

Fernando Pessoa

Charles Dickens — Mr. Pickwick belongs to the sacred figures. . .

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Mr. Pickwick belongs to the sacred figures of the world's history. Do not, please, claim that he has never existed: the same thing happens to most of the world's sacred figures, and they have been living presences to a vast number of consoled wretches. So, if a mystic can claim a personal acquaintance and clear vision of the Christ, a human man can claim personal acquaintance and a clear vision of Mr. Pickwick.

Pickwick, Sam Weller, Dick Swiveller — they have been personal acquaintances of our happier hours, irremediably lost through some trick of losing that time and space have nothing to do with. They have lapsed from us in a diviner way than dying, and we keep their memory with us in a better manner than remembering. The human trammels of space and time do not bind them to us, they owe no allegiance to the logic of ages, nor to the laws of living, nor to the appearances of chance. The garden in us, where they live secluded, gathers in flowers of all the things that make mankind copious and pleasant to live with: the hour after dinner when we are all brothers, the winter morning when we all walk out together, the feast-days when the riotous things of our imperfection — biologic truths, political realities, being sincere, striving to know, art for art's sake — lie on the inexistent other side of the snow-covered hills.

To read Dickens is to obtain a mystic vision — but, though he claims so often to be Christian, it has nothing to do with the Christian vision of the world. It is a recasting of the old pagan noise, the old Bacchic joy at the world being ours, though transiently, at the coexistence and fullness of men, at the meeting a good [?] part of perennial mankind.

It is a human works, and so women are of no importance in it, as the old Pagan criterion has it, and has it truly. The women of Dickens are cardboard and sawdust to pack his men to us on the voyage from the space of dream. The joy and zest of life does not include woman and the old Greeks, who created pederasty as an institution of social joy, knew this to the final end.

Dickens' women are dolls, but all women are dolls. As some thinkers upheld it at Nicea (?), women have no souls. Their existence is bi-dimensional to the tri-dimensional psychism of men. Women are merely ornaments to man's life — of his life as an animal, as enabling him to satisfy an instinct, of his life as a social being, as enabling him to continue the society he lives in and, working for, creates anew, of his life as an intellectual being as a decorative part of the outer world, with landscapes, china, pictures, old furniture... [...]

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