
The Ideas And Symbolism In Christmas Carol

“It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humour.”, is the original famous phrase said by Ebenezer Scrooge in a Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. A Christmas Carol is a novella by Charles Dickens about Ebenezer Scrooge, an old man, who is well-known for his miserly ways. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by a series of ghosts, starting with his old business partner, Jacob Marley. It is a book which encaptures the possibility of change for a person, no matter how “scroogy” they are. Published in December of 1843, during the Victorian Era Literacy, this book explores themes about greed, generosity, family and forgiveness, alongside many of the “Great Ideas”. A Christmas Carol was also the first fictional story written with the setting of Christmas. Prior to its release, all holiday books were about the birth of Christ or religion-based. Charles Dickens incorporated many symbolic characters, aesthetic qualities and universality into a Christmas Carol making it a necessity that this book is included with the literary canon.

Every reader needs to read the story of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. This book explores many deep themes involving family, greed, generosity and forgiveness, just to name a few. Each of these themes was common within the so-called Great Books of the Western Culture, although Dickens was able to fuse them together with an original story to create a masterpiece. Scrooge, this book’s main character prefers to be stingy and hold money over everything else. He turns down family and co-workers, he doesn’t have any friends, in attempts to keep all his wealth to himself. Although he is visited by a deceased past business partner who wears a chain around his waist made of “...cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.” (pg. 14). Jacob says to Scrooge, “I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?” (pg. 25 - 26). He is giving warning to Scrooge’s greed saying that men are meant to help one another. Throughout the book three other ghosts appear, “The Ghost of Christmas Past”, “The Ghost of Christmas Present”, “The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come”, which are the ones to change Scrooge into a personable, family man who now seeks forgiveness from his actions for being the person he was. The original story and unique themes Dickens fussed to this book isn’t the only significant part of why this book should be part of the literary canon. Dickens’ story reflects organised what is known as “Great Ideas”. The path of desire and the journey to happiness are both colossal, in-depth ideas of the book. At the opening of the book, Scrooge is quite wealthy, but he is utterly unfulfilled at the heart. When Scrooge visits the past, he sees how much happier he didn’t have as much wealth. And a present-day visit to his employees household, Scrooge learns that despite not having anything, he is much happier as he finds joy with his family. Thus, the message that Dickens is portraying is relevant and true even in today’s day and age, that happiness is found in friendships and family rather than worldly goods.

Every reader must read the pages of A Christmas Carol, especially because of its aesthetic qualities. Every character introduced in this novel has a symbolic element tied to them. Either embodying a specific lifestyle seen in the written era or possessing a symbolic element with them. The three ghosts are symbolic representations of Scrooge's life, past, present and future. The Ghost of Christmas Past carries a light, illuminating lighting up the fact that Scrooge, though

lonely and poor, was much happier with his family. The ghost of Christmas Present has the children of "Ignorance" and "Want" underneath his cloak, not only representing the plight of Victorian children but the dangers of social neglect. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree; but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.' (pg. 90). Dickens' intended them to represent Man's worst enemies - the state of Want (desire for food, shelter, wealth, more..) that many live and suffer through every day, even today. And the boy who symbolises the self-imposed ignorance that many choose to live by in their day-to-day lives. Dickens wanted the ghost to portray the message, we must wake up and see what is needed by others over ourselves and the part they could play to ease the pain and suffering of our friends and neighbours. Cautioned by the spirit, unless we wake up from our self-imposed ignorance, society will create its own downfall, our own "Doom".

To set the scene, the techniques Dickens used so the reader could visualise the location is unsurpassable. Dickens could describe a majestic Christmas London for the reader to envision, or use minimum yet powerful elements to encapsulate the reader into an isolated room, like Bob Cratchit's workspace, "...the door cracked open... Sat the clerk and a desk... tried to warm himself at the candle." (pg. 4-5). To go alongside the descriptive language, Dickens integrated figurative and allusive language, a reference to something from history or literature to give more context. For example, Jacob Marley makes allusion to the Bible when he says, "Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raised them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode!" (pg. ?). It is because of the aesthetic qualities that Dickens incorporated and used to make a Christmas Carol the masterpiece it is it should be in the literary canon.

The universality of A Christmas Carol is a story that can be told and retold in all different styles and manners. In the past century, many feature-length films and animations told the story of A Christmas Carol, with big names such as Jim Carrey, Tom Hanks, Michael Caine and Patrick Stewart to name a few. The films adaptations can appeal to all ages. Younger audiences enjoy the story with the message portrayed about finding joy with one another. Although, the more mature audience could understand and connect with the symbolism and characters. Although wider audiences have been reached. This classic has been translated, published and sold successfully all around the world. This gem is a timeless tale, one that has never not seen success no-matter where it travels. The story is set in Victorian, London, although it is not restricted to that era. The story has been redone over and over for all different audiences, young and mature, since the release of the book.

English writer, Charles Dickens released the tale of A Christmas Carol almost two centuries, during the Victorian era. And although the book was released so long ago, current movie adaptations show how well the book can stand the test of time. With the exploration of many "Great Ideas" and the dominate symbolism each character presents to the reader, A Christmas Carol must be forever included in the Western Literary Canon."