People's Democratic and Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Aboubekr Belkaid University of Tlemcen

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English

The Implications of the Social Behaviour on Characters in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation

Presented by: Supervised by:
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Academic Year: 2018/2019

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Dedication

I dedicate my jubilation to myself, my family and friends

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This present work seeks to investigate the refractions of the social behaviour of the Victorian industrial society on fictitious characters in Charles Dickens's *Hard Time* (1854). In other words, it aims at depicting the traces of the real Victorian lifestyle on characters in one of the greatest Dickensian novels; which some critics view as a dazzling unique masterpiece due to its philosophical, psychological and linguistic depth. It, therefore, depicts the reflections of the social environment on the psychological and behavioural structure of the character. The main reasons that triggered this research are two-fold. First, to decipher the Sociological perplexity of this novel. Second, to spot and unveil Charles Dickens's talent in depicting these reflections. In so doing, it is necessary to shed light on the major characteristics of the Victorian Era. Based on the survey of the social background of the Victorian era and the descriptive analytical methods of characters, it becomes clear that the relationship between characters and society is dialectical and reciprocal. The characters affect and are affected by society.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature has, for long, been viewed as the portal through which one would study society, understand the behaviour of the individuals and comprehend the lifestyle of people at the time. People tended to express all the aforementioned through two assorts of literature, through that which is fictitious and the non-fictitious part. It is known that literature has always bred new genres accordingly with the needs of the time. From this, writers and scholars came to hold their pens and dedicate their writs to show what lies within the folds of their memories based on what they experienced.

This current work is dedicated to the study of Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times,* the Victorian novel which endeavoured to reflect society of the specific period.

The first Chapter of the work will be dedicated to an overview about the novel including its major aspects; Settings, Plot, Themes, Point of View, Characters, Characterisation, as a style of writing along with an overview on *Hard Times* and its writer Charles Dickens. Meanwhile, the second chapter will be fully focused on the relationship between society and characters. The second Chapter will have focalization on Characters of *Hard Times* and how society affects them.

On this basis, the present work seeks to answer the following questions:

1-   What are the characteristics of the Victorian Era and How it is depicted in the novel?

2-   What is the relationship between the Social background and Characters of Dickens' *Hard Times*?

The present work presupposes that the Victorian Age was characterised by economic and social unrest, and this was reflected in literature since literature is in its essence a mirror of real life. It also hypotheses that the relationship between society and characters in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* is dialectal and reciprocal, in the sense that they affect and are affected by social behaviour.

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. The first one is entitled: Understanding Prose Fiction in which a definition of the novel is provided to

distinguish it from other literary genres. Besides citing the novel's major aspects which consist in the setting, plot, theme, point of view, characters, and characterisation. The chapter also sheds lights on the Victorian novel in particular and its characteristics. Hence, the mention of the literary agenda of the Victorian novelist Charles Dickens and his major achievements. Finally, the emphasis falls on the Dickensian tenth novel *Hard Times* and its plot-summary.

The second chapter endeavours to depict the societal refractions of the Victorian Era on characters. First it denotes the major characteristic of the Victorian Epoch which are mainly the Industrial Revolution, the conflict between classes, and more importantly, the educational system of that specific period besides the conventional morals, norms, values of the dominant atmosphere. Afterwards, the researcher targeted to contrast this social observation on characters in Charles Dickens's Industrial novel *Hard Times*. Finally, tracing the influence of society on fictitious characters and vice versa.

Chapter One: An Overview on the Novel

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1.1 Introduction

It is known and taken for granted that works of art reflect the quality of the producer. For millennia, people manifested ideas and claims and pictured societies and concerns, this flourished during the time when the novel as a genre emerged. The novel was defined as story-telling which is the defining characteristic of it besides of telling facts of daily life experiences from a fictional standpoint. Novels tend to grant explications and descriptions of lives during a specific time rank, given the example of the Victorian Era which is to be dealt respectively. Unlike previous genres which emerged and came to perish, the novel is in a constant state of evolving ever since it came out of the decline of drama, and is still picturing societies and life experiences with a sense of realism.

1.2. A Definition of the Novel

In contradiction to poetry, the novel is a new literary genre that became free from the rhythmical restrictions. The novel is a narrative prose where the novelist narrates a story which reflects his psychological and ideological tendencies that carry different emotional, social and historical backgrounds. Boulton describes the novel as: "a fictitious prose narrative or tale presenting a picture of real life, especially of emotional crises in the life history of men and women portrayed" (11). The motives that push novelists to write unique novels are varied according to their (novelists) aims and extent of visions of life. For instance, "Richardson believed he did so to inculcate right conduct, Fielding to reform the manners of the age, Dickens to expose social evils, Trollope to make money by providing acceptable entertainment" (Allen 14).

. Though the novel is considered as the most readable literary genre, for centuries, the evolution of the novel has witnessed several changes from the very beginning of its biological birth. However, there are certain stable characteristics that distinguish the novel from the other literary genres .In this respect; Milligan has stated

four features that together distinguish the novel from other kinds of literature (Cited in Hadjoui 25). First, the novel is a piece of a narrative .Its structure is characterized by the flow of events performed by fictitious characters .These events are narrated (by the story teller or characters). Next, the specific length: novels "…are usually at least 150 to 200 pages long" (Spurgin 3). Then, the novel is written in prose that makes it different from both drama and poetry. Finally, the novel is fictitious; though sometimes is based on real stories and events.

1.3. Aspects of the Novel

The novel has to combine some major components that are inevitable to write a consistent and coherent story. These components are the constituents of the novel which resides mainly in: the plot, setting, characters, characterisation, the point of view, the mood, the tone,... These ingredients contribute grandly to the flourishing of the novel as a genre that never ceases to develop and evolve, In fact, Allen perceives the novel as a unity in which constituents like milieu, plot, characters, dialogue, style,... are assembled. (17).

1.3.1. Setting

The time and place in which the events are manifested is referred to as the setting of the story. "The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place" (Abrams 284). It is sometimes complex to depict the setting of the story, simply because novelists "... vary their treatment of time. They may devote hundreds of pages to the description of the events of a single day, or they may cover many years within a few paragraphs" (Hadjoui 26), on one hand. On the other hand, events are manifested in multiple of places.

Chapter One: An Overview on the Novel

It is valuable knowing the when and where of the events in order to determine the social, historical and cultural context. Consequently, knowing the when and where facilitates not only creating a strong bond with the other aspects (the plot and characters), but also drawing a social ,historical and cultural contexts around the story.

1.3.2. Plot

The readers of the novel may notice the flow of events. This dynamics of events and their consistency is based on a well studied plot which is the first and most important component of any novel. The plot is the "plan, design, scheme or pattern of events in a play, poem or work of fiction; and, further, the organization of incident and character in such a way as to induce curiosity and suspense in the spectator or reader"(Cuddon 540). Indeed, readers of the novel question the motives that pushed characters to think, act or react in such manner, hence, the reasons behind events. Consequently, this literary device is based mainly on causality. Foster in his *Aspects of the novel* highlights 'le rapport' between actions and events. "A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality" (87). Foster also stresses on the tendencies of the author to stimulate the active curiosity of the reader, challenge his memory and test his intelligence.

1.3.3. Theme

"Properly speaking, the theme of a work is not its subject but rather its central idea, which may be stated directly or indirectly" (Cuddon 721). For instance, Mechanisation is a theme tackled by Dickens in *Hard Times* (1854).

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1.3.4. Point of View

The point of view or the narrative perspective is "...the angle from which the story is told. A story can be told by the author's knowledge, control, and prerogatives are unlimited, the point of view is omniscient" (Hadjoui 27). This type of point of view (omniscient viewpoint) requires the author's full knowledge of both psychology, and physiology of the characters. "Most mainstream novels are written from the point of view of an omniscient, or at least very well informed, narrator, who follows either one character, or several. Readers do not mind this; in fact most of us find it the easiest kind of novel to follow. (Boulton 31)

Another technique is rather to tell the story throughout the point of view of the narrator in which 'I' and 'We' are constantly repeated throughout the story. Events could also be narrated from the Third Point of View, when the narrator steps aside and let a character tells the advancements of the adventure. The mingling between 'showing' and 'telling' enriches the story and adds more flavor and anticipation to the story.

1.3.5. Characters

A character is "the person portrayed in a narrative or dramatic work' (Cuddon 116), this definition might be too wide since a character in a drama is totally different from a character in a novel. In fact, Foster has spoken about this in his *Aspects of the Novel*. Though characters in Drama are also human beings, Foster claims that they constantly have to speak -or at least- make some gestures. On the contrary, characters in a novel are regarded as 'People' because they have that mysterious side as human beings do in real, besides; the creator of these characters knows everything about his characters. There are two types of characters, major and minor characters, or round and flat characters according to their complexity of psychology or their contributions in the plot of the story.

Characters in a novel coexist with the other aspects of the novel (story and plot) and never exist in isolation from them. In this essence, Henry James highlights the value of this aspect by saying: "what is a character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is *not* of a character?" (37).

Characters sharpen not only the aesthetic part of the novel, but also satisfy the curiosity of the reader since the latter decipher the story out of the connection between characters and the rest of the aspects of the novel.

1.3.6. Characterisation

Characters and their characterisations are strongly interrelated, and interdependent. Each novelist has his own methods and techniques to expose and display his characters relying either on showing or telling. It is through characterisation the reader can understand the psychology, and the behaviour of the characters, empathy and sympathy with it. The reader can disassemble a character by analysing:

- physical description — telling us what the character looks like

- dialogue — what the character says

- physical actions — what the character does (particularly in relation to what he or she says or thinks.)

- thoughts, or metal actions — the character's inner life, what the character thinks

- judgment by others — what other characters say and think about this fictional person

- the narrator's judgment — what narrator tells us about the character

- the author's judgment — what the author thinks of the character (sometimes difficult to determine until late in the narrative)(Shaw 1)

1.4. The Victorian Novel

By the end of the first half of the 19 th century, the novel became the dominant genre due to its characteristics and duplications of the smugness of industrialisation. The majority of people became literate which helped them to read journals and periodicals besides the facilitated access for press and paper due to the mass production of paper and easy transportation. Many people –especially the working class- shifted their attention from drama and poetry towards the novel because they found relief in the novels that denounced their agony.

.At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian people adopted the upheaval with certain optimism, yet, their perception changed after the social plight started to rise. The Victorian novelists "were commonly charged with smugness, complacency, hypocrisy, and foolish optimism" (Allen 141).

Professor Timothy Spurgin sums the Major novelists and novels in the following timeline in one of his lectures delivered in 2006

1719–1720..................................... Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess

1740.. Samuel Richardson, Pamela

1745...Jacobite Uprising

1747–1749..................................... Samuel Richardson, Clarissa

1749.. Henry Fielding, Tom Jones

1750.. Population of London approaches 750,000

1759–1767..................................... Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy

1776.. American Declaration of Independence

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1778.. Frances Burney, Evelina

1789.. Storming of the Bastille, start of the French Revolution

1794.. Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho

1808.. Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 5

1813..Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice

1814.. Sir Walter Scott, Waverley

1815.. Napoleon defeated at Waterloo

1815..Jane Austen, Emma

1826..James Fenimore Cooper, Last of the Mohicans (U.S.)

1832.. First Great Reform Bill

1836–1837...................................... Charles Dickens, The Pickwick Papers

1837.. Victoria takes the throne

1837–1843...................................... Honoré de Balzac, Lost Illusions (France)

1847.. Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

1847.. Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights

1847–1848...................................... William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair

1848.. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto

1849–1850...................................... Charles Dickens, David Copperfield

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1851... Population of greater London reaches 2.6 million

1851 .... Herman Melville: Moby-Dick (U.S.)

1852–1853..................................... Charles Dickens, Bleak House

1857... Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (France)

1859... Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species

1860... George Eliot, Mill on the Floss

1860–1861..................................... Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

1861–1865..................................... American Civil War

1865–1869..................................... Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace (Russia)

1871... Population of greater London reaches 3.8 million

1871–1872..................................... George Eliot, Middlemarch

1875–1877..................................... Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina (Russia)

1880... Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov (Russia)

1880s–1890s.................................. Scramble for Africa

1881... Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady

1884... Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"

1884... Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (U.S.)

1885... Emile Zola, Germinal (France)

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1890.. Thomas Hardy, "Candour in English Fiction"

1891.. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles

1899..Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

1899.. Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams

1901.. Death of Queen Victoria. (35)

1.5. Charles Dickens as the Victorian Novelist

Charles Dickens has definitely marked his own print in the list of the Victorians .He is considered as a great novelist, yet this greatness is sometimes questioned by some critics. For instance, Frank Raymond Leavis questioned the greatness of Dickens as a novelist, compared to Shakespeare and other novelists like Jane Austen or George Eliot or Conrad or James or David Herbert Lawrence or Thackary. However, Allen has questioned this blatant judgment and added that Charles Dickens is a great novelist and the greatest entertainer (159). Shelston joins Allen views by saying: "…it was once necessary when advancing the claims of Dickens to insist that he was not an entertainer, it is now becoming increasingly necessary to insist that he was" (81).

The other unquestionable claim about Dickens is his strong bond with his readers. Dickensian novels were increasing especially the working class .Dickens successfully maintained the paramount relationship between him and his readers from the very begging of his journey in journalism. The acceptance and success of Dickens in building this relationship with his audience were portrayed in sales that made Dickens confident and consistent in his work. Major factors led to the building of this relationship. For instance, Dickens was "conscious that his instalments were read, as they appeared, at family gatherings, he ensured that they contained nothing that a Victorian family would blush to hear" (Shelston 85).

Chapter One: An Overview on the Novel

The avid Dickensian audience stayed attached due to another factor which resides in curiosity. Dickensian plots and mainly subplots were neither too obvious nor over revealing. Readers had to be remember what they have already grasped and analysed, and, Dickens had to sustain the vividness of the plot and characters. This balance made the readers craving for more.

This early Victorian novelist, was born in Portsmouth in 1812.He had a quiet a difficult childhood. His father could not get out of his debt which eventually caused his imprisonment in 1824. Dickens had to work in a blacking warehouse. Besides the plight of his father, working at an early age and not getting any education affected Dickens enormously. Yet, he worked hard till he managed to become a clerk in a solicitor's office. Then a reporter in the *Morning Chronicle* in the Parliamentary debates in 1834 where he developed his talent in portraits and caricature. After that, Dickens started to publish his sketches in the *Monthly Magazine* and the *Evening Chronicle* using a pen name to identify his *Sketches by Boz.*

Then it was the publication of *The Pickwick Papers* in (1836-37). After that, was the flow of his novels which Shelston has organized according to their first appearance, *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) which made a huge success, followed by *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1841) , *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) , *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-1844) , and *Christmas Books.*

Dickens also published *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848) ,followed by ,*David Copperfield* (1849-1850),*Bleak House*(1852-1853) ,*Hard Times* (1854) , *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857) ,*A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) , *Great Expectations* (1860-1861) ,*Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865) and his last ,The *Mystery of Edwin Drood* which has left incomplete due to his death in 1870. (Cited in Shelston 83)

1.6. An Overview on *Hard Times*

Chapter One: An Overview on the Novel

"Hard Times is the tenth and shortest of Dickens's novels containing three books and thirty seven chapters" (Mortad-Serir 87). Indeed, *Hard Times* is composed of the first book "Sowing", which contains sixteen (16) chapters. The second book is "Reaping" which contains twelve (12) chapters, and finally, The third book "Garnering", the shortest one that embodies nine (9) chapters. Of all Dickens's novel, *Hard Times* is **"…** of all Dickens's works it is the one that, having the distinctive strength" (Leavis 251).

1.7. A Plot-Summary of *Hard Times*

In the fictitious industrial city of Coketown, lived Mr. Thomas Gradgrind, a retired merchant and a school master, with his feeble wife, and children. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind believed strongly in the philosophy of facts and he raises his own children, Louisa the eldest child and Thomas the selfish ill-natured one upon this philosophy. He even imposes this philosophy on the educational system of his model school where Cecilia Jupe or "Sissy" besides Bitzer and many other pupils, are forged to learn the "Facts". One day Mr. Gradgrind visited his school. He asked Cecilia to define a horse since her father is a horseman in Sleary's circus. She was unable to do that while Bitzer fluently gave a full zoological definition of a horse.

Mr. Gradgrind and his close friend Mr. Josiah Bounderby decided to dismiss Sissy because of her fanciful affluence on the children so they went to the circus and suddenly caught the Gradgrinds (Tom and Louisa) peeping at the circus. Mr. Gradgrind was really disappointed because he considers the circus as another fancy that distracts his children from the loaded facts he kept pouring in their heads. He ordered them home .Then; both men carried their way to see Sissy's father, yet the circus manager Mr. Sleary informed them that Mr. Jupe has left the circus besides his daughter.

Mr. Gradgrind felt responsible so he offered Sissy to join his family to take care of his wife on one condition; she has to forget about the circus for good; which she

Chapter One: An Overview on the Novel

chooses eventually. Mr. Stephen Blackpool is a hard working honest man who works in one of Mr. Bounderby's factories. Mr. Blackpool has feelings for his close friend Rachael another factory hand; however, he is already married to a drunken woman.

One day, after he finishes his work, he went home and found his unwelcomed fallen wife. Stephen went to Mr. Bounderby to ask for legal consultancy in order to divorce his wife. Mr. Bounderby explained that it would be complicated and highly expensive. Stephen came back home where he found Rachael taking care of his wife. Mr. Bounderby watched Louisa blossoming and finally proposed to her though he was thirty years senior. Mr. Gradgrind tried to convince Louisa with some statistics that prove age difference cannot lead an unhappy marriage. Louisa accepted and accompanied her husband to Lyons for he could observe and assess the labouring situation in the factories. He also opened a bank in Coketown where he employed Bitzer as the doorman and Mrs. Sparsit at the surveillance during the afternoons.

One day, someone came looking for Bounderby's house. Mrs. Sparsit, the housekeeper received him. He was a sharp looking man who introduced himself as Mr. James Harthouse the political disciple of Mr. Gradgrind. His mission was to investigate the political affairs there. Mr. Harthouse finally met Mr. Bounderby who keeps telling the same story of how he overcame his vigorous childhood to become a self-made man. Mr. Harthouse was bored; he shifted his interest to Louisa who looked miserable. Harthouse also met Tom because he works in Bounderby's bank and noticed immediately his contempt towards him (Mr. Bounderby). Tom became a callous reckless man. He even convinced Louisa to marry Bounderby because he had money issues. Louisa easily accepted since she had sincere affection for her brother.

The hands were gathered for a union meeting led by the agitator Mr. Slackbridge, who tries to convince Mr. Stephen Blackpool to join the union. Yet the latter refuses, consequently the hands abjured him. Afterwards, Mr. Bounderby was investigating the fuss made by the hands, so he called Stephen to learn about their demands. Stephen

was also accused by Mr. Bounderby who eventually fired him. Louisa witnessed the scenery, she sympathies the poor man's situation.

She went with her brother to visit him, hence, she offered him money to overcome his plight, yet the honest man refuses to take any money for her. Tom had a private conversation with the poor man. He told him to wait outside Bounderby's bank. Few days later, the bank was robbed, and the only suspect is Stephen who used to be seen trudging outside the bank many times. It was confirmed especially he had left the town. At Bounderby's house, Mrs. Sparsit notices the liaison between Louisa and Harthouse who reveals his emotions towards her. Louisa refused him and left her house. She headed to her father's house. When she arrived, she was overwhelmed by the melancholy and distress. She blames her father's stern education which was a stronghold on her .Then she collapses. At that moment, Mr. Gradgrind discovered the failure of his philosophy of facts and decided to abandon it.

The stern Mrs. Sparsit told Mr. Bounderby what she saw. He went to Mr. Gradgrind's house. Mr. Gradgrind informed the furious husband that his daughter is innocent, yet she needs to take some rest after what she had experienced. Mr. Bounderby rejected Mr. Gradgrind suggestion and he told him that he will end the marriage if Louisa does not return the next day. After she woke up, being conscious enough, she decided to stay at her father's house and end her miserable marriage. Sissy witnessed the collapse of Louisa so she decided to visit Mr. Harthouse and successfully convinced him to stay out of Louisa's way.

Meanwhile, Stephen reputation was getting darker. Rachael wanted Stephen to come back and clear his name. She went to the bank and told Mr. Bounderby that Louisa and Tom visited him before he left the town. Mr. Bounderby took her to Louisa who confirmed her story.

 Mrs. Sparsit noticed the mysterious old woman who often pays an annual visit to Mr. Bounderby's bank or house and tracked her and brought her home where she

found out that she was Mr. Bounderby's mother who gave him a good upbringing which denies his the fact that he had a rigorous childhood and being a self-made man.

While Stephen was coming back to Coketown to clear his reputation, he fell in a deep mining pit. The villagers run to rescue him, He hardly confesses his innocence and gave Rachael a farewell, and then expired. It was Tom who robbed the bank and he was the responsible of framing Stephen since he told him to loiter outside the bank. Louisa the affectionate sister has managed to facilitate Tom's escape with the assistance of Mr. Sleary who found Tom an act while he performed as a clown. Bitzer almost caught him, yet Mr. Sleary was able to guarantee his escape for he rides a ship after reaching Liverpool.

Five years Later, Mr. Bounderby died in the street. Mr. Gradgrind abandoned the philosophy of fact while the members of the Parliament still believed in it. Stephen's name was clear, meanwhile the hand Rachael kept working in the factory. Sissy got married and had children. Tom died alone far from his family and town while Louisa remarried, and lived a happy life full with fancy and feelings. She encourages people to unchain their imagination.

1.8. Conclusion

The novel is the new literary genre which varied in terms of several characteristics that differentiate it from the previous genres which are mainly poems, drama and plays. The novel tends to tell about life experiences of people as well as to inform about the predecessors. The Victorian era was a period of time, for many social, economical and political incidents took place. It is also characterised mainly by the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution which helped greatly in the ascension of the novel. The social dynamics during that particular era are worthy of both observation and examination. Consequently, the chief-concerns of the Victorian novelists lied mainly in tracing the social phenomena, criticising the rigorous regimes, and

expressing their indignation through their thoughtful themes, settings, characters, and mainly their characterisations.

Chapter Two:

Characters and Social Behaviourism in *Hard Times*

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Chapter Two: Characters and Social Behaviourism

2.1. Introduction

At the age of eighteen, Queen Victoria ruled the British Empire from 1837 till her death in 1901. Britain during this period became the greatest Empire in the history after the emanation of the Industrial Revolution. Britain became indisputably the strongest manufacturer and producer of goods in the whole world. However, within the Empire, there were a social and economical unrest besides austerity in cultural norms and values. It was the duty of novelists to examine these social ills for two reasons; they were first the elite of the society, hence, the novel was the predominant literary genre.

Queen Victoria (1819-1901)(Retrieved from<www.google.com in 20/04/2019)

Chapter Two: Characters and Social Behaviour in *Hard Times*

2.2. The Victorian Society

It is impossible to approach any Social novel of the Victorian Era without dealing with the context of the Industrial Revolution. During the Victorian era, Britain became the richest empire in the world, however, within the country; arose a social unrest due to the economical distress. The Industrial Revolution emerged in Britain at the beginning of the 19th century. The industry invaded all sectors after consecutive technical inventions. People no longer depended on the traditional methods in agriculture. They eventually started to abandon the countryside in order to join the industrial cities. This radical shift from the agrarian to industrial urban lifestyle caused mass waves of migration. People left their lands to work in factories. However, the working conditions were unmerciful. Men, women and even children had to work in factories, mills, mines and sweatshops for long hours with the lowest wages ever.

2.2.1. The Industrial Revolution

Britain, before the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, depended wholly on agriculture. The new advanced technical inventions revolutionised all sectors and modulated the traditional, old-fashioned lifestyle. Inventions such as the steam engine (created by James Watt in 1775) invaded industry (steam-powered mills), transportation (the steamship), besides many other inventions, led to the massive production of goods which requires a large number of machines, and workers. Meanwhile, the mould of the British society was irrevocably changing.

2.2.2. The Clash between Classes

The advancements brought up by the wave of industrialisation caused a social unrest. Industry widened the gap between the rich and the poor (they were considered

as 'Two Nations' in Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845)). A new social class has emerged. It was the Middle Class stratum; which embodied merchants, bankers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers,…Middle Class people, could afford fine clothing, furniture, food which made them compete with the wealthy aristocrats. On the contrary, the impoverished workers suffered from unemployment, hardship and miserable working conditions. Men, women and children had to work in cramped, humid and unsanitary places.
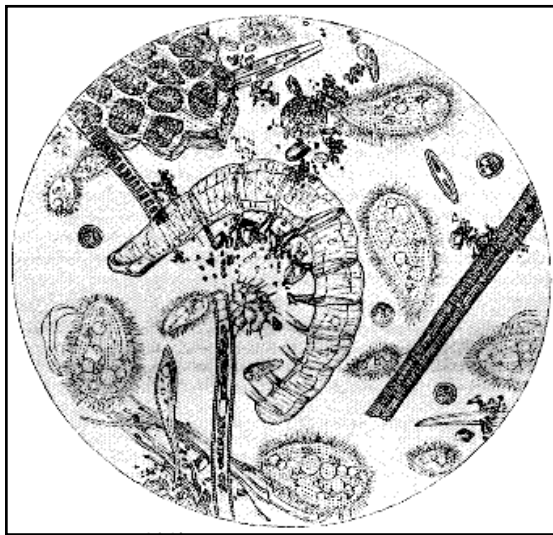
Contaminated London drinking water (1842) containing various viruses, bacteria, paramecia, vegetal debris, nematodes, and other micro-organisms (Chadwick 1)

Chadwick, the secretary of the commission investigating sanitary, alerted the dangers that surround the workers. He also cited the reasons behind the widespread epidemic, endemics and other sorts of fatal diseases, which reside in the decomposed substances, the damp and filth, the absence of drainage, cleansing and proper

ventilation. In fact, the increased population, the lad-drainage, and the filthy atmosphere all jeopardised the public health (1).

2.2.3. Education

Education also changed drastically during the Victorian Era. Public education evolved due to the new succession of laws which made education compulsory. Hence, the Middle Class drove demand for schooling. The teaching methods were traditional (teaching and learning by rote) and education was confined to churches, local schools, and philanthropists. Novelists and writers such as Carlyle, Mathew Arnold, Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens in *Hard Times* echoed the importance of education; they were also played the role of public educators (Cited in Dennis 8).

2.2.4. Religion, Morals and Values

The Victorian Era witnessed a crisis of faith. People started to question religion due to the scientific, geological and biological studies brought by scientists like Charles Darwin and William Paley, besides the criticism of the Bible which subverted their faith causing a state of doubt.

The Victorian society was a class-based prudish society. It was characterised by the individual morality, Women were not allowed to go in public alone. They should be accompanied with a male who better be the husband, the brother or the father.

2.3. The Impact of the Social Environment on Characters

The Victorian Epoch as Charles Dickens describes at the opening of his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859): "…was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the season of Light, it was the

season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair" (13) This denotes the ambivalence of the era and negativistic aspect of it. The novel duplicated these aspects , and *Hard Times* in particular, is the iconic novel of that epoch.

> In the Victorian period two of the great themes of the novel are the depiction and analysis of society as a whole, and the adjustment of the individual to this society. Victorian society was seen to be shaped and formed by individuals: it followed therefore that the emphasis of the novel was on 'characters', who would reflect the 'Victorian values' on which society was based , self-helped, self-dependency- and success(Dennis 16)

Dickens's novels were works of social commentary *par excellence*. He was a fierce critic of social ills and a reporter of the maladies of the Victorian society. He used his diagrammatic characters associated with ideas to commentate on the social stratifications and the report the working class conditions. Characters represent the dregs of the Industrial Revolution, the inadequacy of political economy and Utilitarian regime. Dickens was definitely the spokesman of the poor and the working class who had no voice in the Victorian society.

Ordinarily what are recognized as Dickens's judgements about the world he lives in ('Dickens's social criticism') are casual and incidental…" (Leavis 252-53). Dickens was undeniably a social reformer and his novels were the repository of the social regime. *Hard Times* (1854) was the distinct Dickensian Condition of England novel which varied in terms of plot, themes, and characterisations…

2.3.1. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind is the rigorous representative of the philosophy of 'Facts'. He truly believed in this philosophy, adopted it and imposed it on his own

children and school. The first scene in his model school is the most memorable scene in which Mr. Gradgrind emphasised on 'Facts'.

> Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir! (Dickens 1)

The emphasis on 'Facts' is purposefully put by Dickens. The redundancy or stress on some terms is another Dickensian feature in which he trespasses the aesthetics or laws of language or stylistics. He presented Mr. Gradgrind through caricature because of his obsession with 'Facts' besides his distinct physical appearance.

> The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes fond commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set, the emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of the plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, nay, his very neckcloth trained to take him by the throat

> with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was , all
> helped the emphasis. (Dickens 1)

Dickens associated the Gradgrindian aspect to the Utilitarian house of Mr. Gradgrind, and his rigid school where fancies or loose imaginations are totally unwelcomed.

> Mr. Gradgrind walked homeward from the school, in a state
> of considerable satisfaction. It is his school, and he intended it to be
> a model. He intended to be a model. He intended every child in it to
> be model—just as the young Gradgrinds were all models. (Dickens
> 7)

Dickens was fully aware of the value of education. He had a major role in defending the right of the poor to be educated. The Dickensian voice was amalgamated with the educational reforms such as The Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834. This is the reason that pushed him to criticise harshly the educational system of the Victorian Era.. He stresses on the repellent methods used in teaching. He also highlights the impact of Utilitarianism on education. Pupils of Gradgrindian school were taught only scientific subjects (by memorising) and there was an obvious marginality of the subjects such as Literature or Music.

> So, Mr. M'Choakumchild began in his best manner. He and
> some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters,, had been lately
> turned at the same time., in the same factory, on the same
> principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had answered volumes
> of head-breaking questions. Orthography, etymology, syntax, and
> prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general
> cosmography, the sciences of compound proportion, algebra, land-
> surveying and leveling, vocal music, and drawing from models,
> were all at the ends of his ten chilled fingers. (Dickens 7)

Chapter Two: Characters and Social Behaviour in *Hard Times*

The product of this education is the model pupil Bitzer. His long detailed zoological definition of a horse reflects the quality and strictness of the teaching methods of the Gradgrindian school:

> Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive . Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer. (Dickens 4).

The knowledge of Bitzer is contrasted with the knowledge of Sissy. It is another paradoxical scene where fact and fancy meet each other throughout the novel. Sissy did not have the background knowledge to define a horse though she was raised in the circus and her father was a horse breaker. "… It is the virtue that makes it impossible for her to understand, or acquiesce in, an ethos for which she is 'girl number twenty', or to think of any other human being as a unit for arithmetic".(Leavis 255). However, it is her virtue that will invert the whole situation.

Mr. Gradgrind, at the end of the second book, realised that the philosophy he erected was a fiasco after Louisa collapsed. He consequently changed his standpoint and abandoned his principles and embraced a new way of living.

> She dropped into a chair before him, and put her cold hand on his arm.
> _ "Father, you have trained me from my cradle?"
> _ "Yes, Louisa."
> _ "I curse the hour in which I was born to such destiny."
> He looked at her in doubt and dread, vacantly repeating:
> _ "Curse the hour? Curse the hour?"

_ "How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?"

She struck herself with both hands upon her bosom.

_ "If it had ever been here, its ashes alone would save me from the void in which my whole life sinks. I did not mean to say this; but, father, you remember the last time we conversed in this room?

He had been so wholly unprepared for what he heard now, that it was with difficulty he answered, "Yes, Louisa."

_ "What has risen to my lips now, would have risen to my lips then, if you had given me a moment's help. I don't reproach you, father. What you have never nurtured in me, you have nurtured in yourself; but O! if you had only done so long ago, or if you had only neglected me, what a much happier creature I should have been this day!"

On hearing this, after all his care he bowed his head upon his hand and groaned aloud. (Dickens 193-94)

The character of Mr. Thomas Gradgrind's changed its pertinence. It was confirmed that this character believes only in purely numerical facts. Though the change was radical, it was expected since Mr. Gradgrind, from the very beginning, was both unconsciously and/or consciously able to change.

Dickens criticises the capitalist system through statistics that Mr. Gradgrind used to prove to Louisa that the difference in age does not cause unhappy marriage. These statistics are doomed by the fact that she suffered from a miserable languid marriage

with Mr. Bounderby who is thirty years senior. Dickens elucidates the fallacy of the calculus life and treating people quantitatively like machines or figures. Hence, he refutes the capitalist views that conceive happiness in the great number.

2.3.2. Louisa Gradgrind

Louisa is the eldest child of Mr. Thomas Gradgrind. She is the vessel in which Mr. Gradgrind poured his principles till it reached the brim. Louisa Gradgrind had no outlet of imagination or emotions. When her father caught her peeping at the circus with Thomas, he disappointedly replied:

> "You! Thomas and you, to whom the circle of sciences is open; Thomas and you, who may be said to be replete with facts; Thomas and you, who have been trained to mathematical exactness; Thomas and you, here!" cried Mr. Gradgrind."In this degraded position! I am amazed."(Dickens 11).

The suppressed daughter who knew nothing about fancy and imagination had hard times in order to define her feelings. When she is contrasted to one of the female characters, as Rachael or Sissy, Louisa have neither the full comprehension of her feelings nor the ability to express them. She does not understand what she feels except her affection towards her brother Tom. She even marries Mr. Bounderby in order to save him (Tom) from his plight. In fact, her education, upbringing even her collapse have been seen by some critics as a duplication of John Stuart Mill's life. This British political economist and philosopher is the son of James Stuart Mill. The Benthamian Utilitarian adherent pumped his knowledge in his son's head from a tender age till he collapsed one day at his twenties. This explicitly or implicitly sheds light on both quality and quantity of teaching and upbringing. The condensed teaching methods and neglecting the value of leisure is hazardous.

2.3.3. Tom Gradgrind

Tom is the product of the philosophy of his father. He is the side-effect of the Gradgrindian Utilitarianism. "His descent into debt and bank-robbery is natural" (Leavis 267). His problems were originated from the Utilitarian philosophy; yet, his salvation was in the non-Utilitarian hands.

2.3.4. Mr. Josiah Bounderby

Mr. Josiah Bounderby is a boastful wealthy merchant, banker and manufacturer who pretend to be a self-made man. Dickens describes Mr. Bounderby as:

> A big, loud man, with a stare, and metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open, and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. (12)

Mr. Bounderby turned out to be a Jonsonian rigid character. He had no interest in facts, all what interests him is the material benefit. When this Utilitarian character is contrasted with Mr. Gradgrind, the difference resides in the flexibility of the character and its acceptance of the changes. Mr. Bounderby's ego did not let him change. He was accompanied with valuable people, yet he had no interest in keeping them. For instance, Louisa Gradgrind his virtuous wife, or Stephen Blackpool the honest hand.

2.3.5. Stephen Blackpool

. Stephen Blackpool is a "hand" in Mr. Bounderby's factory. He is married to a fallen woman. Stephen Blackpool is well-known by his honesty, integrity and hard

work. He is the accurate example of the virtue and morality of the Victorian individual. When Stephen is contrasted to Mr. Bounderby, the moral traits found in the character of Stephen Blackpool are completely missing in the pompous Bounderby. In spite of his traits, Stephen was cast away by the hands because he refused to join the trade union the hands had formed. He was also swept by Mr. Bounderby because he refused to spy on them. Despite Stephen's hardship, his principles did not change. He refused to accept the help Louisa offered him to overcome his ordeal. After the bank was robbed, Stephen was the first suspect. When he was coming back to clear his name, he fell in a mining pit. The death of Stephen symbolises the biblical martyrdom.

2.3.6. Rachael

Rachael is a factory worker. She is a hand at the Mr. Bounderby's factory. She works with Stephen as she has feelings for him. Rachael has the same traits of Stephen Blackpool. They both share the moral virtues, integrity and faith. Rachael is representative of the Victorian domestic happiness, moral purity and female compassion. In spite of industrialisation and mechanization that dehumanised the quality of the hands, Rachael maintained her femininity and goodness.

2.3.7. Cecilia Jupe (Sissy)

Cecilia Jupe or Sissy is the daughter of Senior Jupe the horse breaker. Sissy was introduced at the very beginning of the first chapter. She is 'girl number twenty' who was "so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her" (Dickens 3-4). The character of Sissy was utilised to elucidate the paradoxical contrast. First, she is 'girl number twenty' (a figure as the system perceived people) as well as the Gradgrindian views.. She is dark-eyed and dark haired while Bitzer was

> so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.(ibid)

Girl number twenty is the fan of fancies and imaginations which are prohibited by the proponent of facts, Mr. Gradgrind. Sissy also serves the paradoxical scene when she is contrasted to Louisa Gradgrind. She (Sissy) understands her feelings though they are not suitable for the Gradgrindian mould of facts unlike Louisa who struggled to determine her emotions. In fact, the imaginative Sissy supported Louisa when she collapsed and gave her a hand to overcome her relapse. She went to Harthouse and convinced him not to see Louisa again.

2.3.8. Mrs. Sparsit

Mrs. Sparsit is the housekeeper at Bounderby's house. He is a high connected widow since she was a 'Powler'. Dickens implemented her to demonstrate the social class insecurity and instability. Mrs. Sparsit was an aristocrat yet her social status fell when her husband died. She agreed to take care of Mr. Bounderby' house and bank though she despised his boastful manners. She got fired after she met Mrs. Pegler who turned out to be Mr. Bounderby's mother who denied his roguish story of being a self-made man.

2.3.9. Other Characters

James Harthouse was a wealthy aristocrat who travelled to Coketown as a political disciple of Mr. Gradgrind. He was bored with his life until he met Louisa Gradgrind who was married to Bounderby at that time. He tried to seduce her yet she

shut him off. A different social class character is the agitator Slackbridge who exhorts the hands to join the trade union and pitted them against Stephen Blackpool till they cast him away.

Mrs. Gradgrind is the languid wife who followed Mr. Gradgrind principles. Though she was not that committed to the philosophy of 'facts', she had no voice to object like the majority of women in the Victorian society. Her children, besides Louisa and Tom were Adam Smith and Malthus, the references of the economic figures, and Jane Gradgrind who definitely lived happier life than her elder sister. Dickens also used itinerant characters who were mainly members in the circus of Mr. Sleary, the non-utilitarian character who saves Tom. The performers in Sleary's circus were usually minor characters who served the plot and the flow of events.

2.4. The Impact of Characters on the Social Environment

Characters in *Hard Times* were characterised by their vividness. "Dickens's way of character creation was not of the realist novelist, he was after another kind of reality" (Allen 163). Each one of the characters presented in the novel is a symbol embodiment of a Victorian aspect or an idea and defended a certain standpoint or principle. The major characters have a psychological depth and reflect a social pertinence. The quixotic characters lived inside the novel as well as outside of it. In fact, the endowed Dickens succeeded in giving *échantillons* from the different stratifications of the Victorian society as well as in reporting the hardship of the working class which enhanced the public understanding. "The consistent progress of the novel had an undeniable impact over the English society. As a matter of fact, the novel remarkably helped in molding a more mature and formal understanding of the British society" (Bouguedra 8). Characters of the Dickensian novel *Hard Times* were memorable as their names were aggravated in the heads of the readers.

2.5. Conclusion

The second chapter investigates the significance of the implications of the social real phenomena on the fictitious characters in *Hard Times*. It exposes the social dregs of the Victorian society through the lenses of characters. In other words, it traces the sociology of the novel through characters. Dickens implemented explicitly and/explicitly the social aspect in his characters. Consequently, the quixotic characters duplicated the social behaviour. They were so logical and real that they affected the audience of *Hard Times*. Therefore, the influence was mutual since it the novel and the period demonstrate each other.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

During the Victorian Era, Britain became the supreme power and the core manufacturer of the whole world due to the mass production of goods. It was due to the inventions brought up by the Industrial Revolution such as the steam engine that accelerated the pace of production and transportation. Consequently, industry invaded all sectors of the daily life and the shift from agrarian to industrial methods was compulsory and inevitable. Therefore, people moved to the industrial cities looking for labour. This caused massive waves of migration and repellent living conditions for the workers who were men, women and mostly children. They worked in factories for the longest hours and the lowest wages ever. Hence, there was the rise of the Middle Class. This social stratum was composed of doctors, lowers, merchants,...who were not extravagantly rich as the Aristocrats. Middle Class people competed with the Upper Class to define and escalate their social status which caused a permanent clash between the classes. This crisis besides other social ills which resides in the weakness of the educational system and strictness in the social norms and values all characterised the Victorian society.

The novel, like the other literary genres, has always been the outlet of imagination and the emulatour of societies. The Victorian novelists were in charge of reporting the social unrests of the people and voicing their indignant attitudes towards the rigid regimes and the maladies brought up by the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, sociology of the novel reflects the social phenomena in the novel and the faithfulness of the novelist in depicting them. In fact, Charles Dickens is one of the endowed ones who reflected the real social Victorian atmosphere in his writings.

Dickens as a social commentator criticised the philosophy, economy, education, social norms and values of the Victorian Age. In his tenth novel *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens tackled several themes like mechanisation, education, the clash between fact and fancy, the social class divisions and the hardship of the Working Class. There are major factors that exhorted Dickens to write about these social ills. Mainly his rough

childhood, his raised consciousness he developed throughout his life and his commitment toward his readers. His awareness of the literary genre led to the creation of the most vivid and memorable characters.

In fact, each character has a psychological depth that affects other characters and the novel in general. The dialogical and diagrammatic representations of characters reflect the social aspects of the Victorian Era. The round characters are the embodiment of the social traits. For instance, the characterisation of Mr. Gradgrind is served to criticise the Utilitarian philosophy which is applied in fields as economy and education. Consequently, the social background has positively affected the quixotic characters since it affected Dickens at first. In spite of the fact that these characters are fictitious, they were so vivid, memorable and influential. To summarise, Characters are influenced and influence society which affirmatively confirms the previous raised hypotheses and answers the research questions of this present work.

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