

Bob Cratchit / Cratchits

Key Words

Bob/ Cratchits

- Beneficent (generous)
- Benevolent (loving)
- Compassionate
- Grateful
- Fervent (passionate) gratitude
- Morally superior
- Communal values (community)
- Indebted to Scrooge
- Blindly grateful to Scrooge
- Virtuous (moral)

The Poor

- Silenced
- Oppressed
- Marginalised (treated as insignificant)
- Dehumanised
- Power dynamics
- Economic burdens
- Prejudicial (harmful) treatment
- Destitute (extremely poor)
- Impoverished (poor)
- Plight (troubles) of the poor
- Defenceless
- Perpetual (ongoing) cycle of poverty

Dickens' intentions

- Dickens' **scathing** (severely critical) critique of the **systemic injustices** within Victorian society is personified through the **blind gratitude** the lower working classes, like Bob, feel towards those who **exploit and oppress** them.
- In Dickens' allegorical novella, he dispels the idea that wealth is synonymous with superiority. Thus, he constructs Bob and the Cratchits to symbolise **morality and communal values**, reinforcing that despite their lack of material wealth they possess **moral superiority**.
- Bob is a **microcosm of the exploited poor**. Dickens crafts his character as inherently **benevolent** (loving/caring), yet subjected to immense unjust suffering, **to humanise** the struggles of the working classes and prompt readers to reconsider **societal misconceptions** regarding poverty.

“Clerk “ (stave 1)

Link to main key themes:

- selfishness/materialism
- Social injustice/ poverty

Analysis

- **Lack of an identity:** Bob Cratchit, initially referred to simply as the "clerk" in Stave 1 which is symbolic of the **dehumanisation and marginalisation** (treated as insignificant) experienced by the working class during the Victorian era.
- The **deliberate omission** (removal) of his name shows the **societal attitude that stripped the poor of their individuality**, reducing them to mere cogs in the machinery of an **industrialising society**.
- **Symbolism:** Bob's **anonymity** (being anonymous) highlights the motif (recurring symbol or theme) of social inequality and the **power dynamics between the upper and lower classes** – he is under the **oppressive** thumb of Scrooge, a ruthless embodiment of **capitalist greed**.
- Thus, he is perceived as a faceless member of the exploited poor who unfairly faced **prejudicial** (harmful) treatment due to stereotypes of laziness and being viewed as **economic burdens**.

Links To Other Key Themes

- **Religion:** Bob's proximity to the **foundations of morality**, and by extension, religion, shines through despite his lack of material wealth. Despite being overlooked by the **upper echelons of society**, his commitment to providing for his family, even at the expense of his own well-being, demonstrates a greater **adherence to religious principles than the self-serving avarice shown by individuals like Scrooge**.

"I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"

Link to main key themes:

- **Selfishness/materialism**
- **Social injustice/poverty**
- **Kindness/ family**

Analysis

- **Connotation of "Founder":** "The term "*founder*" connotes **creatorship**, reflecting how Bob perceives Scrooge with a **quasi-divine reverence** (having features of being God-like), granting and blessing him with the ability to afford what he deems as luxuries. This is reinforced through their gratitude towards a "*goose*", using the **superlative** "*rarest*" despite the **irony** this was a cheap bird that replaced Turkey in the Victorian era.
- This quote from Bob explores the **disheartening reality** where the **destitute** (extremely poor), like Bob, feel **indebted (owing) and blindly grateful** to those who exploit them, highlighting Dickens' **scathing** (severely critical) critique of the **systemic injustices** within Victorian society.
- **Exclamative sentence:** Bob epitomises (perfect example) **the power of true wealth**. Despite their **meagre materialistic possessions**, their **fervent (passionate) gratitude** is emphasised by the exclamative sentence. Thus, Bob and the Cratchits symbolise **morality and communal values**, challenging the idea that material wealth equates to **moral superiority**.
- Their minimal yet virtuous lifestyle serves as a stark contrast to the **avariciousness** (greed) **and callousness** (cruel) embodied by characters like Scrooge.

Links To Other Key Themes

- **Religion:** Bob's proximity to the **foundations of morality**, and by extension, religion, shines through despite his lack of material wealth. Despite being overlooked by the **upper echelons of society**, his commitment to providing for his family, even at the expense of his own well-being, demonstrates a greater **adherence to religious principles than the self-serving avarice shown by individuals like Scrooge**.
- **Supernatural:** Dickens uses the ghosts as **instruments of his social critique**. By revealing Bob Cratchit's family through the eyes of a spirit, Dickens shatters the upper-class readership's **ignorance and obliviousness**. This **supernatural intervention** exposes the stark contrast between the Cratchits' benevolent spirit and the audience's potential **prejudices** against the working class.

“My little, little child!” cried Bob. “My little child!”

Link to main key themes:

- selfishness/materialism
- Social injustice/ poverty
- kindness/family

Analysis

- **Repeated adjective:** The recurring adjective "*little*" evokes an image of **fragility and innocence**, emphasising how vulnerable children like Tiny Tim often fall **victim to the relentless cycle of poverty**. This repetition allows Dickens to emphasise the harsh realities and **repeated exploitation** faced by the most **defenceless members of society**, highlighting the urgent need for social reform.
- Dickens provides a solution to the **perpetual (never-ending) cycle of poverty** – the development of a **collective social conscience**. Through Scrooge's transformation into a **compassionate fatherly figure**, symbolised by his role as a "*second father*" to Tiny Tim, Dickens suggests that **societal unity and empathy** can alleviate the neglect and suffering experienced by the poor.
- **Indicts Malthusian views:** The portrayal of Tiny Tim as angelic, coupled with Bob's kindness, **exacerbates (further shows negatively) the damaging effects of Malthusian views (see context)**. Despite their morality, they are deemed **economic burdens** and dismissed as "*surplus population*," yet they are subject to real and unjust hardships.
- Bob is a **microcosm (something small representing something larger) of the exploited poor**. Dickens crafts his character as **inherently benevolent**, yet subjected to **immense unjust suffering**, to humanise the struggles of the working classes and prompt readers to reconsider **societal misconceptions** regarding poverty.

Links To Other Key Themes

- **Supernatural:** Dickens uses the ghosts as **instruments of his social critique**. By revealing Bob Cratchit's family through the eyes of a spirit, Dickens shatters the upper-class readership's **ignorance and obliviousness**. This **supernatural intervention** exposes the stark contrast between the Cratchits' benevolent spirit and the audience's potential **prejudices** against the working class.
- **Regret/redemption:** Scrooge's witnessing of the **immense unjust suffering** endured by the lower classes, propels his **redemption**. He begs "*Tell me if Tiny Tim will live*" to the ghost, illustrating how the solution to breaking the **perpetual cycle of poverty** is the **development of compassion and empathy**.