



THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

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UNDERSTANDING THE THREE GHOSTS

Key to understanding these Ghosts is considering the way they are described and the scenes that they show Scrooge.

THE THREE GHOSTS AND CHOICES

One perspective is that the ghosts are metaphors for choices

- Throughout his travels in the spirit world, Scrooge is confronted with choices he has made and the consequences of those choices
 - Some choices, such as the ones in the past, Scrooge has tried to forget
 - Choices in the present and future are just as important, but Scrooge has given little thought to them.
 - each ghost operates to taunt Scrooge with the kind of man that he is now and with regret and remorse over his past, present and future actions
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THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME AS A REPRESENTATION OF DEATH

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come is the last Ghost that visits Scrooge and is very different from its predecessors.

- It approaches Scrooge "slowly, gravely, silently".
 - The triple adverb immediately changes the tone of the narrative, introducing an ominous and sombre quality to the scene.
 - This effect is heightened by the fact that the Spirit is a personification of death —
 - its appearance mirrors classical depictions of the 'Grim Reaper'.
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THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME AS A REPRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The Phantom is used by Dickens to visibly exemplify the idea of accountability and the fact that actions have consequences,

- both of which are themes which run throughout the novella.
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- By showing Scrooge his own death, the Spirit gives him a final push towards complete redemption, one which causes him to fall "upon his knees" and desperately hold his hands up in "a last prayer"

HOW DICKENS DESCRIBES THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

Dickens also describes how the Ghost's clothes "concealed its head, its face, its form" and outlines the "mysterious presence" it has.

- This introduces the idea of anonymity, perhaps to allude to the uncertain and indefinite nature of the future.
 - It is also interesting to note that instead of speaking, the Spirit "pointed onward with its hand".
 - This is the only interaction Scrooge has with the Spirit, which is significant as its hand may represent the hand of time.
 - This emphasises both the importance and power of time, presenting the idea that Scrooge's amoral actions will have repercussions.
 - The purpose of this spirit is to show Scrooge the dark consequences of his actions.
 - The Ghost illustrates to Scrooge what his fate will be if he does not use this opportunity to repent.

DICKENS' USE OF PROLEPSIS

Dickens uses prolepsis (a flash forward) to show Scrooge the reactions of various people in the event of his death.

- This is a dramatic technique, as it could be argued that the reader is equally as interested and affected by Scrooge's future, due to the connection they have built with his character.
 - Nobody seems negatively affected by Scrooge's death which emphasises the messages the Spirits are trying to relay to him.
 - The charwoman, one of the characters that Scrooge watches in the pawn shop, says that "he frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead, ha, ha!".
 - This essentially means that the isolated lifestyle Scrooge chose to lead left him similarly isolated in his death.
 - As a result, his belongings could be taken by whoever wanted them, rather than being protected by those who cared for him.
 - The charwoman finishes this assertion with a laugh, revealing that people are not just indifferent to Scrooge's death but are happy about it as they can finally profit from his wealth.
 - Dickens reinforces this through the character of Caroline.
 - Her family owed Scrooge money, but following his death they can "sleep with light hearts", highlighting the happiness and relief that followed his death.
 - This stave illustrates the importance of social responsibility as if Scrooge had been nicer to





those around him he would have been looked after and cared for in death.

SCROOGE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

Dickens reveals that Scrooge "feared the silent shape" when referencing his relationship with the Phantom —

- the last time he felt fear was when Marley's Ghost left him with a "terrible sensation".
 - This is significant as by drawing parallels to Scrooge's old personality, the reader is able to see and appreciate how much he has changed.

FEAR FORCES SCROOGE TO CHANGE

The fear that Scrooge feels, in addition to the Spirit's silence, forces him to become more forthcoming in the final stage.

- This prompts Scrooge to actively take control of his redemption.
 - The reader witnesses this through Scrooge's willingness to go with the Spirit.
 - He says that he is "prepared to bear" the Spirit's company and will do it with a "thankful heart":
 - This highlights how he is more open to the idea of redemption, signifying his change.
 - Scrooge has a struggle with this Spirit, similar to his fight with the Ghost of Christmas Past.
 - However, this time Scrooge managed to "detain" the Spirit because he was "strong in his entreaty".

WHY SCROOGE HOLD HIS GROUND AGAINST THE HOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

Unlike the past, which is unchanging, Scrooge can hold his ground against the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.

- This is perhaps to symbolise the fact that Scrooge can control his future if his will is strong enough, illustrating his approaching transformation.
 - However, Dickens reveals that despite Scrooge's strength the Spirit was "stronger yet" and "repulsed Scrooge".
 - This assertion ensures that the Spirits keep their powerful status above Scrooge.
 - Furthermore, it highlights that while Scrooge has some control over his future he cannot escape his eventual death.





- Ultimately, this emphasises that it is important to lead a good life and leave a lasting legacy, as death is inescapable.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME: KEY QUOTES

"shrouded in a deep black garment"

- The use of imagery in this phrase resonates with both Victorian (contemporary) and modern-day readers, who likely find the image similar to that of the Grim Reaper -
 - a widely recognised symbol of death.
 - The black colour of the garment is further described as being "deep", developing the Phantom's solemn presence.

"Read upon the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE"

- The adjective "neglected" is used both during the life of Scrooge as well as his death.
 - Therefore, the reader is able to see the unchanging timeline of Scrooge's life.
 - The way that Scrooge lived in life is how he diedv a type of poetic justice (irony, getting what is deserved)

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME AS A REPRESENTATION OF TIME

Lastly, the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come can be seen as a personification of the relentless march of time towards both a fixed and an unfixed

- it appears to be described in such a way as to emphasize its darkness and associations with death:
 - 'It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.'
 - Resembling nothing so much as traditional depictions of the Grim Reaper, this Ghost may be seen as symbolizing death, the common lot of all human beings;
 - see Fred's comment on Stave One, that all people are "fellow-passengers to the grave."

MEANING OF THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

- When Scrooge asks to erase the writing on his own headstone, however, he is not asking for immortality;
 - rather, he is asking that his life before his inevitable death be of a different quality than it would be otherwise.





- Therefore, the Ghost's austerity and imposing manner symbolise the unstoppable passage of time.
 - The Ghost does not engage in conversation or reflection;
 - it simply leads Scrooge from scene to scene, always pointing forward with its outstretched hand.
 - Its stern presence warns readers that-as the saying goes-time waits for no one; should you wish to change your life, do so today.
 - The fact that your life will end is fixed; the meaning that your life will have had is up to you.
 - Again, the point of this Ghost is to illustrate Scrooge's legacy after his death,
 - and to shock him with how little respect and regard he had even from those he considered his "friends" and "business associates."
 - Thus, the darkness and the "solemn dread" that this Ghost inspires in Scrooge is perhaps fitting.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABANDONING THE POOR

Above all else, A Christmas Carol is allegorical

- The children represent those who were living in poverty, with no hope of improving their lot due to lack of education and lack of opportunity.
- Dickens was a strong proponent of taking care of society's poor and downtrodden (see Dickens' purpose notes)
 - this is why he chose to represent them in children
 - Most people will have more sympathy for children than adults
 - Dickens wanted to make the case that the adults we see as criminals started out as poor and abused children.

A BLEAK FUTURE FOR POOR VICTORIAN CHILDREN

"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." (Stave 3)

- Ultimately, the little boys will turn into pickpockets and thieves (like Oliver Twist)
- and the girls will turn into prostitutes (like Nancy)

Unlike most high and mighty Christians of the Victorian era, Dickens did not look down on the poor

- He even started a charity house for prostitutes
 - because he recognized that these were the people that society threw away.





THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Dickens tells us to beware ignorance more than want

- This is telling, because it demonstrates the root of the problem
 - If our poor are not educated, they have no chance to escape the cycle of poverty
 - Want, or hunger and need, is important
 - It comes from ignorance though
 - We need to educate and take care of our young people so that they don't have children that are just as badly off as they are.

DICKENS' PURPOSE

Dickens wrote this book in order to remind people not to just walk past the needy on the street

- It worked
 - When people saw beggars in the street, they thought about Tiny Tim
 - Eventually, laws were passed providing funds for public education and ending the workhouse system

Scrooge showed people that they are responsible for the children of their society.

