

Literary Theme: *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

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Write Thinker I, Lesson 8

Dickens's novel *A Christmas Carol* depicts the results of greed. The protagonist of the novel Ebenezer Scrooge is perhaps Dickens' most famous character. Scrooge's name is now synonymous with greed. Dickens uses Scrooge to communicate the main theme of the novel which is the folly of greed.

Scrooge's penny pinching ways do not just hurt himself but also others around him like his overworked and underpaid clerk Bob Cratchit. Scrooge only provides a few coals to keep Cratchit warm in his drafty room. Scrooge's stinginess also affects Cratchit's cripple son Tiny Tim because Cratchit can't afford to pay for a much-needed surgery and Scrooge refuses to help.

Dickens described Scrooge as a "...squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!" Scrooge not only represented greed but also the way that society abused and scorned the poor. Scrooge made comments that poor people should die and reduce the "surplus population." This belief of his is changed when the ghost of Christmas present shows him Tiny Tim who Scrooge had no idea existed. Scrooge is affected the most by Tiny Tim because he has the influence and means to help the cripple boy. Dickens wanted the Victorian rich like Scrooge to realize that they have the power to help an innocent child like Tiny Tim.

Scrooge learns a lesson on giving from his visions of Christmases past, present and future. The visions show him the error of his ways and how others use their influence for good and how to show love to others. The ghostly visitors teach Scrooge that his redemption lies in the memory of his past and his empathy of the present. The reader then has the joy of watching Scrooge's transformation from a penny pinching grouchy old man to a generous, joyful man.

Dickens wanted *A Christmas Carol* to inspire reflection on the treatment of the poor. He also wanted people to examine their lives and the quality of them. He wanted his readers to be concerned with the present for the past is unchangeable. Dickens shows the reader that anyone can change, even someone as hard-hearted and greedy as Scrooge.

