

KEY WORDS

self-effacing (modest), beneficent (generous), benevolent, compassionate, silenced, microcosm of the poor

Bob Cratchit & the Cratchits

EMBLEM OF THE NEGLECTED POOR

- Bob's **short exchange of dialogue** in Stave 1 represents how poor lower classes were **silenced and oppressed** by the upper classes: **"If quite convenient, sir"**.
- He is also referred to as the **'clerk'** in stave 1. His lack of a name highlights how the poor **were stripped of their individual identities**, consequently causing them to all be seen as one by the upper class- the upper class don't see them as individual humans, rather a group of lazy people who don't contribute enough to the economy (**Malthusian views**).
- In Stave 4, **pathos** and compassion is evoked for Bob when Tiny Tim dies: **"My little, little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!"**.
- Dickens uses Tiny Tim's death, **an angelic presentation of innocent children**, to emphasise Bob's **virtuous and compassionate nature**. He makes the reader see the **unjust punishments** the poor face because of **societal misconceptions**.
- The repeated adjective **"little"** connotes **fragility and innocence**, reinforcing that innocent and fragile children are frequently victims to the **belligerent cycle of poverty**- without **social change**, the unjust issues of poverty will continue.
- Dickens provides a solution to breaking the **unrelenting cycle of poverty**. He shows through the development of a **collective social conscience**, as developed by Scrooge when he becomes a **"second father"** to Tiny Tim, society can **unite and alleviate this neglect and suffering of the poor**.

COMPARISON

Bob and Tim are **emblems of the neglected poor**- both display nothing **but virtuous characteristics yet endlessly suffer**. This juxtaposes Scrooge who undergoes no suffering yet is the **epitome of a Victorian miser**. Dickens' **social commentary is critical of this hypocritical treatment of the classes**. Treatment of an individual should be based on their character, not their financial status.

SYMBOL OF GRATITUDE

- Dickens makes **poverty synonymous with gratitude** through the Cratchits. Mrs Cratchit is **"dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons"**.
- The alliteration on **"twice-turned gown"** emphasises their poverty; Mrs Cratchit is not able to afford new clothes, however as it is a **"gown"** that suggests that she **admirably** is able to make the best out of the little she has.
- The festivity of **"ribbons"** being all over her dress highlights how the foundations of the Cratchits, alike to the "twice turned gown", may be **impoverished**. However, they celebrate and glorify the little they have, symbolised by the ribbons, as they **display gratitude and love** for one another.
- The **immense gratitude** of the Cratchits is highlighted through the **colloquial phrase** **"such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon"**.
- "bustle"** creates an image of **elation and commotion**, emphasising how the Cratchits are overjoyed with how they are blessed enough to be able to eat this **"feathered phenomenon"**.
- The **superlative "rarest"** serves as irony as within the Victorian period, as it was a **cheap bird that was a replacement for turkey**. This compounds their gratitude as they celebrate the small amount they can share together- the antithesis to Scrooge who has ungrateful for the abundance of wealth he has.
- The ultimate sign of Bob's gratitude is still **praising and cherishing Scrooge**- his minuscule wage from Scrooge allows him to put what he believes is a **"great success"** of a spread on the table: **"I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"**.
- "Founder"** connotes creator, alluding to how Bob sees Scrooge in a God like way as he believes Scrooge is the creator of Bob's ability to have what he sees as luxuries.
- This highlights how the **poor are blindly grateful** to the same individuals who **exploit** them- this being a key indictment of Dicken's in his **political diatribe** as Dickens **exposes that it is the rich who propagate poverty by preserving their own wealth**.
- Bob, and the Cratchits', are the **epitome of moralistic and virtuous members of society**. They provide the reader a model example of morality and show that an **abundant lifestyle does not come from materialism but unity and benevolence**.

TOP TIP



The creation of Bob's character is really important for Dickens' message. By analysing WHY Dickens has chosen to make Bob an emblem of the poor, and a compassionate and kind man, you'll be hitting A02 (techniques used by the writer create meaning). It is important to note that Dickens wanted to paint the poor in a favourable light.

MOTIF OF CHILD VICTIMISATION

- The **innocence of children was a typical trope within Dickens' work**. This was aligned with the focus on the **angelic portrayal of children in Victorian literature**. This juxtaposed the portrayal prior to the Victorian era where children were seen as sinners due to not finding God yet.
- **Critic Laura C. Berry** says typically in Victorian society, children were represented as innocent and then became victims of society.
- Tiny Tim highlights **this victimisation as he is a victim to poverty**. Although his health conditions are not because he is poor, it raises the question of-would his death of been so imminent if he had access to healthcare like the rich?.
- Dickens highlights how **child neglection is a by-product of having Malthusian views**. When Scrooge demands to **"decrease the surplus population"**, the actuality of these demands means that the **"surplus population"** may be decreased at the **expense of innocent life**.
- Dickens constructs Tiny Tim to die tragically to show the consequences of holding this ignorant mindset- ignorance enables innocent suffering.
- His vulnerable depiction is exacerbated through the **fragile image** of **"But he was very light to carry"**.

TOPIC SENTENCES

Dickens constructs Bob as an emblem of the neglected poor to highlight how compassionate individuals like Bob, are stuck in the unrelenting cycle of poverty as perpetuated by the rich upper class. He also constructs Scrooge to be an emblem of the upper class to be scathing of the vast neglect and mistreatment the poor undergo due to ignorance and prejudices from the rich.

The immense gratitude the Cratchits display, despite their impoverishment, dispels the commonly held societal prejudice of the poor being lazy and ungrateful. Dickens depicts the Cratchits, a microcosm of the poor, to be benevolent and compassionate despite their lack of materialism- what they lack in material goods they have in abundance in love.

The innocence of children was a typical trope within Dickens' work. Dickens uses Tiny Tim to highlight the victimisation of children as he is a victim to poverty; he shows how ignorant Malthusian views are synonymous with the suffering of innocent children.



TOP TIP *It is important to comment on how Bob was still grateful despite laws being in place, such as the 1834 poor law, that made the destitute suffer. This link between the gratitude of the poor despite their unfortunate circumstances would hit A03 (link between text and context).*