

Worksheet 12 – Stave Three: Ignorance and Want

Review: Analytical Writing

In the worksheet for Lecture 3, you wrote two paragraphs of analytical writing exploring the influence of William Blake's poem 'London' (1794) on *A Christmas Carol*. We will be building on this writing in this worksheet.

- a) Re-read your analytical writing from Lecture 3.
- b) Using the success criteria below, give yourself two writing targets for your writing this lesson.

Success criteria:

- ✓ Accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ✓ Referencing the terms of the question in your answer.
- ✓ A clear topic sentence at the start of each paragraph that makes your argument clear.
- ✓ Quotations from the text embedded into your sentences.
- ✓ Use of subject terminology to describe language and structural features.
- ✓ Detailed analysis of the effect of quotations on the reader.

Recall: Lecture 12

Answer this question after watching the lecture, to see how much you remember.

1. Whose laugh does Scrooge hear while the Spirit shows him Christmas on land and sea?
 - a) A child's
 - b) His nephew's
 - c) His own
 - d) Tiny Tim's

Analysis

2. In his lecture, Prof. McRae explores the influence that social reformer Jeremy Bentham had on Dickens. Bentham created a theory called utilitarianism, which is commonly summarised as aiming to promote *the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people*.

Read the extract from Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780) and answer the questions below:

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The principle of utility recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law. [...]

An action then may be said to be conformable to the principle of utility [...] when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any it has to diminish it.

- a) Summarise in four bullet points what Bentham is saying in the extract.
- b) Explain two ways you think Bentham's ideas might link to the plot of *A Christmas Carol*.
- c) Do you agree with Bentham? Write an argument either for or against his ideas.

Evaluation

3. Read the extracts from *A Christmas Carol* and 'London' (1794), and then answer the essay question below.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. [...]

"Spirit! are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "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.'

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

Essay question: How do *A Christmas Carol* and 'London' present the social reality of poverty?

Success criteria:

- In your answer, compare and contrast the two extracts.
- Write your answer as an essay of at least four paragraphs.
- Include analysis of specific language and structural features in your paragraphs.

Challenge: In your essay, also reflect on the influence Jeremy Bentham's principle of utilitarianism may have had on both writers.

Glossary

- **Want** – the desire to possess something; the state of being extremely poor.
- **Absurdism** – the belief that human beings exist in a purposeless, chaotic universe.
- **Utilitarianism** – The doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a

majority.