

KEY WORDS

Redemption, forgiveness, salvation, submissive, abundance, materialism, plight of the destitute, allegorical characters

Scrooge Stave 3

UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR

- This stave is a clear turning point for Scrooge as he is **displaying genuine emotions of remorse, compassion, and empathy**. His emotional change is clear with his use of imperatives: **"tell me if Tiny Tim will live."**
- Scrooge's use of imperatives, paired with the verb **"cried"**, highlights his **catharsis** (an emotional release) as he is so overcome with guilt due to his **blatant disregard and ignorance to the plight of the destitute**—this being **personified** through the Cratchits.
- This is juxtaposing to his earlier use of impolite imperatives; he is now commanding to know about the well-being of others as he is **developing benevolence and solicitude (kindness)**.
- Dickens **anti-Malthusian tale** is clear within Scrooge's exchange with the ghost. The ghost emulates Scrooge's **heartless Malthusian view**: **"If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population"**. This resulting in Scrooge being **"overcome with penitence and grief"**.
- Scrooge feels **intense remorse** as he has seen the physical effects of his **blissful ignorance towards the plight of the poor**—Tiny Tim is **microcosmic for the victimisation of poor children** because of individuals like Scrooge seeing them as an inconvenience in society.
- Social commentator** Dickens ensures his readership is reflective on their contribution to social ills and if their ignorance allows the mistreatment of the poor to commence—most significantly the **victimisation of children**.

COMPARISON

Scrooge's most poignant change in his transformation is his regret for holding such ignorant Malthusian views. Dickens was critical of Malthusian views, coming from poverty himself, he was aware that the poor were not lazy and instead the rich were actually perpetuating this poverty. Thus, Scrooge's realisation of the damaging effects of holding these views is a tool Dickens uses to emphasise his strong political message for the need for social reform

BEGINNING OF HIS REDEMPTION

- Shows respect and is receptive to the ghosts teaching. He says **"forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask"**. This has **biblical undertones of asking for salvation** and forgiveness from God—**"forgive me father for I have sinned"**.
- Scrooge appears to be understanding his need to be **cleansed of sin**—he uses the spirit, perhaps an incarnation of God, to be aided with this.
- Scrooge appears **submissive** to the ghost, open and **welcoming the idea of his moral and spiritual awakening**. He, for the first time, shows remorse and obedience to his teachings: **"Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit"**.
- The **asyndetic list** **"ivy, turkey, geese, game, poultry, brown, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters..."** creates an **image of abundance and excessive wealth**. This could compound how Scrooge is in the financial position to afford these luxuries and yet takes them for granted.
- However, as these foods all **"vanished instantly"** it could allude to how these **materialistic luxuries only provide an ephemeral (temporary) amount of joy**: they are meaningless in the face of love and benevolence.
- Structurally**, this presentation of abundance is before the **destitute Cratchits**, this used by Dickens as an **indictment** (criticism) of the access to abundance the rich have while the poor are left to suffer.
- The use of **"oysters"** in the asyndetic list mirrors Scrooge's earlier depiction of being **"solitary as an oyster"**. As it symbolises Scrooge containing his internal moral 'pearl', the repeated reference could suggest that this **concealed moral nature is slowly being brought to the surface**.



IGNORANCE AND WANT

- Ignorance and want are **allegorical characters** aim to highlight the **unjustified abuse on innocent children as a result of poverty**.
- Dickens **personifies** poverty through the boy and girl.
- Their skin colour does not resemble that of a young healthy child as it is **"yellow"**. The colour could imply that children are physically sick and **malnourished** because of the **neglection of society and the obliviousness of individuals to social injustice**.
- Alternatively, **"yellow"** connotes sickness mirroring how the upper class believed that poverty was almost alike to a **contagious illness or sickness**. Thus, the upper-class members like Scrooge in society, felt it was easier to distance themselves from this 'disease' of poverty oppose to helping them.
- 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, the **animalistic dehumanising portrayal** could be an attack on the rich's **dehumanising treatment** of the lower classes.
- Dickens makes Scrooge, an extension of the ignorant rich, to meet the dehumanised poor for a sense of **justice** for his readership- the rich are being forced to recognise how they are **perpetuating poverty and animalising the poor**.
- It is significant that Ghost of present shows him this, as Dickens uses the ghost of present as his **mouthpiece to criticise the socio-economic poverty that pervaded Victorian society**.
- Dickens warns to his readers that they must **"Beware them both"** as it is easy to be " "to the **plight** of others and only focus on your **"want"** for more. Dickens uses these **allegorical characters** to make his reader be reflective of their social conscience and if they are **"ignorant"** and **"want"**.



TOPIC SENTENCES

Scrooge appears submissive to the ghost, open and welcoming the idea of his moral and spiritual awakening. He begins to actively seek out his own salvation due to realising the detrimental impact of holding his narrow-minded world views.

Social commentator Dickens uses his anti-Malthusian tale to emphasise how the ignorance to the plight of the destitute is synonymous with innocent children being victimised and suffering. Scrooge is emblematic of the upper class who perpetuate this suffering; hence Dickens creates Scrooge to feel remorse to make other upper-class members reflect on their contribution to social ills.

Dickens' allegorical characters of ignorance and want are used to further his scathing criticism on the dehumanising and animalistic treatment of the poor. He makes Scrooge, a microcosm of the upper class, directly face the impoverished children to evoke a sense of justice- the ignorant rich are being forced to face the consequences of their obliviousness.

