Existential Scrooge: A Kierkegaardian Reading of A Christmas Carol

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Abstract
This article examines Charles Dickens’s A Christmas Carol (1843) through the lens of Søren Kierkegaard’s philosophical concept of anxiety. Owing to its enduring popularity, A Christmas Carol rarely elicits rigorous explication, much less philosophical exegesis. This critical blind spot, however, should not prevent those interested in establishing a nexus between literature and philosophy from examining it as a serious and important artefact within the history of ideas. A Christmas Carol is indeed historically important, so much so that it may have influenced or even inspired Søren Kierkegaard’s The Concept of Anxiety (1844). This work, published on 17 June 1844, put forward the nature of anxiety and explored the ways in which it became manifest. For Kierkegaard, anxiety must precede the qualitative leap of faith which is freedom. Indeed, it is only through anxiety that the self can come to understand its relation between the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal. A seminal existential text, it influenced a range of thinkers including Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Tillich. It is timely, however, to propose that one of the key concepts of anxiety that Kierkegaard expounds in this extraordinary work, that of ‘the demonic’ or neurotic individual, was actually anticipated 6 months earlier, in the fictional form of Ebenezer Scrooge, in Charles Dickens’s widely published and translated popular masterpiece, A Christmas Carol.

This article will examine Charles Dickens’s A Christmas Carol (1843) through the lens of Søren Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety. Such an analysis may at first appear strange. Owing to its immediate and continued popularity A Christmas Carol has rarely been analysed in any critical depth, much less viewed in a philosophical light. As Philip Collins writes:

Maybe critics have been put off by the Carol’s institutional status (one might as readily undertake a rhetorical analysis of the Lord’s Prayer), or they may have considered the Carol one of those childish things that mature literary critics put away, as they look through their glasses, darkly, at texts more adultly recondite. (Carol Philosophy 160)

So too, Paul Davis writes: “most literary critics have neglected the Carol. It is too simple, too popular a work to elicit rigorous explication. Commentators have preferred commendation to close analysis” (12). Finally, Ruth F. Glancy tellingly states: “It has perhaps confounded literary critics that in the Carol they have a truly popular work which is undeniably a masterpiece as well” (Dickens’s Christmas Books xxii). The paradox of the Carol’s status as a popular masterpiece has thus led to something of a critical impasse. This, however, should not prevent those interested in establishing a nexus between literature and philosophy from examining it as a serious and important artefact within the history of ideas. A Christmas Carol is indeed historically important, so much so that it may even have influenced the Danish philosopher, commonly known as the father of existentialism, Søren Kierkegaard when he came to write The Concept of Anxiety (1844). This work, one of the major texts of existentialism and the first book length study on the
subject of anxiety was published on 17 June 1844. Interestingly, however, one of the key concepts of anxiety that Kierkegaard expounds in this extraordinary work, that of ‘the demonic’ or neurotic individual, was arguably anticipated six months earlier, in the fictional form of Ebenezer Scrooge, in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. Published to great acclaim on 17 December 1843, *A Christmas Carol* was within a matter of weeks dramatised in many theatres across Britain and translated across Europe. The first translation in Denmark was published in 1844. Accordingly, there is good reason to speculate that the voracious reader Kierkegaard might have read it in translation or at least been familiar with its storyline. Whether or not, the *Carol* influenced or inspired Kierkegaard will probably never be known. Despite this, there is enough of a resemblance between the character of Ebenezer Scrooge and Kierkegaard’s ‘demonic’ individual to more than justify a Kierkegaardian reading of *A Christmas Carol*.

Upon first reading *A Christmas Carol* there appears little evidence of anxiety. The protagonist, Ebenezer Scrooge would seem to be the least anxious person imaginable. A bellicose, spiteful man, he seems strikingly sure of himself. However, a closer reading of the text from an existential standpoint shows that this is hardly the case. Scrooge, from the outset, is a cold, nasty and mean-spirited character. As the story opens, he turns down his nephew’s invitation to Christmas dinner; begrudges his clerk’s only holiday in the year; refuses to contribute to charity; frightens a carol singer; and violently claims that “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” (48). Where is anxiety to be found in such a stance? Everywhere, I suggest. In Kierkegaardian terms, Scrooge perfectly embodies Kierkegaard’s concept of the demonic (Concept 118). In *The Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard speaks of those who exist in a state of “inclosing reserve” or “unfreedom” (124). These individuals are essentially in dread of the good and as a consequence close themselves off from freedom. As Kierkegaard states: “The demonic does not close itself up with something, but it closes itself up within itself, and in this lies what is profound about existence, precisely that unfreedom makes itself a prisoner” (Concept 124). The worst case in terms of the demonic is that of “bestial perdition”, which for Kierkegaard “shuns every contact [with the good], whether this actually threatens it by wanting to help it to freedom or only touches it casually” (Concept 137). This is because the good represents freedom, communication and expansion which is the direct antithesis of the demonic position which seeks to be “more and more inclosed and does not want communication” (Concept 124). The demonic individual hence feels anxiety of the worst possible kind – in short, neurotic anxiety as opposed to normal anxiety and this is precisely what Scrooge suffers from. Normal anxiety occurs whenever one has the opportunity to grow, in other words, when one is aware of one’s freedom. Examples of this might include the child learning to walk or the child attending school for the first time (May, *Meaning* 38). For Kierkegaard, freedom is aligned with one’s higher self for “the good is freedom” (Concept 111). It also stands for possibility – for “possibility is to be able” (Concept 49). As such, anxiety is unavoidable if a person is to fulfil his or her highest potential or capability. As Kierkegaard puts it: “Whoever is educated by anxiety is educated by possibility and only he who is educated by possibility is educated according to his infinitude” (Concept 156). By contrast, in a state of neurotic anxiety, the individual fails to move ahead whenever he/she confronts his/her freedom and this is just where Scrooge, prior to his reformation, is positioned.

Neurotic anxiety is generally viewed as a failure of adjustment to the world but in reality it is an adjustment to the world. As Rollo May puts it: “Neurosis is … a necessary adjustment by which centeredness can be preserved; a way of accepting nonbeing in
order that some little being may be preserved” (Discovery 26–7). How then is Scrooge neurotic? If we examine Scrooge’s encounter with the Ghost of Christmas Past, we will find that Scrooge, as a child, experienced ontological insecurity. Year after year at Christmas time, Scrooge is left alone in a boarding school, when the other boys go home for the holidays. There he paces the rooms despairingly or reads near a “feeble fire” (Christmas Carol 71). He also develops a vivid fantasy life to the point where he experiences his favourite book characters as real people. Indeed, it is only when he becomes a young man that he is relieved from his pitiable state. The following exchange occurs when his little sister, Fan who has become “quite a woman”, comes one Christmas to collect him:

“I have come to bring you home, dear brother!” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh.
“To bring you home, home, home!”
“Yes!” said the child, brimful of glee. “Home, for good and all. Home for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home’s like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you.” (73–4)

As is evident, Scrooge’s father has up until this point been unkind and neglectful. As to Scrooge’s mother, there is no mention of her, which suggests that she is probably dead. Interestingly the word ‘home’ is foregrounded in the text. Home and all of the things associated with home including security, the love and companionship of his sister, and the joys of family Christmas gatherings are what Scrooge has missed out on. Little wonder then that Scrooge as an adult shuts down emotionally and becomes obsessive about security.

Scrooge is of course a miser. From this we can surmise that Scrooge, as a child, felt that he could trust in no one to provide security, and so, as an adult, he obsessively sought to provide it for himself in a material sense. If anxiety is, within Kierkegaardian terms, the struggle to achieve being as opposed to non-being, then Scrooge adopts the most constrictive and non-creative form of anxiety. In this light, his miserliness and misanthropy are neurotic coping mechanisms – ways which allow him to protect himself against undependable and uncaring humans who threaten him with non-being. Scrooge, by this token, dreads the good because being emblematic of freedom, expansion and communication, it is diametrically opposed to the adjustments he has had to make in the interests of self-preservation. Participating in goodness would involve a major risk for Scrooge: the potential loss of his hard-won identity – an identity which has narrowed his world but has at least made possible some sense of meaning and integration. As Peter Vardy in Kierkegaard writes: “The difference between the demonic and someone who has faith is that although both are in an absolute relationship to the absolute, the demonic is in a relationship of total rejection. The demonic establishes her or his identity in relation to the divine and by rejection of it” (45). One of the best ways to experience goodness is through encounter, as Rollo May states: “Encounter is always a potentially creative experience; it normally should ensue in the expanding of consciousness, the enrichment of self … In genuine encounter both persons are changed however minutely” (Discovery 22).

For Scrooge however, even the slightest encounter provokes anxiety. How significant then, that Scrooge should have a full-scale spectral ‘anxiety attack’ on the night before what is effectively an annual orgy of enforced encounters, Christmas. Traditionally a time of peace and goodwill towards all men, Christmas in its overwhelming celebration of participatory being, threatens to destroy Scrooge’s tenuous and isolated ontological condition.
In terms of Scrooge’s distorted worldview, then, Christmas is not a time of joy but rather a catastrophic event which threatens to completely engulf him in non-being. Indeed, it is a time that awakens Scrooge’s worst fear – his fear of death.

Throughout the book, Scrooge denies the fact that life is finite. Exhibiting a classic case of death anxiety or thanato-phobia, he develops what Winnicott terms a “pathological organisation of defences” (Winnicott 28) to prevent acknowledgement of mortality. There are many indications of this. Old Marley, his business partner might be “as dead as a door-nail” (*Christmas Carol* 45) and Scrooge may be very well aware of it – “Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise?” (45) – but Scrooge never erases Marley’s name from the sign on his counting-house door: “Scrooge never painted out Old Marley’s name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley” (46). In such a way, Scrooge symbolically denies the loss of his business partner. Scrooge resents shutting up his counting-house at the end of a day’s business (53); is indignant at having to pay wages to his clerk on a public holiday; and “beguiles” the evenings away “with his banker’s-book” (54). He is a workaholic who is at odds with time, as Irvin D. Yalom states: “A frantic fight with time may be indicative of a powerful death fear. Workaholic individuals relate to time precisely as if they were under the seal of imminent death and were scurrying to get as much completed as possible” (124). Scrooge’s intense childhood identification with fantasy literature, to the point where he sees Ali Baba “wonderfully real and distinct to look at” (*Christmas Carol* 72) standing outside his schoolroom, reveals a highly developed delusional system, which is a clear indicator of over determined death anxiety. Through fantasy, Scrooge is enabled to avoid confronting the fact that, because he is disregarded by his father and/or mother, he is, in a symbolic sense, like Marley, “as dead as a door nail” (45). As Peter Koestenbaum states:

A *symbolic death* is the collapse of the particular world towards which our energies and goals are directed …. For the businessman, the collapse of his business is a *symbolic death* …. A personal slight is a further example of *symbolic death*. To be ignored, by others, especially by those whose attention we prize and esteem, is to be thought dead …. And the effects … are similar to those facing a person in what we are inclined to call real or genuine death. (14–5)

Scrooge’s rejection of intimacy is an obvious shield against death-awareness and fear. By not getting close to people, Scrooge ensures that he will never experience loss. Not only does Scrooge fear a loss of self, but he also fears the loss of others. For Irvin D. Yalom: “The most fundamental (basic) anxiety issues from the threat of loss of self; and if one fears object loss, one does so because loss of that object is a threat (or symbolizes a threat) to one’s survival” (103). Bereft of his parents throughout his childhood, Scrooge is forced to confront contingency and it literally appals him. A. Maurer in his article “Maturation of Concepts of Death” states:

At some level below true cognition, the child with naïve narcissism ‘knows’ that the loss of his parents is the loss of his tie to life. Left alone or with strangers or in a strange place, he feels abandoned without hope of rescue. Total terror of his life rather than jealous possessiveness of a lost love object is the aetiology of the somatic distress of separation anxiety. (36)

That, quite simply, is why love is anathema to Scrooge. Love, like Christmas, is in Scrooge’s code of values, humbug. In other words, it bodes non-being and must therefore be avoided at all costs. Scrooge necessarily despises those that are capable of love because they possess what he has devalued in the interests of survival. This is highlighted in his annoyance at his nephew’s conjugal state:
“Why did you get married?”
“Because I fell in love.”
“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge, as if that were the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. “Good afternoon!” (49)

Scrooge’s detestation of love is also underscored when his fiancée claims that she has been replaced by money because Scrooge is at base motivated by fear: “You fear the world too much …. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain engrosses you” (79). By forming no loving ties with people, then, Scrooge wards off dysphoria, but he also retards his own emotional growth.

Finally, Scrooge’s insensitivity displays a typically maladaptive and irrational means of dealing with death anxiety. Nothing appears to get to Scrooge. He is above and beyond it all. Extremes of temperature do not affect him: “External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty” (46). The reactions of people in the street when he goes walking do not concern him: “What did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life warning all human sympathy to keep its distance …” (47). The pain of others is of no consequence. This is conveyed through his odious Malthusian proclamation that suffering people had better die “and decrease the surplus population” (51). Disgusted by people that are dependent upon others, Scrooge’s life is characterised by consummate self-reliance. In every way he seeks counter-dependency and dreads any expression of human frailty. Again, dependence awakens feelings of non-being and Scrooge must fight such notions through resorting to denigration. Nevertheless, the ugly, delusive nature of such a stance is aptly expressed by the Ghost of Christmas Present:

“Man,” said the Ghost, “if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man’s child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!” (97)

Death anxiety is thus the central organizing principle of Scrooge’s life and it is owing to this that Scrooge suspends living and growing. As Yalom states: “It is, of course, paradoxical … that it is the person who will not ‘live’ who is most terrified of dying” (161–2). But while Scrooge has built up a sophisticated array of defences to deal with his worst fear, he has stretched this defence system too thin and inevitably a breakdown has to occur. This crisis happens not before time, on Christmas Eve, which is tellingly the night that Scrooge’s business partner died. Prior to Scrooge’s transformation, Jacob Marley (albeit only in ghost form) is the one person that Scrooge can bring himself to compliment. Lamenting his badly handled life, Jacob cries out in torment:

“No space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”
“But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,” faltered [sic] Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.
“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!” (62)
Significantly, a ghost has to tell Scrooge his real business. This is no doubt because Scrooge cannot trust actual people. As a result, he has to be terrified into awareness by beings that are quite removed from his distorted worldview. Perhaps too, his spectral anxiety attack can only be triggered off by Marley, because Marley was the person who most truly resembled Scrooge in life. This is presumably why Scrooge couldn’t care less if people addressed him by the name of Marley or Scrooge – for as the narrator says “it was all the same to him” (46). Marley, in this sense, is Scrooge’s tormented ‘alter ego’ who must finally be allowed, not simply to speak but to bear gifts, the chief of these being the chance for Scrooge to confront death and incorporate it into his life.

One of Dickens’s literary successors, Thomas Hardy wrote: “if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst” (168). And the Worst is just what Scrooge needs to acknowledge because, as Kierkegaard maintains: “He who has not suffered under human bestiality will not become spirit” (Sickness 7). Accordingly, a ghoulish and painful tour is put together for Scrooge by the last of the Christmas Ghosts. Guided by this silent, pointing phantom, Scrooge is taken to see the events following the demise of a friendless, avaricious man. In the streets he is treated to the knowledge that news of the man’s death is greeted merely by yawning and jocularity. In a wretched “low-browed, beetling shop” (114), he views a charwoman, a laundress and a man who works for an undertaker gleefully hawking the dead man’s possessions to a “rascal” shopkeeper (114). At the man’s death bed (surrounded by the noise of cats and rats trying to get into the room) the phantom points to the sheet that covers the man’s head, but Scrooge cannot bring himself to lift it. At an unspecified dwelling, he views the sheer joy and thankfulness of a poor family hearing of the death of their “merciless creditor” (120). All of these experiences prove too much for the confused Scrooge, who then requests to see “some tenderness connected with a death” (120). With the utmost celerity, the Ghost shows Scrooge the sincere grief that the Cratchit family feel at the death of Tiny Tim.

Knowing his time with the Spirit is reaching a close, Scrooge then requests to know who the man was that he saw lying dead. Accordingly, the Spirit guides Scrooge to a churchyard and points to a particular neglected grave. Filled with dread, Scrooge creeps up to the tombstone and reads his own name “EBENEZER SCROOGE” (124). In fear and desperation, the now enlightened and no longer uncaring Scrooge makes an extraordinary trans-temporal resolution: “I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach” (126). This is not, however, enough for the “immovable” (124) Spirit and finally Scrooge, in absolute despair, holds up his hands “in a last prayer to have his fate reversed” (126). At this point, the Phantom shrinks, collapses and dwindles “down into the shape of Scrooge’s bedpost” (126). For Kierkegaard: “when a human existence is brought to the point where it lacks possibility, it is in despair and is so every moment it lacks possibility” (Sickness 68). However, salvation is possible:

The decisive thing is: for God everything is possible. This is eternally true …. But the decisive moment only comes when man is brought to the utmost extremity, where in human terms there is no possibility. Then the question is whether he will believe that for God everything is possible, that is, whether he will have faith. (Sickness 68)

It is only then in the moment where Scrooge finds himself bereft of possibility that he is enabled to simultaneously get in touch with himself and a higher power. As Kierkegaard writes:
in relating itself to itself and in wanting to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the power which established it. Which formula in turn, as has frequently been remarked, is the definition of faith. (Sickness 165)

In taking this leap of faith, Scrooge is well positioned to fulfil his timely resolve to live in the Past, Present and the Future. Indeed, according to Kierkegaard, it is only through faith that an individual can achieve a synthesis of the past and future in the present and hence become what Kierkegaard terms contemporaneous: “To be contemporary with oneself … is transparency in repose, and this is possible only in the God-relationship, or it is the God-relationship” (Journals 456–7).

When Scrooge encounters the ghost of his business partner Marley, he learns that Marley is tangled in chains of his own making:

“You are fettered,” said Scrooge, trembling. “Tell me why”
“I wear the chain I forged in life,” replied the Ghost. “I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?”
Scrooge trembled more and more.
“Or would you know,” pursued the Ghost, “the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!” (61)

This state of self-entanglement is a metaphor relevant to Kierkegaard’s account of anxiety. As Kierkegaard writes:

Anxiety is neither a category of necessity nor a category of freedom, it is entangled freedom, where freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity but in itself. (Concept 49)

For Kierkegaard, the dreadful fettered state of anxiety must precede the qualitative leap of faith which is freedom. So too, for Scrooge, severe anxiety must be experienced before he can pray and thereby experience freedom. This is why when the last of the Spirits has changed into a bedpost, Scrooge is tremendously relieved that he has time before him to make amends and is overwhelmed with the possibilities that lie before him:

“I don’t know what to do!” cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath … “I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world!” (127)

Indeed, he feels nothing short of reborn:

“I don’t know what day of the month it is!” said Scrooge. “I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby.” (128)

Along with freedom, belief or truth brings the possibility of guilt, as Kierkegaard puts it: “In freedom’s possibility, it holds true that the more profoundly this is grasped, the more profoundly and definitively the possibility of guilt appears within it” (“Selected Entries,” Concept 200). There is no question that Scrooge experiences profound existential guilt, because he effectively spends the rest of his life trying to atone for his former mean-spiritedness. Indeed he does everything within his power to be a better person:

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. (134)
In his detailed explication of the *Carol* as a Christian parable, Robert L Patten claims that Scrooge’s conversion is “serious and permanent.” Further, he contends that the *Carol* serves to demonstrate that Dickens was far from irreligious or simple-minded: “The *Carol* ... relates Past, Present, and Future. ... into an ever-present, incarnated Christian unity” (196). I would agree that Scrooge’s conversion should be taken seriously and that the *Carol* (as a parable of spiritual regeneration and multiple temporal dimensions) provides convincing evidence that Dickens’s possessed a complex religious sensibility. In addition, for the reasons stated above, I believe that *A Christmas Carol* can also be viewed as a work which manifests a distinct existential sensibility particularly in relation to anxiety.

The role of anxiety in *A Christmas Carol* is to awaken Scrooge to his being. By revealing death as a definite and meaningful eventuality, it forces Scrooge to acknowledge his freedom. In doing so, he finds faith. Mirroring Kierkegaard’s writings, Dickens’s notion of self-realization is specifically Christian. A number of later existentialists such as Sartre and Camus would take a different atheistic stance which, as John Macquarrie asserts, might “seem to be reaching existentialism in its purest form, for in rejecting any religious claim, these men seem to be asserting the complete autonomy and responsibility of the individual” (20–210). However, this ‘purer’ notion of authentic selfhood does not diminish the pioneering achievement of Dickens and Kierkegaard as the two men almost contemporaneously produced seminal works of existential angst. In her work *Introduction to Existentialism* Marjorie Grene asserts that anxiety lies at the heart of existentialism. For Grene, it is the stress on “the terrible realization of dread as the core of human life [which] gives the [existential] movement such significance.” Moreover, she claims that Kierkegaard as a thinker “saw the possibility of dread and its significance for human life” (138). It would appear to me that Dickens also shared this profound existential insight, for the parable *A Christmas Carol* provides a paradigmatic example for the possibility of anxiety to educate an individual according to his or her infinitude, in other words, to help the individual realize that his or her true identity lies in committing to a power which transcends rational understanding. As such, it represents the fictional working through of the ideas that Kierkegaard was to expound in *The Concept of Anxiety* six months later.

**Short Biography**

Shale Preston holds a BA (Hons) from the University of Sydney and a PhD from Macquarie University. She is an Honorary Associate in the English Department at Macquarie University and is a member of The Dickens Fellowship. Her research on the works of Charles Dickens has been published in international journals (including The Yearbook of English Studies) and in edited collections including David Copperfield (C.A.P.E.S./Aggregation Anglais, Paris: Ellipses). Shale has given lectures and conference papers on Dickens at Dickens Fellowship meetings and at international Victorian studies conferences in Europe, the United States, Asia and Australia. Her monograph Dickens and the Despised Mother: A Critical Reading of Three Autobiographical Novels is forthcoming with McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, North Carolina, USA.

**Notes**

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1 It precedes Sigmund Freud’s 1927 work on anxiety, *Inhibition, Symptom, and Anxiety*, by over 80 years.

2 (1844) *Julenatten* [CC], trans. anon., Copenhagen: Jordan. My thanks to Professor Dominic Rainsford (Department of English, University of Aarhus, Denmark) for this information. According to Professor Rainsford, “The first trans. of CC called it “Julenatten”, i.e. “Christmas Night”, but “Et juleeventyr”, i.e. “A Christmas Story”, has become standard.”

**Works Cited**


