

Worksheet 3 – Comedy

Review: Lecture 2: Ghosts

In the previous lecture of the unit, Prof. Mullan discussed the development of the ghost story.

- ✓ Based on what you learnt in the last lecture, explain why Scrooge is typical of the main character in a ghost story, giving examples from the text if you can:

Recall: Lecture 3: Comedy

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. How does Dickens describe his reactions when thinking about A Christmas Carol?
a) Wept and laughed c) Laughed and cried
b) Anger and Sadness d) Happy and Sad
2. What two words does Prof. Mullan use to describe this mixture?
a) Happiness and sadness c) Pathos and humor
b) Tragedy and comedy d) Light and dark
3. Who 'laughed out loudly' when the Spirit passed them?
a) The chimney sweep c) The policeman
b) The Lamplighter d) The washerwoman
4. What adjective is used to describe the laugh of Scrooge's Nephew??
a) hearty c) loud
b) happy d) long

Bonus point: Who laughs in a similar way?
Scrooge's Nephew's wife

Analysis

5. In the lecture (5.55 – 6.10), Prof. Mullan quotes from Stave One of A Christmas Carol. In this quotation, Dickens describes Marley's face:

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar.

- a) What technique does Dickens use here?
- b) What is the effect of this comparison?

6. In the lecture (9.10 – 9.25), Prof. Mullan quotes from Stave One of A Christmas Carol. In this quotation, Scrooge refuses to believe Marley's Ghost is really there:

You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

- a) What ordinary things does Scrooge blame for the appearance of Marley's ghost?
- b) What word play does Scrooge attempt and why? A pun based on the similarity of 'gravy' and grave.'

Evaluation

7. In the lecture (11.07 – 11.39), Prof. Mullan refers to Stave Five of A Christmas Carol, where Scrooge pretends to be angry at Bob Cratchit:

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did. The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo," growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I'm very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I am behind my time."

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge, "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; "and therefore I am about to raise your salary."

- a) How does Dickens build the sense of fear for Bob Cratchit?
- b) How does Dickens make the moment light and comical?

Challenge: What is Prof. Mullan's explanation for Dickens ending the novel in this way?

Glossary

- **Dismal:** *causing a mood of gloom or depression: "the dismal weather made the late afternoon seem like evening"*
- **Dismayed:** *cause (someone) to feel concern and distress: "they were dismayed by the U-turn in policy"*
- **Disperse:** *to scatter or separate or lessen: "The oil appeared to be dispersing."*
- **Earnestness:** *sincere and intense belief: "he tells his story with intense earnestness"*
- **Impenetrable:** *impossible to pass through or enter: "a dark, impenetrable forest"*
- **Lamplighter:** *a person employed to light street gaslights by hand.*

- **Pathos:** *a quality that evokes pity or sadness: "the actor injects his customary pathos into the role"*