
Use Of The Cratchit Family To Show The Struggles Of The Poor In A Christmas Carol

In the extract from Chapter 3 of A Christmas Carol, Dickens uses the plight and poverty of the Cratchit family to explicate the overall struggle of the poor.

Dickens sheds light on the fact that the Cratchit Family only owned “Two Tumblers, and a custard cup” to be used by the Cratchit Family, this severely demonstrates the Cratchits lack of wealth and extreme poverty crisis. However, this is instantly juxtaposed as Dickens, in a way, mocks the rich through the use of “These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets” stating that two tumblers and a custard cup can do the same job that a golden goblet serves. This illustrates the Cratchits selflessness and happiness all while living a poverty and poor lifestyle.

At the start of the extract, the reader is immediately struck with an exclamatory sentence “a wonderful pudding!” which reinforces the idea that the Cratchits are a grateful and loving family regardless of the size of their “small pudding” The Cratchits demonstrate gratitude in a time when the upper class would not, depicting a sense that the Cratchits have a higher level of respect for Christmas time and family. The pudding is described as a “success” by Bob Cratchit implying that perhaps he did not have his hopes up for there to be a pudding that dinner. Bob Cratchit said this “calmly” also creating a contrasting sense that he still had faith in Mrs Cratchit demonstrating love and companionship in the Cratchit Family and between Bob Cratchit and Mrs Cratchit.

All throughout the novella, Dickens uses the foil characters of Scrooge such as Bob Cratchit to demonstrate the compassion not only in Bob Cratchit but all of the Cratchits, this can be seen when Scrooge is reluctant to give Bob Cratchit Christmas day off to spend time with his family and makes a disrespectful comment of it being the same as “picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!” whereas we know this is Scrooge placing the poor in the stereotypical category of them being “dirty” thieves and nothing but trouble, the Cratchits in the poem, are the complete opposite of this. Perhaps Dickens does this as an example that the upper class have got the wrong idea of the poor and that the world is evolving.

Comprehensively, Dickens shows the antitheses of the Cratchit Family, such as Scrooge and openly depicts that the Cratchit Family is the one carrying the most Christmas spirit even though Scrooge is a wealthy man who owns a business, ultimately, showing money does not grant happiness and that struggling as a poor family does not always affect one’s behavior.