. Hence, what Zemeckis finds cinematically attractive is usually associated with the peculiarity of the story. Robert Zemeckis has shown interest in holiday movies via *The Polar Express* which triggers the idea of the spiritual realm and referenced Ebenezer Scrooge; the protagonist from his next Christmas film adaptation. Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* uses the concept of time travel which seems to interest Robert Zemeckis ever since his big film *Back To the Future*, which is probably why he decided to build another time machine using the Dickensian literary fabric and new technology to capture the imagination in the *Carol* like never before, and most importantly to do it *'with style'*.

Disney's A Christmas Carol (2009) seems to have dragged Robert Zemeckis back to making time travel films about the future, the present and the past. It is the first performance capture adaptation of the Dickensian *Carol*, a new technology that succeeded to capture Dickens's imagination for his *Carol* like no other technique could before. The film is produced by director and producer Robert Zemeckis along with Steve Starkey and Jack Rapkey. All three producers have founded a production company known as ImageMovers which, along with Walt Disney Company, have produced and distributed Disney's *A Christmas Caro* in 2009. This performance capture adaptation was excessively demanding, with a large cast and staff members that consist of teams of production, performance capture unit, photography, special effects, animation, editing, and much more.

When asked on why he chose to revisit the *Carol,* Robert Zemeckis says "it is a magnificent novel…it has never been realised in a movie the way that I think Dickens intended it when he wrote it, with the technology we have now I thought maybe we can finally do the novel justice" (*Capturing Dickens* 00:02:15-00:02:35) an assertive tone that emphasises the fidelity needed for the adaptation to be accurate for Zemeckis; fidelity to the imagination and the spirit not to the text per se. Producer Jack

Rapkey explains “Dickens wrote [the *Carol*] before the invention of cinema and so he wrote a book that obviously couldn’t be translated in the way that his imagination called for” (*Capturing Dickens* 00:02:48-00:03-01) motion Capture offers limitless possibilities that are suitable to capture such a whimsical story of time travel and the supernatural which cannot be captured realistically otherwise. Similarly, *A Christmas Carol* is visually packed as a cinematically adaptable literary work.

To capture the excitement of Scrooge’s spectral experience, Zemeckis had to use MoCap technology to faithfully adapt its details on screen. Regardless of how outdated fidelity is as a crucial approach in adaptation studies; being faithful to the author’s imagination is still an effective method since it preserves the authenticity of the text without limiting its possible interpretations. Most of the spectral scenes and visions in the *Carol* could not be realised in a live action film adaptation while the computerised universe copes with the vivid imagination of Charles Dickens that embraces the living and the dead in all dimensions of time.

The cast of *Disney’s A Christmas Carol* had to familiarize itself with performance capture technology which, despite of the suits, the sensors, the markers and the artificial sphere altogether, allows a theatrical quality, mainly since the actors perform on stage while imagining the entire mise-en-scène. What differentiates this technology from the others is its close attention to details of performance; the actors’ facial expressions are never ignored, for their faces are marked with dots to record relevant expressions from different scenes in order to provide natural detailed realistic movements for their animated versions. On stage, the facial expressions are captured via a rig of video cameras attached to helmets every actor should wear to be transferred and animated afterwards (Figure 2), motion capture supervisor and animator Gary Roberts explains “we process that video data the same way we did the body, we identify those tracking points on the face and generate three animation from it” (*Capturing Dickens* 00:05:24-00:05:29).

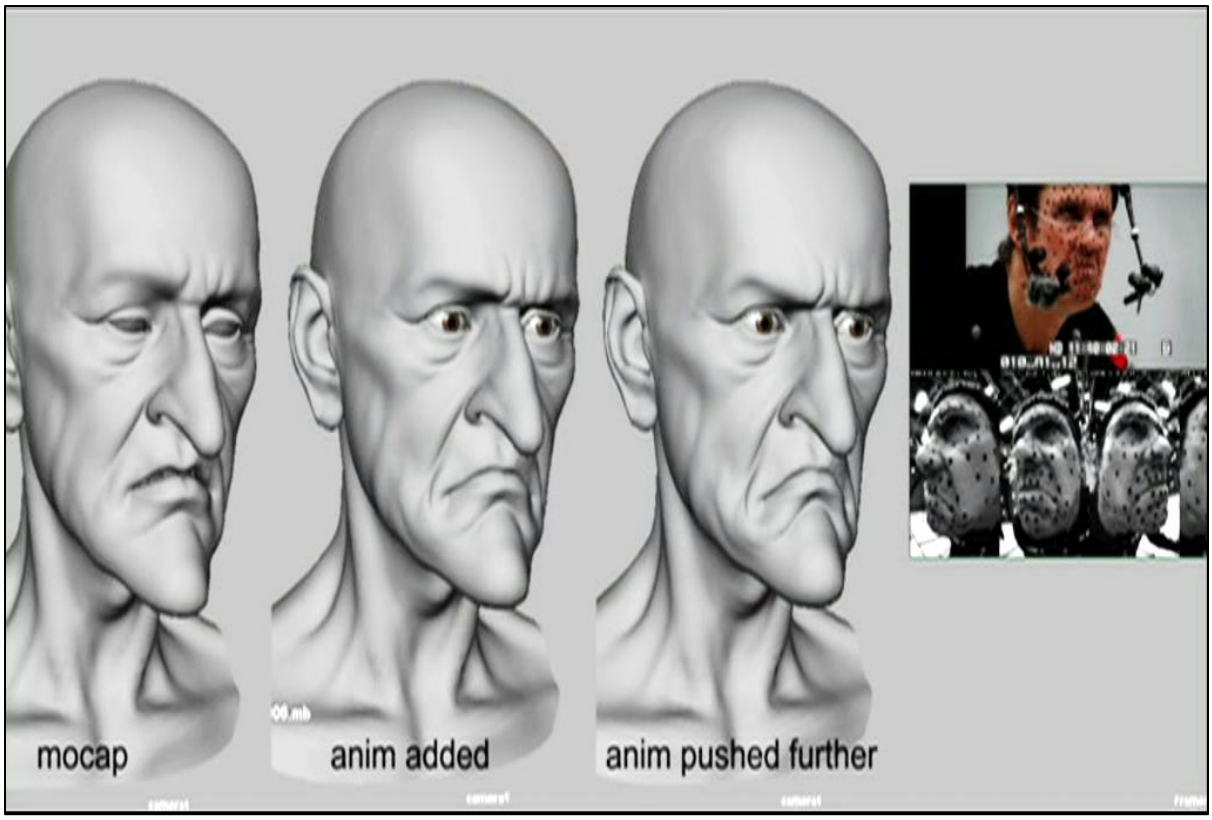


Figure 2 the cameras helmet that every actor should wear to his facial motions to be captured and properly animated.

Disney's A Christmas Carol relies on great actors like Gary Oldman and Jim Carrey who have been mastering their craft for years. Thus, putting their skills to test with MoCap technology can be intensively challenging for actors. Motion Capture is technical-based, for instance, the computers that are used in the process must be provided with a starting point and a stop; a robotic process that pushes actors to do what is known as a T-Pose nearly before every shot is taken to have a good exposure of all the tracking markers on the suit. The T-Pose breaks the continuity of acting and emotion which can disturb the actors after intensively building up their motions, actions, reactions and their performances as a whole; it is quite similar to calling 'cut' after every shot, the difference is that it is done constantly during the process of MoCap and not just by the end of it.

Creating the illusion of life in animation and of performance in motion capture depends on the actors whose performances on stage accentuate their presence in the virtual world of animation which makes the characters less robotic and more realistic, believable, and relatable. It is in the Mission Control room that the data captured on

camera is given a form through what seems like digital puppeteering. The actors' range of motion along with their tracking markers data are used to create and animate their characters. Once the performances are finally brought to life, the director is able to use a 3D virtual camera to start shooting in a more familiar and traditional way through a process known as directors layout of motion capture i.e. DLO. The latter allows the director to work with the camera and explore the virtual environment and takes; with the director of photography, to create the shots from the series of beats[37] taken according to the director's vision. Directors' layout permits the narrowness of performances to what is essential and effective for the film.

Once the shots are chosen, they become animation ready. Animators generate 3D animation, edit, and polish the shots to create a flow of natural looking motion. The technology of performance capture offers the director unlimited freedom of control over scenography and cinematography, a double-edged sword, as producer Steve Starkey notes "the good news is you can do anything, the bad news is you have to do everything" (*Capturing Dickens* 00:12:26-00:12:29). Performance capture possesses the power of rendering the Dickensian imagination visually possible, and since with great power comes great responsibility, Robert Zemeckis intended for his adaptation of the *Carol* to be faithful to its phantasmagorical essence.

4.1.A Robert Zemeckis Christmas Carol: An Analysis

This ninety-two minutes long American cinematic adaption opens with a scene through a slightly frosty window to show the beautiful Victorian London streets where the sound of horses and carriages rides on the paving stones is harmonious with a musical combination of traditional Christmas carols composed by Alan Silvestri. The camera places focus on what seems to be a desk on which the Dickensian *Carol* is placed next to an inked quill; it is a writer's environment that simulated his imagination. The music intensifies with a forward zoom to mark the transition of tone and build up the thrill of the story as the book opens abruptly; a common feature and a typical Disney tradition but previously used in Hurst's adaptation in 1951. The camera zooms in on the first line from the book written in bold "Marley was dead: to begin

[37] The motions captured on camera.

with." (Zemeckis 00:01:36) with the word 'dead' centred to stress the supernatural and the fantastical elements of this adaptation. Using a close up shot to capture the magnified face of Jacob Marley followed by a zoom out, both welcome the viewers into a new realm and reveal its surroundings. It is an opening that lives up to the genre both visually and musically.

Zemeckis wanted to literally capture how Scrooge's name was "good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to" (Dickens 9) via details of performance. Both Scrooge and the undertaker are shown in Marley's funeral using point of view shot i.e. P.O.V shot which allows viewers a sense of observation through the characters' eyes to share their perspective. Marley, being the loner he was in life, was a loner in death with no one but Scrooge; his sole witness to sign his register of burial. His features were lifeless as they were in life leaving him "dead as a doornail" (Dickens 9) a simile; probably inspired by Shakespeare's Henry IV, that Dickens heard in one of his countless dreams shortly preceding his writing of the *Carol,* he admits in a letter to his American friend Professor Cornelius Felton:

> It is not a strange thing if writers of fiction never dream of their own creations; recollecting, I suppose, even in their dreams, that they have no real existence?...I had a good piece of absurdity in my head a night or two ago. I dreamed that somebody is dead…and I was greatly overcome when the news was broken to me (very delicately) by a gentleman… 'Good God!' I said, 'is he dead?' 'He is as dead, sir' rejoined the gentleman, 'as a door-nail.' (Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens 1833-1870* 97)

In a dimly lighted room filled with cheap pine coffins, where the deafening silence is only broken by the squeaky wooden floor, the undertaker expands his hand to receive money for his service, embodying Scrooge's nightmare and fear which he displays by pulling away from the undertaker, carefully picking a coin, and handing it to him with a shaking hand that communicates hesitation and resistance; it is a sign of great solid attachment and thrift. Hence it is no wonder for the heartily-numb Scrooge to seek a refund by taking the two coins placed on Marley's motionless eyelids; an old practice inspired from Greek mythology and believed to help the dead but it was later

used to keep the eyes of the dead closed only. Scrooge's despicable act expresses excessive loyalty to Victorian virtue of thrift and utilitarian attitude; for "tuppence is tuppence" (Zemeckis 00:03:52-00:03:54) says Scrooge while rubbing two coins in his fingers. Scrooge's performance, grumpy expressions and sounds are impeccably captured by the new technology in ways that the audience can still recognize the actor behind the character through performance capture which preserves the actors' traits and captures their acting methods and techniques.

Ebenezer Scrooge was carefully moulded in Zemeckis's adaptation, for readers among the audience can instantly recall Dickens's physical description of his character; "the cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin."(Dickens 10). This adaptation remains faithful to the Dickensian characterization of Scrooge due to the visual vividness attributed by Dickens to the protagonist and the director's vision which did not require modifications of appearance, for Zemeckis's purpose was never to expand the *Carol* but to retell it as Dickens intended to tell it.

Using tracking[38] and dolly[39] shots in the following scene shows Scrooge walking the streets of London in the early Victorian times in an extremely faithful portrayal of Dickens's description and a clear influence of previous adaptations, from the blind man's dog to the street carollers, they all communicate fear of the English miser Ebenezer Scrooge. Nevertheless, London generates the festivity of the season via the warm features on the children's faces whom to Scrooge were "delinquents" (Zemeckis 00:05:05) in every legal and financial sense of the word. The credits are then presented along with vivid images of the Victorian city inspired from Dickens's London in the third stave of the *Carol*. Using a crane[40]shot, Zemeckis offers an overhead view of the city of London during the Victorian era by operating the camera

[38] It follows the subject on camera from left to right or right to left.
[39] It is used interchangeably backward or forward, change of background tracking type
[40] A shot where the camera is on a high level dolly, it shifts height levels and changes direction to provide an overhead view.

dynamically to explore the set and capture the dynamics of industrial London and the diversity within while sustaining the fluidity of camera movements.

This adaptation provides a lively animated image of industrialization and its impact in mid nineteenth century Victorian London which are faithfully but carefully translated on screen from the Dickensian text. The scenes are arranged harmoniously to display Victorian traditions, culinary heritage, and Christmas ambiance yet they move in ways to emphasise a social juxtaposition. From the smoking chimneys smokes, and the carbon dusted buildings; to the wintery iced Thames River, the London Bridge and the St Paul Cathedral, this adaptation spares no detail to deliver a perfect photograph of the Victorian Christmas in London. To stress the social contrast, Zemeckis uses a scene of the Mansion House; the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, where a luxurious banquet was orchestrated by the butlers in a glamorously decorated hall. Whereas lavish meals were served in the upper apartments for upper classes, the camera zooms in from a high angle to show the narrow suffocating streets where children of the low classes beg for morsels. Irony is presented via the generosity of the mayor's cook whose small piece of meat is randomly tossed that it got snatched by a dog instead.

Dickens had probably included the Mansion House as a recall of his childhood memory which he later shared in *Gone Astray*; an article he wrote for his weekly journal *Household Words:*

> When I was a very small boy indeed, both in years and stature, I got lost one day in the city of London…I saw a pile of cooked sausages in a window with the label 'Small Germans, A Penny.' I went in and said 'if you please will you sell me a small German?' which they did…when what should I see before me but a dog with his ears cocked… I took the small German out of my pocket and began my dinner by biting off a bit and throwing it to the dog…until he suddenly made a snap… tore it out of my hand, and went off with it. He never came back to help me seek my fortune. (553)

It is clear that Zemeckis has done intensive research to incorporate some of Dickens's experiences that serve the story telling when making the film to sustain the credibility and intimacy usually found the book and its author. Charles Dickens would have easily recognized himself in Zemeckis's adaptation if he ever had the chance. Moreover, the beggars' scene at Lord Mayor's Mansion House was also inspired from Dickens's childhood experience, he adds:

> There was a dinner preparing at the Mansion House, and when I peeped in at a gated kitchen window, and saw the men cooks at work in their white caps, my heart began to beat with hope that the Lord Mayor, or the Lady Mayoress, or one of the young Princesses their daughters, would look out of an upper apartment and direct me to be taken in. But nothing of the kind occurred. It was not until I had been peeping in some time that one of the cooks called to me (the window was open) 'cut away, you sir!' which frightened me so, on account of his black whiskers, that I instantly obeyed. (Dickens, "Gone Astray" 555)

This is a cliché that carries plenty of truth about a brutal reality where the privileged never look out for the poor unless they look down on them. The setting in this adaptation remains faithful to the Dickensian text, it explores every detail to draw a plausible picture of Dickens's London during the holiday season; from the underage labourers cleaning the chimneys on freezing rooftops, and a market that welcomes all kinds of trades, to curious children enjoying the three shells and a pea game and joyous penniless boys racing hoops along a deserted iced street where Scrooge and Marley's office is located; a street that even the beams of light struggle to pierce its high buildings.

Unlike Hurst's 1951 cinematic adaptation of the *Carol*, Disney's *A Christmas Carol* gives a more accurate representation of the sign that reads Scrooge & Marley in bright colours, shortly thereafter looking worn out in a fixed close-up, for it is used as an anchor point to dynamically mark the temporal transition and display the darkness that consumed its owner. Zemeckis uses an on-screen text that reads "Seven Christmas eves later" (Zemeckis 00:08:49); a traditional method which seems to survive the digital era, as if the transition technique to communicate the passage of time could not

properly deliver the idea, for time is measureless and immeasurable, hence its concept is too delicate to be managed in every detail.

Scrooge and Marley counting house exhibits the criteria which any reader of the *Carol* expects; from Scrooge's small fire to his clerk's struggle to reach out for the heat of a burning candle while an unused locked coal-box sits on his office. In a scene with no dialogue and a music that communicates discomfort and awkwardness; Gary Oldman as the clerk Bob Cratchit appears to be looking for an opportunity to use the coal and provide warmth while dodging Scrooge's nonverbal menaces which he often sends Bob through his forever open door so that "he might keep his eye upon his clerk" (Dickens 11).

Zemeckis's script remains strongly faithful to the text. Fred's rhetoric expresses Dickens's point of view regarding the insignificance of money to happiness and unhappiness using Scrooge's own argument "'Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough' [said Scrooge] Come, then', returned the nephew gaily. 'What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.'" (Dickens 11) with no reasonable argument to use, Scrooge finds no better words than his catchphrase '*Bah! Humbug*' to end the discussion. Using the same arguments for justification to stress their invalidity is a common feature in the *Carol*, for in addition to Fred, the Ghost of Christmas Present uses Scrooge's own words and arguments to help him see his wrongdoings and how flawed his philosophy is, hence create a greater effect and influence, and a positive change.

Charles Dickens uses Fred as a vessel among many others to accentuate the humanitarian nature of Christmas and transcend the barriers people usually create in the name of religion. In a narrow perspective of what all religious festivities, Christmas included, Fred argues:

> Apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that" Christmas should be perceived as both an opportunity and a reminder "as a good time…the only time I know of, in the

> long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave. (Dickens 12)

Regardless of Dickens's beliefs and the seemingly utopian ambitions, he aspired for religious symbols and traditions to reinforce the human ties instead of breaking them. Nevertheless, Scrooge dodges the morality of the speech while Bob Cratchit applauds it as he appears from a high angle shot to emphasise his diminutive presence and social status in a scene that is too political for Fred's oratorical skills to go unnoticed by Scrooge who notes "you're quite a powerful speaker, sir…I wonder you don't go into parliament" (Dickens 12). This dialogue remains unaltered in Disney's adaptation for its powerful statement.

Jim Carrey, being the meticulous actor he has always been, spares no detail for a convincing performance. He expresses his discontent with the charity gentleman's philanthropic rhetoric as he holds their credentials close to the flame of his candle that it almost catches fire before one of the gentlemen snatched it back, Scrooge then delivers his infamous speech on the surplus population in a close-up shot to focus the attention of the audience on the importance of Scrooge's statement to the story and its development. The Victorian times witnessed the legislation of the New Poor Law which aimed to form unions and create workhouses for the poor; however, the workhouses were the manufacturers of nightmares, Dickens asserts in the postscript of his novel *Our Mutual Friend;*

> No law so often infamously administreted [as the Poor Law], no law so often so openly violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised. In the majority of the shameful cases of disease and death from destitution, that shock the Public and disgrace the country, the illegality is quite equal to inhumanity - and known language could say no more of their lawlessness. (777)

The unpopular Victorian workhouses became a popular subject and a source of inspiration for artists such as Dickens to trigger social sympathy or conjure haunting ghosts as the unsettling experiences of the Victorian witnesses.

In portraying Bob Cratchit, Gary Oldman uses a soft voice to address Scrooge and a body language that strongly indicates insecurity and fear. To Scrooge, Christmas day bears no importance hence he simply refers to it as the twenty fifth of December to stress its insignificance in his calendar year. However, to Bob Cratchit, Christmas is an embodiment of everything joyful, therefore in the hope of celebrating Christmas with his family, Bob wears a faint nervous smile on his face to attract both Scrooge's and the viewer's sympathy. The following scene shows Scrooge securing his door as he turns his keys in three different locks; nevertheless he tries the handle repeatedly for good measure before snatching his cane from his clerk while looking grumpier than ever. It is a concrete demonstration of Scrooge's alienated spirit and shut-up heart; utterly sealed like his doors.

To draw comparison, this adaptation captures Bob Cratchit's bubbly personality in a scene where Bob; with a hearty laugh, unravels the youthful enthusiasm behind the timid unmotivated clerk as he "went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys…in honour of Christmas-eve" (Dickens 16). In *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, Bob Cratchit seems to appreciate Christmas for all its particularities regardless of his socially and financially exhausting reality. Bob "ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's-buff" (Dickens 16) for despite his circumstances at Camden town, London, he still finds happiness in family gatherings and blind man's-buff; a traditional yet a popular group game during the Victorian era in which one player is blindfolded trying to touch other plays without being able to see. The game offered plenty of enjoyment and goofiness.

Contrasting Bob's scene, Zemeckis uses low-key lighting to capture Scrooge's shadow as he approaches his house in a scene where silence is solely broken by Scrooge's shortness of breath and the echo of his footsteps. The absence of colour along with the ominous quiet and the squeaking rusty gate accentuate Scrooge's solitude and exile. Zemeckis's choices for this scene can be seen as an attempt to evoke a sense of suspense to captivate the viewer, and eeriness to foreshadow the horror aspect of the story. For a greater effect, Zemeckis pairs the element of suspense with that of surprise which evokes the Bomb Theory by the master of suspense British

filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock who, in a Master seminar for the American Film Institute, has argued that while surprise is instant, awareness and anticipation breed suspense which is a key ingredient to make fascinating scenes with long-lasting effect. Hitchcock notes that in a scene where people are having a conversation and a bomb blows suddenly, the audience will only have few seconds of surprise whereas when the viewers are informed about the *bomb* they anticipate, focus and become emotionally invested, he says:

> Four people are sitting around the table, talking about baseball (whatever you like), five minutes of it, very dull. Suddenly a bomb goes off. Blows the people to smithereens. What does the audience have? Ten seconds of shock. Now take the same scene. Tell the audience there is a bomb under the table and it will go off in five minutes…You have given them that information…Now the conversation about baseball becomes very vital…You've got the audience working. (Hitchcock 00:00:03-00:01:05)

Hence the audience will have minutes of suspense instead which is to Hitchcock more efficient. However, building up the suspense and distracting the viewer by having Scrooge drop his keys to introduce Marley's ghost and have him open his mouth and eyes with his teeth flying out surprisingly, becomes inadequate when the story is unceasingly adapted on screen ever since the invention of cinema. Providing the audience with information develops the suspense unless it is overused.

This adaptation continues to use Dickens's own imagination quite literally as it is demonstrated through Marley's face "it was not in impenetrable shadow…but had a dismal light about it…with spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot-air…that and its livid colour, made it horrible" (Dickens 17). Denying his first spectral encounter, Scrooge lights a candle and walks up the stairs holding his candlestick in his left hand only to help the burning candle light cast his distorted elongated shadow on the right (Figure 4) which is captured in a low-angle shot to give a menacing and dominant appearance. Scrooge's shadow creates an intriguing contrast and enhances the aspect of mystery in a scene that summons up the famous scene of Count Orlok's shadow (Figure 3) climbing the

stairs in the German feature film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* 1922 by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. Zemeckis relies on shadows and silhouettes to evoke the emotions related to the unknown; mainly fear, American writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft views in his essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* that "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown" (Lovecraft 1041).

Figure 3 Count Orlok's shadow in *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* 1922.

Figure 4 Scrooge's shadow in Disney's *A Christmas Carol* (2009).

Dickens wrote “if each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of Marley’s head on everyone” (Dickens 18) Scrooge seems to inspect his own shadow looking for a plausible explanation to disbelieve what he previously encountered. Cinematic techniques have not a definite meaning, but they do acquire symbolic features and certain meanings due to the way they have been used by filmmakers through the history of cinema. As a result, specific functions are today naturally attributed to them. Shadows in this particular adaptation serve another purpose that is shedding light on Scrooge’s ability to perceive shapes and images on surfaces similar to Rorschach inkblots psychological test somehow. It can be an indicator of a phenomenon known as *Pareidolia* which is the human tendency to make connections between patterns to see face-ike features in things entirely different; it can be perceived as an optical illusion which Zemeckis achieved using a particular doorknocker to effortlessly capture Marley’s face. For a man like Scrooge who has “as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London” (Dickens 16) the shadow is probably referring to his Pareidolia which can be perceived as a scientific explanation to Scrooge’s whimsical journey while providing an insight into his sinister personality or fear. In cinema; the kingdom of shadows as Russian writer Maxim Gorky described it in an account he published that is considered to be an early film criticism response by a literary figure to Lumière brothers’ film *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* in 1896, shadows serve multiple purposes such as capturing the supernatural in the story through the use of light and shade mainly since random black shadows have always been distinguished as ghostly figures. Zemeckis’s shadows and lighting techniques carry multiple meanings for the story, and different interpretations for the viewers, but to Dickens’s protagonist it was simpler than that for, “darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it” (Dickens 18).

Dickens seizes all opportunities to ridicule the English laws for being poorly supervised and easily broken, he wrote “you might talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stair, or through a bad young Act of Parliament”

(Dickens 17) as a reference to MP[41] Daniel O'Connell who claimed he could drive a coach drawn by six horses through feeble Acts of Parliament. Therefore, Scrooge double locks his door the way he secures his office out of fear of all intruders, both human and spectral. Jim Carrey's acting style derives from physical comedy, which relies on body language, facial expressions like pantomime. As a comedian, Jim Carrey is known for his exaggeration, and agile body movements and face contortions, he has a skill for animation that his characters seem too cartoonish for live action films. The details in his performance seem easily captured by MoCap technology due to his artistic generosity and talent. In an attempt to elude the lurking fear; Scrooge shuts every possible entrance to his room, he clasps his hands together before realising the ludicrousness of the situation and decides to brush it off with his grumpiest grimace while muttering to himself.

The scene with the ringing bells, the squeak of the brass door handle, and the clacks of the long and heavy chain; which is traditionally associated with ghosts and distinctly audible in the Non-Diegetic[42] Sound of Alan Silvestri's sinister music for the scene, uses sound to establish the mood and offer a sense of autonomy for the sound to stand alone and still convey the same terror without visuals. It is the power of the sound that controls the emotions that this scene generates. Disoriented, Scrooge seeks an explanation to the situation that his brain could not fathom, then covers his ears helplessly to block it and screams. The scream is not heard, due to a sound match cut; an editing technique that uses a matching sound to establish connections. Thus, the jingling bells sound is symbolic of Scrooge's scream. Gary Oldman, hardly recognizable as Jacob Marley's ghost glides through the door into the room where Scrooge; sinking in his chair and consumed by fear, receives him in an unwelcoming way. Hiding behind the chair wing which he uses a shield; Scrooge still shows an unyielding resistance. In the *Carol*, Dickens pronounces this resistance through a word play "'you're particular, for a shade'. He was going to say 'to a shade,' but substituted this, as more appropriate" (Dickens 21) whereas to a shade means to a degree, for a

[41] Member of Parliament.
[42] Unlike Diegetic sounds which include all sounds that are part of the setting and that characters hear, Non-Diegetic Sounds are the sounds that characters do not hear but are added for different purposes such as establishing a mood. They include sound effects, musical pieces, etc.

shade means for a ghost; which would have connoted a sense of belief that Dickens was not willing to imply yet.

Marley's Ghost possesses the conventional qualities and lack of originality of all ghosts. In discussing popular superstitions, in his book *A Provincial Glossary* English author Francis Grose defines ghosts as "the spirit of a person deceased…they are supposed to be mere aerial beings, without substance…they can pass through walls and other solid bodies at pleasure. Ghosts commonly appear in the same dress they usually wore whilst living" all of which are applicable on Marley's ghost; except that; for Grose "no ghosts can appear on Christmas-eve [and] dragging chains, is not the fashion of English Ghosts; chains and black vestments being chiefly the accoutrements of foreign spectres, seen in arbitrary governments: dead or alive, English spirits are free." (Grose 101-102) Dickens could not disagree more, for he clasped his ghost tightly so that those who share Grose's opinion know the arbitrary laws that operated in Victorian England and wrecked many social institutions.

Zemeckis's characterization of Marley's Ghost tends to be more vivid than Dickens's. Gary Oldman's portrayal of the ghost quenches the theatrical thirst of the viewer's when he introduces himself to Scrooge and to the audience as "Jacob Marley" (Zemeckis 00:23:02-00:23:04) with a hoarse voice and stresses both syllables to establish an eerie tone. Effortlessly, Marley's ghost sits on a chair "as if he were used to it" (Dickens 21) it is a line and an act that evoke the idea that ghosts roam the earth among the living. Scrooge's bleak house offers enough room for ghosts to roam. Zemeckis captured the jaw dropping scene from the book and used it captivate the viewers and accentuate Marley's misunderstanding of man's true business. The scene can disturb young viewers for being horrific. Nevertheless, one must never forget that this adaptation is faithful to the *Carol*, and the scene was originally written by Dickens himself.

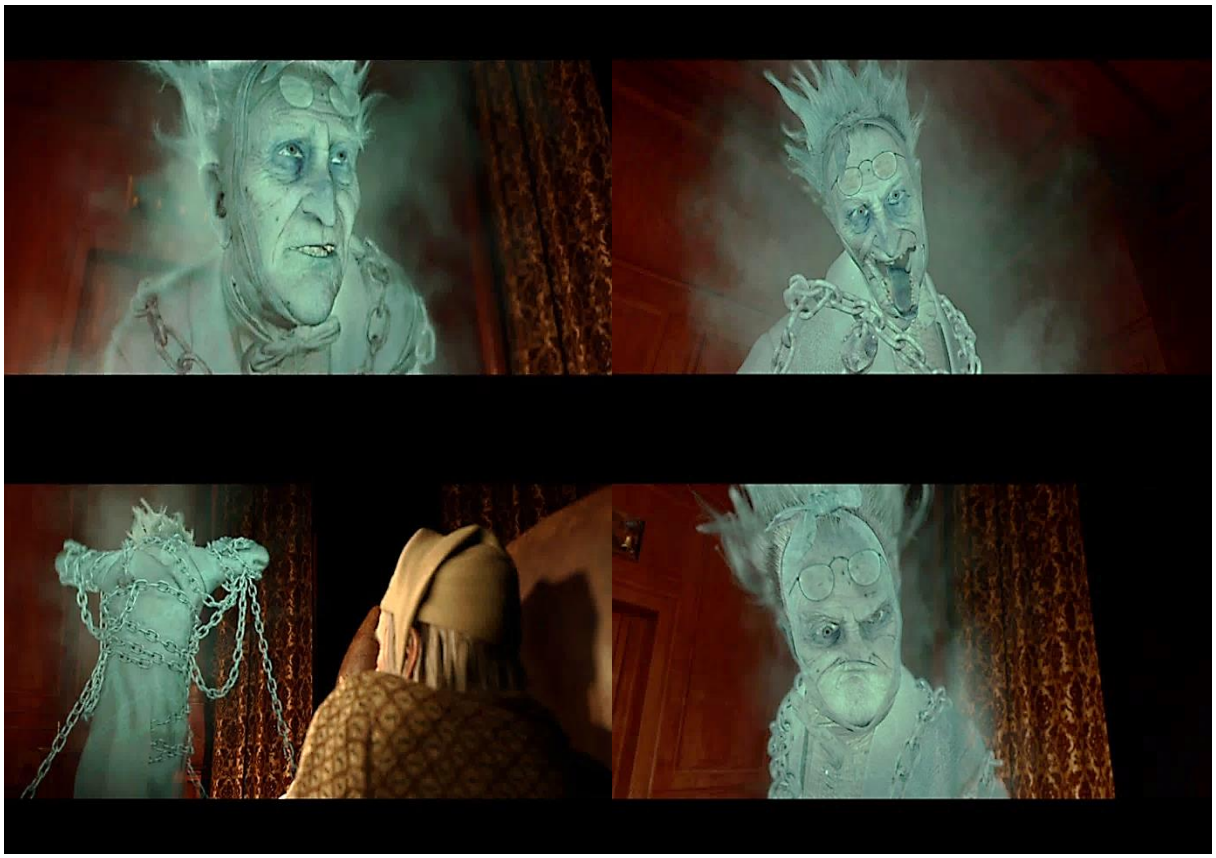


Figure 5 Jacob Marley's ghost jaw dropping scene.

This adaptation captures the spirit of Dickens's line; "there's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" (Dickens 21). Using the bandage wrapped around Marley's chin and head; used to maintain the position of the jaw and prevent possible dreadful expressions of the dead, Zemeckis chooses to lighten the intensity of the scene. Marley's ability to speak becomes challenging, hence he turns his back to fix his bandage but tightens it overly to reveal a caricature of a ghost whose lower lip covers the tip of his nose, losing both the ability to articulate (Figure 5). Zemeckis has delivered the grave and the gravy in one grotesque but comical scene. The last scene Marley shows to Scrooge is of chained wandering ghosts; depicted in a way that is quite similar to a satirical print designed by English illustrator Robert Seymour in 1830.

The print is entitled *Heaven & Earth* (Figure 6); it depicts the labourers' discontent with taxation and the agony caused due to the social system. It juxtaposes the working class with the middle class through the statement "oh! It's very well to live on the taxes-but the devil to pay them" and via a cloud of steam bearing 'tax-

eaters' as they enjoy their lavish life style by draining the trading world, while on the ground taxpayers communicate their plight in multiple ways in the hope of getting the tax collectors' sympathy to make a change. The answers they received were as echoing as the beadle's insulting words "vot should you have Children for—don't you know, there's no more hoperatives [weavers] never vanted". The ghosts' scene recalls the cloud of steam from Seymour's print in a different life; the afterlife, where tax eaters and businessmen like Scrooge and Marley show the will to help the needy but the power to do so is forever lost.

Figure 6 *Heaven & Earth* by Robert Seymour.

The next scene carries a different tone as a beam of light strikes the darkness of Scrooge's room to establish a reassuring climate and introduce the first of the three spirits; the Ghost of Christmas Past. In this adaptation, the Ghost of Christmas Past is portrayed by Jim Carrey as a burning candle that preserves the brightness of the ghost with a flame that offers endless possibilities to shape its appearance and control its expressions. It is a portrayal that only MoCap technology can deliver. Zemeckis

distorted the ghost on different levels but he still captured its essence. Combining the dolly zoom technique, also known as Hitchcock's Vertigo effect with the dolly-in and out shots permitted Zemeckis to stretch the background and form a tunnel in order to communicate Scrooge's confusion and disconnection from reality before embarking on a journey to the past.

The way Zemeckis captures Scrooge flying suggests the imbalance and peculiarity of the experience; and amuses the adventurous spirits of his audience. The ghost takes Scrooge back to where he spent his childhood to help him reconnect with his purest version and release his pent-up emotions in a place that vividly echoes Strood Rochester with its little market town, bridge, river, and church, where Dickens himself was bred at a young boy. Adjusting the lighting as they approach the school where Scrooge; alone with a book in his hands, has experienced solitude and neglect by friends and family, is meant to demonstrate his grim emotional state while seeking companionship and an alternative reality in fiction. "'It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know!' one Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that" (Dickens 31), Dickens associated fertile imagination with reading, and used few of his favourite stories like Ali Baba from the *Arabian Nights* to demonstrate how loneliness can trigger the imagination, evoking by that the possibility that Scrooge's ghostly journey is but a work of imagination sparked by literary texts. Nevertheless, imagination is never synonymous with unreality, *Harry Potter* author J.K Rowling wrote "is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?..."Of course it is happening inside your head…but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?" (Rowling 591).

It seems that Dickens has anticipated the possibilities that motion capture is offering for fantasy as a genre to be captured in cinema. He wrote his scenes as he imagined them, and MoCap offers a neat translation. The rapid transition of settings and scenes is highly visual in the *Carol* that seeing it on screen feels plain for a Dickensian reader, but startling for a regular or inexperienced viewer. To write a work of fiction is a visual process; Dickens knew how to deliver both qualities in *A Christmas Carol*. In the next scene, the mere recall of Fezziwig's name triggers instant

laughter. In an identical representation, Fezziwig sustains John Leech's illustration of the character and Dickens's jolliness for the character. Unlike Scrooge, Fezziwig honours Christmas in every detail, he even closes his warehouse at seven whereas the Victorian closing time for business places was at nine o'clock. Zemeckis's adaptation changes the time to six o'clock, probably to adapt it for American viewers according to American business hours. Phrenology is a pseudo-science that gained popularity among the Victorians. Fezziwig lives up to his phrenological examination (Figure 7); which suggests that the area right before the forehead was the "organ of benevolence" (Dickens 34) hence the larger it was the greater it was the will to spread happiness, and so was Fezziwig in both Leech's illustration and Zemeckis's adaptation.

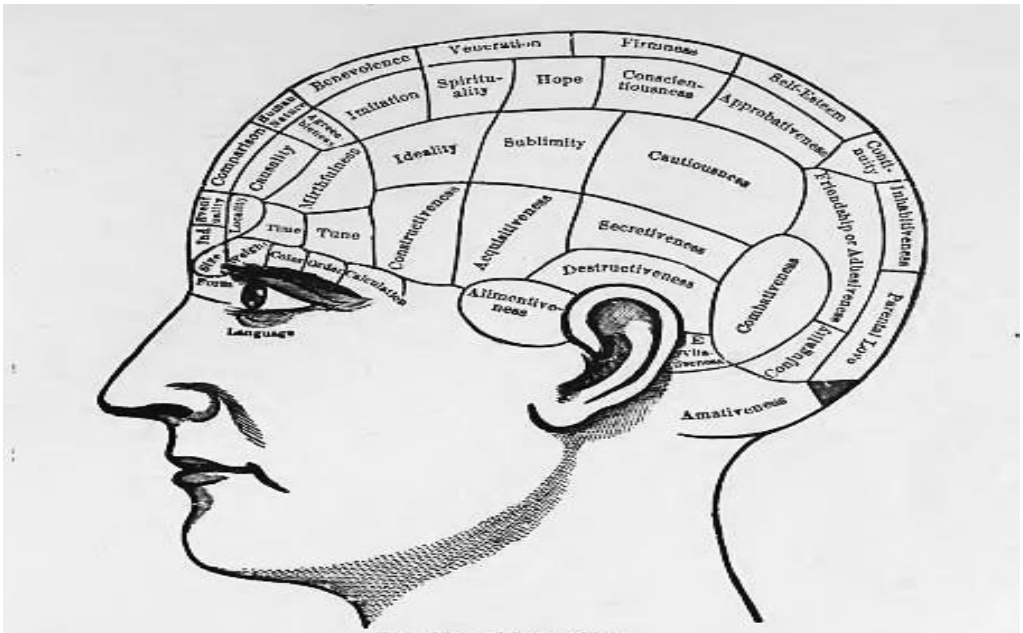


Fig. 264.—Model Head.

NAMES, NUMBERS AND LOCATION OF THE MENTAL ORGANS.

1. Amativeness.—Connubial love, affection.
A. Conjugal Love.—Union for life, pairing instinct.
2. Parental Love.—Care of offspring, and all young.
3. Friendship.—Sociability, union of friends.
4. Inhabitiveness.—Love of home and country
5. Continuity.—Application, consecutiveness.
E. Vitativeness.—Clinging to life, tenacity, endurance.
6. Combativeness.—Defence, courage, criticism.
7. Destructiveness. — Executiveness, push, propelling power.
8. Alimentiveness.—Appetite for food, etc.
9. Acquisitiveness.—Frugality, economy, to get.
10. Secretiveness.—Self-control, policy, reticence.
11. Cautiousness. — Guardedness, care-taking, safety.
12. Approbativeness.—Love of applause and display.
13. Self-Esteem.—Self-respect, dignity, authority.
14. Firmness.—Stability, perseverance, steadfastness.
15. Conscientiousness.—Sense of right, justice.
16. Hope.—Expectation, anticipation, perfect trust.
17. Spirituality.—Intuition, prescience, faith.
18. Veneration.—Worship, adoration, deference.
19. Benevolence.—Sympathy, kindness, mercy.
20. Constructiveness.—Ingenuity, invention, tools.
21. Ideality.—*Taste*, love of beauty, poetry and art.
B. Sublimity.—Love of the grand, vast, magnificent.
22. Imitation.—Copying, aptitude for mimicry.
23. Mirth.—Fun, wit, ridicule, facetiousness.
24. Individuality.—Observation, curiosity to see.
25. Form.—Memory of *shape*, looks, persons, things.
26. Size.—Measurement of quantity by the eye.
27. Weight.—Control of motion, balancing.
28. Color.—Discernment, and love of colors, hues, tints.
29. Order.—*Method*, system, going by *rule*, arrangement.
30. Calculation.—Mental arithmetic, numbers.
31. Locality.—Memory of place, position, travels.
32. Eventuality.—Memory of facts, events, history.
33. Time.—Telling *when*, time of day, dates, punctuality
34. Tune.—Love of music, sense of harmony, singing.
35. Language.—*Expression* by words, signs or acts.
36. Causality.—*Planning*, thinking, philosophy
37. Comparison.—Analysis, inferring, illustration.
C. Human Nature.—Sagacity, perception of motives.
D. Suavity.—*Pleasantness*, blandness, politeness.

Figure 7 Phrenology diagram

The Sir Roger de Coverley music is played in a festive scene that is faithful to Dickens's *Carol*. For a smooth transition, the dancers' scene fades into oblivion to spotlight Scrooge and Belle and the connection between the two; a scene which fades out when the Ghost of Christmas Past; portrayed as a candle goes out as if to emphasise the importance of their connection and how losing it has altered Scrooge's character and view of life. *A Christmas Carol* provides a similar cinematic transition of scenes "with a rapidity of transition" (Dickens 32). Belle, in her mourning dress, mourns the dead and the living who, like Scrooge, mistake greed for financial wisdom.

As the ghost starts changing its features to show all characters from Scrooge's past in a scene that echoes Dickens's own words, Scrooge attempts to extinguish its light as he presses the extinguisher-cap down upon the spirit's head while screaming "haunt me no longer" (Zemeckis 00:42:03-00:42:05), which summons Leech's illustration of the luminous shapeless Ghost of Christmas Past. Scrooge's attempt fails, for the ghost stands for memory and the light of memory cannot be extinguished, very much like the ghost's lesson cannot be denied. Scrooge falls from a high altitude and lands on his bedroom floor to mark the end of a chapter. Interestingly, falling off the bed is commonly associated with sleep and dreams. Just like the recurrent dream of falling, falling scenes can carry different meanings, communicate different emotions, or indicate different situations; Scrooge's mid-air fall can be interpreted as the death of the miser in him and the rebirth of his former, kinder self after recalling repressed memories from his past. It can also symbolise Scrooge's downfall as he meets his demise if the light that is left within him is forever extinguished, or seen as a camera work that speaks for itself to create dramatic effect for an action packed scene. The *Carol* confuses its readers like its adaptation does to its viewers, for it provides both proofs of reality and unreality as far as the spectral experience in involved.

The following chapter is of the Ghost of Christmas Present, presented to the viewers in dramatic scenery that is packed with every possible Dickensian detail. Dickens associates light with the first two sprits as an indicator of their virtue. However, he attributes a grim touch to it in order to maintain the spirit of his ghostly book; he wrote "a blaze of ruddy light…was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he

was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might beat that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it" (Dickens 42-43). It is a nineteenth century myth that people could die of spontaneous combustion as they suddenly burst into self-generated flames caused by the chemical activities in the human body. Whilst some people viewed this as a myth, Charles Dickens refused to admit it, basing his beliefs on a research he had conducted on the matter, he argues in the preface of his novel *Bleak House*:

> The possibility of what is called Spontaneous Combustion had been denied since the death of Mr Krook [from *Bleak House*]… I have no need to observe that I do not wilfully or negligently mislead my readers, and that before I wrote that description I took pains to investigate the subject. There are about thirty cases on record, of which the most famous, that of the Countess Cornelia de Bandi Cesenate, was minutely investigated and described by Giuseppe Bianchini, a prebendary of Verona…the next most famous instance happened at Rheims… and the historian in that case in Le Cat, one of the most renowned surgeons produced by France. I do not think it necessary to add to these notable facts [and] the recorded opinions and experiences of distinguished medical professors, French, English, and Scotch. (Dickens, xxxiv)

The light is generated from a room that carries the holiday spirit in every possible way; from the jolly spirit that embodies the holiness of Christmas, the beautiful decoration, and the morality it bears. "Come in! Come in and know me better, man!...you have never seen the likes of me before?" (Zemeckis 00:44:13-00:44:45) is a line that connotes Scrooge's ignorance as far as Christmas is concerned. The jolly giant is the reincarnation of both looks and traits of Father Christmas which derives from Roman and Greek gods of time Saturn and Cornus, and the generosity of Saint Nickolas of Myra; known as the gift giver commonly referred to as Santa Claus in American culture. However, unlike Cornus who devoured his children to mark transition of time and generations, the Ghost of Christmas Present aims to bless and protect all children; the poor like the miners, the ill like Tiny Tim, and the unfortunate like Ignorance and

Want regardless of his limited lifespan. With his capacious breast that refers to his generosity and warmth, and his sword-less scabbard which presents him as a messenger of peace, the ghost seems to be an embodiment of what Jesus Christ stands for.

The ghost comes with riches including sucking pigs as one can see in John Leech's depiction of the spirit. Its torch "in shape not unlike Plenty's horn" (Dickens 43) emphasises its generous nature and shows another pagan influence that Dickens used to mould this character while representing "the conspicuous consumption that typified a middle- or upper- class Christmas in a Victorian home" (Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas* 80). The ghost holds his torch up suggesting that the spirit above shines on those below which is biblically symbolic as it strongly breeds the concept of the guidance of Jesus "you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5.14). The incense it sprinkles evokes the frankincense offered by one of the Three Magi who visited Jesus Christ to present him with gifts as a celebration of his birth; it is a Christian symbol of generosity, blessings and holiness.

Zemeckis has faithfully preserved all the crucial details even by excluding the Christmas tree which is a German tradition that was not adopted yet by the English at that time who used evergreen instead. However, his mise-en-scène is slightly different, for he chose to fill the room with clocks; probably to echo the Christmas bell rings and the significance of time in the plot. Touching the ghost's robe was a French literary influence on Dickens the reader, for it was inspired from Alain René Lesage's novel *Le Diable Boiteux* translated to *The Devil on Two Sticks* that Dickens read, admired and referenced in his works. As Scrooge touches the ghost's robe everything beneath him disappears to unravel a top view of every corner from the city of London in a vertiginous but "heavenly perspective of man's world" (Zemeckis 00:47:52-00:47:55) that only Scrooge was granted a chance to experience, as if to say that no other technology could pertinently depict the magic of the scene from a bird's eye view[43] to give the miser a bigger perspective of life almost literally. This particular scene is noticeably cinematic, for it can be adapted for theatre, but never adapted in theatre. In

[43] When the camera is elevated to capture the view from the top.

other words, the theatrical translation of the scene is possible on stage but not through faithful execution, for the traditional ways of the nineteenth century theatre could not cope with the visual qualities of the Dickensian scene.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens gets verbose in describing Victorian London that he fulfils the readers' appetite almost literally. He was crafty with his words to describe the baskets of chestnuts as "pot-bellied", the Spanish onions as "ruddy, brown-faced…winking", the Norfolk Biffins; the deep red cooking apples Dickens was fond of, the citrus fruits he called "juicy persons", and the French plums that "blushed in modest tartness" (Dickens 46-47). Dickens's description animates his photograph of the hectic markets and shops due to his animistic approach which attributes human qualities and spirits to spiritless things; hence it gives the inanimate a spirit to animate it. In order to stimulate the different senses of his readers and picture London during Christmas time, Dickens does not merely communicate the smells and tastes of Christmas in industrial London, but the weather and colours as well. Dickens brings the festive Victorian London to life in every sense.

In a detailed adaptation of the Dickensian scenes, Scrooge recognises the joy that the labouring children find even when doing labour, shovelling snow on house tops before moving to a church, then to a bakery which even though it was illegal to bake on Sunday or Christmas day, it was still open to cook the meals of those who could not afford kitchen facilities. The church and the bakery provide images that support the contrast Dickens was trying to shed light on the dialogue between the ghost and Scrooge. In one the most outspoken commentaries, Dickens denounces Sir Andrew Agnew's constant attempts to introduce the Sunday Observance Bill, he even wrote a pamphlet back in 1836 entitled *Sunday under Three Heads. As It is; As Sabbath Bills would make it; As it might be made,* yet he felt the need to remind his readers of such ridiculous ideas usually associated with religion merely to find a holy purpose for ignorant people to accept and believe. Agnew's Bill called for closing bakeries and limiting all types of entertainment as far as the poor are concerned to preserve the holiness of Sabbath as a God serving day which is a narrow way of approaching religion that Dickens despised, for just like his *Carol*, he has always

thought of religion as a way of life that promises joy, peace and love whereas such bills would only suffocate the city of London; Dickens wrote in *Little Dorrit*:

> It was a Sunday evening in London, gloomy, close and stale. Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance…Melancholy streets…all taboo with that enlightened strictness…Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to change the brooding mind, or raise it up. Nothing for the spent toiler to do, but to compare the monotony of his seventh day with the monotony of his six days, think what a weary life he led, and make the best of it - or the worst, according to the probabilities. (Dickens 31)

For Dickens, it was not man's duty to serve the Sabbath, for the latter is meant to serve man by giving him an opportunity to escape the mundane. It is an opinion that Dickens attributes to his ghostly character which clearly states its opposition to the Sunday Observance Bill Scrooge was referring to, as he replies "there are some upon this earth of yours, who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name; who are as strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us" (Dickens 48) as a reference to those who use the word of God to serve their interests and purposes. Zemeckis chooses to identify the doers as the "so-called men of the cloth" (Zemeckis 00:49:58-00:50:01) however, the anonymity preserves the limitless identities, thus it provides a larger scope, for what Dickens was referring to is still relevant and applicable in modern times mainly where certain ideologies breed ignorance to sustain their hegemony by manipulating the people through religious beliefs, hence breeding crime in the name of religion.

The following scene is of the Cratchits' house that bears a close resemblance to Dickens's family house in Bayham Street, Camden Town that Zemeckis chose to explicitly depict through an image of a portrait of Dickens himself, drawn by the Irish artist Daniel Maclise in 1839 which can be seen hanging on the wall next to the Cratchit's fire place. The Ghost blesses Bob's house with his incense. Originally, Scrooge appears curious about the flavour of incense and how particular it is for a

Christmas dinner, so when he asks about it; the ghost explains that the flavour is his own and that it applies "to any kindly give. To a poor one most…because it needs it most" (Dickens 48) it is Dickens's philosophy simply put that it is still more logical than the utilitarian philosophy. The next scene captures the preparations in the Cratchits' house, while Scrooge rolls his eyes to show disinterest and exasperation the ghost hits him on the head in a comical scene as a warning for Scrooge to focus and seek the morality of his visions for the sake of redemption. It demonstrates the duality of the ghostly character as a godly figure that appears to be both merciful and punishing.

In the next scene, Martha Cratchit chooses to hide and surprise her father to provide a simple innocent kind of amusement despite her weary life as a milliner's apprentice. Martha's supervisor must be another utilitarian businessman who, like Scrooge, thought of Christmas as "a poor excuse for picking a ma n's pocket every twenty-fifth of December" (Dickens 16) thus he made his employees work extra hours at night as a compensation for those they will miss on Christmas day. In *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens describes the milliners during the Victorian era and notes that "the milliners' and stay-makers' apprentices…-poor girls!-the hardest worked, the worst paid, and too often, the worst used class of the community" (Dickens 74). Moreover, it was a dangerous workplace where milliners were exposed to poisonous chemicals that affect the nervous system which inspired the association between hatters and madness. This association is best represented in Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* through his character the Mad Hatter.

The Cratchit family is entirely gathered when Bob arrives; carrying Tiny Tim on his shoulder. Tiny Tim seems to suffer from an illness that prevents him from walking naturally. During nineteenth century England, children were affected by different diseases mainly due to the unsanitary conditions in their workplaces and houses located in the poorest most dismal neighbourhoods. Whether the treatment was available or unavailable, help is both needed and wanted; for a good nutrition and a healthier environment would have eased the pain Tiny Tim was feeling both physically and emotionally. During the Victorian era when money making was an unquestionable

priority, even for a kid Tiny Tim chooses a different path. “Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard” (Dickens 50) Tiny Tim possesses the qualities of a thinker, he was a child yet wise enough, he was poor enough yet grateful for what he has, he seems to have virtuous aspirations than most utilitarian industrialists claim to have. Similar to Dickens, Tim mastered the art of observation.

Tiny Tim seems to grasp the true meaning and purpose of religion. In a powerful scene, Bob Cratchit played by Gary Oldman recites Tim’s echoing words while fighting back tears “he told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see” (Dickens 50) represent a biblical reference. Dickens uses irony in an attempt to criticise the likes of Sir Andrew Agnew who claim to serve God every Sabbath in churches while the poor and the unfortunate struggle to survive England’s social class system through Tiny Tim, a representative of the disabled and poor children in Victorian England who is willing to use his disability to positively influence the people. For an unhealthy poor lad, Tiny Tim shows his strong faith in God which might breed his optimism about a promising future, he even teaches moral lessons that the so called men of the cloth fail to teach such as the importance of charity and human connections like family ties which seem to grow stronger with time in poor families like the Cratchits’.

“The pudding looks delicious. The whole washhouse smells like a pastry cook’s shop” (Zemeckis 00:53:29-00:53:34) this association of the washhouse with pastry should not sound strange, for Ms Cratchit cooks her Christmas pudding in the copper which is a boiler made of copper originally used to do the laundry in the washhouse. “A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry cook’s next door to each other, with a laundress’s next door to that! That was the pudding” (Dickens 51) the confusing smells are but another symbol of the poverty and simplicity that forged Tiny Tim’s perspective of life.

Scrooge moves away in an attempt to escape a scene where Mrs Cratchit expresses her anger towards him while Bob toasts him as the founder of their humble

feast, but the ghost forces him to stay and see Bob's family showing respect, appreciation, and gratitude to the utilitarian Scrooge. The inclusive wish and famous line in the *Caro,l* is then uttered by Tiny Tim "God bless us everyone" (Dickens 52). Scrooge then shows sympathy and interest to reform the reality of the Tiny Tim like never before; a possibility which unlike the past, the present time is flexible enough to offer. Curiously, the ghost takes on Scrooge's features and voice as he quotes his surplus population tag phrase "what then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population" (Zemeckis 00:55:42-00:55:51) to either empower its effect or hint the connection between the protagonist and the spirits as different reflections of his character. In the *Carol*, the spirit does not merely quote Scrooge, but makes a clear statement to point out the wrongs of his utilitarian shared philosophy:

> Man…if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! To hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust. (Dickens 52)

It reveals the worthlessness of the heartless like Scrooge and how ignorance can take different shapes as deciding who is significant and worthy of living and who is not.

This adaptation ignores Bob and Peter's conversation about a situation that Peter might consider which echoes Dickens's own situation at the age of twelve when he started working at Warren's Blacking factory for about six shillings a week, twelve hours per day. Like the Cratchits, Dickens knew enough pawnbrokers who used to lend people money in exchange for certain valuable objects, but if people could not afford paying back the money the pawnbroker would sell the objects in his possession. Dickens despised the concept, for he lost many of his precious belongings to pawnbrokers including his books.

One of the most significant scenes that this adaptation ignores is the miners' in Cornwall. Only a year before he started working on *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens

visited Cornwall to witness the working conditions of children working in the mines. Moved by the Royal Commission[44] 1842 report on children's employment and treatment in mines, Dickens chose to protest against the system which violated the innocence of the poor and the impoverished British children, endangers their lived, and deprived them of education. In Cornwall, a place where heavenly churches and hellish mines collide, children carol in an attempt to preserve their innocent Christmas traditions. Another literary reference that sparked the imagination of Dickens as a kid was *Jack the Giant Killer*; which associates giants with Cornwall "the burial place of giants" (Dickens 54) as an emphasis on the giant amount of work those unfortunate Cornish children had to do, often leading to fatal consequences.

Dickens describes a scene from Christmas in Cornwall, "an old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their holiday attire. The old man…was singing them a Christmas song, it had been a very old song when he was a boy; and from time to time they all joined in the chorus" (Dickens 55) Cornwall is not merely known for its bleak side, for it has always been known for its old carols transmitted from one generation to another the same way they helplessly inherited their social status. Scrooge's ignorance is accentuated again when he asked 'What place is this?'(Dickens 55) which demonstrates how such places as mines and their workforces are forgotten in a society ruled by a utilitarian middle class. "The spirit did not tarry here, but …passing on above the moor, sped- wither? Not to sea? To sea." (Dickens 55) in a cinematic succession of images, Dickens provides different instances of Christmas celebrations and industrial realities in what he described as a "lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death" (Dickens 56).

In a dizzying and confusing arc shot[45], Zemeckis transports Scrooge and his audience to a different setting, and highlights the social class conflict. It was Fred's house where he and his guests played the popular *Yes and No* game in which a player must think of something while the other players guess what it is. As the players start

[44] The commission investigated the treatments and working conditions of children in mines.
[45] A shot where the camera rotates around the subject being captured.

asking questions such as “you’re thinking of an animal?...a rather disagreeable animal? a savage animal?...and lives in London?” (Zemeckis 00:56:18-00:56:32) Fred seems to agree, which emphasises the inhumane nature of his uncle whose philosophy in life has devoured his best human qualities. “A horse? A cow? A dog? A pig?” the guests ask Fred who dismisses as wrong answers until someone asks “An ass?” then Fred answers in confusion “yes and no”, for his uncle might not be what the word means in its old use but he unquestionably embodies what the word connotes. The scene lacks the musical and visual dialogue which Zemeckis could have incorporated for a pronounced cultural significance. Nevertheless, he merely used a computer generated image of a piano to indicate Fred’s interest in music “for they were a musical family” (Dickens 58) similar to Dickens’s sister Fanny whom inspired Fred’s mother character; Fan.

In the last scene, the spirit introduces Ignorance and Want to Scrooge. Dickens was willing to introduce Ignorance and Want earlier in his *Carol* but decided to use them by the end of the third stave in order to establish a memorable effect and message. As opposed to the luminous introduction of the Ghost of Christmas Present, its last scene is dark and grim. In a high angle shot, Zemeckis magnifies the size of the clock and its shadow to capture the insignificance of humanity to time and space. Scrooge meets Ignorance and Want; “a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish, but prostrate too, in their humility…where angels might have seat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing…no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creatures, has monsters half so horrible and dread.” (Dickens 61) in a scene that might shock a very young audience due to the fear it invokes. Dickens makes his strongest statement regarding the dangers of ignorance and want and argues via his ghostly creation:

> They are Man’s…and they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. The boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!...Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end! (Dickens 62)

Ignorance is the evil that can devour any civilization until it falls into ruin. Dickens was devoted to his cause which revolved around changing the reality for the victims of a social class system that encouraged child labour to ultimately breed ignorance, thus criminality in all its forms. The two characters were inspired from Dickens's experiences both as an adult and a child, for he once was a labouring child in a blacking factory, one of many hopeless environments where ignorance and misery prevail and forever haunt those who once knew them like Dickens, English author Lucinda Hawksley explains:

> No matter how famous he became, Dickens could never rid himself of the twin spectres of the Marshalsea and the blacking factory…During the blacking factory months, Dickens had become a wary street child…As an adult, Dickens often suffered from insomnia when that happened, he would walk around London at night…On these walks, he took inspiration for his stories, worked out plotlines, observed characters and came to a genuine understanding about the lives of London's poorest communities. (Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas* 66)

The boy and the girl transform into a grown man and woman to foreshadow their future selves and the social upheaval caused by what they symbolise. As the spirit collapses, Scrooge inquires "have they no refuge or resource?" (Zemeckis 00:59:20-00:59-21) and while the man gets trapped in a cell and the woman moves in a seductive manner, the ghost quotes Scrooge's infamous questions rhetorically "are there no prisons?...are there no workhouses? (Zemeckis 00:59:24-00:59:33). The scene bears an important message of how places like prisons and workhouses fuel the dark workings of the mind and trigger madness which is what Zemeckis probably intended by dragging the woman away in a straightjacket. Being a poor child of a prisoner at a certain point forged Dickens's understanding of how pivotal education was to tame all kinds of want which; paired with ignorance, will conceive destructive monsters.

Dickens's concerns never ceased even after the publication of *A Christmas Carol,* for reform was not yet made. He delivered a powerful speech for fundraising in Birmingham in 1844 that was published in the weekly journal *The Spectator* "now, there is a spirit of great power, the Spirit of Ignorance, long shut up in a vessel of Obstinate Neglect…release it in time, and it will bless, restore, and reanimate society; but let it lie under the rolling waves of years, and its blind revenge at least will be destruction" ("Birmingham Speech" 223). Ignorance, being a pervasive evil, along with the different universal subjects that Dickens tackled in his literary texts made his canon appeal to different readers of different cultures from different times.

According to American author Stephen King, horror is different from terror. To him horror is rather a reaction to a concrete trigger of fear, whereas the second is an anticipation of a trigger of fear. Terror is the outcome of fear of the unknown. Charles Dickens's fears seem to help him create and domesticate both horror and terror through the story of the infamous utilitarian miser Ebenezer Scrooge, more noticeably via the last of the spirits. Zemeckis's representation of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come disturbingly intensifies the horror and terror in Dickens's *Carol*. The skilful fusion of some horror genre elements of darkness and surprise, along with the supernatural, captures the spirit of this particular ghost. Using Scrooge's own 2-D shadow to frame the ghost and still preserve its motionlessness and silence while Scrooge asks questions helplessly to seek answers, builds up the suspense needed for an efficient element of surprise and a visual impact, two crucial qualities in the horror genre. Only a realistic horror scene would generate fear as long as it provides the needed triggers. In this adaptation, disturbing the third dimension as the ghost rises from a 2-D shadow to come to life (Figure 8), and its persistent silence along with its dark and mysterious features, breed fear in the viewers. As the ghost springs up to life, Scrooge tumbles down the stairs in a scene that demonstrates an explicit connection between death and this last ghost.

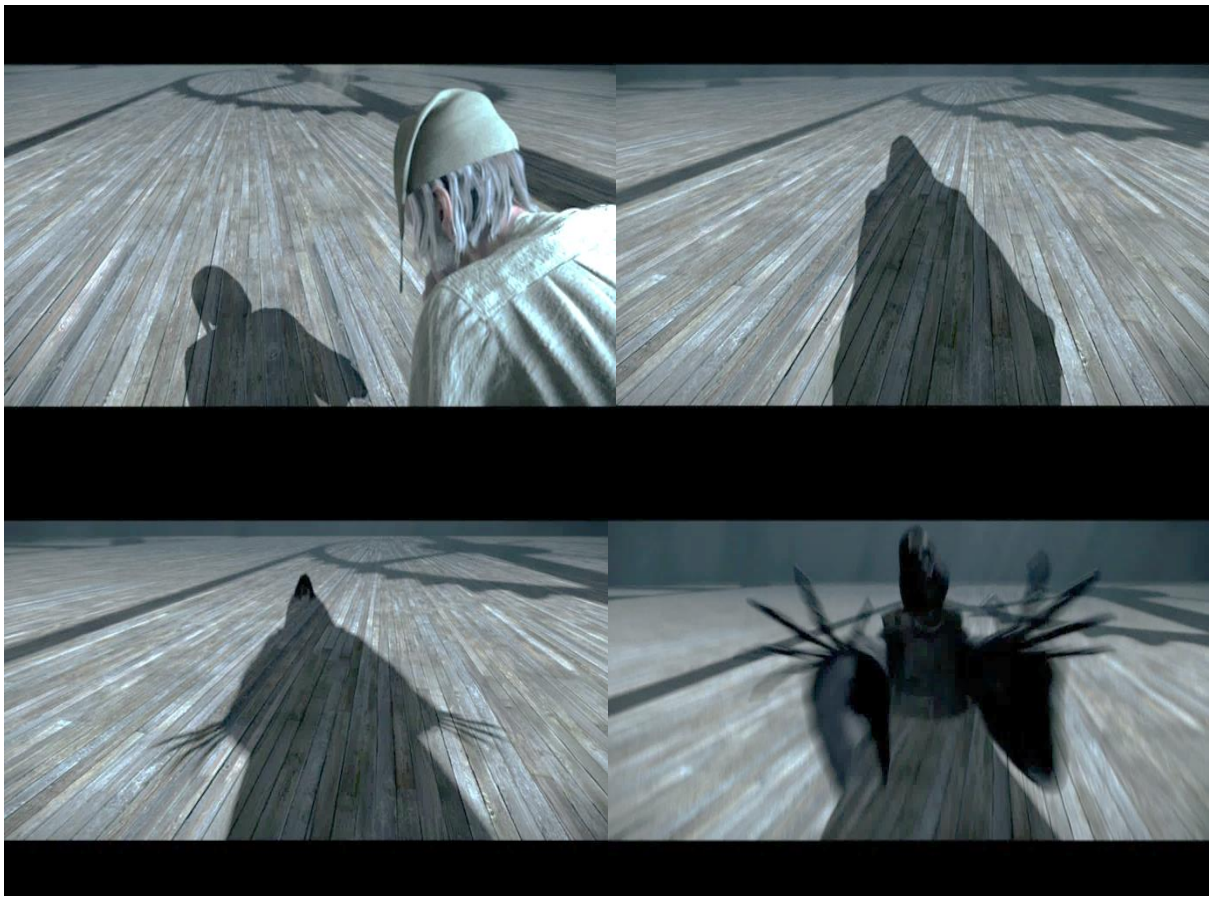


Figure 8 from Scrooge's 2-D shadow to the conjuring of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come 3-D shadow.

Through a ghostly representation of death, Dickens rekindles the painful memories which are usually associated with joyful Christian times like Christmas; a day to happily celebrate the birth of Jesus while sorrowfully remembering his sacrifice and mourning his death. The last spectre opposes the former spirits in both looks and methods of communication. "It would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night" (Dickens 63) the black garment conceals the features of the ghost to generate the mystery of the unknown future and the possibility to mould it otherwise, while projecting the eeriness of the only certainty of death and the melancholy of times yet to come, unless the present reality is altered.

Silence can speak louder than voice in horror genre, for what is voiceless and unexplained can generate greater terror. The ghost of Christmas Yet to Come solely uses its bony finger to guide Scrooge through the different shadows which can be perceived as a means to point the finger of blame at Scrooge and show him how one's future is the product of one's own doings, and changing it is in the hands of the doer as

well, peoples' destinies are intertwined after all. Silence suggests the possibility of change, for the spectre shows the shadows of things that might, hence the future that will only be if Scrooge does not redeem himself. The future is therefore flexible; voicing the spectre would concretise the shadows and prove their true existence which would waste the purpose of Scrooge's spectral journey and the *Carol*'s as a realistic text.

Voiceless characters in cinema reveal intelligent acting and directing skills of silent film. In this motion capture adaptation, the director's challenge was to recreate a dreadful representation of the spectre through a serious scene that sparks genuine fear. The silent spectre evokes the debate over the significance of sound in cinema; for a good and a real film would still make sense and communicate ideas even when the sound is turned off which is true, not because sound is insignificant to the visual medium sound but because the means of communication in cinema have been visual ever since its beginnings. Thus, artistic techniques like light and shadows were required and achieved using digital novelty. It is important for the director, especially in the digital era, to control the technology at his disposal and not be controlled by it in order to create visual art using the ways and techniques of cinema.

The first scene that the Grim Reaper-like spectre shows Scrooge is of three businessmen discussing the funeral of an anonymous man near a building similar to the financial centre The Royal Exchange which Dickens referred to in his *Carol*. The utilitarian philosophy which the businessmen adopt seems to survive in the future only to reveal a horrendous attitude towards the living and the dead. Instead of mourning the deceased, the businessmen seem to be interested in the funeral as a ceremony, for it is a traditional custom to serve food to the mourners in funerals; hence it was only food that could get one of the three men to attend the funeral. The scene indicates the absence of morality in times yet to come and recalls Scrooge's similar behaviour before Marley's burial, for "even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of businessman the very day of the funeral, and solemnised It with an undoubted bargain" (Dickens 9) a trait that Zemeckis

captured in the first scene of his film adaptation where unsentimental Scrooge cared tuppence about tuppence.

The businessmen fade to mark a transition of shot, time and tone. Day becomes night, and Scrooge finds himself alone, solely accompanied by the shadow he casts. Once again, Zemeckis uses Scrooge's shadow for an effortless distortion in order to summon the spectre which points to another shadow of a carriage drawn by two horses and a coachman wearing a hat. Similar to the way the spectre was summoned, the horses come to life from a 2-dimentional space to 3-D (Figure 9) pulling out the carriage and the coachman from a mere reflection on a wall to appear in the three dimensional space of the film. The coachman's attire, the black carriage, and the black horses with the menacing red eyes portray a hearse from the Victorian time to demonstrate the bleakness that awaits Scrooge both in life and the afterlife.

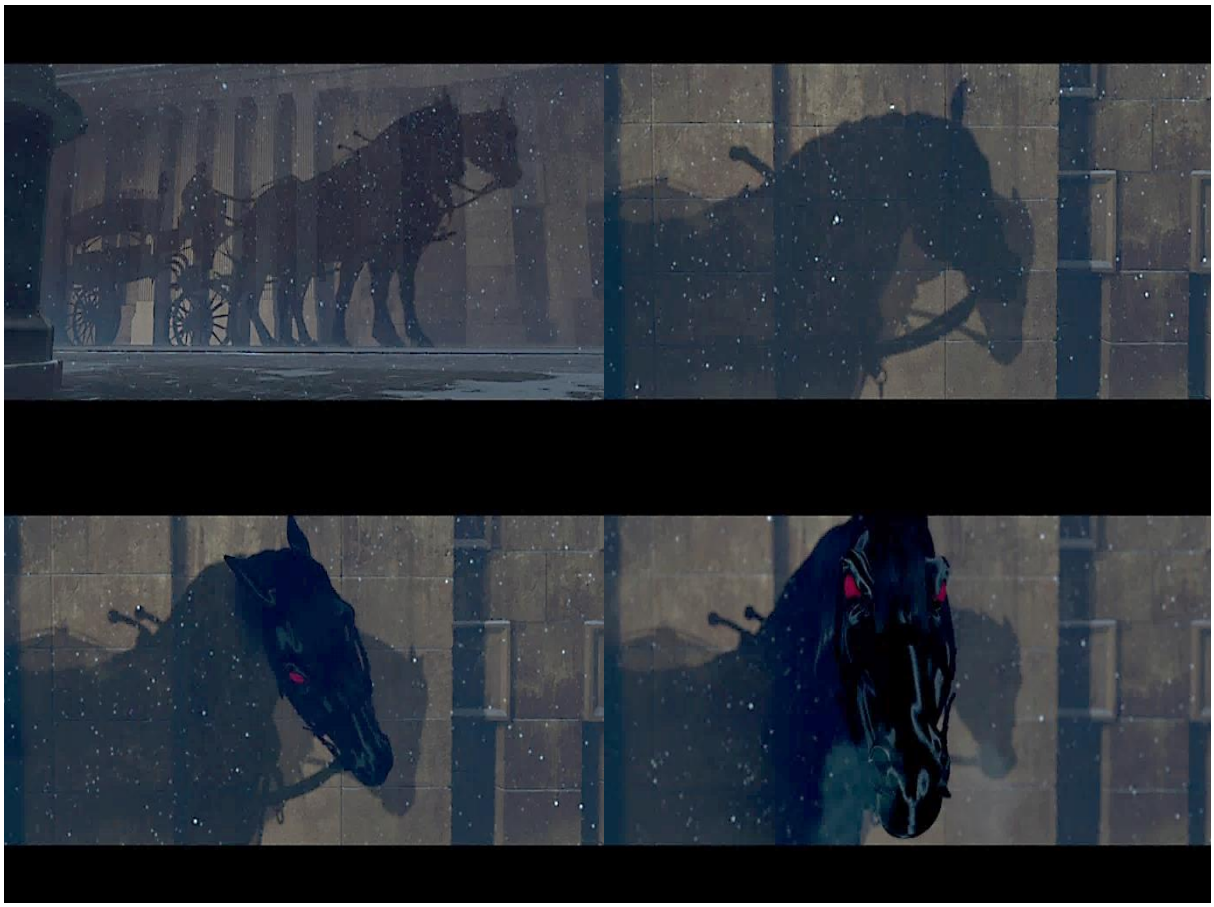


Figure 9 Zemeckis's use of shadows to conjure fearful instances in his *Carol*'s adaptation.

The chase scene reveals another technique previously used by Zemeckis which is the Vertigo effect which one can see as Scrooge struggles to escape the hearse chasing him. The street appears to be stretching to create a vertigo effect as an explanation to Scrooge's unchanged pace and inability to distant himself from the hearse and its emblem. As the horses chase Scrooge through the narrow streets of London, ghastly figures emerge from the ground to reflect the hideous conditions and life in the slums. The darkness of the scenes is broken when Scrooge falls on his back to roll a barrel on his feet in a circus-like entertainment before getting struck by a strange energy generated from the coachman's whip. The energy seems to shrink Scrooge's size; a clear reference to Alice in Wonderland Syndrome[46] which is usually associated with sleep disorder, thus, recalling the hypothesis suggesting that Scrooge's journey is but a dream.

The chase is used by Zemeckis for excitement and entertainment. Running, sliding, and surfing on an icicle, Scrooge is tracked via a following shot before his shrunken self falls to land in a bundle carried by Mrs Dilber who takes on a slightly different role from hers in the *Carol*, into Joe's rag-and-bottle shop. To achieve a smooth transition, Zemeckis uses a split edit, known as a J-Cut in digital cinema, to connect two different scenes by launching the audio before its matching scene. It is a delayed editing technique that aims to captivate the audience using sound to stress its importance in maintaining the flow of the visual art of cinema. The viewer is transported into the shop where Joe and Mrs Dilber; the representatives of the underclass and the criminal workings of some of its members, are captured through a low angle shot to make them look bigger, hence dominating, whereas Scrooge is captured from a high angle to make him look even smaller in order to emphasise his insignificance in a scene that accentuates the shift of balance.

Joe investigates Mrs Dilber's bundle curiously, for bed curtains and holes-less shirts were almost peculiar to his social class and rag-and-bottle shop. 'We knew pretty well that we were helping ourselves…It's no sin' (Dickens 68) regardless of

[46] It is the distortion of perception which makes small things appear bigger than they are, and vice versa similar to Alice's experience with the drink and the cake in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.*

how immoral the likes of Joe were, they were convinced it was a mere way of survival. Horrified, Scrooge listens to the discussion between Mrs Dilber and Joe which reveals an extreme despicable version of the utilitarian philosophy where the need justifies the means, Joe argues "you was born to make our fortune, and you certainly will do it" (Zemeckis 01:08:00-01:08:04) to prove the triumph of both ignorance and want in a hopeless future.

In the next scene, Scrooge restores his normal size, and finds himself back in his own bedroom. On his bed, the dead man's body lay alone, when Scrooge asks "if there is any person in this town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death…show that person to me, I beg you!" (Zemeckis 01:10:55-01:11:00) aspiring to find a mourner. However, as an emphasis on the importance of conquering people's hearts and mastering man's real business in life, the spectre shows Scrooge a family; relieved to hear about the man's death, for they can finally "sleep to-night with light hearts" (Zemeckis 01:11:38-01:11:39). Scrooge blocks the vision by clasping his hands against his eyes, an action which Zemeckis uses that to establish a match on action[47] to connect the shots and preserve the continuity of events.

The following scene takes place in Bob Cratchit's house where every member of the family mourns the death of Tiny Tim. It is a reflection of every house and family sorrowing over a deceased child. As a kid, Dickens lost two of his siblings, Alfred Allen and Harriet Dickens; the pain he felt is reflected in most of his works through characters like Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. As Bob climbs the stairs in his house, he stops to face Scrooge's shadow as if he senses its presence. Scrooge looks into Bob's blank eyes for the first time and notices the long hidden agony of his clerk whose fear kept him from making eye contact with Scrooge unless it was accompanied by a nervous smile out of fear. Gary Oldman, as Bob Cratchit, delivers a sentimental performance as a father grieving his son in a room where a shadow of Tiny Tim's lifeless body is cast on the wall.

[47] An editing technique that connects shots using movement of actions to create continuous flow.

In the last spectral scene, Scrooge finds himself in churchyard on a massive snowstorm day. In the *Carol*, Dickens's verbose description of the churchyard portrays it as an evil, deserted place "overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; chocked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite" (Dickens 75) mostly like many of England's graveyards due to a high mortality rate, an irony that associates life with hunger, and death with replete appetite. The Spectre points a gravestone that reads Ebenezer Scrooge with his date of birth and a day of death. Zemeckis conceals the year of death to suggest the possibility of altering the events. Scrooge shows how sincere his quest of redemption is when he constantly tries to fathom the lesson to be learned, and the purpose of his spectral journey through pertinent questions that the spectre does not answer for a greater impact that communicates hopelessness and hopefulness.

Through his line "are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only?" (Dickens 75) Scrooge questions the inevitability of these shadows but the ghost's silent answer pushes Scrooge to try harder in order to make sense of his journey, he wonders "men's courses will foreshadow certain ends…but if the courses be departed from, the ends will change…I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?" (Dickens 75) Dickens has made sure that the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is less concrete than the other spirits due to its undecided nature, hence he chose to make its hand tremble once Scrooge started showing sincere regret and hope for redemption as if to obliterate the shadows that will no longer be. Zemeckis stays faithful to the Dickensian dialogue until Scrooge falls deep in his grave where an open coffin awaits him. Using triple match cuts at once; graphic[48] and match on action cuts (Figure 10), and a bang as a sound bridge[49]; the coffin wooden panel turns to Scrooge's bedroom floor that Scrooge taps seeking reassurance before he starts laughing and jumping happily, and dancing with Mrs.

[48] The graphic match cut is a visual editing technique that connects shots using an visual element for a smooth transition.

[49] An editing technique that connects shots by carrying the same sound from one shot to the second one for a smooth transition

Dilber in a scene which strongly recreates Alastair Sim's performance from Hurst's 1951 adaptation of the *Carol*.

Figure 10 graphic and match on action cuts.

As Scrooge realises that the ghosts have done it all in one night, both the viewer and the reader are left to wonder how the distortion of time is connected with dreams, since Scrooge falls asleep almost after each encounter. Scrooge's gift for the Cratchits helped influencing the English Christmas tradition when the English started showing a new preference for turkey instead of goose. Zemeckis does not spare a chance to portray Scrooge's changed character, thus he enhances the joyful images and shows Scrooge chasing a carriage and holds on its bar skating in a scene that calls up Christmas sleigh rides. Like Dickens, Zemeckis captures Scrooge's redeemed self as a donor, a giver, and a caroller.

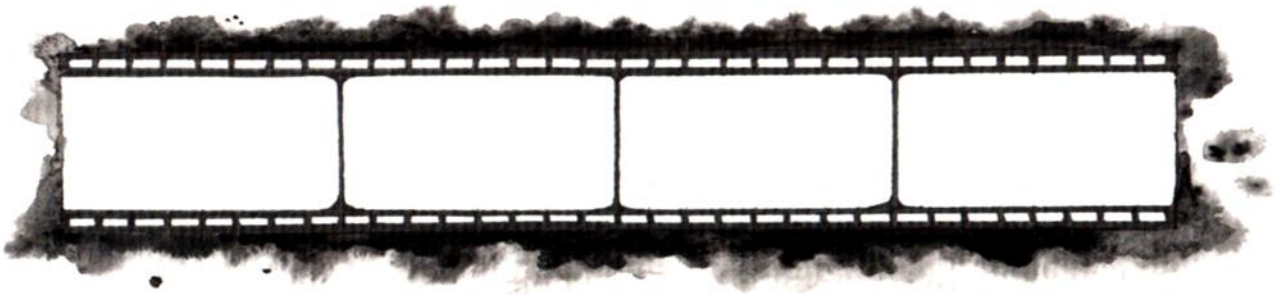
The next scene takes place in Fred's house where Scrooge, wincing, re-witnesses the *Yes* and *No* game that the Ghost of Christmas Present has shown him, before his presence interrupts the game and everyone welcomes him in a typical Christmas holiday scene. The following scene shows Bob Cratchit trying to catch his breath after rushing his way to work on Saint Stephen's Day i.e. boxing day; the day after Christmas which currently stands for receiving and opening gifts. Ironically, Bob Cratchit did not expect gifts, only mercy for being few minutes late for work. Ignoring Scrooge's changed personality; Bob wears a confusing look on his face and staggers in disbelief as Scrooge shows a greater mercy than the one he aspired for. He gives his hat to Bob as a symbol of classless society.

In The End of It, the fifth stave of the *Carol*, Dickens notes that "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" (Dickens 83) Dickens reassured his readers that Tiny Tim got well and that Scrooge contributed to society by helping the likes of Tiny Tim, and that if every utilitarian man redeemed himself the way Scrooge did, more children would escape a dreadful future of ignorance and want. Bob Cratchit takes on the role of a narrator and the film ends with Tiny Tim's beloved line '*God Bless Us, Every One!'* before the animated version of Scrooge carrying Tiny Tim on his shoulder, the way his father did, becomes a motionless illustration in the Disney animated book of *A Christmas Carol*. The book closes in the final scene.

Not all readers and critics were happy to see Scrooge a changed man, for it was a sudden, unbelievable change to some. However, what makes the story and the instant change believable is the fusion of the fantastical elements with the topical portrayal of Victorian reality, for fantasy allows what realism does not. Scrooge "had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle"(Dickens 83) Dickens associates his personal love for spirits, as in alcohol, with the supernatural to emphasise Scrooge's commitment to the humanitarian approach to life and the moral lessons instructed to him by the spirits he once encountered. Nevertheless, Scrooge learned how to let his present embrace both his past and future.

Dickens might not have attended film schools, for they did not exist in his days, but his love for reading, his wild imagination, attentive observation of reality, skills of writing and love for theatre have kindled his idea for a story that is meant to be performed, visually captured, and adapted in cinema. While reading is solitary, cinema is communal; two qualities that Charles Dickens so harmoniously offered through his novella *A Christmas Carol,* for "what is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?" (Carrol 37).

A reproduction of John Leech's illustration of the Spirit of Christmas Yet To Come



CHAPTER IV

A WRITER'S PECULIARITIES:

DICKENSIAN REALISM AND CINEMA

"Realism is a bad word. In a sense everything is realistic.

I see no line between the imaginary and the real."

-Federico Fellini

Dickens revived, if not started, the tradition of Christmas story telling in its most memorable prosaic form which encouraged the business of seasonal publication. However, like most writers, Dickens faced writer's block which might have been triggered by the constant pressure to write, to serialize, and to meet deadlines. Dickensian literary instalments were the product of the writer's skills, concerns, and vivid imagination kindled by the loud and the quite streets of London and Dickens's travels. Dickens's works matured in the streets, it is why they appealed to the masses. It appears that for Dickens, Christmas tales required an unusual agency like the supernatural which he instantly introduced from the beginning of his popular *Carol* in the first stave he entitled *Marley's Ghost*. The use of the supernatural in *A Christmas Carol* required proper timing to keep the natural pace of the story, for in both literature and cinema; different agencies and effects require proper timing to be introduced to the readers and the viewers for them to have a proper impact.

A Christmas Carol helped starting *new* fashions and revamping *old* traditions. It boosted the fashion of Christmas celebrations during the second half of 1840's and 1850's, that even the Victorians among the needy, celebrated it in their own humble ways. It is fair to consider Dickens as the inventor of Christmas, for it is a celebration that inspired its qualities from the book, along with German traditions and many ancient pagan influences which were unwelcomed by the Anglican Church whose members have always disliked the names of days just because they are inspired from pagan beliefs and mythologies, such as Thor's-day, and Saturn's-day. Les Standiford argues, "It was Pope Julius I who, during the fourth century, designated December 25 as the official date for the birth of Jesus, and scholars believed that he chose the date so that Christianity might attract new members by co-opting the lingering sentiments for the ancient festival of Saturnalia, held annually by the romans in honour of their god of agriculture." (Standiford 105). Indeed, Christmas which means Mass of Christ, started attracting non-religious people since it embraced their customs for its celebration; in return, they have embraced Christianity. By the 1860's Christmas celebrations took their whole form, from Christmas decorations and shopping, to Christmas cards and fashion, which eventually bred the commercialisation of Christmas.

Dickens re-created a world where the rich and middle class members like Scrooge, and the poor working class members like Bob Cratchit, the pure like Tiny Tim, along with the gruesome ghosts like Marley's, the friendly spectres like those of Christmases past and present, and the gloomy ones of times yet to come, can all coexist. It is a recipe for an everlasting *Carol*. To include illustration was not a mere Victorian practice, but a necessity for Dickens's highly visual stories. John Leech's design for English author Albert Smith's Christmas book *The Wassail Bowl* in 1843 has made him Dickens's new favourite illustrator after the death of his former collaborator Robert Seymour with whom Dickens worked on the illustrations of *The Pickwick Papers.*

A Christmas Carol in prose: Being a Ghost Story of Christmas was Dickens's original title for his timeless novella, sold for five shillings; a slim amount of money, still hard for clerks like Bob Cratchit to afford with a family to support. Dickens cared about the way his *Carol* appealed to the readers, from the narrative, to the illustrations and the cover, the *Carol* was to Dickens a literary visual experiment. He was never willing to settle with his publishers for what they had to offer, by becoming involved in the publication process. On publishing his *Carol* Dickens asked for "four wood cuts, four etchings. The cover in red, hand coloured. The title in rustic spectral writing, the end papers to be green and all three edges to be gilded…it must be exquisite" (Nalluri 00:42:49-00:43:00). Dickens did not want what is cheapest, he simply wanted the best even if he had to drain his finances.

The spirit of Christmas is incarnated through literary aspects. Using the realistic and the ghost story together, two realms that transfer the reader from his realistic expectations of such fiction which is committed to its purpose of faithful portrayal of reality, to the supernatural which pushes the reader to lose his connection with reality and question it, Dickens melded the realistic, the real and the unreal in what Les Standiford describes as "a deceptively innocent form to do such serious work" (Standiford 179).

While the financial purposes could be seen as a motivation for writing the *Carol*, it was never its goal. Les Standiford's book and Nalluri's film tackled

Dickens's financial situation which required a lavishly looking *saviour* that came bound in red cloth with golden gilded papers. The reviews showered the English author with literary compliments and favourable critiques on the book, even though some others despised the loose vowels and the silent letters which they presumed as vulgar and bad grammar, Dickens carolled in prose a Victorian reality as authentically as a ghostly little Christmas book could have. Dickens was haunted by the idea of becoming a literary failure, mainly after the critics' reaction to *Martin Chuzzlewit.* The *Carol* reassured Dickens both artistically and financially, before the haunting expenses started lurking especially since Dickens's *Carol* was subject to plagiarism, thievery, unauthorised publications and theatrical adaptations, all of which resulted in costly cases. In the book *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, Les Standiford argues that every adaptation of the *Carol* was rather good publicity for the author's work rather than a source of distress.

While Tiny Tim, Dickens's image of his nephew or late brother Tiny Fred, could seem like the focus of the story, it is ignorance and want that the story revolves around. Regardless, Tiny Tim is a medical puzzle with symptoms that hint various medical problems such as renal tuberculosis, kidney diseases and rickets that could be avoided and treated through a healthier diet and life style which only middle class members could afford. Dickens did not write the *Carol* because he had to, but because he wanted to, which can explain why his other Christmas books felt like an obligation that never resulted in something as echoing as his *Christmas Carol*. Dickens turned his writings into a cathartic source to overcome his haunting demons of debt, failure and childhood traumas:

> Eliminate ignorance, Dickens dreamed in his *Carol*. Eliminate want. A tall order then, and a tall order now. But one does not need to be a social scientist to know that he identifies the true sources of misery in this world. And it is a mark of Dickens's genius that we return eagerly to his hopeful vision- millions of us now- year after year. And vow to do the best we can. (Standiford 226)

Charles Dickens's sister Fanny and her son were explicitly present in his *Carol*. In 1848, Fanny and her son were severely ill, she died in September leaving Dickens

devastated. While reading the *Carol* during Christmas was one of Dickens's personal favourite Christmas traditions, reading it after Fanny's death became a painful reminder since both little Fan and Tiny Tim were inspired by Fanny and her son Henry Burnett, Dickens's lost ones. Dickens canalized his sorrow and grief in his book *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* which was published later on the same year in December. It was his last Christmas book that shares common features with the *Carol* including the use of the supernatural agency and the theme of ignorance which recalls the problem of education and those poor and unwell children ignored in society as well.

Dickens might be considered a true populist and a popular celebrity, with a naval pay clerk father imprisoned for debts, an imprisonment that forced Dickens to leave school and become an apprentice as a law clerk. He worked as a stenographer before writing for a British magazine called the *Morning Chronicle.* Dickens grew up to know that justice and laws are not essentially synonyms, so he dedicated his art to tackle such matter, Les Standiford notes, "all art grows out of its maker's loss, it has been said- and if that is so, Dickens's loss of his childhood was to become the world's great gain" (Standiford 4-5).

The women among the underclass members tended to turn to crime in its different forms; mainly prostitution in order to survive. It was a social concern of Charles Dickens, therefore, he collaborated with the Victorian baroness Angela Burdett Coutts; England's richest heiress, and opened Urania Cottage in 1847; a philanthropic institution for women who aspired a better present for a better future. In *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge is an embodiment of the Malthusian cruelty supported by the 1843 Poor Law Amendment Act, which is explicitly echoed through his infamous line on the surplus population that; similar to Scrooge, the English economist Thomas Malthus viewed as a threat that can only be controlled by different causes of death such as war and sexual restraint.

Dickens's ideological views can neither be described as radical, for he simply supported what can be regarded as a reasonable humanitarian capitalism that calls the fortunate to help the unfortunate and look into the Corn Laws, Sunday bill, the

imprisonment of debtors and labour laws which aggravated the daunting conditions, in order to avoid the human social desperation which will likely lead to crime and violence, two dangerous outcomes that Dickens never justified but proved to be understandable.

In the *Manchester Athenaeum Speech Dickens* gave in 1843, and devoted to support the Manchester Athenaeum, a society that emphasised the importance of knowledge and worked to diffuse it, he noted:

> I should be glad to hear such people's estimate of the comparative danger of 'a little learning' and a vast amount of ignorance; I should be glad to know which they consider the most prolific parent of misery and crime…The man [who] seeks to improve himself in such a place as the Athenaeum, acquires for himself that property of soul…and…learns, the better, gentler, kinder man he must become. When he knows how much great minds have suffered for the truth in every age and time, and to what dismal persecutions opinion has been exposed, he will become more tolerant of other men's belief in all matters. (Dickens)

He added "I am quite certain that long after your institution, and others of the same nature, have crumbled into dust, the noble harvest of the seed sown in them will shine out brightly in the wisdom, the mercy, and the forbearance of another race." (Dickens). Free public schools like the Field Lane School were ragged but still attempting to "douse an inferno with a teacup" (Standiford 69). Dickens never ceased discussing the dangerously everlasting aftermath of ignorance which always proves costly, in 1848 he wrote his article *Ignorance and Crime* for the weekly paper *The Examiner* "side by side with Crime, Disease, and Misery in England…Ignorance is always brooding, and is always certain to be found" (Dickens 275-258).

A Christmas Carol turned the worst of times to the best of times, while tackling the needful seeds making Dickens reap an immortal popularity. Those who might argue that the *Carol* is limited to a Christian audience must know that the secular nature of the story caused controversy even with the Theatres Act in 1843 which aimed to free theatre from the government censorship to everything nonreligious, for

instance; it was the office of the Examiner of Plays that controlled what to stage and what not to stage.

Regardless of the social commitment in his texts, Dickens's theatrical interests never diminished. Whereas Dickensian texts have always been theatrically adapted, *A Christmas Carol* was a precious stage-fit book, frequently staged to introduce Dickens to what Les Standifrod describes as "an exponentially wider audience, in the same way a successful film adaptation might for a popular novel today." (Standiford 169). The book served as a source of amusement, and enlightenment but it would probably have had half its impact if it was not serving its true purpose of entertainment. An art that entertains can always be appreciated for its aesthetic value, a rhetoric art however, would not be impactful or appreciated for the rhetorical purpose attributed to it unless it was entertaining, Les Standiford argues "while it might be argued that in most fiction the aim is to entertain first and defy second, if ever there were a medium where the manipulation of an audience's emotion is paramount, the motion picture form is it." (Standiford 171).

Dickens used to enjoy pantomime which had its own popularity and audience during the Victorian era, Professor Jim Davis argues in his book *Victorian Pantomime*:

> Pantomime in the Victorian era was not only an all-pervasive form of popular entertainment, but also functioned as a way of seeing, even as metaphor, in shaping perceptions of the contemporary world in just as forceful a way as has long been credited to melodrama...In effect pantomime is in part a materialist form, showing off commodities, encouraging consumerism and participating in the capitalist ethos of an industrial society. (J. Davis 2-4)

In 1853 Dickens started a series of public readings that brought his characters to life in their best Dickensian theatrical versions. His public readings were mostly accessible to all in order to provide both entertainment and awareness of the needed financial aids, yet he got involved in charity readings which "were given in aid of an adult-education establishment in Birmingham, late December 1853...he continued only with occasional 'charity' readings (always of the *Carol*). Late in 1857 his 'paid' idea

quickened: he needed much ready cash to refurbish Gad's Hill, recently purchased" (Schlicke, *The Oxford Companion to C.D* 483). The most popular Christmas reading has always been *A Christmas Carol,* influencing businessmen according to unsubstantiated stories that still emphasise Dickens's major role in shaping the universal perception of Christmas and its celebration. His ghostly little book, his *Carol,* was even part of his farewell tour reading program in 1869 through Britain, Lucinda Hawksley writes "for many years, Dickens had read aloud from his novels to friends and in aid of charities, tacking the opportunity to indulge his love of acting and to bring his characters to life" (Hawksley, *Charles Dickens* 146).

The Dickensian literature carries Charles Dickens the performer in all his phases, moods, and versions within its pages, for both as a writer and a reader Dickens knew how to build up the excitement and capture the attention of his readers and his audience. He was a street savvy and an inimitable writer whose imagination, his fictionalised but encapsulated life experiences and literary purpose attracted the *curious*, the *concerned*, and the Victorians. Hence, his art was *read*, *staged* an *applauded* by the masses. Today, his art is *read*, *staged*, *applauded*, *screened*, and *viewed* by the masses.

With countless adaptations and reinventions of the *Carol* in cinema, theatre, television, radio, and untold stagings, Les Standiford notes that "not only had *A Christmas Carol* become the most 'adapted' of all the author's works, but it would be hard to name any other work of fiction that has thereby become so ubiquitous a part of Western popular culture" (Standiford 174). Dickens's descriptive voice is revealed via reading, whereas in adaptation it is replaced by the adapter's who vocalises himself through camera work, mise-en-scène and the narration he chooses for the adaptation. Even with the new medium of television in the forties, which later on televised previous cinematic adaptations of the story which helped popularising them, the *Carol* never ceased spreading and transcending all mediums, moving from the written to the staged to the visual to the oral form.

1. The Man Who Invented Christmas: Dickens in Film

In 2017, the Irish and a Canadian production companies Parallel Films and Rhombus Media have made a new Dickensian film entitled *The Man Who Invented Christmas* which is based on a book of the same title. The film is directed by Indian and British director Bharat Nalluri, starring Dan Stevens as Charles Dickens, and Christopher Plummer as Ebenezer Scrooge. It is a semi-biographical film and a cinematic adaptation to *A Christmas Carol*, fuelled by dramatic and fantastical elements. It depicts the *Carol'*s creative creation while revealing Dickens's life and reality that might have inspired it.

It captures the creative process of writing and the mounting pressure Dickens has experienced to come up with a story and publish it within six weeks while dealing with writer's block. It captures Dickens, the active pedestrian who sought ideas in the streets, the writer of the everlasting popular novella, his haunting ghosts of debt and financial difficulties, his struggle to protect his art from plagiarism, his literary influences[50], and how the artist's art is inevitably biographical even when it is fiction.

The film figuratively demonstrates how characters manifest themselves and bring their own suggestions as participants in the writing process to communicate Dickens's tendencies and supernatural beliefs. From hearing voices of characters, to spontaneous combustion and the alleged London Ghost Club membership; Dickensian characters breed on those ideas to take shape and provide a literary adventure allowing the viewers to step into Dickens's inner workings of his mind. To celebrate the birth of Christ was to Dickens less about its divinity than it was about its humanity. Thus Christmas was an education for all the senses.

The Man Who Invented Christmas both film and book tackle the relationship Dickens had with his father John Dickens; a man known for being reckless with money, and his son Charles grew up to become a writer supporting both his family and his parents. The film captures the Victorian financial challenges and how Dickens chose to send his parents away just to keep them from all the temptations London

[50] Charles Dickens offers his maid Tara a book entitled Aladdin which is a reference to Dickens's childhood favourite book *The Arabian Nights* which inspired him as a kid and as an author.

could offer to a spendthrift like John Dickens who sold bits of his son's drafts and signatures to gain money. Dickens feared the world the same way Scrooge did "given his current uncertainties- both artistic and economic- *A Christmas Carol* could easily be read as an allegory for his own life: a once successful man receives a final opportunity to redeem himself" (Standiford 125) a line that might have inspired the film which brings the *Carol* closer to a biography of the author himself and the process of artistic creation. Moreover, it demonstrates how Charles Dickens, regardless of his inimitable literary skills, has always sought the feedback of his closest friend John Forster, the English biographer who inspired the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and suggested different plot developments in other works. This important friendship was vividly captured in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017), a film that captures Dickens's struggle as an author to find inspiration, a theme, a story and a title for a book.

The film opens with an audience rhythmical applause and an on-screen text that reads New York City 1842 to welcome Charles Dickens, introduced by a presenter as "the great magician of our time, whose wand is a book, the Shakespeare of the novel, the people's author, the marvellous Boz, Mr Charles Dickens" (Nalluri 00:01:36-00:01:56) while Dan Stevens as Charles Dickens recites a passage from a letter he sent to his friend John Forster to express how impressed he was to know that he is a literary sensation in America, and how his shattered American expectations worsened his homesickness.

The following scene shows Dickens as he struggles to write, a writer whose latest literary creation was a disappointment as it was expressed by British actor Miles Jupp as William Thackeray in a scene that depicts the competitive literary sphere in a playfully. Struggling with author's block and fear of losing his skill and everything resulting from that, Dickens starts looking for triggers; for what triggers the imagination triggers creativity, hence, a rich material for writing. Such triggers are displayed throughout the film as they are derived from Dickens's background, his environment, and his possessions such as his house décor, green painting, the

chandelier, and the door knocker. All of which are presented in a smoothly traceable way to explicitly hint the plot and the themes of the story.

The film captures Dickens's peculiar obsessions and curiosities from collecting names to performing acts. Actor Pat Mooney as Marley the waiter at Garrick Club; a gentlemen's social club frequented by Charles Dickens, serves Dickens and Forster oysters while looking dreadful and ill in a scene that connotes the nexus of life and death, hence the ghostly nature of Jacob Marley in the story, for oysters can be served cooked or raw, dead or alive, a ghost existential duality. The film made use of every possible detail to draw attention to what might have inspired Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. It captures Dickens's experience with child labour and how it forged his interest in writing about the poor, social injustice, and its dreadful outcomes. Dickens's social stand is explicitly apparent as he says "I'm sick of London, it is overcrowded, overpriced…no place for a man without money, not to mention the bloody fog!...I've run out of ideas, I feel old" (Nalluri 00:11:04-00:11:27).

According to Lucinda Hawksley, "[Dickens's] experience of covering court cases for newspapers confirmed his beliefs about the legal world, a world he would criticise and parody with great intelligence in his fiction"(Hawksley, *Charles Dickens* 14). Dickens's journalistic journey forged his views on the law which he explicitly expressed in his novel *Oliver Twist* through the famous line "the law is a ass" (Dickens, *Oliver Twist* 399). The film stands as a biography of the author and an adaptation of his novella, most importantly; it uses the *Carol* to capture Dickens's life, using the prosaic art of the *Carol* to write dialogue. For instance, the film uses Scrooge's conversation with the charity men on the surplus population in a different scene between Dickens and other utilitarian men after his speech for London Children's refuge.

Nalluri's use of the candle for a smooth transition between scenes serves a different purpose which is to capture the essence of the Ghost of Christmas Past and its connection to memory while foreshadowing the *Carol*'s ending and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Sound which can be considered as a stimulant for supernatural presence is stressed through the imaginary maid Tara who uses her voice

to enhance her storytelling which intrigues Dickens. The effect that the sound can have on the imagination and its association with the supernatural is accentuated when Charles Dickens's writing rituals are interrupted, but he regains his focus when he hears a bell ring and finally comes up with a name for his protagonist and conjures him up the same way Scrooge's apparitions were conjured in the *Carol*. To hear or not to hear, presence of sound is as terrifying as its absence. Sounds intrigue curiosity and inspire ideas to conjure the perfect Christmas ghost story of *A Christmas Carol*. Nalluri seems to overuse the idea of dreaming and what might be associated with it, by showing Dickens laying down, waking up, and falling down along with the interruptions which can all be used as an explanation for Scrooge's spectral encounter or Dickens's association with ghosts.

The Man Who Invented Christmas captures the loss of the ability to write and how Dickens unblocked writer's block once he had the needed ingredients: a theme, a statement, a protagonist, supporting characters, a catchphrase, and a particularity in order to write his ghostly little book in a literary genre that it almost too quirky to be definable.

The comical tone in the *Carol* softens the discomfort that can result from the pathos, Dickens notes that "there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour" (Dickens 56). The film reproduces the comical tone of the *Carol* through different scenes like Forster's humorous look as the Ghost of Christmas Present, with his pinkish rosy cheeks, silly outfit, and glittery beard, for Leech to capture the essence of the spectre in the illustration. Dickens knew how to keep a ghost moralistic story entertaining by using a subtle humorous edge as he did with the wordplay of gravy and grave in Stave One from *A Christmas Carol.*

Dickens is portrayed as an attentive observer of his surroundings, a skill he used to become a true realist with a constant aspiration to be a reformist. He could not detach his love for writing from that of theatre as he acted out his characters in a dramatized theatrical manner as if to incarnate an audible visible idea, loud and visual enough for readers to hear and see; Mamie Dickens reported:

> I was lying on the sofa endeavouring to keep perfectly quiet, while my father wrote busily and rapidly at his desk, when he suddenly jumped from his chair and rushed to a mirror which hung near, and in which I could see the reflection of some extraordinary facial contortions which he was making. He returned rapidly to his desk, wrote furiously for a few moments, and then went again to the mirror. The facial pantomime was resumed, and then turning toward, but evidently not seeing, me, he began talking rapidly in a low voice. Ceasing this soon, however, he returned once more to his desk, where he remained silently writing until luncheon time. It was a most curious experience for me, and one of which, I did not until later years, fully appreciate the purport. Then I knew that with his natural intensity he had thrown himself completely into the character that he was creating, and that for the time being he had not only lost sight of his surroundings, but had actually become in action, as in imagination, the creature of his pen. (M. Dickens chap. 3)

The Man Who invented Christmas (2017) shows the theatrical aspect about Dickens's writings once more when he uses terms such as 'intermission' which is rather a common practice in performing and visual arts. It indicates stage directions which boost its theatrical significance and adaptability on both stage and screen. Dickens's love for the theatre was kindled at an early age; he wrote a play around the age of eight entitled *Miznar, The Sultan of India*, in addition to theatrical reviews for the *Morning Chronicle* in 1832, he started a family tradition of amateur theatricals in what he called The Smallest Theatre in the World, staged and directed theatrical plays such as *The Frozen Deep* by the English author Wilkie Collins. Dickens indulged his theatrical ambitions in his vivid public readings, Lucinda Hawksley notes "it was this knowledge of acting and characterization that allows Dickens's novels to be so easily adapted to the stage and screen today" (Hawksley, *Charles Dickens* 92).

Naming the characters helps conjuring them. It is an idea that can be paired with the supernatural element of *A Christmas Carol*. Charles Dickens's admiration for games is demonstrated through his characters like Fred in the *Carol*, and in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* as he crafts his characters. In a game of words, Dan Stevens

as Dickens learns about his protagonist and provides the viewers with his characterisation as he reveals that for Scrooge darkness is cheap, love is swindle, money is security, children are useless, workhouses are useful, and Christmas is *humbug*.

Dickens's characters seem to appear and reappear after sleep related hints, for instance Scrooge's first appearance occurs when Dickens lies down in his office, he appears again later to awake Dickens from his sleep, even Dickens's memory of the past is interrupted when he suddenly awoke from sleep. The association of dreams with the writing process of the *Carol* is applicable to Scrooge's story as an explanation to his spectral encounter. Furthermore, some events in this film occur when Dickens is drunk to associate fiction with the loss of reality, imagination and dreams.

The film uses a line from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* "no one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another" (Nalluri 00:46:07-00:46:10) which sums up Dickens's purpose and aspirations in life. It also uses Fanny's visit to her brother with her unwell boy to draw the link between the *Carol* and Dickens's inspiration for its characters like Tiny Tim. It depicts the literary reality of the Victorian readers as well, for whereas writers like Dickens and Thackeray discussed literature in Garrick Club, Tara the maid; a representative of the poor, reads the popular cheap penny dreadful *Varney the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood*[51], both available and affordable form of literature for the Victorian working class readers. However, just like the book[52] Catherine Hogarth Dickens was reading in an earlier scene, the penny dreadful used in the film does not correspond the era it is set in, for Dickens wrote the *Carol* in 1843, whereas *Varney the Vampire* series appeared two years later in 1845.

Dickens's literary economy is questioned by Scrooge who points out how Jacob Marley "was never one of a straight answer" (Nalluri 00:38:34-00:38:36) an economy that is needful for a circadian novella. However, having worked on serialised

[51] A serialised penny dreadful by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest.
[52] *Roughing it in the Bush* by Canadian author Susanna Moodie was published in 1852 almost a decade after Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

literature, Dickens knew how round characterisation and complicated plots would result in extra costs and literary unbalance. Hence, he developed his skills to know when to be succinct and when to be verbose while maintaining the thrill which the *Carol* constantly offers to the readers.

The question Marley asks Dickens, "do you know the weight and length of the chain you bear yourself? You Charlie, your chain, all around you…past and present, and what is to come" (Nalluri 00:39:46-00:40:13) communicates another biographical trait about the *Carol* that Dickens used to canalise his fear. Dickens's fear resulted mainly from his father' thriftless life and imprisonment for debt along with his dreadful experience at Warren's Blacking Factory which triggered his literary purpose and interest.

Fear stimulates and challenges Dickens's imagination. This idea is concretised in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) when Dickens, worried about meeting the deadline to finish his book, stares at a bookshop front and reads "order now and avoid disappointment" (Nalluri 00:58:08) to promote his *Carol*; fear and pressure build up to nudge his imagination which instantly summons the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Scrooge, who appears to be both a friend and a nemesis, provokes the author and questions his authorship as he says "you're the author, aren't you?" (Nalluri 00:47:38-00:47:41) emphasising the complexity and peculiarity of fiction writing as Dickens claims "I'm the author here!" (Nalluri 01:06:39) and Scrooge answers "allegedly" (Nalluri 01:06:41) which recalls Dickens's 'voice hearings' and raises the question of intertextuality and authorship. This film sheds light on Scrooge's missing argument which could have justified his utilitarian-based ideology as Christopher Plummer playing Scrooge criticises Dickens's writing of a scene and comments "the scene is very one-sided my character does not get to explain his side of the things, so I have taken the liberty of writing a short speech, something about the national self-interest and the national tendencies of free markets" (Nalluri 00:56:12-00:56:31). It is an idea that Dickens blocked to emphasise how cruelty can never be justified even when it is explained, an idea that was used in Brian Desmond Hurst's 1951 adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* starring Alastair Sim to voice what Dickens silenced for literary

purposes. Therefore, *The Man Who Invented Christmas* tried to capture Scrooge's upbringing that might have forged the miser to make his cruelty explicable if not justified.

In the scene where Dickens and Scrooge are in the market, the faithful portrayal of reality in realistic literature is well spoken by Dickens who notes "life, Mr Scrooge. It's London, the great theatre of the world, it's all here" (Nalluri 00:50:08-00:50:13). It shows how gathering inspiration comes from reality itself and how Charles Dickens saw life in every corner of London and succeeded to discover it in order to create timeless fiction, Spanish Architect Antoni Gaudí has argued that "the creation continues incessantly through the media of man. But man does not create...he discovers. Those who look for the laws of Nature as a support for their new works collaborate with the creator. Copiers do not collaborate. Because of this, originality consists in returning to the origin".

Dickens was willing to kill off Tiny Tim but decided not to do it in order to accentuate the humane redeemable side of Scrooge, yet he chose to foreshadow it as a possibility to reasonably justify Scrooge's redemption and communicate optimism to make a change and reform, thus serving the purpose of the genre. Moreover, in a discussion Dickens has with Forster, Christmas is approached as a hopeful event which requires a hopeful ending for a Christmas story, English actor Justin Matthew Edwards as Forster argues "if Tiny Tim dies, then what is the point" (Nalluri 01:05:48-01:05:51), for the point is to make Scrooge change, if there is no greater consequences there will be no greater significance, hence no everlasting impact. It makes Christmas a suitable choice for a realistic novella that should present a faithful portrayal of reality and offer enough optimism to reform it.

Dickens's literary insecurities are awakened as he faces another block in finding a suitable ending, and hears his father Mr John Dickens played by Jonathan Pryce reciting Shakespeare, before the reappearance of Scrooge who comments "Aha, Shakespeare. There's a man who could write. I doubt he ever had a blockage…self-preservation, first law of nature and that is just a fact" (Nalluri 01:02:36-01:02:48).

Dickens looks at the mirror and faces himself to provide a reflection that highlights a duality of his kind versus harsh personalities. Mirrors can reveal secrets, summon hidden natures, and transport characters through different realities and worlds. Dickens's reflection can be interpreted as a self-confrontation and a bridge to the other world inhabited by his ghosts; a window to the soul, and a frame that invites new psychological and spatiotemporal dimensions and extensions. To interpret a mirror as a ghostly passage is a valid idea that can be backed up through the several mirrors in Dickens's house both in the film and what is today known to be London Charles Dickens Museum in Doughty Street in Holborn, London, and Scrooge's sudden appearance when Dickens saw his reflection in the mirror, to say "blood of iron, heart of ice" (Nalluri 01:04:47-01:04:49) which can also connote the duality in Dickens's personality and how the Victorian industrial machinery conquered and corrupted the age and its people.

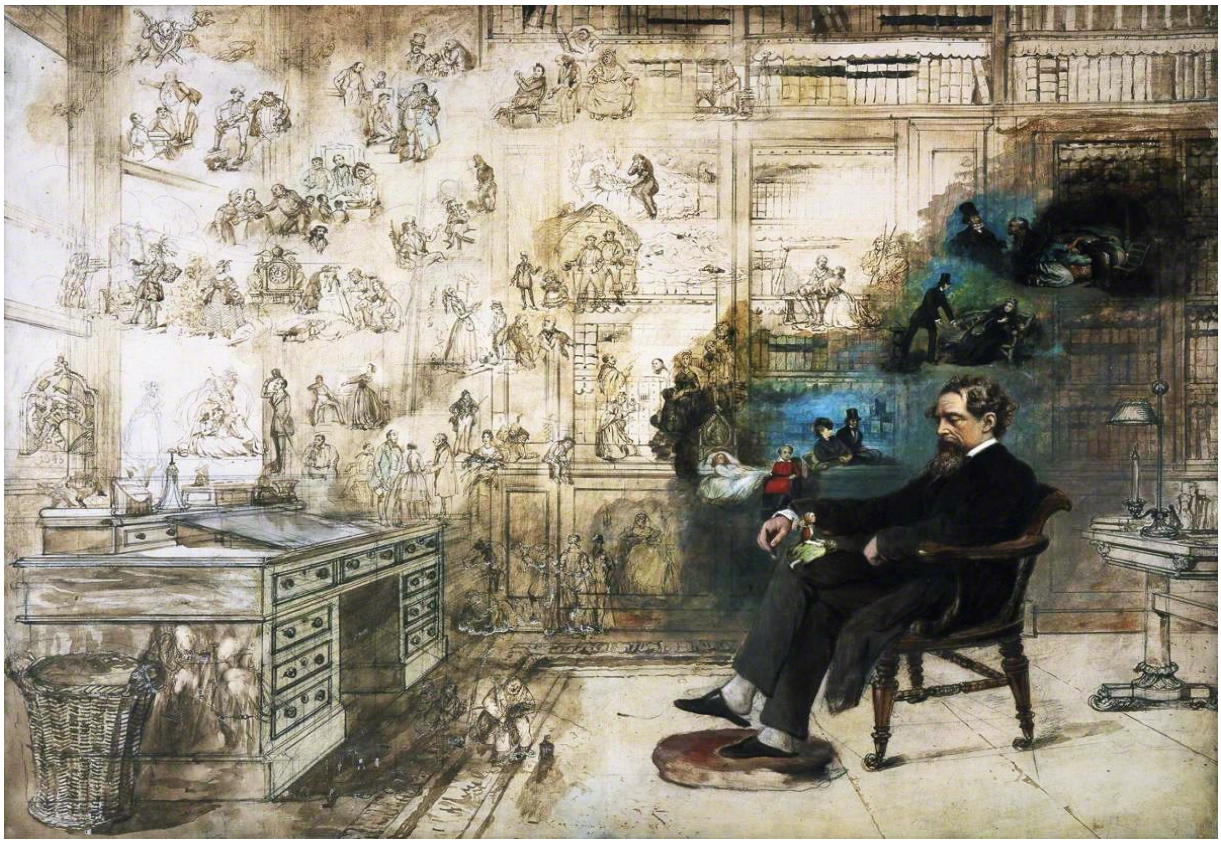


Figure 1 *Dickens's Dream* or *'A Souvenir of Dickens'* by Victorian artist etcher and illustrator Robert William Buss (1804-1875).

Associating the graveyard scene from the *Carol* with Warren's Blacking Factory echoes Charles Dickens's childhood nightmares which haunted him forever that he considered the warehouse a graveyard for innocent dreams. Surrounded by his characters, a puzzled Dickens struggles to find an ending in a scene that recalls Buss's unfinished oil painting *Dickens's Dream* (Figure 1). Scrooge wonders "what's the point! We keep stopping at the same place…admit it you're blocked!" (Nalluri 01:06:28-01:06:35) and while Dickens denies it in an attempt to block his characters' constant interference and restore his authoritarian position as an author, Scrooge makes a mocking statement that Dickens is merely an author allegedly speaking while the rest of the characters snicker in agreement.

In an important scene shot in shot-reverse-shot; Dickens and Forster discuss the ending of an unfinished *Carol* and unravel the missing aspect that explains Scrooge's attitude which adaptations like Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951) tried to provide:

> Dickens: could a man as mean spirited as Scrooge; as evil as Scrooge, could he become a different person over night?
> Forster: what is so evil about him?
> Dickens: well, he is a miser.
> Forster: well, that does not make him evil, it just makes him cheap.
> Dickens: he worships money; it is the only thing that matters to him.
> Forster: Why?
> Dickens: he has nothing else.
> Forster: no friends? No family?
> Dickens: no one he trusts.
> Forster: why?
> Dickens: because he is afraid
> Forster: of…
> Dickens: being found out... (Nalluri 01:07:33-01:08:15)

The discussion unravels a truth about Dickens whose experience at the shoe blacking factory traumatised him and helped shaping his views. To be found out is to unravel hidden secrets, Scrooge is given the opportunity to draw a portrait of the author

himself as he says “so this is your miserable secret , the famous author, the inimitable Charles Dickens was once a scabby little factory boy, a common bit of riffraff, a squalid wretch, no use to anyone” (Nalluri 01:21:09-01:21:29). The film collects enough information about Dickens and artistically utilise them to communicate bits of his life including his drinking problems at Hungerford Stairs, his childhood trauma at Warren’s blacking factory, and his love for magic tricks and theatre.

Scrooge does not acknowledge the single authorship of Charles Dickens, his idea is uttered in words when another character tries to identify Dickens but Scrooge; being the outspoken character in the film, introduces him as “nobody. The author” (Nalluri 01:14:58-01:15:01). Scrooge knows that he is a reflection of Dickens who describes him as cynical, but Scrooge replies “you look in the mirror sometimes…hypocrite” (Nalluri 01:15:22-01:15:29). Nevertheless, Scrooge considers himself to be an embodiment of different devouring evils, “I’m hunger, I’m cold, I’m darkness, I’m a shadow on your thoughts, the crack in your heart, and the stain upon your soul” (Nalluri 01:22:27-01:22:44). The unredeemed Ebenezer Scrooge is Dickens’s fear and nightmares, not his dream which consists of his literature and characters. Scrooge is rather a symbol and an embodiment of everything that inspired the creation of A *Christmas Carol*.

A Christmas Carol was carefully conjured, skilfully written, and beautifully illustrated that it continues to spawn film adaptations, as relevant today as it was in the past, and will probably remain relevant in the days yet to come. From sketches to tales, and stories in all varied narrative forms, Dickens spawned the literary sphere with immortal fiction. In the Victorian age when novels were popular, *A Christmas Carol*, serious and comical, believable and unbelievable, shocking and comforting, succeeded to maintain its appeal as a Victorian novella among critics of that era and today’s digital age.

To study the works of Charles Dickens one must consider the biographical factors that might have inspired the work along with the social and cultural elements. On politicising literature, Harold Orel argues in his book *The Victorian Short Story* that “if [Victorian writers] wanted to write political commentary, they either had to

learn how to place the didactic message within an innocent-seeming or allegorical wrapping, or run the risk of government displeasure" (Orel 5) it is no wonder that Dickens used his fiction as a vessel to communicate what his journalistic career restricted. Dickens admired travelling, just before *A Christmas Carol* year of publication he travelled from Italy, to France and America. Dickens seemed to experience his travels as "not only journeys across space, but also journeys through time" (Tyler 112). Dickens had a quest of finding the vintage of the past in Italy, and the modernity of the future in America.

Serialisation and the use of illustrations were popular during the Victorian era that they became a standard of publication in the 1830's, Orel notes that "in the case of Dickens, such factors as serial publication, Christmas books, and tours providing the opportunity to give dramatic readings were new to the Victorian scene" (Orel 12) such changes were paramount, as a result they influenced the relationship the author can and must have with his audience.

Dickens used a Christmas setting; which is associated with peace, love, redemption; a time for Man's better nature to prevail, along with the narrative genre to justify his literary decisions, for it is a suitable atmosphere for dramatization and symbolism of regeneration. His moral tone, literary merit, awareness of topical social problems, and concerns with social justice permitted a careful treatment of the Victorian most repellent social matters.

Dickens created the spirits to transport his protagonist and his readers to different spatiotemporal dimensions as a means of withdrawing from present linear time, using a non-temporal tense to establish historic present. According to Roland Barthes; the past perfect is a tense of "cosmogonies, myths, histories and novels" (qtd. in Tyler 114), *A Christmas Carol* exhibits frequent use of the tense as well. Dickens's overuse of the past perfect might be regarded as an emphasis on the temporal connections he used to work with time travel, and the supernatural spiritual world. He joined the past, the present and the future to make a meaningful synthesis and "effect a reawakening to fuller consciousness." (Tyler 119).

Dickens's *Carol* controls time by stopping it; hence Scrooge's punctual encounters are condensed to occur in one night unlike Marley's promise. Time travel removes the reader from present time to past and future while constantly returning to the present which gets interrupted by the spirits in an attempt to reshape it, in Tyler's words "[Dickens] wants to look forward into the future through the past and thus to awaken the present" (Tyler 120). Dickens knew how powerful the past can be to shape the present and alter the future. Dickens uses memory as a tool to recover the innocence of Scrooge's origins; memory therefore permits fluidity between present and past and gives time travel a credible purposeful usage while preserving the elasticity of time.

Dickens never degraded the political utility that literature can have to raise awareness and make a change. On the impact that literature can have on people, Dickens expressed a sense of literary empowerment in a letter he sent to his wife Catherine Dickens on the second of December, a year after the publication of *A Christmas Carol,* he wrote "if you had seen Macready last night- undisguisedly sobbing, and crying on the sofa as I read- you would have felt (as I did) what a thing it is to have Power" (qtd. in Tyler 119).

Dickens's characters seem to talk the same way, and because to talk is to act, and action is character, hence speech is imbedded in the character's characterisation. Speech in Dickensian fiction is realistic, realist, and sometimes vulgar to those who view literature as an art for the prestigious class of society. Speech in Dickensian literature respects the intellectual and social position of the character; the Shakespearean dramatized speech would ridicule the realistic genre of Dickens.

The narrator in Dickens's fiction can be a reflection of the author himself through his theatrical representation which can be seen through Dickens's performance in his public readings that express the theatricality of his writing and his personality "the theatricality of much Dickensian narration makes narration a performance" (Tyler 162). The narrator moulds the reader's sense and perception of the characters because they trust him as much as they trust the author who seems to virtualise all of his characters except for his narrator mainly when he is omniscient, otherwise the narrator

would lose his credibility and trustworthiness. The nineteenth century French author Stendhal has said "qui s'excuse, s'accuse", a statement that sums up the previous idea, for the author can sympathise with his characters but the narrator is perceived as a neutral non-participant.

The supposedly realistic Victorian literature of Charles Dickens exhibits non-realist and anti-realist notions of ghosts and their relation to the human perception, illusions and delusions as possible explanations for the phenomenon. It was a trend that pervaded literature during Dickens's time when writers used what might be considered unrealistic to communicate the real, such as dreams, ghosts, and the supernatural.

Lyn Pykett[53] argues, in her article *Sensation and the Fantastic in the Victorian novel* that the significance of the *fantastic* in Victorian literature lies in it being a form of "the personal or political unconscious, the return of the repressed…or in which subjugated, silenced, or invisible social groups or impulses rise up against the social institutions or forces which seek to deny or contain them" (David 212), its association with the inexplicable and the irrational gives it access to discuss different matters and "problematizes or interrogates perception" of both time and space, hence 'it disrupts linear narrative" (David 212), an interruption that captures the Victorian reality. Pykett continues:

> The fantastic is itself a liminal and transgressive mode, concerned with and moving between borderlands and boundaries: the boundaries of the conscious and the unconscious; the rational and the irrational; the 'civilized' and the 'primitive'; the religious and secular; the material and the numinous; the natural and supernatural; the self and the not-self" (David 212)

The use of the *fantastic* element in *A Christmas Carol* permits the questioning of all those concepts.

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2. The Supernatural: A Ghost of an Idea

A Christmas Carol marks a perfect relic of the ghost story in the Victorian era. Dickens's use of the ghost story in his inventive style enlivened the genre itself through his topical setting and supernatural ghostly interruptions of the mundane to serve allegorical purposes and revive repressed memories for mammon serving characters like Scrooge to seek redemption, for "the erasure of memory also erases the sources of sympathy, tolerance, gratitude, and repentance from his own and others' lives" (David 215). Ghosts can fall in two different categories; the first one is the unconscious ghost "which perpetually repeat or re-enact some past wickedness or wrongdoing" (David 216). According to Sigmund Freud, the uncanny is related to the fear generated from the domestic, and the familiar, it can grow out of the human unconscious. It is the revival of what is supressed and alienated due to certain stimulus which is adopted by the spirits in order to have an impact on Scrooge. The second ghost is conscious like Marley's ghost "which usually appear only to a particular individual or group in order to [right a wrong] or to presage future harm" (David 216).

Dickens uses fear to breed awareness, but preserves hope by establishing the source of fear as a mere imaginary consequence, in Tyler's words "all of Dickens's Christmas books are structured around what is essentially a 'false alarm'…not of actuality but of an imagined possibility, often presented by a quasi-imaginary agency" (Tyler 95) it creates confusion and sparks questions regarding the possible origins of fear, and how the concept of the 'false alarm' can have both factual and delusional notions, allowing the *Carol* to smoothly move from dark to friendly tone serving both genres it represents; the fearful ghostly story, and the Christmas tale, all while maintaining its realist elements. Dickens controls and softens the fear he wants to kindle by constantly reminding the readers that the story is fictive, and pushes them to question the extent to which the story is imaginary.

Daniel Tyler argues that "Dickens addresses what has been called the 'paradox of fiction' whereby we respond to fictional characters and circumstances as if they were real, without forgetting that they are not" (Tyler 98). However, writing is a ghostly art, for to write is to bring to life a fictive world that is recognisable enough to

question its fictiveness when it conjures up things beyond its papers. Narrators breed this idea, for "they witness numerous scenes, though the actors in them catch no sight of any watching presence. They can move with phantom ease through time and space, and their voices are disembodied, speaking from no fixed location" (Tyler 97) this can be assessed through the following line from the *Carol* "Scrooge…found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow" (Dickens 28).

The narrator is rarely questioned, hence his rational explanation as to why certain things appear as supernatural phenomena sound plausible. The dream theory, for instance, can be supported by the fact that Scrooge encounters the ghosts in his bedroom, at night, while wearing his nightshirt suggesting that the entire experience occurs in "a liminal state between waking and sleeping" (Tyler 99). Leech's illustrations fuel the idea of dreams as he depicts Scrooge in his nightshirt with the Ghost of Christmas Past, and with the Ghost of Christmas Present outdoors in the foggy city of London with ignorance and want as a metaphor for the English chancery and illusion of equity, and finally on his knees covering his eyes with the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come.

Personification, animism, and prosopopoeia are different concepts that revolve around the attribution of human traits to the non-human. They are part of Dickens's style and strongly present in his fiction, and more apparent in his Christmas *Carol*. An aspect that was well reflected in Zemeckis's MoCap adaptation when the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come emerges from a two-dimensional shadow. From the church bell ringing "as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there", to picturing London houses "playing at hide-and-seek with other houses", and the "ruddy, brown-faced" Spanish onions "winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as went by" (Dickens 15, 16, 46), and pointing out facial traits in doorknockers, animation was Dickens's forte, and his fancy was unleashed in his literary playground, both limitless and free.

Dreams signify their origins, just like the pictorial devices like painting, photography, and cinema give form to imagined images. Dreams have accepted physical and spiritual origins and explanations; either digestive or prophetic. *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of* by John Anster Fitzgerald shows the conflicting origins of dreams, as they take visual form to communicate beautiful and daunting aspects. Scrooge's journey can be interpreted as a dream originating from both material and supernatural sources. The painting shows instruments which seem to have an association with dreams, Bown questions, "are they playing a musical accompaniment to the dream, or are they providing the musical stimulus that prompts the formation of the dream in the [dreamer's] mind" (Bown et al. 165), for sound can be a trigger like the bell tolling preceding the appearance of every apparition in *A Christmas Carol.* Dickens's supernatural promotes the idea that the supernatural bursts from psychological and physiological triggers.

Figure 2 *The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of* by John Anster Fitzgerald

The supernatural and other superstitious beliefs which circulated among the Victorians were usually regarded by the middle class members to be popular among

the uneducated who sought explanations of abnormalities in séances and dream books, "throughout its Victorian heyday, spiritualism was condemned as the work of Satan, a sordid commercial 'business', an 'epidemic delusion', a 'wretched' superstition, 'filth' and humbug." (Bown et al. 26). However, Dickens; being a middle class member, has owned dream books including *The Philosophy of Sleep* by Robert Macnish. He was also intrigued by the inexplicable that he indulged in supernatural investigations. In fact, spiritualistic phenomena arrived to Britain from America in 1852 and became popular among the ignorant and the learned, similar to the outbreak of the Victorian epidemics.

Scrooge's spectral experience can be interpreted as dreams derived from his past and repressed memories. In her article *Investigations and Fictions: Charles Dickens and ghosts,* Louise Henson notes that "apparitions and spectral illusions were wildly discussed in early and mid-nineteenth- century mental philosophy in relation to the involuntary functions of the mind, including dreaming, somnambulism, reverie and more serious cases of mental derangement" (Bown et al. 45), while dreams can have spiritual or supernatural causes, nightmares are mostly physiological products of things such as indigestion. Scrooge's nightmarish dream is a reaction to both triggers, hence it neither validates nor denies the supernatural phenomenon, professor and author Nicola Bown argues:

> Dreaming breaches the integrity of the mind, and thus the physical boundaries of the sleeper, because it is impossible to distinguish what is inside from what is outside. Dream images which are, in reality, inside the dreamer's own mind, appear to be outside it; spectral illusions seem to have the same material reality as the physical causes which produced them. (Bown et al. 162).

On the supernatural in Dickensian fiction, Tyler adds, "resurrection is a habit of Dickens's image-making…that channel[s] some of Dickens's long-standing concerns about how much of a person's life and influence remains posthumously and about the need to keep responsible attitudes towards morality from the life-defeating paralysis of a morbid fear of death" (Tyler 102).

The supernatural manifestations exploded during the nineteenth century to become a major controversial aspect in the Victorian times. The supernatural interested the Victorian scientists who sought natural causes to explain it. The Victorian age was governed by scientific authoritative agencies but challenged by supernatural beliefs threatening the intellectual and scientific authority of the era, Richard Noakes notes, "the Victorian period witnessed such fierce scientific, intellectual and theological debates over the boundaries between…Science and pseudo-science…these boundaries are the *explanandum* not the *explanans*" (Bown et al. 24).

Professor Richard Noakes[54] notes that "most spiritualists insisted that manifestations furnished proofs of one or more of the following claims: the independence of spirit and matter, the survival and immortality of the spirit following bodily death, the eternal progress of all in the other world, and the possibility that under certain conditions spirits of the dead could manifest themselves to the living" (Bown et al. 27). While the supernatural can restore certain religious beliefs of the afterlife and the immortality of the spirit, it was considered a threat to the protestant beliefs since it encouraged unholy practices such as the séances that were held as an attempt to communicate with the dead. The credibility of supernatural manifestations and séances was forever questioned due to the dubious circumstances surrounding them from dark paces, to well-equipped ones that can cause distraction, hence disbelief.

Physiology views the supernatural phenomenon as a mere reaction of the senses. Accordingly; the Victorian physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter suggests that "we should trust rather to the evidence of our *sense* rather than to that of our *senses*" (Bown et al. 32). Nicola Bown argues that "dreams resemble the supernatural world, even if they are not part of it; yet the presence of these figures serves as a reminder of how difficult it is for the dreamer to know what is dream and what is reality, especially when both seem equally supernatural" (Bown et al. 166). William

[54] A former British Academy-Royalty Society Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the History of Science at Cambridge University and a Lecturer in History at the University of Exeter.

Henry Harrison, a scientific journalist, suggests that words such as *miracles* and *supernatural* connote unscientifically explained phenomena; hence to rid such words would legitimate the supernatural manifestations through the use of scientific methods.

Dickens conjures the spirits and the ghosts that haunted the Victorian reality, from ignorance and poverty, to want and crime. The ghosts are agents, an embodiment of different but real qualities such as cruelty, rigid utilitarianism and graciousness that can bring change and reform to character's beliefs and views. Ironically the ghost story thrived in the Victorian realistic rational age; it seems like the Victorian readers had a thirst for unexpected non-pragmatic breaks. The ghost story, which was played down and as underrated as the crime filled penny dreadful, has popularly circulated among the people and through the social class pyramid. Some critics compare the idea of a ghost to the Victorian servant who was, Lynch notes "in the home but not of it" (Bown et al. 67) silent, and mostly invisible "furnishing the home with a ghostly agency that moved the tables and chairs, emptied the grates and chamber pots, and disappeared around corners and through passages to the 'other side'" (Bown et al. 68).

The maid Tara reveals a certain truth about domestic servants in the Victorian houses, mostly seen as aliens alienated for their alien culture. Tara is Scottish and deeply rooted in the orality in her culture. Tara serves as a reminder of the Victorian nurses' stories that were told to children. Dickens shares his views on nurse's stories as he wrote "if we all knew our own minds…I suspect we should find our nurses responsible for most of the dark corners we are forced to go back to, against our wills." (Dickens, *Uncommercial Traveller 150*).

The ghosts and the supernatural in the *Carol* were:

> Emblems of what Victorian society is unwilling to 'see' in its social condition: laissez-faire liberalism in home policy divides the Victorian social realm into isolated worlds of rich and poor, dependent and independent, public and private, visible and invisible. The supernatural spirits…remind us of what is being supressed socially or repressed psychologically in Victorian society. (Bown et al. 74)

It is a marginalised genre with great potential to become a vehicle that provides social criticism and commentary.

Ghosts are considered to be recollected images, ideas, or memories repressed in the mind of the seer. Dickens's use of mesmerism i.e. animal magnetism had therapeutic purposes and aimed to evoke the physiological causes that might manifest themselves as a ghostly apparition. Mesmerism was introduced to Dickens by a professor of medicine named John Elliotson at the UCH i.e. University College Hospital in the 1830's. Dickens enquired into the ghost stories and sought critical and scientific explanations to supernatural manifestations. Dickens's famous investigation was done on Mme Augusta de la Rue whose case proved to be neurological. Dickens never hesitated to include mesmerism in his fiction. In *A Christmas Carol*, magnetism is brought to its purposeful cause as it is deeply connected to Scrooge's memory, philosophy and experience which manifest themselves as Christmas spirits to help the Dickensian miser restore his true nature.

Scrooge's nightshirt, and the bedroom, along with the warehouse and the doorknocker serving as triggers to recall the memory of Jacob Marley, have piled up together to present a possible interpretation for the visions as magnetic sleep or sleep walking. Even though Scrooge knows how the senses can restrict the rational power of the mind, for they can be easily affected which recalls J. A. Hadfield's theory of the heavy supper[55], he denies the authenticity of his visions but accepts to embark on the spectral journey due to fear and curiosity. On what might support the supernatural theory of dreaming, Nicola Bown explains:

> For the Spiritualist Revd Thomas Millington, only 'ridiculous or frightful' dreams could have physical causes, but dreams in which the imagination is at play are the work of a spirit body that exactly corresponds to the corporeal body but is partly separable from it…the spirit, which is immortal and therefore supernatural, is the source of all true dreams, and these are messages from a

[55] Another theory that revolves around the influence indigestion can have on the human body and brain, and how that influence results in dreams.

> ‘more glorious scene’ in which it holds converse with other spirits. (Bown et al. 162)

A Christmas Carol is one of the stories that:

> Suggest[s] that individuals can wilfully imprison themselves in their mental habits. Hence the therapeutic powers of the magnetic sleep transform the attitudes of [characters]…endowing them with a kind of clairvoyance, so that they may see the moral consequences of the attitudes to which they adhere, and thus empowering them to overrun their habitual modes of thinking. (Bown et al. 49)

Restoring control of the mind and consciousness can be exemplified via the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come which by the end of stave four “shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost” (Dickens 77).

To circulate speculations about Scrooge’s spectral journey is to push readers to embrace their own beliefs while preserving curiosity and doubt in favour of both supernatural and natural approaches, “Dickens’s position in the ghost controversy can thus be identified as a naturalistic one, although the explanations he endorsed relied on occult as well as known physical forces” (Bown et al. 61). The supernatural, as terrifying as it can be, still provided a bridge to another world, new possibilities and realities that the Victorians were desperately yearning for.

One must consider the supernatural as a reaction to the scientific development and the new theories like Darwinism[56] which triggered a crisis of faith. Ghosts can manifest themselves vocally similar to the “disembodied voices” of the Victorian new technologies such as “the telephone, the superhuman speed of the railway” and the “near-instantaneous communication through telegraph wires” (Bown et al. 1). However, the *unexplained* became a business for the fraud. In Dickens’s article entitled *The Spirit Business* which he published in his weekly magazine *Household*

[56] It is the theory of the English biologist and naturalist Charles Darwin. It explains his philosophy and views on natural history such as evolution and natural selection.

Words, he wrote "in the Spirit business, as in most other trades, there are some bankruptcies" (Dickens 220).

What is particular about Dickens's ghostly fiction is that it "indicates the complexity and diversity of debate about the nature of the ghost in the pre-Spiritualism era" (Bown et al. 14). Dickens himself was interested in phrenology and intuitive precognition which were both personally experienced by the author, he wrote to John Forster in a letter in 1863:

> Here is a curious case at first-hand. On Thursday night in last week…I dreamed that I saw a lady in a red shawl with her back towards me…On her turning round I found that I didn't know her, and she said 'I am Miss Napier'. All the time I was dressing next morning, I thought…why miss Napier? for I never heard of any Miss Napier. That same Friday night, I read. After the reading, came into my retiring-room, Mary Boyle and her brother, and *the* Lady in the red shawl! whom they present as 'Miss Napier'! These are all the circumstances, exactly told. (Dickens, *Selected letters* 376)

In her article *Spectral politics: the Victorian ghost story and he domestic servant*, Eve M Lynch notes, "writers such as J.S Le Fanu, [and] Charles Dickens…have been famous in the twentieth century" (Bown et al. 69) while her statement could be a general fact, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* was an exception; reaching an instant popularity among readers and the audience of the theatre.

3. On Realism, Cinema, and the Carol

The art of cinema is studied to accumulate knowledge about filmmaking and a better understanding of the art and the artist. It reveals the power and the weakness of the medium, hence its usage. While this knowledge can make the creative art of cinema and the enjoyable experience of watching films move from pleasurable entertainment to a mere case study, it still compensates for that loss of pleasure, for to study films is to understand their power which not only explores interdisciplinary connections but also defines and shapes them. Film studies should aim to help viewers get a better understanding of the art but not at the expense of the original purpose of film; that is

entertainment. Film studies investigate the film's cinematic capability of portrayal and communication by providing theories and methods to study films as an artistic form, not cinema as a medium.

Cinema is the product of nineteenth century novel and movements along with the technological evolution, all of which have led to the development of cinema and its significance in popular culture and the entertainment industry which has encouraged the institutionalization of the art. It was after 1915 that cinema started to form its rules on what should be made and what should not be made in films. Though film theory aims to provide systems that enable the theorist to understand the film and approach it from different perspectives[57], it might limit the experience of film watching, nevertheless, it still provides a multi-universe where every film is offered a chance for multi-existence through different interpretations. Every theory considers the material used; like characters and sound, in addition to the techniques and methods used to convey certain meanings and messages, in relation to the economics of the film and its geography, space and time. Moreover, it pays attention to the form which the film takes, its genre, critical response, its value to the viewer, and its significance in the cinematic universe and life in general. Specific theories intrigue specific questions such as how the film is related to reality, and whether sound is more real than the image in films.

During the sound era, realist theory was introduced in France by Jean Vigo and Marcel L'Herbier, following the formalist theories of Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin. The realist theory is supportive of the social function of art, unlike the formalist theory which is rather aesthetic, as it requires cinema to give a realistic perception that mirrors reality. French theorist André Bazin suggested a major realist theory that tackles politics but does not lose its power to it.

It was until the end of the Second World War that the realist theory emerged as a competitive opponent to the formative one. Bazin supported the mechanical power of the camera in trace and record; he encouraged the art of capturing and recording images and scenes instead of artistically controlling them. It was to him more

[57] Films can be approached linguistically, religiously, socially, etc.

communicative and real just like cinema is supposed to be. In 1951 Bazin and Jacques Doniol-Valcrose founded *Cahiers du Cinema*, a magazine that promoted a new kind of criticism which later on paved the way for the New Wave in France.

*3.1.**André Bazin: What is Cinema?***

Bazin presented his best thoughts orally, which resulted in the loss of his best criticism which is believed to be delivered in the French *Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques*. However, his book *What is Cinema*; a collection of essays, presents his most important ideas. The way Bazin studied and theorized films was through film itself, acknowledging its values and imagining the film "it was or was trying to be" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 136), detecting its genre or creating one for it, while formulating its rules and criteria to eventually generate an applicable theory. It is a method that makes Bazin's theoretical ideas closely linked to the films they inspired them resisting systematic categorization or description.

For Bazin the visual art of cinema is meant to portray reality, similar to photography in a mechanical recording, hence the dependence of the two on reality is both inevitable and necessary. The reality that Bazin was interested in was a brute. "Cinema attains its fullness, in being the art of the real" (qtd in. Andrew, *Major Theories* 137) Bazin's views seem to make of cinema a suitable medium to adapt the *A Christmas Carol*; for they share the same purpose as far as realism- in its broader sense- is concerned. According to Bazin, cinema is linked to realism "not certainly the realism of subject matter or realism of expression, but that realism of space" (Bazin 1: 112) which can be viewed today as a rejection to digital cinema. He defines photography as the sole art that does not allow Man's creative interference since the image is captured using a non-living agent which is the camera. However, choosing a shot is subjective, hence photography still allows Man's intervention, unless what Bazin was referring to is the image itself, virgin and non-edited. His views seem to explain his dislike for montage as a negative effect on the art that is supposed to be realistic. The mechanical recording of reality makes "cinema and photography not the media of man but the media of nature" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 138). Photography appears to be objective, for it preserves the credibility of the image; a quality that no

other art can sustain. Editing impinges on the realistic influence that the image should have on the viewers, thus it breaks the continuity of reality.

In Bazin's time, photography was not advanced as it is today. Therefore, it lacked the power to credibly deliver the photos or manipulate them. It is a manmade technology which helps the realistic medium fully achieve its realistic purpose. For a realistic representation of reality, man should interfere in the making of art; it is an argument that contrasts Bazin's views on realistic cinema and what it should be, along the choice of shots. The photograph is an impression of the real, it does not have to look like something, it simply needs to be made by it.

The tracings of reality on celluloid are the material that cinema should work with. Those tracings should be linked to reality by duplicating Man's accessible visions. It makes cinema an asymptote of reality, depending on it and closely approaching it but never reaching it. Bazin's way of defining cinema gives it an objective nature for its mechanization. It is when the tracings i.e. the photographs and shots are taken and ready to be shaped that techniques like editing are used. Bazin wanted the cinematic techniques to get people closer to the reality cinema tries to capture.

If the film must be realistic to shape reality, then filmmakers must limit themselves to realistic means. To Bazin, photography has a realistic quality, thus he developed a liking to realistic films, for he sees that all films must obey the rules of reality and the raw material. Moreover, filmmakers must take the realistic nature of the raw material into account regardless of whether they want to deform it or not. Reality is influential, but it does not have a final influence on the medium. Film theorists and theories must serve Bazin's saying "cinema's existence precedes its essence" (qtd in. Bazin 1: xii). Hence, films should be studied for what they are instead of what needs to be done or how it should be in order to provide understanding instead of limitations.

For Bazin realism is a style that reduces the focus on the signification of film to place emphasis on its significance. It is the process of transforming the raw material into a different shape; probably through the use of editing to communicate ideas that

makes cinema artistic. Therefore, silent films are more evocative for the minimum use of any verbal language usage and references. It is a traditional way of understanding the art of films. This does not means that photography is not an art, for the way a photographer shoots the photos utilises the light for example to communicate ideas and shape reality using subjective perspective, makes photography an art form as well.

The visual language of cinema can take two forms. The manipulation of the image of reality by giving it a certain shape using different elements such as light scale, or by giving it a certain meaning and controlling the context via editing like montage which according to Sergei Eisenstein is the "full artistic capability of cinema" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 144). Bazin, however, viewed montage as a tool to manipulate and harm the purpose of filmmaking; which according to him revolves around reflecting reality. In other words, montage according to him turns cinema into a deceiving art with styles that do not match its goals and purpose. He believed that filmmakers either use the reality to create a truth, or explore it by seeking its significance within itself which brings the viewer closer to that reality.

Bazin viewed montage as a mere "ordering of the images in time" (Bazin 1: 24) which along with the quality of images make up the language of film. However, montage is more complex. The quality of the images needs to give the viewer a sense of freedom to investigate the scene without being controlled by the filmmaker's intended audience response, a freedom that only realism can offer according to Bazin. Since he despised the manipulation of reality, he would never approve the technique of superimposition which was used in *Marley's Ghost* (1901) adaptation due to its association with the presence of supernatural energy in that film adaptation of the *Carol*. Bazin viewed cinema and theatre differently even though both audiences go to the theatre, except that the former is centripetal as it brings the spectator and focus his attention on the centre of the stage where the scene is framed, while the latter is centrifugal as it moves away from the centre of the scene which exists in a boundless world that the viewer acknowledges its existence when the camera constantly explores it with every scene. This approach views cinema as a window that captures a portion

from an undeniable reality in a big world. It is no wonder that Bazin disliked the theatrical décor, which to him is a deceiving tool to manipulate and deform reality.

On adaptation, Bazin supported "filming the artificiality of [a text] rather than transforming it into a cinematic artificiality" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 150). Transforming the setting such as turning a play into a film where the setting is modernised, is not realistic to Bazin who advocated fidelity in cinematic adaptation to "retain [the original work] special reality" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 151), fidelity was after all dominating the cinematic adaptations debate as a crucial element to evaluate adaptations. Therefore, as far as adaptation was concerned, deformation was both needless and wrong according to the French theorist. Classic cinema survived from 1915 to 1938 and with the growing interest of the people in the art, cinema established its supreme position. This type of cinema made all film adaptations dull and semilar according to Bazin which depersonalized the literary classics.

The realist approach to cinema encourages the exploration of artistic possibilities without manipulating reality. Hence, style is needed but the realistic purpose must be preserved. James Dudley Andrew argues that the artist's style and vision should be established from reality not from its transformation, for the audience to recognise the significance of nature instead of fathoming the one that filmmakers try to create from it. According to Andrew, a "true cinematic expression" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 155) lies in the realistic use of cinema in which style does not modify the reality to present a different one but rather choose one portion of it.

If realism is not about being faithful to reality but to the human perception of that reality, then all editing is not truly realistic, unless the break fuels the curiosity of the viewers and goes unnoticed. Films tell stories visually, and stories consist of the relationship between events even when they are discontinuous; hence to create unity, editing provides a certain succession of events that lead the audience into accepting a certain order that points out the connection of events and a continuous reality.

Bazin believed that montage is mostly welcome when the scene, for instance, requires a long take to preserve its realism and maintain its credibility among the

audience. J.D Andrew explains Bazin's idea as he compares is to magic tricks which would lose their ambiguity and authenticity if they were edited and make the audience question the magician. Bazin believed that montage is needed but the world already has a language which speaks loud enough, hence realistic cinema can trace that language, and silence its willingness to create meaning via the world, but capture and restore meaning within the world instead.

Bazin believed that reality is free and bigger than any design that filmmakers can create, therefore, editing limits the expansion of the aspects of reality and affects its freedom and the viewers' interpretation which realistic cinema essentially tends to preserve. Depth of Field on the other hand, is meant to accentuate the authority of reality and help the viewer sense its indefinite meaning. Sergei Eisenstein views editing as a means to interpret events, and that the artistic nature of cinema lies in montage among other editing techniques. Bazin's views on how montage has to serve the realistic purpose of cinema witnessed a remarkable shift, for later in his career he believed that it was time to rediscover the value of unedited brute cinema. Bazin discerned two types of montage that evolved during the silent era and the emergence of sound. In silent cinema, montage was used to connect the tracings of reality when they were not recorded together in order to create a meaning for an event that the audience must accept. It is why some scenes are broken intentionally for a dramatic effect. With the talkies, montage took a different form that preserved the natural experience of the scene to increase the realistic experience; this montage can be seen through the development of editing techniques such as the shot reverse shot which is mostly used when filming conversations and dialogues. Bazin has encouraged the use of Depth of Field as a technique which according to him provides a more realistic treatment of events than montage.

A realistic style of editing would show events in relation to their universe; connecting cinema with reality. Montage destroys that continuity but uses discontinuous shots for instance to create an unrealistic type of reality. Eisenstein believed that good editing indicates artistic acuteness, a sense of visual economy and certainty of meaning. Bazin approved ambiguity in realistic cinema, for reality would

still be meaningful even when it is ambiguous without the need to disturb and chop its continuity, allowing cinema to capture what is interesting instead of creating it via editing techniques like montage. Hence, it permits unity of place and action, and ambiguity of meaning.

While Montage tells events, Depth of Field records them; it has a mechanical, rather than a technical nature. Therefore, Depth of Field was to Bazin more realistic as it captures the ambiguity of the world that the viewer naturally faces as he tries and struggles to find meaning. Bazin did not condemn montage as a technique; he simply minimized its value and importance in filmmaking as a minor cinematic technique while stressing the superiority of long takes for realistic cinema. His standpoint regarding montage revolves around the transformation of things from real to imaginative, which reduces the power of the film to have an impact on the audience. Montage treats films as fiction, and what is fictional is not real. Thus the audience cannot relate to it the same way they would relate to Bazin's way of making films. In a way, Bazin called filmmakers to exclude their artistic creativity that is canalised through montage, for to avoid montage is to detach subjectivity from cinema, hence the acknowledgment of the "powers of the bare image" (Andrew,*Major Theories* 168).

According to Bazin cinema is supposed to be realistic, for it is the product of arts such as painting and photography which aim to duplicate the world. He was interested in the reality cinema produces as if he was interested in cinema more than in reality itself. Therefore, Bazin called for a new ways to make films, encouraging cinema to surpass itself and create a new kind of cinema. Bazin approached cinema as a product of nature and science and wanted to see it evolve, expand and know its possibilities by maintaining a non-definite definition. In an attempt to free the visual medium from restricting theories; J.D Andrew notes that, "cinema is that which it has been and can become" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 172).

Bazin's views remained unrivalled until mid-sixties. He wanted reality to script the film almost literally instead of cinematizing it with editing techniques. Cinema must be an investigating presenter. After the forties, cinema witnessed new styles and practices of exploring reality allowing new cinematic genres and techniques to emerge.

It started welcoming different filmmakers instead of making all filmmakers conform to what cinema was known to be. It nurtured the authorship of filmmakers and the auteur theory. Bazin was to his fellow critics a "humanist' and his theory is 'idealist" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 178), a combination that defines the core of realism.

*3.2.**Sergei Eisenstein: This is Cinema***

Sergei Eisenstein, on the other hand, is a filmmaker and a thinker whose theories are derived from his readings on multiple subjects. He was committed to Marx and Lenin but he did not restrict the infinite possibilities that could be inspired from other schools of criticism or fields.

Eisenstein presented his ideas on different aspects of film without logically weaving them for his readers which makes them impossible to summarise. According to Pudovkin the shot is the "film's basic building block" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 44) but Eisenstein was a supporter of what he called attraction; less dependent on the camera mechanistic work since it relies on the viewer's mind activity which he believed the filmmaker can shape and control. He viewed montage as a mechanistic tool before understanding its psychological notions. His views still allow comparison and stimulate cinematic development even though they tend to stress an absolute certainty about the importance of attractions, an idea which later in his career is weakened by his own –other– views.

Eisenstein considered that everything should be treated equally in cinema as far as importance in concerned; from lighting to set to costumes, unlike Bazin who regarded settings and reality as a top priority, on top of the cinematic hierarchical pyramid. Eisenstein wanted a creative use of reality for filmmakers to creatively and freely use. Hence, he developed neutralization which, in J.D Andrew's words helps "decomposing reality" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 46) to sparkle meanings that filmmakers can shed light on or compose similar to the way music treats and uses sounds, and painting treats tones. For Eisenstein everything is relative; that means meaning as well. Therefore, the meaning of one thing depends on the interrelation it has with other variables and variants.

As far as montage is concerned, Eisenstein seemed to have a dogmatic support for it, before he noticed its relationship with psychology and the viewer's perception. He understood the relationship between film viewing and filmmaking and acknowledged their potential. While filmmaking is more mechanical than it is psychological, film viewing seems to be more delicate, for it is rather psychological, hence more complex. He viewed films as a means to understand the world and know it better, and acknowledged its rhetorical purposes to persuade the viewers of certain ideologies and ideas. He regards cinema as a juxtaposition of oppositions; both artistic, and mechanistic, and above all, as an autonomous independent stand-alone art form.

He despised the ideas that make filmmakers slaves of the events and reality segments they choose to shoot which render them as a mere faithful tool of reproduction and replication of reality. Unlike Bazin, Eisenstein viewed fidelity as an enemy to cinema, adaptation, and reality. The machine resemblance of cinema might be a result of Eisenstein's former background since he studied mechanical engineering; hence, he considered art to be an outcome of a manufacturing process. Eisenstein chided long takes and filmmakers who use them excessively, for to him they are not cinematic. The shots according to Eisenstein stimulate psychological aspects for the viewers, as they are combined to make units which form a film that only achieves its artistic state when it is viewed as a bundle of shots that can be shaped and combined through different editing techniques such as montage.

Filmmakers must have power and artistic control similar to those possessed by other artists. Thus, Eisenstein called for the neutralization of shots so that they lose their "native sense" for their "physical properties" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 46) to offer countless combinations i.e. editing what the director wants to create, whether it is meaning or significance. It regards stylization as a means to strengthen reality and provide interpretations.

Eisenstein aspired to create a system for film that makes all its elements equal and help films escape the realism which is commonly defined as a mechanical recording of reality, and a mere storytelling and reproduction of life, usually viewed as a top priority while other elements are seen as minor supportive elements. He wanted

for the action and the story to be no longer the dominant aspects about films, for other elements do give and create meaning and impressions that are also important for the film.

J.D Andrew discusses the two major values of Eisenstein's neutralization. First, transference which is where an effect can be produced by different elements such as acting and lighting, such elements work together to highlight an effect, or conflict to create another, and sometimes one unexpected element can spark the needful effect resulting in the form of transference. When elements of speech and lighting interact to form dialogue; "transference of effect has occurred" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 49). However, the true cinematic skill is proven and shown when elements like lighting are part of dialogue along with speech, action and intertitles, offering a combination for a multisensory experience known as synaesthesia to emerge. It is when the viewer can see, hear, feel, and almost smell the event which can be achieved through the skilful use of different cinematic elements.

The filmmaker's creativity lies in the proper choice of his shots and their organization. The director provides a realistic event for the viewers to experience, and leads them through the confusion and ambiguity of reality via that organization. Eisenstein did not want a simple acceptance and persuasion of an audience; he wanted an involved audience in the filmmaking process by being involved in the reception and perception of a film, a process that manufactures its meaning. When watching films one's senses perceive the attractions while the meaning is only understood when one's mind acknowledges the connections between those attractions presented in front of him, simply put, it is the mind that creates meaning and makes sense of the shot via that collision of attractions.

According to Eisenstein, the shot is not a mere tracing of reality captured on camera by the filmmaker, for it is centred on elements like lighting and movement. Creative filmmakers should make up their own sense of the shot out of their raw material and create meaning instead of simply directing it. Russian filmmaker Vsevolod Pudovkin defines the shot from a filmmaker's point of view, as a technical step in the process of filmmaking in which the camera captures the tracing. Eisenstein

on the other hand, viewed the shot as a container of material which revolves around the elements he calls attractions such as lighting since the mind of the viewer gets attracted when watching films. He took the viewer's experience into account, considering the shot as a combination of "mind and matter" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 51). To understand Eisenstein's point of view regarding how the change of one attraction produces a new signification, J. D Andrew gives an example of a child, a bird, and a mouth that provide different connotations, for a child and a mouth indicate a possible scream, while a bird and a mouth indicate a possible twitter.

Eisenstein shed light on the link between literature and cinema through Haiku poetry, a Japanese poem consisting of three lines, to suggest that the three lines serve as attractions due to their visual essence, the combination of all three lines serves as montage that produces a psychological effect just like cinema. He generated different types of montage that can either be mechanical when it deals with duration and length, or intellectual when meaning is generated by the viewer who uses his mind to join those attractions in order to unify them and create a particular significance. The shot becomes a stimulation of meaning in montage which to Eisenstein is "the creative power of film…[and] the life principle which gives meaning to raw shots" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 52).

Eisenstein made sure technology would serve the creative, formative ways of cinema which makes his theories and views adaptable in modern age. His views on montage and raw material were shared before the sound era in cinema, yet he made sure he included the new realistic addition of sound which makes his views cope with technological advancement. He knew that with sound, cinema would take a commercial path and exploitation. Eisenstein knew that sound would affect montage, making the visual art more independent with no need of montage to enhance it. While technology was seen in Hollywood as a means used for more realistic films, Eisenstein wanted to strip elements like sound from their realistic aspect and nature by using them in an artistic experience via montage. Inspired by psychological theories; mostly by the Swiss theorist Jean Piaget, Eisenstein derived and constructed his own montage theory.

The only way sound could offer new opportunities for montage to exist and develop is through its "contrapuntal use" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 53) which is when the sound is not captured from the source but recorded, then added to correspond certain actions, it is known as the non-synchronous sound i.e. when the sound does not originate from the actor or place that scene shows. This sound paves the way for a pleasant "counterpoint for visual images and aural images" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 53). Therefore, sound could be used in montage to establish a better communication than intertitles. Such sound technique allows the use of realistic aural recording technology for montage. Eisenstein encouraged colour cinematography as well since colour would mean more units for montage and attractions to interact with other elements of film such as lighting, similar to today's technology which provides new spatial and temporal units giving by that a new element to control for the filmmakers.

According to Eisenstein, montage is egocentric. Similar to children aged between two and seven years old who view everything from their personal perspective and their own point of view, the viewers see themselves in films, and try to identify themselves within as if the images embody their personal experiences. Hence, film viewing is egocentric. Just like children measure meaning through the difference between "two terminal states" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 56) and not the process between them which is known as thinking in montage which viewers adopt when watching film. For Eisenstein, editing theories pay attention to the terminal states, and montage can produce impactful terminal states that enhance the cinematic experience. For instance J.D Andrew argues, "it is more meaningful to show three lions in quick succession, each static, each occupying a different position", which provides more excitement "than to show one lion actually rousing itself to fight" (Andrew, *The Major Theories* 56). The former is more pronounced. This ability of montage communicates the inner speech of the viewers, visually.

Eisenstein did not explicitly implicate Piaget's ideas but he certainly wanted for cinema to be a significant art that gets its audience invested on different levels with its ability to establish an emotional and intellectual communication. Therefore, he introduced new ways of montage to unify the attractions and shots for a specific

signification. Every shot has a dominant attraction that every film focuses on to deliver the proper needful meaning, whereas the other attractions merely support the dominant one. Montage should serve the film form and genre for an efficient effect. J.D Andrew uses thriller films as an example where the viewer is directed to focus on the "killer as he hides behind lace curtains…in a slightly more abstract film [the viewer might focuses on] the moonlight and its shadows" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 58) it shows how dominant attractions shift from décor to lighting for instance, according to film forms and genres. Montage orients the viewers, a function that conforms to the shape and form of the film.

Eisenstein's idea of having a dominant attraction opposes his call for neutralization where all attractions are equal. Thus to avoid confusion, Eisenstein has argued that the story and plot seem to be dominant attractions almost always, his aim is to make other attractions dominant as well. In other words, all attractions must be equal but if having a dominant attraction is inevitable, it has to be anything but the plot, the story or anything that is realistic and not artistically creative.

The dominant attraction is what fully attracts the viewer's attention, and that cannot be sound since it is realistic which makes it a secondary stimulus. However, for a rich film all attractions must take turn and be used as dominant ones whenever it is needful, for what is secondary can turn primary in a particular scene. Eisenstein called for an equal use of the dominant attractions and the non-dominant ones, mainly sound, for all attractions are important components to make a film that would make a difference and be cinematically rich.

Such treatment requires a carefully orchestrated totality that viewers will notice and appreciate as a meaningful unit. This is known as polyphonic montage which is similar to when multiple musical tones are played together to make a whole unit. In cinema it is when the filmmaker focuses on multiple lines and attractions along with the dominant one, so he uses different techniques and technologies such as close-ups, lighting, and sound to shift the focus and place emphasis on different attractions.

Eisenstein deemed that films are presented either as “art machine [or] art organism” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 60). The image of art as a machine was emphasised by the nineteenth century realists. Eisenstein, however, regards it as a machine; a Marxist approach that considers art as any other work. Just like films, machines are designed before getting constructed in order to achieve a purpose or fix a problem; if the machine is good then its performance is both known and predictable. If it fails, it will be fixed by replacing its nonworking parts. However, if it is no longer effective, it will be replaced with a new model that functions in the same effective way. The film takes the form that the filmmaker wants to evoke, so he must be aware of it and of its results before choosing the means to achieve it just like machines are built.

The dramatic level is then replaced by a sense of generality for the spectator, for he starts seeing the story as an example of a theme that could be tackled by other filmmakers in other films. It is a symbol of awareness that the filmmaker intended for the viewer to have after watching a film or when doing so. Once again, film proves to be a machine; attractions are its fuel which creates montage as its steam, whereas motion, story, plot, and characters are its product, its meaning, whereas the theme and the moral of the story are its destination and receptors.

The filmmaker focuses his attention on finding and using the needful means to lead the viewer through and to the film idea and theme. An active audience is crucial in creating meaning otherwise “there would be no artworks” because the film “derives their energy from the conscious mental leaps of the spectator” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 63). This mechanistic theory focuses on the importance of the human mind and its capacity rather than the film as a “self-sufficient” art form. Eisenstein was not entirely supportive of the mechanistic approach but he welcomed the organic theory which was one of the most influential theories in western civilisation during the nineteenth century, so he wanted to fuse both theories since he has always been an admirer of the aesthetics of the art of cinema.

Every organism consists of parts that make up its complete shape and give it its functions. It has the ability to fix its shortcomings and adapt itself to different contexts

without “losing its identity” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 64). An organism has a quality that allows it to produce what is beyond the usual and the expected. Unlike a machine which promotes a predicted result, an organism exists for its “own continuity” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 64). Eisenstein was interested in life-related principles of the human soul and thoughts which to him control and inspire the creative process and the means that make a film.

A good film is the film where attractions produce the theme that inspired them in the first place, it is here that the actor plays a vital role. According to Eisenstein, from a mechanistic perspective the actor knows what to convey and seeks the effective means to do it for the audience to “leap to that image” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 65). Whereas from an organic perspective, the theme is not visible to actors until the gestures are performed which carry the “micro-system of the theme” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 65).

Eisenstein considered nature and history to have a dialectical form; therefore artists must wait for the dialectical form to appear to them and see the conflicts before they can come up with a theme from it and have their attractions and montage techniques to be dictated by it. Films undergo creative processes where the viewers participate “emotionally and intellectually” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 67) to recreate its themes. Discovering and choosing a theme is an important and a hard task for filmmakers. Organic theorists think nature is the source to inspire the work, but not according to Eisenstein, for to him nature, similar to reality, is not directly or easily understandable; J.D Andrew notes that it is the artist’s task to “apprehend the true form of an event or natural phenomenon and then utilize that form in the construction of his artwork” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 66).

This organic theory places the origin of film in the hands of nature instead of the filmmaker’s, and uses montage to manipulate the viewer, a manipulation which Eisenstein did not approve. Filmmakers must understand reality “thematically” to choose a theme and create a film. Montage provides “the mechanical energy which allows the film machine to perform its designated task” while still relating to the “organic structure of nature and of history” (Andrew, *Major Theories* 67).

Realism for Eisenstein is different from reality hence to attain the latter and capture it, J. D Andrew argues that the artist must "destroy realism" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 66) via breaking the way the tracings and the event appear, and constructing it again using montage. He viewed the film as a machine when discussing its effects on the viewers, and as an organism when discussing the relationship between film and reality. Eisenstein wanted films to work like a machine would but not just any machine, an organic one that is self-sufficient with interrelated parts. This view is however useless, for it does not encourage cinematic evolution.

Eisenstein's organic machinery fusion seems to be resulting from his uncertainty regarding the purpose of film which according to him is either rhetoric or artistic and aesthetic, two everlasting opposites with a slight preference for art. The purpose Eisenstein attributed to art is explained through the "relationships between rhetoric and autonomous art" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 68). Rhetoric is the science of language and communication that studies "ends, methods, and effects of discourse" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 68). Basically, it is the examination of a situation where a party conveys an idea to another with the intention to influence and enlighten. The mechanical theory serves this idea because it makes of films a medium for the filmmaker; the orator who conveys his ideas and affects the audience either intellectually or emotionally, or both. It makes the filmmaker the dominant party while the viewer is a mere "recipient of effect" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 69) willing to be affected by whatever this film machine is trying to deliver.

Eisenstein's definition of cinema and art has always been "audience-oriented" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 69), centred on the viewers' thoughts and emotions. This audience cantered interest to create and have a precise effect makes his theory a theory of propaganda. The concept of propaganda is emphasised when the effect of film becomes the film's *raison d'être*. This way films become evaluated and appreciated according to their "suitability in conveying an explicit effect" (Andrew, *Major Theories* 70). Films have always been used for propaganda purposes, J.D Andrew gives a pertinent example of how viewers buy cheap tickets for a small amount of money to see films that can cost millions only to make billions; the ticket might seem

cheap but its effect and influence that the film tries to have on its audience is worth more than what the viewer thinks was paid for. Art to Eisenstein targets emotion before raison, delivering by that an effect that cannot be delivered through ordinary speech. Cinema is a true powerful rhetorical medium, for it is richer in effect.

The film serves as a channel to reach the audience. The romantics viewed art as independent and free from any effect that an artist might want to attribute to it, for it only exists to "manifest itself"(Andrew, *Major Theories* 71). Art is at a higher position and of a higher existence. Following this romantic view, art can never have rhetorical purposes. Therefore, the filmmaker works to create a form that allows art to exist for the sake of its aesthetic existence. Eisenstein did not approve much with the romantic views but he considered it since the rhetorical purpose was also too simplistic to define cinema and art in general.

Eisenstein supported both ideas; he embraced the rhetorical approach to explain how the image is first known to the artist whose task is to transform it into representations to evoke the original image in the viewer. However, he adopts the organic approach and argues that the image cannot be made by the filmmaker, for it is born as he makes the film. J.D Andrew suggests that art can be viewed from speech vs. inner speech perspective as well. Some films affect the viewers using simple speech and editing syntax, while others invade the inner workings of the viewers' minds. All films have a purpose but only great films affect the viewers deeply by using cinematic techniques such as montage to promote inner speech which tends to be more delicate and more complex, thus more impactful.

Art can reinforce culture and change perceptions, attitudes and knowledge in a natural unnoticed way by being itself. Art is talked about as being rhetorical when it exists to deliver a truth and to make a specific change of ideas. However, it tends to become more of an aesthetic medium when it does not reveal any type of non-artistic allegiance. Literature and cinema have two different stimuli; the former is verbal whereas the latter is non-verbal. Both stimuli generate images that are produced and perceived differently.

Victorian realistic literature is by definition the topical narratives which aim to provide a faithful portrayal of reality hence, the concept of the photograph in literature; crude and unmodified. The photographic quality of Victorian realistic literature transported the literary art from of telling to a more cinematic-like form of showing. Dickensian literature was no exception to that, packed with visual information; the *Carol* was ready to be transmuted into theatre and public readings, before cinema was established as a new visual medium. The *Carol* stresses the "ongoing processes of transmutation among the arts" (McFarlane 4) and invites adaptation which is an interdisciplinary field that is viewed by professor and author Yvonne Griggs as a "catch-all in cultural studies" (Griggs 1).

The hierarchical positioning of the literary cinematic art forms in adaptation critiques is mostly an outcome of the ultimate reliance on fidelity. A chronological tracing of adaptation studies would reveal fidelity as a central focus of early critiques before George Bluestone's book *Novels into Film* was published in the late fifties, in which Bluestone questioned the nature of adaptation and how fidelity as a criterion can be invalid mainly since cinema and literature are different in nature, and to give fidelity a central focus is to undervalue the filmic potential. Geoffrey Wagner's identification of the three types of adaptation; transposition, commentary, and analogy, is crucial in order to properly critique the film. Adaptation studies have generated theories that assess the relation films can have with their literary origins, hence challenging the primacy of the origin and shifting the focus.

While the origin may never be clearly known, stories are remembered in their most popular or canonical text, sometimes in their reshaped form since some people tend to recall a story from its film adaptation, for "the adaptive process works to ensure a story's on-going rebirth within other communication platforms" (Griggs 5). Adaptation is a cultural practice, that "each adaptation is a new thing in and of itself, but it evolves from a complex web of adaptive processes related to existing narratives, cultural mores, industrial practices, and to the agenda of those engaging in its construction" (Griggs 5-6).

4. A Christmas Carol: Victorian Cinematic Sketches

Adaptation permits new readings and new critical direction and "challenge[s] the ideas embedded within it…adapters prompt us not only to engage with ideas embedded in their own text but to question those found in its literary forerunner" (Griggs 8). To exclude the concept of the text as 'the source' is also to exclude the concept of certain canonical 'source' cinematic adaptations, in attempt to view both forms as complimentary, for to write a book and make a film is an invitation to new readings and re-writings.

The Victorian era produced cultural texts such as *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens that can be considered as part of the literary canon which in its traditional definition is an 'a-topical' masterpiece. What adaptation does is place the text in different frameworks but the cultural elements can still be communicated, hence connecting the texts with their filmic adaptations. The selected adaptations in this dissertation preserve the original narrative structure of the *Carol,* the same journey, the same setting, and the same ending except for Richard Donner's *Scrooged* 1988. Adapting the canon cinematically tends to be regarded as an inferior degradation to the source even though the canon can never be perceived similarly among the readers, just like film adaptations among the viewers.

The enduring popularity of Dickens and the continuing relevance of his universal themes made him theatrically and cinematically alluring. The Dickensian canon is part of the English heritage; its adaptation unravels that heritage and explores its different dimensions. Dickens could not control or prevent the copious unauthorized stage adaptations of *A Christmas Carol,* considering that by the 1840's Dickensian literature was "appropriated in the highly commercialised world of early Victorian entertainment" (G. Smith, *Dickens and Adaptation* 51). Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* found its way to silent films, and the talkies in the twenties, to the biggest film industry of Hollywood in the thirties through adaptations that respect the story's timeframe, "[Dickens's] relationship with cinema as a medium of expression is central to an understanding of how and why his work is so frequently adapted to screen." (Griggs 80).

A Christmas Carol is a canonical text that is popular because it is populist. An interest in "Dickens' narratives emerged post-World War Two, with the release of *Great Expectations* (1946), *Nickolas Nickleby* (1947), *Oliver Twist* (1948), *Scrooge* (1951), and *Pickwick Papers* (1952)" (Griggs 79). The 1951 adaptation of the *Carol* by director Brian Hurst, became a canonical film; the 'source' that every other adaption seems to compare itself to and be compared to it. Therefore, people remember the story of Scrooge through its cinematic form which now haunts future adapters of the story more than its origin; the text.

Eisenstein notes that "perhaps the secret lies in Dickens's (as well as cinema's) creation of an extraordinary plasticity. The observation in the novels is extraordinary-as is their optical quality. The characters of Dickens are rounded with means as plastic and slightly exaggerated as are the screen heroes of today" (Eisenstein, *Film Form* 208) this observation can explain the cinematic appeal of Dickens's writing. He credits Dickensian literature with editing qualities, he argues:

> Griffith arrived at montage through the method of parallel action, and he was led to the idea of parallel action by Dickens!...Even a superficial acquaintance with the work of the great English novelist is enough to persuade one that Dickens may have given and did give to cinematography far more guidance than that which led to the montage of parallel action alone. Dickens's nearness to the characteristics of cinema in method, style, and especially in viewpoint and exposition, is indeed amazing. (Eisenstein, *Film Form* 205-206)

It is in Dickens's Literature that "we can find another montage method typical for Griffith-the method of a montage progression of parallel scenes, intercut into each other" (Eisenstein, *Film Form* 217) such optical qualities enhance the cinematicity of Dickens's work, hence it becomes transferable and adaptable. McFarlane considers the cinematic contribution of Dickensian literature to be overrated; he argues "apart from the historical importance of parallel editing in the development of film narrative, the influence of Dickens has perhaps been overestimated and under-scrutinized" (McFarlane 6). Novelistic serialisation is a pattern that Dickens adopted in his *Carol* through the staves. Building up anticipation with every *stave* along with the Victorian

publication practice of using illustrations, demonstrate the visual qualities that can facilitate the cinematic adaptation of the text.

Parallelism is also present in the *Carol* to emphasise similarities and contrasts and help accentuating the elements that build up Ebenezer Scrooge as a character. This parallelism can be exemplified via characters like Jacob Marley a rigid utilitarian businessman, Fezziwig the gentle-business-man, Bob Cratchit a hardworking father struggling to be a sufficient provider for his family and yet a very kind-hearted man, and Joe and Mrs. Dilber whose social status seems to explain their lack of ethics.

Dickens, with his universal themes and appealing style, acquired an enduring capacity to reach and entertain the audience. Parentage and genealogy should not keep the debate restricted as to deny the growth of texts with every cinematic adaptation. Adaptation is an elaboration that serves the purpose of the production and reacts to its context. Cinematic, staged, or televised, adaptations of the *Carol* have all explored new perspectives from different characters; allowing new incarnations and interpretations. The story of *A Christmas Carol* seeps into the people's collective memory and consciousness through the text and its countless adaptations. In cinematic adaptation, to acquire the classic canonical status of a text is to become recalled as one, similar to Hurst's adaptation *Scrooge* (1951), for "memory works in a kinaesthetic manner akin to the medium of film rather than prose." (Griggs 108). When Scrooge is transported to different locations from his past, and the Victorian Christmas market is captured in every possible detail, in addition to the bird's eye view of Victorian London offered by the Second Spirit to a establish a dream-like status, are distinctive scenes which recall editing qualities that transfer and connect images to provide imagery which makes Dickens's *Carol* a generous provider of mise-en scènes that can be imaged and seen all together like a literary story board.

A Christmas Carol can be regarded as a circadian coming of age story of its protagonist Ebenezer Scrooge since readers get to witness his personal journey through flashback, memory, and *supernatural* visions. Moreover, the use of time travel helps establishing elements of the bildungsroman novel, partially if not entirely. Dickens denounces the injustice of a middle class system that views ignorance as an

advantage, the poor as utility, and gentlemanly qualities as class-based. Bob Cratchit for instance is an embodiment of a gentleman, yet he is not viewed as one in a Victorian society where Scrooge, despite his miserly ways, is a middle class member, for it was rather about the social status than the behaviour. Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, and Tiny Tim along with the spirits have been rarely altered or absent in film adaptations, unlike Ignorance and Want which; despite their significance in the story, they tend to be excised more often than not, probably due to their narrative independence. However, they are essential characters that embody the core of the *Carol* and its social significance.

The reason why cinema has established itself to become mostly viewed as a narrative form of entertainment is probably because of its derivation and longstanding reliance on literature which fuelled the hierarchical approach to literature as a prior source. Bluestone acknowledges the connection between both mediums which essentially lies in seeing, however "between the percept of the visual image and the concept of the mental image lies the root difference between the two media" (Bluestone 1). Fidelity is a myth; adaptations adhere to their realities in one way or another. Hurst's 1951 adaptation *Scrooge* was released during post World War II Britain, a delicate period when every nation was trying to build itself according to the new world and deal with war trauma. The healing process required hope and optimism which Dickensian realistic *Carol* promotes. However, while the forties were the golden age of British cinema, the post forties were challenging due to the new competition established by the presence of television, it is no wonder then that the 1951 adaptation became popular in the post fifties when such films were televised.

In his article entitled *The Discourse of Adaptation,* author Christopher Orr observes that "the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but rather how the choice of a specific source and how the approach to that source serve the film's ideology" (qtd. in McFarlane 10). The social, political, cultural, and economic climate along with the conditions[58] surrounding the making of the film and its time help shape it, in terms of style and emphasis. The 1951 adaptation ensures a

[58] The cast, the director, the producer, the genre, etc.

sense of empathy as it provides answers to understand Scrooge's malicious nature. The running time of *Scrooge* (1951) is eighty-four minutes with three major parts, the first one takes 23 %, the second takes 60 % and the third part takes 17 %. The great share is given to the second part which dedicates 52 % of its running time to unravel Scrooge's past, which means that it takes more than 30 % from the total running time of the film. *Scrooge* (1951) reduces certain parts to strengthen its central focus on the psychological patterns that might have forged Scrooge's character.

Hurst's 1951 adaptation consecrates a large portion of the feature to tackle Scrooge's formative years from childhood to adulthood which have not been fully explored in the book. This treatment of the story strikes a chord with the post war reality where people sought encouragement to overcome hardships, an opportunity to cherish, and an optimistic attitude for rebirth and a better future. All of which are offered in the *Carol*, from Scrooge's childhood and what appears to be a dysfunctional family, to his utilitarian ridged-self forged by his experiences and fear of poverty, in addition to his spectral journey of redemption, and the beautiful soul he succeeded to restore. Scrooge, a dislikeable protagonist that the audience and readers are eager to know his story must have appealing qualities. Such qualities are embedded in his sympathetic childhood that Hurst's 1951 adaptation tries to provide via Scrooge's backstory which aims to provide new insight without revealing much information that can badly affect the element of mystery.

Creativity in adaptation is as required as allegiance to the already established effect and mood. An adaptation must preserve the story's hinge points, i.e. what Barthes termed cardinal functions. They make the text recognizable in its cinematic adaptation and highlight the text-film connection without limiting the filmmaker.

Plotting was a Victorian and a Dickensian practice; from action and resolution, to new difficulties and cliff-hangers from chapter to chapter, writing was filmic:

> According to Nichols, a text that embodies all elements noted as essential within the 'jargon' of screenwriting manuals, with its 'three acts, an inciting incident, a series of obstacles, a crisis at the end of the second act.' Each section

> (or act) builds towards a moment of dramatic climax and leads to the ultimate point of closure. It adopts a story design of the type identified by narrative theorist Tzvetan Todorov as a simple cause and effect narrative structure that lends itself to the medium of film. (Griggs 88)

For narratologists like American film critic Seymour Chatman, narration is different from narrative. The former is the form and discourse, whereas the latter is the story and the content; it is what Russian formalists call the *suzet* and *fabula*. Narration is the *how*, the narrative is the *what*. It is the *how* that adapters focus on using different tools and considering different perspectives. Therefore, to determine the *how*, adapters should assess the independence of the *what* from its original form and whether it fits the visual mould, hence assess the extent to which the text is cinematically adaptable. Relevant and relatable themes can play a major role in the text adaptability which Dickens offers in his fiction that covers central concerns and themes such as social awareness and mobility.

One must remember that adapting literature is rarely about reflecting the text's era of production that is usually embedded in the story, but rather the agenda and era of the filmic adaptation, and to move beyond the fixations established by both the text and its canonical cinematic adaptation. Adapting literature is a cinematic practice, and adapting popular literature is an industrial practice, for "the lure of a pre-sold title, the expectation that respectability or popularity achieved in one medium might infect the work created in another" (McFarlane 7).

Unlike Hurst's 1951 adaptation which explores the psychological aspect of Scrooge's personality, Zemeckis's 2009 film adaptation invites social cultural readings since it sheds light on social reality and mobility in the *Carol*. Zemeckis's use of Dickens's portrait in his adaptation intensifies the fidelity he was aspiring to guarantee and the connection he wanted to establish between his film and its source. When the narrative conveys vivid scenes with vivid dialogue like Dickens's, it is usually left intact with minimal intervention. The dialogue in the adaptations tends to be intact, entirely reproduced with rare additions that are useful when the adapter chooses to

conjure new dimensions to the story like Hurst did in his adaptation, and Henson's *The Muppet Christmas Carol.*

The Man Who Invented Christmas (2017) uses Dickens's biography as an intertext to demonstrate how the artist's life manifests itself through his art which adds more complexity and significance to the narrative. To artists, art is meraki[59], for it carries something of himself. This film explores the fictionalised life of Charles Dickens cinematically. Bharat Nalluri's film *The Man Who invented Christmas* highlights the issue of authorship in Dickensian literature which is present in the visual art form of cinema.

Good finances have always been needful to make films and promote them, along with the ideology that the film intends to promote. Ironically, the ideology of the rich producers rarely conforms to that of the poor. Cinema is a powerful medium that the class in power uses to influence the masses, Yvonne Griggs notes:

> Adaptation is not a neat painting by numbers exercise, it is instead a complex process that involves complex transitions, both cultural and ideological, in response to changing modes of storytelling and adaptive intent… The adaptive tapestry is rich and complex when viewed as a body of intertextuality connected work that shape-shifts in response to a whole host of contributory factors. (Griggs 257-58)

Questioning the means and ways of adaptation is to question its nature and purpose, which can provide some answers to why cinema adapts literature.

A Christmas Carol could use an alternative history; a new timeframe. "Some may even argue that…radical departures produce a more challenging and thus more engaging dialogue with the precursor text "(Griggs 126) such departures are rarely present in *A Christmas Carol* adaptations. Reader-viewers come with an idea and an image in mind, along with an expectation for the adaptation to meet their interpretation and imagination. As a result, adaptations tend to disappoint them as they do not always

[59] A Greek word for putting a piece of oneself, creativity, soul, and love in one's work.

meet their vision, for imagination is forever bigger than a mere segment that manifests itself cinematically as an interpretation among countless others.

Fidelity appears to be an issue for both adapters who choose to sustain it to a great extent and those who do not, for similarity is one of the first things that reader-viewers look for in a cinematic adaptation of a text, but also expect an unexpected unravel. Fidelity however, can establish one meaning, one interpretation, and one reading from the text that adapters should capture on screen, which results in the limitation of the film-maker's authorship, and the reader-viewers' readings. To be faithful to the spirit is always desirable, but to limit possible interpretations and new readings of the text is to restraint creativity and possibilities that both art forms promote and encourage. The power and effect of adaptation may lie in "the effacement of the memory derived from reading the novel by another experience – an audio – visual one- which will seem, as little as possible, to jar with that collective memory" (McFarlane 21).

Alfred Hitchcock, among other filmmakers, has adapted literary works, yet his art is rarely viewed as secondary to its source. Therefore, fidelity is not important when the filmmaker is a skilful adapter who treats the text as a central –not prior or superior- source. Cinematic adaptation does not and should not only target the reader-viewers; it has to reach an audience that is not familiar with its literary origin as well. Adaptation is rather the process required to seek and provide alternatives that carry an effect that is close to their literary source when films fail to transfer what is textual or find amenable elements in the text.

The *Carol* provides a literary form that does not require a great deal of selection to fit a feature film. The Dickensian little ghostly book is written in a visual style; it is a cinematic literary amalgam. To consider the *Carol* as cinematic is to think of it as a transferable literary fabric with visual capacity and cinematic amenability. The narrative form plays a major role to assess the transferable and adaptable abilities of a text. Serialisation was a Victorian popular practice that Dickens pioneered; he even preserved the writing techniques that this tradition of publication has always encouraged and admired, in his *Carol* which was published complete. Dickens moved

from building anticipation with every instalment to retain his loyal readers, to intriguing the reader's curiosity and excitement in every stave.

A Christmas Carol can be regarded as a drama in three parts; the life guide and rules of the businessman Ebenezer Scrooge, the spectral journey that can be divided into three subparts, past, present and future, and Scrooge's redemption and change of heart. The first part establishes the needed perception of the protagonist who appears to be an antagonist due to his rigid way of being; it marks a certain departure from the story, providing a vivid image of Victorian London. The second part revolves around the process of redemption which uses memory to trigger nostalgia for the past, trigger guilt and shame with the present, and enhance the maelstrom of fear and regret resulting from that guilt. The last part moves to a more optimistic future bred by the redeemed self of Ebenezer Scrooge.

The first person narration can be considered as a cinematic quality in literature as well. To attribute the discourse to one narrator who can either be an active participant – like he is in the *Carol*– or a passive participant in the story, is to provide an invitation for Omniscient P.O.V i.e. point of view shots, and the use of voice over which is the accompaniment of a character's voice; usually the narrator, to a scene which can convey a sense of nostalgia, an important role of the past, or the speaker's relationship with the scene or the action being presented. This is not to say that third-person narration is not cinematic, for it can be visually inviting as well. The mise-en-scène, acting, lighting, and camera work can omnisciently narrate the story cinematically. The same tools can be used to adapt the non-transferable in a cinematic adaptation. Films are all omniscient in a sense because objectivity is present even in subjective first person cinema, since there are always scenes where the narrator only observes but not interfere. The *Carol* offers a dual narration, a double-view that combines the first person narrator and the omniscient point of view. This narrator shapes the reader's understanding and interpretation of the story, along with his perception of the characters. This narrator displays a capability to implicitly voice Dickens, Marley, Tiny Tim, and even the spirits, for he is "as close to [the characters] as [he is] now to [the readers]" (Dickens 28).

Just like camera, Dickens's fiction presents reality in its physical significance and symbolic value. Cinematic adaptations of the *Carol* such as Hurst's in 1951 and Zemeckis's in 2009, use physical elements to highlight their symbolic value, such as Tiny Tim gazing at a shop front, or the boy chasing a dog that snatched a piece of meat tossed by a cook in the streets of London, McFarlane argues, "the symbolic effect is the function of the mise-en-scène" (McFarlane 132).

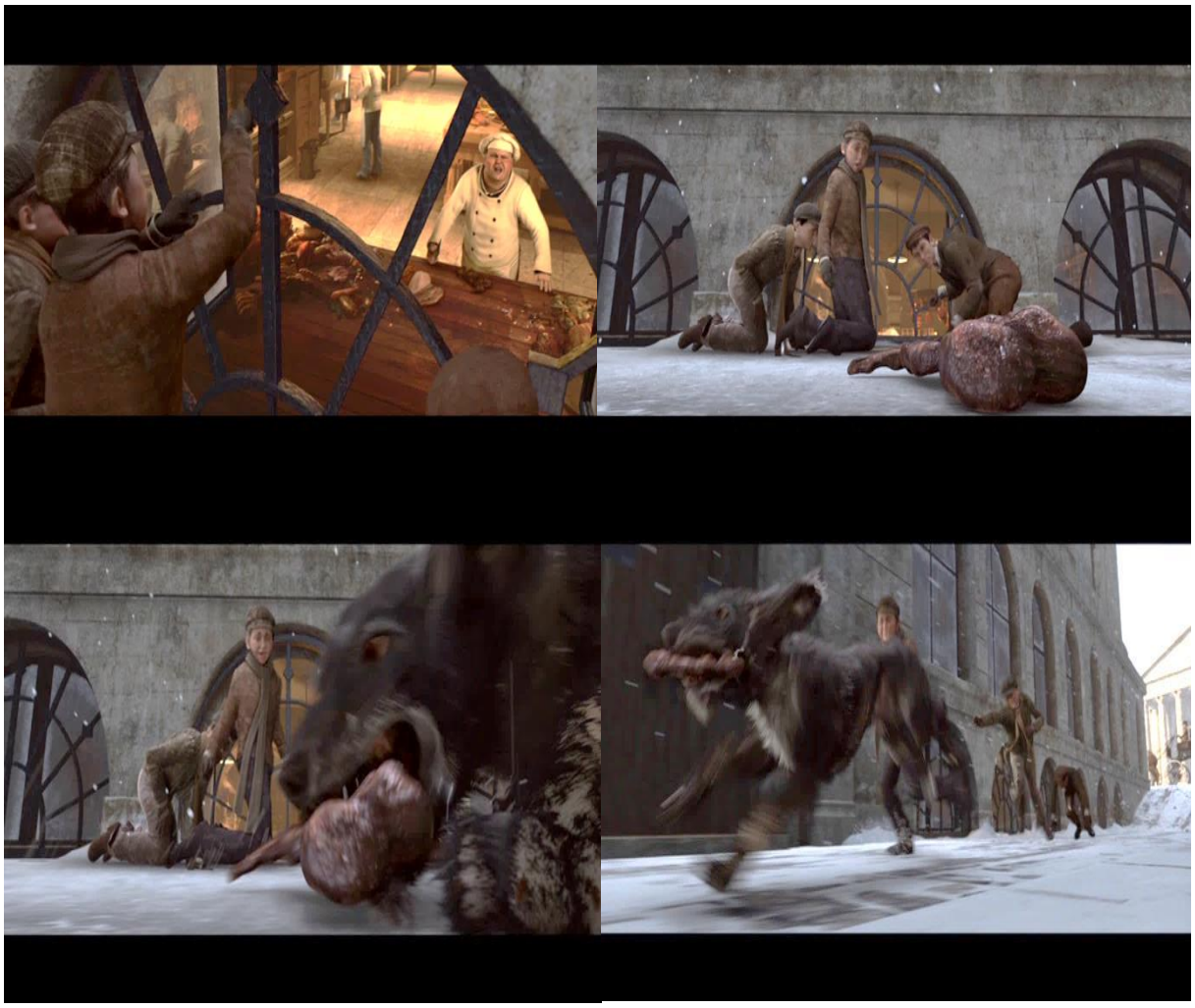

Figure 3 poor children begging the cook for a piece of meat that the dog snatched when it was tossed in Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) adaptation.

Dickens's Christmas books established a clearer link between his adult writing and his childhood favourite fairy tales and stories. Reading his unfinished novella to Tara in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* stresses Dickens's yearning for the past and how his connection to his younger self breeds his imagination and enthusiasm for writing.

Christmas seems to have accompanied Dickens throughout his literary career including his last unfinished mysterious novel *the Mystery of Edwin Drood*, in which

the protagonist Edwin Drood disappears on Christmas eve to be declared missing on Christmas day. Lucinda Dickens Hawksley argues "if Dickens did intend Edwin to be killed, it would have been ironic that the man credited with inventing the way in which Christmas was celebrated in Victorian Britain, should have ended his life's work with a Christmas murder mystery" (Hawksley, *Dickens and Christmas* 192).

For readers and writers, viewers and filmmakers, Charles Dickens is a *mutual friend* appealing to artists and arts. To the Victorians, Dickens was a *vigilant watchman* of society with the *key to the streets*. Like a *Next-door Neighbour*, Dickens, *a hero of his own life,* captured the Victorian period *which was so far like the present period;* curious, bleak, and hard but loaded with great and hopeful expectations. *A Christmas Carol* is another literary *magic reel*; dedicated to shed light on *the one thing needful* and call for *hope to the last!* Dickens's writing times have ended, *his chimney-corner has gone cold, and his clock has stopped forever* but his *Carol* continues to inspire. Writing, for Dickens, was about "constructing fictional worlds that keep renegotiating the relation between the made and the unmade self" (Tyler 173). Dickens's fear of becoming Joe, or Fagin, Oliver, or Tiny Tim, the fear of being ignorant to become corrupt, the fear of not being the writer he grew up to be, have provided him with endless motivation to create immortal fiction, forever enjoyed and relatable, never forgotten or devalued.

Just like photography, realism can never be objectively faithful, for as Ernst Gombrich noted, there is no innocent eye in viewing art. American author Peter Mendelsund argues that "there is no such thing in art as the naïve reception of imagery…we make our choices –we have *agency*" (Mendelsund 197) hence, if the agency is present in reception, it is present in perception, inevitable in the making of art. Photographs tell stories that are untold in words, Dickens voiced those photos through his literature, and preserved their vividness through his optical qualities, and illustrations. While Dickens's fiction is a visually rich invitation, it is crucial to assess the extent to which the *Carol* can still welcome new readings, or have its several adaptations exhausted the text for it to have new possible significations and meanings?

CONCLUSION

Cinema and literature are two forms of narration. They use different voices to tell the same story. Literary and cinematic fabrics promote ideas, carry meaning, take and make photographs, and tell stories embedded in the contexts which summoned them in the first place, as they are mostly inspired from the backgrounds that forged them. Culture is voiced through art forms and artists both intentionally and unintentionally.

The realism in Dickensian literature projects a vivid image of the Victorian times in industrial London into the reader's mind. *A Christmas Carol* can be viewed as a literary photographic piece of writing that captures the reality of different Victorian social representatives. It fictionalises the Victorian industrial social model. Dickens's *Carol* sheds light on ignorance as a threat to any civilization. It is an a-topical universal theme that speaks to all cultures, times, and civilisations. Due to its sense of immediacy, *A Christmas Carol* remains relevant. The visual appeal of the Dickensian *Carol* is manifested through dreamlike scenes, cinematic techniques, and the photographic depiction of Victorian England. Cinema has visited the text ever since its beginnings and carried on re-visiting it in different contexts and times, and still persists on adapting Dickens's exhausted text every holiday season.

Realism is about portraying the real and mirroring reality similar to photography which captures instances and segments from life. This photographic trait facilitates the adaptability of realistic literature on screen. Charles Dickens was a taker and a maker of photographs. While the *Carol* communicates the Victorian manifold concerns; socially, economically and politically, it still offers cinematic features, some of which proved to be challenging for early cinema. While photographs communicate whatever the imagination suggests with little direction, words tend to limit those imaginative suggestions as they focus on a specific direction to promote a specific reading; it is the power of inscriptions. That is what intertitles did in silent cinema, and what sound does in the talkies. What written and spoken words do for photographs proves that while a photo is worth a thousand words, a word is more often than not worth a thousand photos as well.

It might be that cinema offered motion to still photographs, but photographs have always known how to talk, both on photographic paper and through realistic literature like Dickens's which appropriated the essence of photography to wordily capture reality. Such realistic portrayal was never done in vain, for it serves as a reminder, as a wakeup call, and as a stimulus for reform. Such function is attributed to all arts; cinema being an accessible popular medium seems to offer an instant, direct and unforced influence. This function tends to intensify the literary cinematic bound, allowing a natural tendency for transferability and adaptability. Nevertheless, such artistic translation is governed by the text's cinematic qualities for it to be cinematically adapted.

Dickens's writing is intensively visual. Whereas realism might have stimulated the filmic quality in the Dickensian texts, it is the artist's background that might have had a greater impact on his style. Dickens the reader, the admirer of the fancy originating from his childhood fairy tales stories, the appreciator of performing arts such as theatre and pantomime, and the curious creature who sought plausible explanations for outer unknown dreadfulness of the supernatural, have all contributed in forging his lively characters, his literary descriptive richness, and photographic authenticity. These character traits made Dickens a suitable photographic and cinematic writer for the realistic movement and the cinematic medium.

When approaching the cinematic adaptations of Dickens's popular work *A Christmas Carol*, one needs to identify the adaptation being assessed and critiqued. Identifying the cinematic adaptation paves the way for an accurate assessment that shifts from fidelity-based approaches which breed hierarchical views to what is text and what is film. While fidelity dominated the debate for a long period of time, it still presents an important criterion for critics to take into consideration whenever a cinematic adaptation is discussed, for a literary fabric will forever be an important part in the novel-to-film equation. Film critics such as Geoffrey Wagner and James Dudley Andrew have suggested classifications that canalise criticism for plausible assessment in their publications *The Novel and the Cinema* and *Concepts in Film Theory*. Similar to many adaptations of the *Carol*, the selected cinematic case studies in this

dissertation, do not present a major departure from the Dickensian text. While fidelity keeps on monopolising the debate, critics such as Brian McFarlane in his book *Novel To Film* and Linda Hutcheon author of *A Theory of Adaptation;* have introduced new models in the late nineties that shed light on artistic connections, intertextuality and the influence resulting from contextual factors such as cultural and industrial variables. In order to properly approach any cinematic adaptation of a literary fabric, critics must identify the filmic product in relation to the adapted text, contextualise it by questioning its motives through assessing its social, economic and political sphere; which usually affect the rhetoric and the meaning of the adaptation, to offer a logical interpretation and a plausible reading for an authentic critique.

The adaptive process must preserve some recognisable notions from the text as long as they meet the adapter's vision. Whereas textual reference calls for fidelity-based approaches, innovation should always be welcome and encouraged in the field of cinematic adaptation. What Seymour Chatman referred to as kernels in his book *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* represent the hinge-points which recall the text to establish the film as an adaptation of a text as they help recognising the adapted material. The adapter's challenge lies in making an eclectic selection of the transferable and adaptable features of the text, and differentiating between the story that the adapter can choose to transfer, and the plot which is an adaptable element that controls adaptation as a strategic process.

It could be that the cinematic qualities and the transferability of the Dickensian ghostly little book are the reasons why the cinematic adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* tend to be flat and repetitive. As a popular novella, the *Carol* offers an audience and limitations for the adapter. Familiarity might seem as a magnet that attracts viewers when the text is not cinematically exhausted or adapted in different cinematic eras. However, familiarity begets disinterest when de-familiarization is needed but not achieved. Whereas adaptation can become the visual text that overshadows its narrative textual source, or simply conquer the reader's imagination and memory of the text as he recalls the story, many adaptations of the canon go unnoticed and unremembered, for they become repetitive while being thematically distant.

Cinema tells history through reels. *A Christmas Carol* has accompanied cinema through its evolution, therefore one can track its continuous progression though Dickensian adaptations. Both films and Dickens's *Carol* are embedded in culture. Whether it is artistically silent, lazy loud or digitally manoeuvred; almost all kinds of films have fostered the *Carol*. Regardless of Russian theorist Victor Shklovsky's views on changing form and its mutation of meaning which he expressed in his book *Literature and Cinematography*, adapting literature should be directed but not limited. What brings literary art closer to cinema is the visual process that is forever tied to writing and reading. A good work of fiction leaves something to the imagination by stimulating that of the reader without exhausting it, it would help the readers visualise instead of visualising it for them. Thus, readers recall stories visually, and differently. Fiction calls for the artistic fusion known as film adaptation; transporting texts from their wordily atmosphere to the cinematic world of artistic expression. Therefore, giving every wordily eyeful of meaning and images new vivid ones for viewers to see and understand. Similar to literature, film adaptation serves as imaging the imaginations of both readers and adapters.

A Christmas Carol has been adapted on screen for a long period of time which exemplifies the established interrelation between the text and the filmic medium. The literary filmic connection has intensified over the years, with the *Carol* being the most adapted English text in cinema; adaptation took a new instructive role in teaching Dickensian literature. Nevertheless, the literary cinematic debate heightens through adaptation. While Victorian literature appeals to cinema due to its photographic origins and notions, the Dickensian *Carol* appeals to filmmakers for its filmic motion qualities that critics such as Russian film theorist Sergei Eisenstein and American filmmaker D.W Griffith have suggested that they have inspired certain cinematic techniques.

A Christmas Carol offers a suitable playground for the reader's mind and the viewer's eye to experience visual leaps by breaking the traditional linearity of storytelling and adopting continuity through discontinuous spatiotemporal edited segments. Such visual qualities along with the memorable characters and the solid universal rhetoric make the *Carol* a malleable fabric for adapters who tend to

constantly mould it similarly in different film adaptations. For a rich and relevant text like the *Carol*, adopting an interpretive approach rather than a descriptive one when adapting it cinematically is needful to maintain its compatibility in modern society for modern non-reader-viewers and reader-viewers, hence the controversial concept of auteurism.

The auteur theory sees the adapter as the ultimate creator and the sole proprietor of the film. As a critical approach, auteurism which can be used as a marketing strategy, is as traditional as fidelity since they both attribute a supreme status to limited contributors while minimising and disregarding the rest of the team working in pre-production, production, and postproduction. Auteurism can be artistically stimulating but egoistically invalid. Filmmaking is after all a communal process that produces films for collective experiences. Supremacy in adaptation is inevitable, however it must never possess total control over criticism or academic debate, for it is an idea to be considered but never trusted as an ultimate truth.

Nevertheless, adaptation remains a provider of new readings which permit the displacement of the story into a new context and frame. This displacement bears multiple aspects ranging from cultural to financial and rhetorical factors. As a result, the art of adaptation transcends the fabric of time and space to retell segments of history as they were told before via texts, with unlimited capability to appropriate them according to modern times. Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* was woven in a topical setting which, along with the use of temporal shifts through past and future timelines that break the linearity and continuity, facilitates its cinematic adaptation in multiple temporal frameworks. While remaining a socially committed work of fiction, the *Carol* experiments with the supernatural and time travel to make an everlasting seasonal classic which appeals to different readers, adapters, and arts.

Imitation is innate. It is a common feature in different arts, for in one way or the other, art is an imitation by and of the artist's background, reality, and experiences. As a concept, imitation is highly revealed through photography, Victorian realistic literature, and cinema, hence the cinematic adaptability of the photographic Victorian Dickensian realistic *Carol*. Nevertheless, the cinematic qualities presented by Dickens

in the *Carol* such as the successive abrupt visions presented by the second spirit of Christmas Present which evoke filmic effects and editing techniques, might appear contradictory for a supposedly realistic depiction of society, true perception of reality, and film critics who advocate realism as the core and sole purpose of cinema. For instance, the French film critic André Bazin viewed realism as a cinematic function that defines the seventh art, hence he regarded montage as a inauthentic discontinuous technique to be used to reflect a continuous world that cinema ought to respect and depict.

Does this mean that the spatiotemporal breaks in *A Christmas Carol* make the text unrealistic? No, simply because the methods of portrayal are dynamic, hence they do not and should not limit the writer as long as the purpose is preserved and reality is mirrored on different scales. Montage, among other editing techniques, is not always used to maintain continuity since meaning is formed through discontinuity as well. The world might be perceived as being continuous, however people's continuous realities are connected, hence they make one unit of discontinuous segments to form one vast reality.

Charles Dickens's *Carol* is captivating, for it is a product of an industrial revolution and its ramifications which have reshaped the world tremendously and consecutively triggered every other historical landmark. Dickens shed light on the utilitarian philosophy, the English class system and its outcomes, all in one topical setting which the text transcends as it reaches cultural continuums welcoming different narration tools to retell it and multiple readings to approach it. Rhetoric is forever present in socially driven arts like Dickens's *Carol* which mirrors Dickensian horrors, and Victorian social concerns revolving around poverty and its aftermath. The connection that realism has with reality makes of the *Carol* a vessel to canalise the author's ideologies and the adapters' as well.

The *Carol*'s cinematic features vary from evocative characterization, specificity of description, and proto-cinematic writing of scenes with transitional instances that proved theatrically challenging but cinematically achievable. It became a culture text that is part of the English heritage and the people's collective memory, ritualized as

part of Christmas tradition and celebration. Dickens was an animator of details to convey meaning, to sketch images, and evoke emotions and effects. His journalistic experience, theatrical background, and love for the literary arts have built the skeleton for his popular ghostly little book to be framed.

Cinema relied heavily on literature for narrative material in its post experimental years, hence the concept of film adaptation. Adaptation offers a twofold intertextuality from both films and texts. Black and white adaptations of the *Carol* range from silent to talking motion pictures which used sound to minimize the film dependency on intertitles, yet they showed a great deal of dependency on sound instead. The selected adaptations are analysed to introduce cinematic techniques and track filmic evolution, and reveal Dickens's spirit in the text along with the social role attributed to arts in general, and realistic Dickensian literature in particular.

The first film adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* was Walter Robert Booth's *Marley's Ghost* (1901), a silent black and white British production that used J.C Buckstone's minimal theatrical translation of the same work as a reference. Booth's adaptation used traditional techniques such as superimposition for special effects and intertitles for transition and creation of meaning, which might be viewed by modern viewers as a lazy simplistic transportation of the text from paper to screen. *Marley's Ghost* (1901) feels as theatrical as its inspiration, but it shows major techniques that cinema, people know today, was established on.

Technology undergoes constant progress which stimulates new ideas for filmmaking and filmmakers. Despite the new challenges imposed by new media forms such as television, cinema kept making films during the sound era which introduced the talkies. Sound films such as Brian Desmond Hurst's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* entitled *Scrooge* (1951) starring Alastair Sim displayed new filmic usage of the camera, editing techniques, film score and sound design, and a new reading to Dickens's popular text.

Hurst's adaptation is a classic that many viewers and film critics regard as the *Carol*'s most accurate adaptation, not merely due to its fidelity to the text, but its

complementary role to fill in the gaps that most readers wondered about regarding the psychology of Ebenezer Scrooge. Moreover, it builds a bridge that connects the art to the artist mainly since most of Dickens's characters reflect pieces of himself, people he knew, and people he observed which helped him write stories such as *A Christmas Carol* which he founded on his personal experiences in which he incorporated many biographical instances such as his Warren's Blacking factory labouring days, his father's imprisonment for debt, and his nephew Harry Burnett's struggle with health problems.

As a utilitarian businessman, Scrooge's philosophy is exemplified through his treatment of his clerk Bob Cratchit, but also through the additional dialogue Alastair Sim; as Ebenezer Scrooge, has had with actor Clifford Mollison who played Mr Wilkins, by London Royal Exchange which communicates its ruthlessness and lawfulness. A social commentary and a rhetoric that remains unaltered in the text. Transition in Hurst's adaptation relies heavily on the editing technique of dissolve which marques a passing of time and a traditional transitional device. Alastair Sim's acting and euphonic voice, communicate certain details which so vividly conveys the characterization of Dickensian protagonist.

The supernatural elements in Dickens's text were shallowly and minimally used and transferred on screen in previous silent adaptations such as Booth's, however, they were almost funny captured in Hurst's *Carol* film adaptation. In order to properly handle the peculiarity of Dickens's spirits, John Leech's illustrations have been adapted as well which shows the interrelation cinema has established with different art forms, including painting.

Scrooge (1951) is an adaptation that presents itself as a psychological research into the Dickensian text that seeks excuses and explanations to present for the viewer to consider new perceptions of Dickens's villain Scrooge. It invests in the bildungsroman aspects of the *Carol* to expand it and transcend its fictional essence to reach Dickens's biography through Scrooge's back story and his brotherly-sisterly bond which affected his relation with his nephew and ultimately his view of life. As a Dickensian talkie, Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951) captures the *Carol*'s major hinge-points, it

offers a commentary through Scrooge's back story, and uses sound to communicate Victorian details and reality like the door creaks of Joey's rag-and-bottle shop.

After the talkies, the thirties painted over motion picture films introducing colour as the new cinematic norm. Despite the rise of new competitors and strategies of filmmaking, films continued to evolve to attain their modern form; adopting new technologies and attributing relevant rhetoric to the art form, two major concepts that animation did not only offer as it paved the way for infinite visual possibilities that can meet the adapter's imagination and capture the Dickensian filmic realism.

Animation has been around before its establishment as a serious art form that can mutate according to different needs. It is an art form and a style which according to Italian animation historian and author of *Animation: A World History* books Giannalberto Bendazzi, welcomes all genres. From childish entertainment to political propaganda, animated films it can serve different purposes in the film industry. It evolved through experimentation, from celluloid, and stop motion photography, to the fusion of live action and animated picture which recalls the essence of motion capture technology that aims to create lifelike illusions. Walt Disney Studios have been a leading figure in animated motion picture. With the emergence of computer generated imagery and MoCap technology, Disney never ceased exploring the unlimited possibilities of animation through incorporating such innovative notions in filmmaking.

Puppet films have shared the marginalization of animation as a cinematic artistic form. Jim Henson's collaboration with Disney produced *The Muppet Christmas Carol* in 1992. Familiar and faithful, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* relies on the instructive notion and purpose of films as it introduces Dickens as a character while Rizzo the Rat breaks the fourth wall to address the viewers. It offers a cartoonish quality to Dickens's text which does not necessarily degrade the *Carol*'s literary value but overshadows its social and political significance. However, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* being a sombre musical for children communicates the inevitability of death along with the freedom of choice that can ease the pain of those in need in a moralistic yet very accurate adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*.

The debate over realism in cinema heats up when it is teamed up with animated motion picture and motion capture i.e. performance capture. Unlike traditional animation which can use actors to voice the characters, motion capture is based on the human computer interaction which not only offers a direct physical intervention of real actors in the process of filmmaking, but restores the theatricality of performance on stage which requires pure smart acting and a great deal of imagination with strictly minimal scenography. This is not to diminish the significant role of animators who interpret, animate, and manipulate data, or the other teams working in postproduction.

Robert Zemeckis's adaptation *Disney's A Christmas Carol* (2009) can be viewed as a faithful yet artistically innovative adaptation of Dickens's *Carol* for multiple reasons. First and foremost, Zemeckis's use of MoCap technology permitted a concrete visualisation of Dickens's imagination and the representation of the whimsical spectres such us the Ghost of Christmas Past which Dickens's illustrator John Leech could not shape through the 2D art of drawing. Moreover, Zemeckis relied on symbolism to adapt the text, industrial London, its class system and Victorianism. Furthermore, the adaptation draws instant connection to the author by embedding biographical elements in the film, which Dickens wrote about in his letters and articles such as Lord Mayor the Mansion House in London. With the highly unaltered dialogue and use of direct quotations, Zemeckis's adaptation could either be regarded as too faithful, or it is Dickens's writing that is as too cinematic, but since Zemeckis's reading of the text reflects and uncovers the Victorian and Dickensian reality; one might wonder if this adaptation is the most accurate and informative *Carol* that is ever made.

A Christmas Carol (2009) begets previous adaptations including Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951), ever since its opening but exhibits new details for the viewers to grasp the text and see the literary figure behind it through Scrooge's story. In this adaptation, Zemeckis used different techniques and angles to capture and communicate some unnoticed details and interpretations such as Scrooge's pareidolia and its possible stimulation of spectral encounter.

To retell a story that has been told through a literary text is to remain faithful to the essence of the text, however, to remain faithful to the text does not mean restricting the adapter's vision and artistic potential. Zemeckis's *Carol* retells the story as it adapts Dickens's text cinematically. The adaptation ignores the Cornwall scene of the miners but it captures the symbolism of the story's major concepts; ignorance and want. He used Dickens's text, Leech's illustrations, scenery that echoes the artist's biography and recalls the era's famous prints, and film classics for cinematic inspiration, while preserving his personal cinematic imprint as an advocate of cinematic diversity, the use of MoCap technology and promoting a relatively new, yet very serious form of acting and filmmaking.

Robert Zemeckis plays with spatial dimensions the way Dickens did with temporal dimensions to fuel the eeriness of the last spirit. He uses major cinematic techniques that transmit specific meanings and effects which can only prove that motion performance is not less serious than live action films, and that filmmakers are granted total freedom to be as cinematically creative as they would be in live action features. Zemeckis incorporates the Alice in Wonderland syndrome and symbols such as the magnified clock to indicate the insignificance of the human being in the cosmos and to time recalling a Lovecraftian tradition, all of which stretch the viewers' perception of the film and its source.

Dickens's *Carol* combines theatrical extravagant characters like Scrooge and Fezziwig, silent cinematic art through the last spirit, the black and white films through Marley's ghost, the loud colour features through the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the impossible which is digitally made possible through the filmic humanlike transition of scenes. It is a literary fabric that offers a little bit of everything to everyone.

A Christmas Carol speaks to the people and of the people. It welcomes different readings and can appeal to different schools of criticism. Dickens might not be the man who invented Christmas per se, but his *Carol* has surely revived it like no other text did before. *A Christmas Carol* stands as a universal transcendent text with

philanthropic aims. Through the *Carol*, Dickens offered the world a socially driven theatricality that is made cinematic.

Bharat Nalluri's film *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) starring Dan Stevens as Charles Dickens and Christopher Plummer as Ebenezer Scrooge is a concretisation of Les Standiford's book of the same name. In this semibiographical film, the viewers are introduced to the world of Dickens; the writer, with multiple flashbacks of his childhood and experiences that forged him and inspired his writings. The film offers a journey into the author's mind which appears to be a captive of a bundle of insecurities, author's block, childhood trauma, and haunting spectres of poverty. Dickens had to face his own demons and monsters through his writings as if to conjure them up and destroy bits of them as they turn into ink on paper to be read by the people and roam around London to haunt others with similar experiences. Victorian London was a city of ghosts of the unfortunates; the only difference is that Dickens's ghosts haunted the readers among the Victorians pleasantly.

The film is multi-fold, for it offers a lose adaptation of the *Carol* and captures the writing process of the *Carol*, its social context, a segment from Dickens's biography, and his quirky interests. It effortlessly emphasises the unbreakable existing connection between art, the artist, and the universe. It gives an interpretive reading of the *Carol* as a reflection of both reality of the era, and Dickens's life. Nalluri's film accentuates the imitation of life in art as it captures Dickens's observation of reality and adapting it literary. Moreover, it questions authorship in an interesting way, and raises questions such as who is the auteur of the *Carol*? Is it Dickens; is it reality, or the auteurs of the intertextual texts imprinted in the text? All of which lead to questioning the concepts of intertextuality, authorship and auteurism.

The supernatural in *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) was given three different functions. The first clear role is similar to Dickens's use of the supernatural and that is to portray the spirits in his ghostly little book. The second function is to concretise the author's ideas through the process of writing where characters are brought to life as real characters who interact so vividly and concretely with the

author. The last function would be to echo Dickens's curiosity and interest in the supernatural among other intriguing phenomena like mesmerism.

The concept of dreams is a recurrent argument and interpretation that could explain Scrooge's spectral journey and that Nalluri hints through different scenes where Dan Stevens either falls asleep or wakes up from a sleep. It is an approach that Dickens encourages, for he has always investigated the association of dreams and human psychology with certain manifestations that can be perceived as a supernatural phenomenon. It is an invitation to question everything, to remain curious, and to seek explanations and knowledge for a better understanding of the world, of reality, and of the human being. Such understanding is cultivated through films.

According to the French film theorist André Bazin cinema's major concern should be to authentically reflect reality. He discouraged the use of editing techniques like montage unless the aim was to restore or enhance realistic qualities and experiences, because to him such techniques impinge the credibility of cinematic realism, deform and limit the meaning. This standpoint breeds the assumption that Bazin would probably not consider performance capture to be cinema or cinematic, since he believed that any deformation of reality is not and should not be welcome in the seventh art. Since deformation is unwelcome in cinema, it is unwelcome in adaptation. According to Bazin, to adapt is to remain faithful to the text, an idea that was dominant back in the forties, so adopting it by critics was typical. Bazin's views on editing, realism, and his preference for depth of field as a technique indicate his cinematic preferences as a whole which revolve around keeping cinema as photographic as possible with minimal interference of editing that might deprive the audience of forming their own meaning of the film which ought to be realistic.

Russian film critic Sergei Eisenstein before him was a supporter of everything that could stimulate new and different meanings in films. Editing for Eisenstein is a creator of opportunities for viewers to interpret films and manufacture meanings without feeling limited or restricted by the mechanical tracing of reality. Watching films is a psychological experience that editing stimulates by creating meaning through artistic reformation and deformation. His views stress the artistic quality of

filmmaking and the psychological quality of film viewing. Eisenstein did not merely speak of editing but of filmmaking as an art. He emphasized the importance of melding what he termed organic and mechanical cinema for a better cinematic experience. Filmmaking has to be an organic machine that captures the complex and ambiguous reality, destroys it, and reconstructs it through editing for it to have multiple effects on the viewers.

A Christmas Carol mirrors pieces of reality without restricting the cinematic qualities that could be used to adapt it like montage in order to connect scenes or edit them in ways that might break their linearity in order to inspire meaning and attribute symbolic significance to them, and join the events as a unit that corresponds with the circadian form of the *Carol*. Whether it is the parallelism in Dickens's canon that Eisenstein regarded as an inspiration for some cinematic methods, or the serialised publication of Dickens's long narratives, or his theatrical aspirations that influenced his literary economy in his ghostly little book, Dickensian literature exhibits an undeniable cinematic quality that appeals to the performing art of theatre before the invention and the evolution of motion picture.

The cultural practice of adaptation assembles different factors and variables; text and context included. It is a quality that makes the cinematic adaptation of any text a multidimensional product on an even bigger scale than literature or cinema. Meanwhile, every adaptation of the *Carol* attracts a different reading, for instance Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951) offers a psychological interpretation, while Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) entails a social reading of the film, and Bharat Nalluri's *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) calls for a biographical approach.

This doctoral dissertation tries to offer a shot-by-shot analysis that introduces different cinematic techniques, defines them and interprets and reinterprets their meaning based on their previous cinematic usage and their relation to the text being adapted in order to construct meaning of the *Carol*'s film adaptations. Shot-by-shot analysis takes different components into consideration from composition, to cinematography and editing techniques to highlight the style and the narrative form of

the film and eventually suggest explanations of possible meanings in relation to the adapted text and the filmmaker's purpose.

This research does not encourage the disparagement of film adaptation or the hierarchical approach to literature and cinema. It investigates the cinematic adaptations of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* as artistic productions and historical instructive documents using what might be viewed as formal analysis that melds a variety of models. Surviving through analog and digital photography and all cinematic eras, Dickens's little ghostly book appears to be cinematically drained. This does not mean that the *Carol* has lost its adaptable appeal; it simply means that the text needs a new reading which can be triggered or inspired from a different context, a different reality. It might be that the world has not witnessed new major landmarks yet, politically, socially, and ideologically speaking to have new powers shifting dominance in the world, and attribute new signification to the *Carol* for it to accept a new adaptation that does not lack a new accurate significance. Ultimately, it is always far more interesting to find yourself in a story than to lose yourself in one.

Different adapters have looked *at* the Dickensian *Carol* and its illustrations, some of them have looked *through* it with an attempt to give it a new meaning. Brian Desmond Hurst's *Scrooge* (1951), Robert Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (2009) are two cinematic adaptations, the former sought a psychological explanation to Scrooge's character, while the latter was committed to what was once considered to be the *Carol*'s unattainable visual potential. They both narrate the Dickensian seasonal classic differently on multiple levels such as the intensity of emotions in Hurst's reading of the *Carol*, and Zemeckis's dark tone.

Is there a limit to a text's adaptability? No, but when should filmmakers stop adapting an adapted exhausted literary fabric such as Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*? The answer to this question would be when an idea for another adaptation has important non-financial motives; otherwise both critics and audiences would be disappointed. *A Christmas Carol* revolves around political shortcomings which can both directly and indirectly breed ignorance and every aspect of its dangers; an evil that fosters all evils through the history of mankind. It is a universal theme that,

unfortunately, would never be outdated or irrelevant. Dickens's *Carol* made its last screen adaptation on television in 2019 on BBC One entitled *A Christmas Carol;* a miniseries that is divided into three chapters *The Human Beast*, *The Human Heart*, and *A Bag of Gravel*, by British film and television director Nick Murphy, starring Guy Pearce, and performance capture acting savvy Andy Serkis.

Literature and reading have always had a visual association that excites the imagination and invites interpretation. *A Christmas Carol* offers artistic variety that serves as a ground floor for filmmakers to work with to recreate and co-create. Recreation is about shared authorship, it is co-creation that fuels the conflict over ownership of authorship. Charles Dickens was a conjurer of Victorian images, a wordy painter of Victorian pictures, and a maker of Victorian photographs. The visual transposition that his *Carol* naturally dictates will forever be subject to influence. Every film adaptation seems to colonise the text, such colonisation is rarely pleasant to the reader. Nevertheless, adaptation is a new reading, a retelling, a reimagining, a re-discovery, and a reframing of the text and even though something always gets lost in translation, there is always something new to be found. Therefore, every film adaptation should embrace its text with remembrance just like every text should embrace its film adaptation with longing.

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ILLUTSRATIONS:

-A reproduction of *A Christmas Carol’*s original John Leech’s illustrations by Mr. Mustapha Ousfeya.

-Analog Film illustration by Ms. Madjda Bellache.

Résumé

Un Chant de Noël fait partie de la célébration de Noël et son adaptation est devenue une tradition cinématographique saisonnière. Les adaptations cinématographiques des grandes époques ont accueilli le roman de Charles Dickens, du film muet *Marley's Ghost* (1901), au talkie noir et blanc *Scrooge* (1951), et *A Christmas Carol* (2009). Les questions principales auxquelles cette dissertation tente de répondre tournent autour de l'adaptabilité du roman *Un Chant de Noël* en tant que texte littéraire cinématographique, et la mesure dans laquelle ses adaptations cinématographiques reflètent le texte ainsi que sa finalité réaliste et ses dimensions sociales, politiques et biographiques.

Cette dissertation identifie les caractéristiques visuelles du roman qui ne pouvaient pas être correctement adaptées dans des formes adaptatives non cinématographiques telles que le théâtre, ainsi que d'autres éléments cinématographiques qui contestaient les films avant l'évolution numérique du médium au fil des années qui a introduit de nouvelles technologies telles que l'imagerie générée par ordinateur (CGI), et la capture de mouvement. La dissertation remet en question la mesure dans laquelle un texte excessivement adapté comme *Un Chant de Noël* est toujours adaptable, et affirme l'importance de l'adaptation dans les études culturelles en raison de sa nature multidisciplinaire qui couvre différentes sphères telles que l'histoire et la culture.

Un Chant de Noël propose des thèmes universels, pertinents dans les temps modernes en raison de leur caractère actuel. Cette dissertation de doctorat offre une expérience culturelle dans l'approche de l'adaptation cinématographique. L'étude des films est cruciale pour acquérir une approche analytique de ces produits culturels qui regroupent différents domaines tels que la littérature et l'histoire, et aide à façonner comment les gens aperçoivent le monde, et à accroître le plaisir et la réflexion stimulée par les films et les textes. La dissertation se concentre sur le film muet de Walter Robert Booth *Marley's Ghost* (1901), l'adaptation de Brian Desmond Hurst *Scrooge* (1951), Brian Henson *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992), et *A Christmas Carol*

(2009) de Robert Zemeckis pour étudier le roman de Dickens et donner un aperçu de l'évolution du cinéma et des adaptations cinématographiques. Il examine le film de Bharat Nalluri, *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017), un film semi-biographique qui explore le monde de l'écrivain Charles Dickens, et les expériences qui l'ont forgé et inspiré ses écrits.

Les adaptations sélectionnées comportent des particularités de différentes époques cinématographiques qui permettent d'étudier le cinéma en tant qu'art à travers l'histoire. Cette dissertation est divisée en quatre chapitres qui abordent le lien entre le cinéma et la littérature invoqué par l'adaptation, les théories principales du débat sur l'adaptation cinématographique. Les chapitres analysent l'interrelation entre la *lire* et *voir* dans une tentative de mettre en évidence certains traits cinématographiques innés dans la littérature, et comment *Un Chant de Noël* de Charles Dickens est un exemple vivant et concret d'un réalisme filmique qui ne porte pas seulement des données historiques, mais permet l'ingéniosité cinématographique pour faire des films qui reflètent l'histoire victorienne.

الملخص

أصبحت رواية ترنيمة عيد الميلاد لتشارلز ديكنز جزءًا من احتفالية عيد الميلاد بينما أصبح اقتباسها سينمائيًا تقليدًا موسميًا. لطالما رحبت السينما بترنيمة ديكنز، من الفيلم الصامت (1901) *Marley's Ghost*، إلى الفيلم الأسود والأبيض الناطق (1951) *Scrooge* ، و (2009) *A Christmas Carol* لديزني. تتمحور الأسئلة الرئيسية في هذا البحث حول قابلية الاقتباس السينمائي لرواية ترنيمة عيد الميلاد كنص أدبي مناسب سينمائياً ، وإلى أي مدى تقوم اقتباساتها السينمائية بتجسيد روح النص اضافة الى غرضه الواقعي وأبعاده الاجتماعية والسياسية والبيوغرافية. تهدف هذه الاطروحة الى تحديد الميزات البصرية في رواية ديكنز التي لا يمكن اقتباسها بشكل صحيح عن طريق فنون اخرى كالمسرح، إلى جانب العناصر السينمائية التي لطالما عرقلت صناعة الأفلام قبل التطور الرقمي الذي أدخل تقنيات حديثة مثل الصور المنشأة بالحاسوب و لاقط الحركة. علاوة على ذلك، يقوم البحث بدراسة قابلية الاقتباس السينمائي لترنيمة عيد الميلاد كنص أقتبس لعدة مرات، و يسلط الضوء على أهمية الاقتباس السينمائي في الدراسات الثقافية و هذا لتغطيته لمجالات و تخصصات مختلفة كالتاريخ و الثقافة.

تقدم ترنيمة عيد الميلاد مواضيع عالمية مواكبة للعصر الحديث. تقدم أطروحة الدكتوراه تجربة ثقافية من خلال الاقتباس السينمائي. إن دراسة الأفلام تساهم في تكوين نهج تحليلي للأفلام كمنتجات ثقافية تتداخل مع مجالات اخرى كالأدب والتاريخ ، والمساعدة في تشكيل نظرة الناس للعالم وضمان الاستمتاع و التفكر في الأفلام والنصوص. تركز هذه الرسالة على فيلم والتر روبرت بوث الصامت (1901) *Marley's Ghost*، اقتباس براين دسموند هورست (1951) *Scrooge* ، و براين هنسون (*The Muppet Christmas Carol* 1992)، اضافة الى روبرت زيميكس (2009) *A Christmas Carol* لدراسة ترنيمة عيد الميلاد وتقديم لمحة عن تطور السينما و الاقتباسات السينمائية. كما يفحص فيلم بهارات نالوري *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017) وهو فيلم شبه بيولوجي يكشف عالم الكاتب تشارلز ديكنز والتجارب التي صاغت وألهمت كتاباته.

تحمل الاقتباسات السنيمائية المختارة خصوصيات من عصور سينمائية مختلفة مما يسمح بدراسة السينما كفن عبر التاريخ. ينقسم البحث إلى أربعة فصول تتناول العلاقة الأدبية-السينمائية من خلال الاقتباس، و النظريات الرئيسية في دراسات الاقتباس. تقوم الفصول بالبحث في العلاقة الرابطة بين القراءة و الرؤية لتسليط الضوء على الميزات السينمائية الفطرية في الفن الأدبي، إضافة الى تحليل نص ترنيمة عيد الميلاد لتشارلز ديكنز كمثال للواقعية السينمائية التي لا تحمل بيانات تاريخية فقط بل تحفز البراعة السينمائية لإنتاج أفلام تعكس التاريخ الفيكتوري.