

# Scrooge

## Key Themes

- Selfishness/ materialism
- Social injustice/ poverty
- Supernatural
- Kindness/Family
- Religion
- Regret/Redemption

## Key Words/Phrases

### Stave 1 + Stave 2

- Parsimonious (stingy)
- Frugal (stingy)
- Miser (doesn't spend money - tight)
- Avaricious (greedy)
- Covetousness (desire for wealth)
- Apathetic (unemotional)
- Ostracised (isolated)
- Callous (cruel)
- Cold
- Misanthropic (anti-social)
- Archetypal villain
- Ignorant
- Malthusian views
- Irascible (easily angered)
- Unrepentant (no guilt)
- Intransigent (stubborn)
- Obdurate (stubborn)
- Entrenched (stuck) in his beliefs
- Perpetuates (continues) social injustice
- Insularity (ignorant)
- Moral transgression (go against)

### Stave 3 + Stave 4

- Repentant (remorse)
- Remorseful
- Penitent (feels regret)
- Develops a collective social conscience (right from wrong in society)
- Compassion
- Salvation (save from harm)
- Redemption (save from sin)
- Submissive
- Receptive (open to new ideas)

### Stave 5

- Virtuous (moral)
- Scrupulous (moral)
- Champion for social justice
- Benevolent (loving)
- Enlightened
- Undergone a rebirth
- Transmogrified (change in a surprising manner)
- Freed
- Rebirth
- Compassion
- Altruism (selfless)
- Philanthropic (charitable)
- Magnanimous (generous)
- Humanitarianism (loving towards others)

## Dickens' intentions

- Dickens crafts an **allegorical** (story with moral message) novella with a **didactic** (to teach) purpose, aiming to convey a message about the **virulent** (harmful) consequences of **avariciousness (greed) and frugality (stinginess)** in society. He criticises the upper classes for their apathy (lack of concern) toward the poor and **their complicity in perpetuating dehumanising laws and social structures** through ignorance.
- Dickens communicates to his upper-class audience the important role of repentance (remorse) and compassion in creating both personal and societal **moral redemption**. **By holding up a mirror to his readership**, he prompts them to **introspect** (look in at themselves) and assess whether their attitudes **perpetuate social injustice or contribute to social reform**.
- In Stave 1, Dickens deliberately portrays Scrooge as deeply entrenched in his **misanthropic** (anti-social) attitudes, highlighting his transformative journey by Stave 5. By depicting Scrooge as a **microcosm** (something small representing something larger) of the upper class, Dickens demonstrates the potential for change and personal growth, even in individuals **with the most entrenched immorality**. Ultimately, Dickens emphasises that social reform can be achieved when society is guided by **principles of generosity and empathy**.

**“Squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner” (Stave 1)**

**Link to main key themes:**

- **Selfishness/materialism**
- **Social Injustice**
- **Religion**

### Analysis

- **The asyndetic listing (a list that uses commas rather than the word ‘and’):** The asyndetic listing highlights selfish and avaricious character. It portrays Scrooge's immoral characteristics as ongoing, casting him as an unrepentant (no guilt) “sinner.”
- The use of **7 negative adjectives** mirrors how there are **7 deadly sins**, known as **cardinal sins**, which were seen in the bible as the root of all evil. As the **foundations of Victorian morality was religion**, the parallels between Scrooge and the sins are used by Dickens to highlight how the rich, symbolised by Scrooge, are more inclined towards **moral transgression** (go against morals) than the poor. Dickens implicitly critiques societal structures, such as the **1834 Poor Law**, which were ironically designed to address the perceived sin and laziness of the poor.
- **‘squeezing’ and ‘wrenching’ connotes a struggle:** The verbs “squeezing” and “wrenching” connote a struggle, this illustrates how Scrooge struggles to see the detrimental consequences of his **frugality** (stinginess) and thus, his role in **perpetuating social inequality**.
- Alternatively, the undertone of a struggle is used by Dickens to illustrate how the **avariciousness** (greed) of the upper classes directly causes a struggle for the **impoverished** (poor).

### Links To Other Key Themes

- **Regret/redemption:** Dickens constructs Scrooge initially as a **quintessential** (perfect example) **Victorian miser**, embodying the archetype (typical example) of a villain. However, this depiction serves to emphasise his journey of growth and transformation into a regretful and **actively virtuous** (moral) member of society.

**“He seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.” (Stave 2)**

**Links to main key themes:**

- Supernatural
- Redemption

### Analysis

- **Verb “pressed” and adverb “sudden”:** The aggressive verb “*pressed*,” combined with the rapid adverb “*sudden*,” delves into Scrooge's immersion in deeply **suppressed emotions**. He reacts irrationally out of sheer panic, anticipating the prospect of confronting these **stifled memories from his past**.
- This **ethereal (delicate)** figure serves as more than a symbol of Scrooge's past; it symbolises the supernatural intervention necessary for Scrooge's **spiritual awakening**. He wants to place the restrictive ‘*cap*’ upon its head in a futile (pointless) attempt to **evade (avoid) the necessity of confronting his own humanity** and the repercussions of his actions.
- **Symbolism of the ghost:** The ghost is presented with iridescent (sparkling bright) imagery as it has a “*bright clear jet of light*”. This symbolism suggests that the ghost aspires to illuminate both the **literal and metaphorical darkness in Scrooge's life through revelation** (revealing his past) and reflection.
- The ghosts illumination of the past and its **interconnected nature to the present**, offers Scrooge the chance to **embark on a pathway of redemption** (save from sin). However, his attempt to cover the ghost with the ‘*cap*’ signifies his reluctance to embrace this opportunity for redemption.

### Links To Other Key Themes

- **Kindness:** The introduction to the supernatural eventually **catalyses** a change in Scrooge as he becomes to shatter his **insular** (ignorant) views and begins to see the **transformative power of empathy** and how this can break the relentless cycle of unjust poverty.

## “Yellow” “wolfish” “scowling” (Stave 3 - ignorance and want shown by Ghost of Christmas Present)

Links to main key themes:

- **Social injustice**
- **Selfishness**
- **Regret/ redemption**

### Analysis

- Ignorance and want are **allegorical (to teach) characters** aim to highlight the **unjustified abuse on innocent children as a result of the callous (cruel) and apathetic (un-emotional)** attitudes of the upper classes.
- **Image on yellow:** The colour ‘*yellow*’ serves as a stark reminder of the physical sickness and malnutrition endured by neglected children, a **consequence of societal neglect and individuals’ obliviousness to social injustice.**
- The encounter between Scrooge and these **marginalised (insignificant)** children illuminates that their poverty and suffering are directly caused by the affluent members of society, epitomised by characters like Scrooge, whose **covetousness (desire for wealth) outweighs their compassion.**
- **Animalistic image:** There is a feral and animalistic portrayal of the children as they’re described as “*scowling*” and “*wolfish*”. This animalistic image highlights how poverty **dehumanises individuals, stripping them of their humanity and reducing them to less than an animalistic state of being.**
- Alternatively, Dickens employs Scrooge, **an extension** of the ignorant wealthy, to encounter the dehumanised poor, illustrating that the **only remedy** to societal ills is for the rich to acknowledge their role in **perpetuating** (continuing) poverty and dehumanising the **impoverished** (poor).
- This notion is exemplified in Scrooge's **repentance (guilt)** in Stave 3, evident in his use of imperatives like “*tell me if Tiny Tim will live,*” showcasing his desperate attempt to **reverse his ignorance towards the plight (struggles) of the destitute (poor),** recognising their humanity amidst a society that has treated them in an animalistic way.

## Links To Other Key Themes

- **Religion:** As the ghost of Christmas present is presented in a God-like omniscient (all-knowing) way, it illustrates the **transformative power** of religion and how it is **inextricably** (closely) linked to morality. By bringing an individual back to the **foundational teachings of Christianity**, it **creates spiritual enlightenment** which allows individuals like Scrooge to become champions of social justice.
- **Supernatural+Kindness:** The introduction to the supernatural **catalyses** a change in Scrooge as he becomes to shatter his **insular** (ignorant) views and begins to see the **transformative power of empathy** and how this can break the relentless cycle of unjust poverty.

**“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me” (stave 4)**

**Links to main key themes:**

- Supernatural
- Religion
- regret/redemption
- Selfishness

### Analysis

- **Religious allusions:** The concept of “*three*” could be a biblical allusion to the three different forms of God within the **holy trinity: the father, the son and the holy spirit**. This could emphasise how the three ghosts almost acted as **incarnations of God** himself- relaying a moral and religious message that penetrated deeply within Scrooge.
- When he speaks of them striving “*within me*,” it signifies his **internalisation** of their moral teachings and his desperation to be given the opportunity to embark on the path of **salvation and redemption (save from sins)**.
- **Juxtaposition between ‘past, present and future’:** The juxtaposing passages of time in “*Past, present and future*” serve as a symbolic reflection of the stark contrast between Scrooge’s former **avaricious** (greedy) self and his transformation into a person dedicated to **redemption, moral and spiritual enlightenment**.
- The passage of time also emphasises his realisation of how his attitude in the “*past*” and “*present*” was not only **perpetuating** his ‘*solitary*’ existence, but also contributed to the **systemic oppression and exploitation of the vulnerable in society**.

## “Quite a baby” “merry as a schoolboy” stave 5

### Links to main key themes:

- Selfishness
- Religion
- Regret/redemption
- Social justice

### Analysis

- **Infantile language:** Scrooge’s infantile self-descriptions indicates his rebirth as he brands himself as a “baby” and “schoolboy”. As both a “baby” and “schoolboy” connote **innocence and youth**, Scrooge is showcasing how through him **repenting for his sins**, he has regained his youthful innocence and ability to see the world in an untainted light – he now views it through compassion, kindness and benevolence.
- As being a “baby” is the start of life, this signifies that Scrooge has been reborn as he has gone from a selfish “old sinner” back to the most innocent form of human life– he has had the ultimate rebirth.
- **Christian ideas of rebirth:** The concept of **rebirth holds significance in Christianity**, symbolising a **spiritual renewal and connection with God**. This is deeply intertwined with the belief in **Jesus Christ's rebirth**, which offered **salvation to humanity**.
- Similarly, Scrooge's own rebirth may hold the **promise of salvation and relief for the less fortunate**, as he assumes a **paternal** (fatherly) role akin to a “second father” to Tiny Tim, embodying compassion and generosity toward those in need.

### Links To Other Key Themes

- **Kindness/family:** Through Scrooge's portrayal as a **microcosm (something small representing something larger)** of the upper class, Dickens illustrates the easy potential for personal transformation and **redemption**. By depicting Scrooge's transition from **avarice (greed) to altruism (selflessness)** and genuine compassion, Dickens showcases the possibility of **catalysing positive change** within society simply by replacing selfishness with empathy and kindness.