

Essay about a christmas carol by charles dickens



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Charles Dickens wrote 'A Christmas Carol' during the Industrial Revolution the time of factories and machinery.

Although this was the start of a new invention it brought about a negative outcome and consequently the population led to increasing work exponentially. As a result, the infrastructure of the cities (especially London) couldn't handle the population which led to foul housing and immense poverty. Dickens' own childhood experience involved his father getting into debt and was also imprisoned in a debtor's prison, called Marshalsea. He even worked at the age of 12 to free his family from debt. Luckily the death of a relative eventually left enough money for his father to be free his father. So Dickens himself had to experience these laws as they played a big part in his life and may have even influenced him to write about others who suffered like himself and his family when he was a child.

The Christmas Carol had a big Social context. Back in Dickens time there were no welfare state pensions or benefits so the Christmas carol was about the concern of many of the social problems of Dickens time. Social problems were caused by the Industrial Revolution that large amounts of people had to move into cities for work as a result it led to the cities (especially London) which couldn't cope, led to squalid housing and immense poverty. The times of the early Victorian society took poor people into workhouses or debtor's prisons and families chose to be homeless rather than going to prison.

There were benefits like today's day and age. Also many poor people chose to be homeless rather than break up the family by entering the workhouses, this shows how devastating the workhouses were in the sense that they

would rather take their children into the streets than a workhouse. The book *A Christmas Carol* raises the awareness of the plight of the poor by Charles Dickens showing a picture of the social problems of the 1840's. Before Dickens starts the book he says, " I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea. Dickens' seems to be addressing a problem to the rich of his of the 1900's and may have tried to encourage people to think about the poor people in the country who are suffering and are unfortunate. The book is mainly aimed at society and tries to encourage them to take a look at their own behaviour towards the poor.

The book gave me the feeling that Dickens felt that the entire society would face serious consequences if changes were not made to the way they treated and viewed the poor. The Christmas carol did encourage people in many ways to give to the poor because Dickens' main aim of his story was for people to be more generous to the poor and don't just look at them as rubbish. Dickens' concerns were about the poor but his main concern was about poor children how they suffer and how they were treated because Dickens was a child when his life started to go downhill, he was mainly made aware of their terrible plight when he visited the Field Lane Ragged School' and was appalled at what he saw. Dickens had queries on how to release his concerns about the fate of the poor, considering producing them in the form of a pamphlet, but as he was the most popular novelist of the day he realised that more people would take notice of the poor if he wrote about them in a story.

Dickens aimed his story at the wealthy, as they were the ones who could make a significant difference. Dickens wanted to make the wealthy realise

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what was happening and how bad it was. Scrooge is an old miserable man who lives life alone. He owns a firm called Scrooge and Marley has only disgust for the poor, thinking the world would be better off without them.

“ Decreasing the surplus population” Scrooge dislike everyone that feels happy on Christmas day and if he could work his will everyone that say’s merry Christmas should be kill “ If I could work my will,” said Scrooge indignantly, “ every idiot who goes about with ‘ Merry Christmas’ on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should! ” Scrooge is important because he is the main character and he shows us the meaning of the book. Personal greed will lead to peril, while kindness and generosity lead to personal happiness. Scrooge represents greed, hardhearted, selfishness in the beginning of the book but towards the end of the book Scrooge represents Dickens uses vivid description, similes, metaphors, personification, and imagery to capture the essence of the character’s personality and traits. Dickens describes Scrooge in Stave 1 at the start as “ A tight-fisted hand at the grindstone” this is a metaphor because it is trying to say that Scrooge is literally as tight as the hand to the grindstone.

Then a bit after this Dickens uses seven adjectives to describe Scrooge, “ Squeezing, Wrenching, Grasping, Scraping, Clutching, Covetous, Old sinner”. Each one has an effecting meaning on Scrooge describing seven traits of Scrooges character, which begins to give the reader a visual picture of how Scrooge looks. Afterwards Dickens uses similes to describe Scrooge the first simile is “ hard and sharp as a flint” this is saying Scrooge is a hard-hearted man and the second simile is “ solitary as an oyster” this is saying Scrooge is

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a person who has no friends or social life. Another way in which we can see how Scrooge's character is by exploring the way he talks to other characters. When Scrooge's nephew greets him he says " A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you! " - In a cheerful voice. However this contrasts with Scrooge's response (" Bah! " " Humbug! ") This shows Scrooge's disapproval in his only family member's greetings.

So he disapproves having a merry Christmas because he doesn't want to be merry he'd rather be miserable. He doesn't even greet his nephew. He also says " What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough. " My perception of this statement is that Scrooge is saying that if you are poor there isn't any reason for you to be happy, however if that is the case why is he miserable when he is rich. So Scrooge's encounter with his nephew helps us to see the contrast between his joyous nephew and his miserable self. When the charity collectors are speaking to Scrooge they are trying to make him empathise with them about the poor.

This we see doesn't work as Scrooge retaliates by saying he wishes to be left alone in spite of the charity. He says " I don't make myself merry at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. " -So Scrooge is calling all of the poor idle, regardless if it's their own fault or not or whether they can help themselves or not, so he shows no remorse to them. Pathetic Fallacy is mentioned in Stave 1. " It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal". People would " go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only gone three but it was quite dark already-it had not been light all day.

” The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense that although the court was the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything. ” What I understand from this paragraph is that the weather in Stave 1 was quite depressing and words like biting helps the readers to apprehend how menacingly bitter the weather was. Also people would stamp their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. This tells me that cold had made the blood in their feet cold.

The way the fog is described informs me of how thick it was and hard to see through. Also the clouds were ‘ dingy’ this shows how the clouds were greyish and dull. Dickens wrote the Christmas Carol because when he was a boy his father was thrown in debtor’s prison, and he wanted people to realize that it was important to help the poor, not stick them in prison. Dickens also compares the house he used to live in when he was a child with the Cratchit family house. This was a four room house. Charles Dickens was a family of six and he had a little brother who was sickly and it corresponded to the six Cratchit children, and Dickens’ youngest brother was also called, “ Tiny Fred”.

In this instance, he was inspired to write a Christmas story explaining the plight of the poor as a calling out for charity from those living wealthy also such charity was desperately needed during the severe economic depression of the 1840s. Having suffered considerable hardship and poverty during his upbringing, the passionate feelings inside Dickens’ book were based on bitter experience. Dickens wanted to use his own popularity to spread the message of Christian charity so that he can show people that they are less

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fortunate families that are going through tough times so richer people should look down on those families and give them a helping hand . Dickens was one of the most famous and popular writers of his time and his books were serialised in the daily paper and he knew that his book would go out to thousands and wanted to use his popularity to reach out to people so they would appreciate each other more

The first key event is in Stave 1 when Marley (Scrooge former business partner) comes to Scrooge telling him he will be visited by three spirits for the path he took in life “ You will be haunted,” resumed the Ghost, “ by Three Spirits. ” This is showing that Marley has come to tell Scrooge he will be haunted by three spirits because of the way he is living his life

The second key event is in Stave 2 when the ghost of Christmas past takes Scrooge back to his childhood when he was in boarding school. While everyone has gone to their homes for Christmas, Scrooge is alone at his boarding school sitting in the corner until his sister intervened to come and get him “ I have come to bring you home, dear brother! ” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh.

“ To bring you home, home, home! ” This is showing that knowing has come to take Scrooge home except for his sister however Scrooge now recalls his recent treatment to her son

The third key event is in Stave 3 when the ghost of Christmas present takes Scrooge to Bob Cratchit house and their having a Christmas dinner Scrooge starts to feel some sympathy for Bob Cratchit son Tiny Tim “ No, no,” said Scrooge. “ Oh, no, kind Spirit. Say he will be spared. ” This is showing that Scrooge has emotions he is actually feeling for someone other than himself

The fourth key event is when Scrooge gets on

his knees and begs the ghost of yet to come that he will not die a miserable old man “ I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future.

The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone! ”

This is showing that Scrooge wants to live his life different and doesn't want to die a lonely selfish man The firth key event is when Scrooge buys a turkey and sends it to Bob Cratchit house “ I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's! ” whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. “ He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim.

Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be! ” This is showing that Scrooge is a change man from who he used to be in Stave 1 he even makes a joke about him sending Bob Cratchit an anonymous turkey. Scrooge is now truly a changed man. Scrooge has changed in Stave 5 by many ways and Dickens starts by using various metaphors and similes to describe how Scrooge feels. Similes like, “ Light as a feather”, can show that he has had a huge weight lifted from his shoulders. This is in comparison to how Scrooge used to move in Stave 1. Edge his way.

... “, however now he feels light and “ as merry as a school boy” and we can only imagine how a happy school boy would walk with joyfulness and will be jolly.

Adjectives like ‘ Scrambled out of bed’ and ‘ running to the window’ are both examples of fast movement, complete opposite's to how his movement is

described in Stave 1. Furthermore in Stave 1 Scrooge says “ every idiot who goes about with ‘ Merry...

. ” By him saying he is as merry as a school boy it contradicts what he says in Stave 1, because he has called himself merry. “ I am as happy as an angel”, well angels are seen as religious and good but when was the last time Scrooge said he was happy. “ I am as giddy as a drunken man” shows he feels fairly joyous and is beaming with energy. When Scrooge asks the boy in Sunday clothes, “ what’s to-day! ” he repeats it again however this time adding “ my fine fellow” this is a general act of kindness in his community but since when was scrooge part of his community? Definitely not in Stave 1 if ever and he even talks to the boy.

His use of these rhetorical devices helps us to see the contrast in Scrooge’s attitude towards life before the ghost’s appear to him and after. Similes like “ Light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy, I am as giddy as a drunken man” are used to show this change in personality in a positive light. The way in which you can see his change in personality and understand properly, is that scrooge is like a butterfly in its cocoon in Stave 1 but in Stave 5 he has come out of his shell as he used to be “ solitary as an oyster”, but is now happy, merry and giddy instead of ‘ self-contained’, serious and miserable. This effects the audience’s perception of Scrooge. They now see Scrooge’s changed ways, which was deep inside him.

Dickens’ wants the audience to see that they are good in everyone and everyone can change. In the conclusion I have given a summary about the Christmas carol I have gather information about the Social and historical

context of the book. I have written about why Charles Dickens wrote this book I have also written about how this book raise the awareness of plight of the poor and how the book encourage people to give to the poor.