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Mitsuharu Matsuoka, editor. *Dickens and the Anatomy of Evil: Sesquicentennial Essays.* Athena Press, 2020. Pp. xiv + 366. ¥3,636. ISBN: 9784863403376 (hb).

Setting the scene of this project commemorating 150 years since Dickens's death, the editor notes that, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, it almost did not make its deadline. Yet, in true tribute to Dickens's own strict adherence to deadlines, the collection was successfully published (in even greater tribute) on Christmas day of 2020. The influence for the work, as Paul Schlicke identifies in his Introduction to this edited collection, is that "[a]mong Dickens's firmly held beliefs is the conviction of the existence of evil" (2), and each of the twenty essays anatomizes the "various kinds of evil" (ix) at play, focusing on one of Dickens's major works, roughly in chronological order of publication.

Schlicke frames the collection according to what he argues Dickens saw as the primary evils – murder and the abuse of children. As well as the thorough and solemn evil of murderers and abusers like Sikes and Murdstone, there are the "comically grotesque figures," taking on "allegorical status more powerful than any realism" (4). Tomoya Watanabe identifies Jonas Chuzzlewit as such as character, while Mark Weeks shows another function of the comic grotesque through an examination of affective laughter in *Pickwick Papers*, seeing overflowing embodied experiences and energies in the novel as an antidote to "the evil seen to be inflicted upon bodies by the law" (26). Unique in Dickens's works, suggests Schlicke, is an evil showcased in *The Haunted Man* – a type that is not an "active ingredient" but the "negation of goodness" that comes with the removal of memories which create positive qualities such as empathy (5, 6). Yet, almost conversely, suggests Yasuhiko Matsumoto of Dickens's unfinished *Edwin Drood,* the constant access to imagination Jasper possesses, and to which the reader is partly privy, "presents an uncomfortable possibility that imagination, often regarded as a foundation for empathy, can serve evilness" (365). The private, rather than public, setting of *The Haunted Man* is expounded in Hiroshi Enomoto's analysis of the Christmas books, where he suggests that, "[r]ather than taking social evils at face value," Dickens "addresses them as

private experiences in order to make his writing resonate with a wider range of people" (167). Expanding on the cast of specific "evil" types of character, both Keiko Kiriyama and Sari Nishigaki separately explore how James Harthouse of *Hard Times* and Compeyson of *Great Expectations*, respectively, are evil dandified figures, each of whom "succeeds in concealing his true character" through his good and gentlemanly looks ([Nishigaki] 318). Each author charts the breakdown of their character's "chain of evil" – the former owing to an innocent antithesis, the latter through a more complex thread of forgiveness and consolation. Mitsuharu Matsuoka offers an alternative focus by considering how the wider material and economic context of postal anonymity had positive aspects for customers, but "also caused maladies or evil effects, including […] the promotion of valueless products, defrauding recipients, blackmailing for money, and threatening to reveal dark secrets" (244), in *Bleak House*.

Yet, what many of the essays in the collection essentially argue is that there are characters, narrative and generic tensions, topographical descriptions through which the reader is "led to doubt" the "indisputability" of the otherwise "clear demarcation between Good and Evil," and the unstable or inconsistent aspects "shake and endanger the seemingly unassailable distinction" (44). For Mio Hatada, even with positive guardianship in *Oliver Twist*, the child figure is nevertheless shown to be both "promise and threat" and this strongly suggests "that the seemingly innocent and good Oliver might prove no exception to this dual-sidedness" and can be viewed as "the source of the collapse" between good and evil (47, 58). Similarly, Keiko Inokuma suggests that "behind various episodes that reveal his immaturity, *David Copperfield* shows the flickering image of an almost nefariously mature David," for "[w]hat appears to be innocent and pure contains what could be mature and even evil." (217, 221). Both point to what scholars of childhood have identified as "[t]he emblematic child" who "is, in fact […] Janus-faced," at once the "good/evil child" (Conrad 185).

Character is also key for Mizuki Tsutsui, who demonstrates how *Nicholas Nickleby* "calls into question the good/bad dichotomy," as the unstable narrative arcs of Ralph Nickleby, Smike, and Mrs. Nickleby show. Yasuki Kihara posits that, in *Barnaby Rudge*, it is perhaps Hugh of the Maypole who "more appropriately embodies the evil chaotic energy destroying order," for he can intrude into the daylight world, whereas Barnaby, whose "innocence is unfortunately tainted by that blood-like smear on his wrist" is a solely "chaotic night crawler" (99, 100, 102). This makes Hugh more dangerous because he flouts the law of the binary. For Masayo Hasegawa, actions complicate, not maketh, the man, for there is an ambiguity of the "Christ-like martyrdom" of Sydney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities,* a metaphorical self-cannibalism which reveals a darker side to this apparent act of Goodness

in dying to save his rival.

A few essays examine adherence and disruption of the perceived boundaries of genre through the theme of evil: melodrama and anti-melodrama in Tsutsui's essay, and myths, legends, and fairy tales in Ryota Kanayama's discussion of *The Old Curiosity Shop* and Aya Yatsugi's study of *Dombey and Son*. Akiko Kimura argues that *Our Mutual Friend* "represents evil through more complicated narrative devices than any other" Dickens novel, and that, ultimately, "[w]hile the clear dichotomy of good and evil is maintained and emphasized, especially by the fairy-tale elements […] the fantastic also destabilizes the fictional reality in the urban space by continuously creating other narrative layers" (322, 346).

In her examination of "Europhobia" in *Little Dorrit***,** Arisa Nakagoe argues that "cosmopolitanism and multilingualism" can be threatening because they potentially allow "malevolent foreigners" to slip "into domestic society" unperceived, where lack of fluency generally deems the character trustworthy, but infantilized, as in other contemporaneous fiction; and yet Dickens mocks characters who treat the foreigner this way, thus subverting the trend. Complementarily, Manami Tamura suggests that the foreign *location* as a source of disruption is enacted in *Pictures from Italy,* through the sublime and stark contrast between the Gothic horror and beauty of the same location, yet "like a möbius strip, darkness will turn into light, and past will turn into present without us noticing" (185). So too, in her examination of "the carceral or claustrophobic landscape depicted in *American Notes*," Nanako Konoshima asserts that in his "use of contrasts, in describing landscapes" Dickens contests "the duplicity, inherent in 'the land of the free'" (119). There appears a consensus that in Dickens's serially published non-fiction the narrative voice is often unstable or inconsistent in its depiction of evil. Kotaro Murakami notes how the "duality of Dickens's city aesthetics" in *Sketches by Boz* reveals "miscellaneous voices" (22) that evolve from simple messages of repulsion to a gradually deepening sympathy in later ones. This is extended further in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, which Fumie Tamai argues has a narrative which "reveals his complex identity that is torn between the ideal as a benignant social reformer and the fear of the threatening poor" (298).

Whilst the relationship to the overall theme is less focused in a few of the essays, the intention of the volume is achieved through the collective connections. It is also enriched by the number of visual representations throughout, including illustrations from various nineteenth-century editions, and pertinent extraneous material from, for example, Hogarth, *Punch*, and the *Illustrated News* that helps situate the arguments within the wider social, political, and imaginative network. The structure and focus of each unit also enable the essays to be consulted separately, making the collection

valuable not only to Dickens scholars, but extremely useful in a classroom and university setting.

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Annette Federico. *Charles Dickens: But for You, Dear Stranger.* Oxford UP, 2022. Pp. vii + 164. £18.99. IBSN: 978-0-1928-4734-8 (hb).

Annette Federico's *But for You, Dear Stranger* exemplifies how nuanced and analytical personal responses to literature can be. Rather than solely *thinking* our way through Dickens's corpus, Federico demonstrates the rewards to be reaped from *feeling* our way through as well. She achieves this quietly, but unashamedly, unapologetically, and with admirable honesty. Federico has previous form with such an approach, as evidenced in her 2020 project, *My Victorian Novel: Critical Essays in the Personal Voice*, and it shows. The narrative that unfolds is highly creative, at times poetic and even therapeutic through its combined personal and critical engagement with Dickens's novels. Despite the modest admission from the outset that "I never thought of myself as a Dickens expert" (ix), the breadth and depth of her knowledge and thinking around Dickens, his life and his work are never in question; more importantly for this book, neither is her love for them. *But for You, Dear Stranger* underscores how personal experience can be used effectively to revitalize areas of literary study and how the personal is not the enemy of the critical.

Federico outlines in the preface that this book, in line with Dickens's own ethos, is part of an attempt to "grow more childish," to go on "a pilgrimage away from mere intellectual knowingness toward some other kind of knowledge" (xi), through a consideration of her past, her relationships and herself. This pilgrimage takes the form of three chapters, each one dedicated to a focal novel – *Oliver Twist* (1837), *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Little Dorrit* (1857), consecutively – with a concluding section about *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859).

In chapter one, entitled "Where Is Love?," Federico begins by revealing the loss of her parents and thoughtfully examines her relationships with them. She describes an 1895 decorative plate owned by her parents depicting the