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The Depiction of Social Layers of 19th Century Britain in Charles Dickens'

Novel "*Hard Times*"

An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this modest work to my dear

parents for their love, patience, encouragement, and

help.

This work is also dedicated to my brother and sisters,

and to all my lovely friends.

Farouk

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate and to analyse the social classes which Charles Dickens intervened in his novel "*Hard Times*". The present study expresses the author's society during Victorian Age. It is clear that Dickens was much more successful than his predecessors in exposing the troubles of the industrial society including class division, and poverty. This investigation aims at laying attention on the characteristics of each class, through a literary study of corpus. In this regard, the dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter involves background knowledge about Victorian literature. Also, it discusses the Effects of the Industrial Revolution in the British society. Its aim is to show the Victorian society and how a social novel draws it. The second chapter studies the main features of literature which is social criticism that concerned with the social structures, with the essential Marxist theory that can be applied in social classes. The aim of this chapter is to criticize the Victorian society and show the social classes and its conflict. Third chapter centres on the analysis of the novel focusing on the content through a discussion of the social class in 19th century England.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The Victorian period of English literature began with the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne in 1837, and lasted until her death in 1901. Because the Victorian period of English literature lasted over six decades, the year 1870 is known to divide the era into "early Victorian" and "late Victorian". In general, Victorian literature deals with the issues and problems of day which are social, economic, religious, and intellectual issues and problems surrounding the Industrial Revolution, growing class tensions, the early feminist movement, and pressures toward political and social reform. Some of the most recognized authors of the Victorian era include Alfred Lord Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, her husband Robert, Charlotte Bronte, George Elliot, Thomas Hardy, and Charles Dickens.

The basic quality of daily life for people in Victorian England rested on an underlying structure determined by social class and shaped by traditional ways of life in country, town, and city. English society in the nineteenth century was still highly stratified, although some of the old class distinctions were beginning to blur by the end of the period. These social distinctions ran in parallel to the old social class system of landed gentry and rural poor, which in turn derived from the medieval feudal system. The reason of this later is the industrial revolution, had created profound economic and social changes, which is the shift from a way of life based on ownership of land to a modern urban economy based on trade and manufacturing.

The British society during the Victorian period is known for its class conflict. Therefore; the Victorian novel, with its emphasis on the realistic portrayal of social life, represented many Victorian issues in the stories of its characters. Moreover, many authors spoke about social problems of the Victorian time in their works like Charles Dickens for example in his novels *Great Expectations", "David Copperfield"*, and also *"Hard Times"* which is the subject of this paper.

Analysing the literary work in this study requires the analytic method in which the literary work should be analyzed clearly for illustrating the target object of the study. It requires an adaptation of a suitable literary theory which will be the Marxist literary Criticism, this latter serves the main aim of this study. Analysing Dickens' novel "*Hard* Times" from a Marxist perspective will give a clear image about the different social classes in England during the nineteenth century and the inequalities between them.

The present study aims at showing the way in which a specific literary text gives the reader a clear image of the society at a specific period of time. It also aims at explaining and pointing out a major function of literature which is mirroring society. It proves that literature is not just a collection of fictitious stories based on imagination for entertaining readers; it is based on realities and facts covered sometimes by fiction. The research work would try to find out the social layers differences in Dickens' "*Hard Times*", and to show whether it reflects a social realities from the Victorian society.

When we read a literary text whatever it is; a short story, a poem or a novel, our consciousness will start drawing each detail in the work, and reflects each expression, setting and character have been mentioned in the text. As any reader starts reading a piece of literature, he gets into another world, and discovers its realities and facts. That is a main function of literature.

Literature is a record of social facts, realities, and experiences in which class division in the Victorian society can be revealed through Dickens' Hard Times. This fact can be proved by reference to historical writings. At the end of reading a piece of literature, readers will get a clear image of society at the time it was written. For me as a reader of the novel "*Hard Times*", it appeared to me that my Algerian society is somehow similar to the Victorian one in the matter of social classes, and also how patriarchal it is towards women.

The novel "*Hard Times*" represents a number of interesting themes such as poverty, suffering social class, abandoned children and family life, for this reason the study aims at investigating and analysing Dickens' representation of social layers in his novel "*Hard Times*", because Dickens lived during a time of great social changes in Europe having publishing novels, the subject of his writing varied of many topics, one of them focuses on the social layers differences. This research work aims at answering the following questions:

1. How does Dickens reflect the Victorian social reality in Hard Times?

2. How does Charles Dickens make distinctions between social layers in his novel "*Hard Times*"?

Therefore, a number of hypotheses are formed in order to answer our research questions:

1. Dickens' "*Hard Times*" characters represent the social layers that existed in the Victorian society.

2. Dickens may introduce three different layers in the novel.

The present study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents the historical background of the Victorian literature and the social class inequalities in the society during the era. It also deals with the Victorian novel and the new characteristics that it acquires during the Victorian era in order to make it the appropriate mean in recording facts and realities. The second chapter is devoted for the social criticism in order to clarify the relationship between literature and society referring to the Marxist literary theory, and also it will provide some tendencies about literature in addition to a number of notions about social class. The third chapter is the analytic study of the novel "*Hard Times*" by showing the influence of the individual and the class division in the Victorian society on the light of the Marxist literary theory.

Overall, we hope that we would be able to reach the aim of our research which is finding out the social layer differences in Dickens' "*Hard Times*". We also hope that this study would help the students of English Literature in their study.

Chapter One:

The Historical Background of the Victorian Literature and the Society

Chapter One

Introduction:

During the 19th century, Britain witnessed a lot of changes in different fields such as science, politics, economy, social and literature. These changes actually gave birth to many authors, poets and other writers who marked their literary carrier in English Literature. So in this chapter we will deal with the historical background of the Victorian literature and the social factors that pushed Dickens to write about the society at that time.

1.1 The Historical Background of the Victorian Period:

The Victorian period of English literature started with the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne in 1837 until her death in 1901. It was the longest reign in the history of Britain; it lasted for six decades. Therefore the year 1870 is known to divide the period into two, "The Early Victorian" and "The late Victorian". This period witnessed real changes in different fields, for example science, politics, economy and society and these changes were depicted in literature.

When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, the population of London was only two million inhabitants, when she died in 1901, the population increased to 6.5 million and Britain became the richest manufacturing in the world, but unfortunately there were some events that ended this success such as the Crimean war (1853-1856), and also the death of Queen Victoria's husband, prince Albert in 1861 which made the Queen to be a widow for forty years and pushed the citizens to protest against the monarchy (Carter and McRae, 224).

Although it was a period of achievement, The Victorian Age was also a period of doubt, paradox and anxiety. There were so many problems such as poverty and bad living conditions. During this era the middle class became rich and powerful force in the society, while the working class were poor and lived in terrible circumstances and forced to work in bad conditions. Within this context Burgess Wilson asserts that:

The Victorian Age thus had a large number of problems to face. In many ways, it was an age of progress in railway-building, steam ships reforms of all kinds but it was also an age of doubt. There was too much poverty, too much injustice, too much ugliness and too little certainty about faith or morals – thus it became also an age of crusaders and reformers and theorists (80).

So in general, nothing characterizes the Victorian society too much as its quest of self definition because the sixty three years of Victoria's reign were marked by social changes. Within this context Sharp and Henderson claim that "the sixty three years of Victoria's reign were marked by momentous and intimidating social changes" (451). Despite of all its conflicts, contradictions, problems and the threat of social breakdown, the Victorian period can be described as an age of reform. Within this context Thompson claims that:

The whole meaning of Victorian England is lost if it is thought of as a country of stuffy complacency and black top hated moral piggery. Its frowsty crinolines and dingy hansom cabs its gas lit houses and over ornate draperies concealed a people engaged in tremendously exciting adventure _ the daring experiment of fitting industrial man into a democratic society (quoted by Sharpe and Henderson 460).

In the other hand, the Victorian period also witnessed a deep religious thinking that reflects in a wide range of attitudes in helping the poor and fighting for reform (Grellet, 106-107). This situation inspired several Victorian writers who attempted to depict a real image of their society. Through many of their works, these writers revealed their commitment towards their society environment during the nineteenth century.

1.2 The Effect of Industrial Revolution on the British society:

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, another revolution, an industrial one, was transforming the economic and social structure of Europe, although in a less dramatic and

rapid fashion than the French revolution. Industrial Revolution occurs when a society stops using tools to make products and starts using new sources of energy. It is a shift from the home to the factory, from the country to the city, from human or animal power to engines power, but the social and economic changes were so far reaching over generations that, looking back, it becomes clear that they were nothing short of revolutionary.

The Industrial Revolution increased tremendously, bringing wealth and power to Great Britain throughout the nineteenth century. Since the Industrial Revolution was so new at the end of the eighteenth century, there were initially no laws to control the new industries. So during the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, between 1790 and 1850, British society became the first example of what happens in a country when free-market capitalism has no disciplines or controls.[1]

Therefore, the Victorian Era of Great Britain is considered the heighest of the British Industrial Revolution and the top of the British Empire. Furthermore, England was the first country to move from an agricultural economy to one based on manufacturing. It changed the whole civil society; the historical importance of which is only now beginning to be recognised. Moreover, the Victorian period saw an intensive production of literary works, especially novels dealing with social realities during the Industrial Revolution. It saw many effects of industrialization which are on society, on the daily living and the working conditions of common people (Hudson, 13).

1.2.1 Working conditions:

The Industrial Revolution has positive effects as well as negative ones on the British society during the nineteenth century. Work began to take place outside the home. The whole family was forced to work in factories, even children. Therefore *Engles* argued that:

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[1] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Industrial Revolution." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 Mar 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution. 01 Feb 2019.

The Industrial Revolution's mainly developments were the invention of the steam engine and the cotton industry. As the improvement of technology, the steam engine could produce more power with less energy than before. As a result, it leads to the improvement and industrialization in other areas. (16)

During the Industrial Revolution, instead of learning a trade, children were paid humble wages to be the primary workers in textile mills and mines. The Industrial Revolution helped to create opportunities for employment and all members of the family. However, any improvement to the quality of life for the labouring class had come from a hard experience from factory labour. Workers benefited eventually, but at first they suffered bad working conditions. Because kids had to work, they were not going to school and getting an education, and they were not healthy. They had to work about 18 hours a day. (Forster, 11)

Moreover, working conditions were often much less than satisfactory for many of those employed in the new factory systems and children were the worst during the Industrial Revolution. Workplaces were often poorly ventilated, over-crowded, and unsafe. Men, women, and children were all employed in order to survive and in unhealthy and dangerous environment. It left children crippled, deformed and without a future employment for the rest of their lives. This greatly affected not only the child, but the family as well. There were no laws to support these families affected by the terrible working conditions from the Industrial Revolution.

Workers were able to afford no more than the housing, resulting in the rise of ghetto. Stories of the implausible work conditions in mines, textile factories, and other industrial work places soon became a staple of Victorian Literature.

1.2.2 Living Conditions:

The impressive growth of cities in the first half of the nineteenth century produced miserable living conditions for many of the inhabitants. Of course, the quality of life had been

poor for centuries for many people in European cities, but the rapid urbanization associated with Industrial Revolution intensified the problems in the first half of the nineteenth century and made these miserable conditions all apparent.

The Industrial Revolution changed the population of Great Britain in the late eighteenth century which was about seven million inhabitants just before the start of it. During the Industrial Revolution, the population was twelve million at 1811. By 1851 the population of Great Britain had reached over twenty one million because the movement of population to the cities from the countryside to seek jobs in the new factories. Therefore, it produced dramatic changes in lifestyle.[2]

Living conditions varied from the splendour of the middle class to the immorality to the lower class labourers. Social commentators like Tonybee, The Webbs, the Hammonds and novelists like Charles Dickens stressed the "rapidity of change and the terrible effects of industrial transformation upon the living standards of the masses" (Hudson, 106)

Before housing was recognised by government as a concern to the nation, it had been in the hands of charities and private enterprises. During the Industrial Revolution thousands of new cheap houses were constructed near mines and factories. The conditions or quality of the houses was not a major concern to the factory owners. These homes were England's first urban slums. The homes were small and were extremely overcrowded. Families would take turns sleeping in the same bed, if they could afford one. People without a home slept in parks, and fisherman sleep in their boats.

When the Industrial Revolution started in the eighteenth century, the great majority of people lived in the countryside. But, the growth of cities coincided with the growth of industry, and rapid urbanisation continues to increase in contemporary times.

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    [2] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Industrial Revolution." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 Mar 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution. 15 Feb 2019.

In general, living conditions and sanitation in urban centres were often deplorable. However, this revolution encouraged the growth of capitalism and science[3]. By improving the quality of life of the workers, increased production levels for the factories and mills. The New Lanark Mill, owned by Robert Owen, introduced many new reforms to this mill that gave better hygiene, better housing and better physical and mental welfare for his workers.

1.2.3 The Emerging of Middle Class:

During the second half of the eighteenth century in Britain, there had been a small class of merchants, traders, and small farmers. This small class was called "the middle class", and it had increased with the rise of industrialists and factory owners. Then, in the nineteenth century, it grew quickly. Industrialists of this class were successful and self-made men who came from poor beginnings (McDowall, 131).

The middle class was made of factory owners, bankers, shopkeepers, merchants, lawyers, engineers, businessmen, traders, teachers, and other professionals. In other terms, it included everyone between the working class and the upper class. New roles were defined for middle class men and women; middle class men went for work in business, while their women stayed home and took care of the family. This class made about fifteen percent of the population. A man's status depends on his education, values, and community position. One of the main characteristics of this class is that the idealization of family life and being together. The middle class kids were raised by servants, and had the chance to go to school. Their education became important. People of this class shared a set of values and ideas. They valued hard work, sexual morality, and individual responsibility (McDowall, 139).

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[3] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Industrial Revolution." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 Mar 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution. 22 Feb 2019.

1.3 Overview of the Victorian Literature:

Human life cannot be separated from the existence of a work of art, literature is a work of art, that is why, there are many definition put forward of the term literature but it depends on who is using it. It can be defined as a kind of writing in ordinary language or the means through which writers convey their ideas, belief and concerns in artistic works. Literature is human creativity dealing with the writer's feeling and imagination in expressing the life experience. In this context, literature is the mirror of society view and problems. Furthermore, literature has been traditionally divided into various kinds according to certain criteria of writing such as fiction, poetry and drama.

The Victorian Literature is the literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). It takes its beginning exactly with the death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832 and went up to 1914. The Victorian Era can be characterized as a great age of literature because it was a period that witnessed an intensive production in literature particularly by novelists, poets, essayists and philosophers, within this context Sharpe and Henderson assert that:

> The energy of Victorian Literature is its most striking trait, and self exploration is its favourite theme. Victorians produced a staggeringly large body of literature, renowned for its variety. Their writing is distinguished by its particularity, eccentricity, long-windedness, earnestness, ornateness, fantasy, humour, experimentation and self consciousness. (469)

One of the most distinctive features of the Victorian Literature is its social orientation because much of the writing during that time was concerned with the social problems. The Victorian writers attempt to express the spirit of the age with all the resources of imagination, feeling and thought revealing the effect it had upon them. Moreover, they tried to show their readers that there were many problems behind the beautiful picture of the Victorian society (Carter and McRae, 126).

During this time the novel become the most popular literary form of representation and it was the novelists rather than the poets who become the literary representative of the age, because of a period of social and political change the novel became more important as a form of an exploration of change.

Moreover, during the nineteenth century there was a remarkable flourishing of writing for and about children. Therefore, that period can be regarded as the golden age of children's literature. Childhood as a subject for literature became important. It takes its beginning from the early poetry of Wordsworth and Blake. The Victorian writers built on the romantic vision of child as innocent and indulged themselves in the child's world as well as in the nature of childhood. The best well-known writers who wrote about children were Dickens, Carroll and Lear, they had memories of difficult childhood (Sharpe and Henderson, 795).

In addition to that, the Victorian literature is divided into two parts; the early Victorian literature which started from 1830 to 1870 and late Victorian literature started from 1870 to 1901. Firstly, in the early Victorian literature, the main concern of literature was in the belief that literature has a mission to expose social problems and to rise people's moral consciousness and this was achieved by the novel as a dominant genre of representation and as a major form of public entertainment (Grellet, 107). The outstanding novelists were Dickens, Thackeray, George Elliot and Trollope. In the same context, the Victorian poetry also was present and its main themes were loneliness, melancholy, suffering, social change and men's place in universe. The famous poets during this time Tennyson, Mathew Arnold and Robert Browning.

Secondly, in the late Victorian literature which appears in the end of the century, it gave another mission to literature where there is social and political unrest which resulted in an increase of doubt and anxiety. It appears as a reaction against the earlier Victorian view that art should serve a moral or social purpose that is they revolt to art for art's sake.

Overall, the Victorian literature got the inspiration for its subjects from common and existed places. They insisted on the description of the lifestyle and setting of the middle and lower class citizens. Thus, the setting became very important in establishing the realistic nature of characters and location.

1.3.1 The Victorian Social Novel:

In the Victorian period the novel became the most fundamental literary form of representation in making connection with some of the interests of the age rather than poetry, this is because of the successful novels of Sir Walter Scott who created a fashion for the series novels and the rise of reading public.

The term novel means a piece of writing, it was considered as a narrative form, a work which deals with the issues of everyday life. It takes its origin from the Italian word novella which simply means "new". Also, the novel in that period showed a variety that is why it can be classified into different kinds such as the historical novel, gothic novel and the social novel. (Carter & McRae, 133)

The novel was so important because it spreads the authors' social critical message to the public readers, and especially for those who did not know about those social problems from their own experiences. Many of the social novels at that time were serialized, so everyone could be able to buy a copy. The Victorian social novel is divided into three different stages: the Early Victorian social novel (1830-1850); the industrial system was to blame for the bad living conditions of the workers. The authors at that time drew less attention to the details of the world of work and its machines, but rather preferred the depiction of physically and mentally injured people, because of their hard work. The main feature of the middle Victorian social novel (1850-1880) was no longer to give solutions to current social problems, but it was the reflection of the *"Golden Age of British Capitalism"*, and the power of the system was made responsible for many social misunderstandings and not only common people, but

also successful businessmen were considered to be its victims. However, people like *Dickens* expressed heavy doubts towards the implausible ideal of upward mobility. In the Late Victorian social novel (1880-1910) there was a new wave of accusing elements and from there the so-called "Slum Novel" developed: it mainly criticized, as may be delayed from the name, the mostly bad living conditions in slums and contained lots of pessimistic components. (Carter and McRae, 134)

1.3.2 Dickens and his Peers on the mission. "Being a Novelist":

After mid-century, writers produced increasingly realistic stories about ordinary children and their doings, as well as adventure tales, school stories, historical novels, and other genres of popular writings. The most popular form of literature was the novel and the novelists responded with a will. The reign of the novel has lasted so long to appear natural. Furthermore, Victorian writers attempted to achieve their commitment through expressing the spirit of the age with all resources of imagination, feeling and thought, and spotting light on the condition of England question (Carter and McRae, 136). In addition, they try to show that there were many problems behind the beautiful picture of the Victorian society.

Authors such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte and Thomas Hardy together are the names that first come to the mind of the reader when he or she thinks of the Victorian novelists. Despite of all their differences, they have much more in common, that they share a special climate of ideas and feelings and penned works that became popular (Grellet, 205).

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the greatest novelists in the Victorian novel as Tennyson is in the Victorian poetry. He is considered to be one of those few authors whose works remained popular after their death. With the Victorian novels, especially those written by Dickens, the language of literature was improved and developed. Dickens' artistic

productions are varied in styles and themes. Therefore he is regarded to be "the most widely read author of great powers and permanent interest" (Churchill, 117).

Dickens combined his literary carrier with a variety of social interests. Thus, his writings make the reader aware of those areas of interaction between society and literature at that period. He portrays and analyses the different condition of the Victorians. Through his different novels, *Dickens* focused on the social problems of his time and tries to describe and attack different kinds of unpleasant people and places, bad schoolmasters and schools, dirty houses and bad prison. Most of Dickens' novels are full of characters; his characters are vividly drawn and invite readers warmly into the pages of his novels although they are thieves, murderers and hungry children. (Thornley and Roberts, 121)

Dickens was the first major novelist to place children at the centre of novels, and his achievement in doing so is one of his significant contributions to literature. Within this context Martin Stephen, in his book "*The English Literature*" asserts that "the lost, neglected or ill-treated child is a central figure in a vast number of Dickens' novels, and perhaps derived from his own childhood" (236).

After all, the Victorian Novel especially those written by *Dickens* and, through its realistic depiction of the Victorian society in general, enabled the readers to understand what was going on in England at that time.

Conclusion:

Overall, in this part we have seen that the Victorian period has many characteristics in its society like inequalities between social layers and also its authors who were interested with the Victorian novel which make it different from any other period. The Victorian novel became more and more popular than any other literary genre in this period precisely, that is why Charles Dickens is a good example with his novels that treat the social issues at that time.

Chapter Two:
Social Criticism

Chapter Two

Introduction:

Victorian age is considered to be the age of social criticism from its state, society and industry. It was an age of doubt and paradox because there were many problems that exceeded in this period. Therefore, we expose in this chapter the social structure and the division of social classes and its conflicts; also we will see prominent elements in the Marxism literary theory.

2.1 Social Criticism as a Main Feature of Literature:

Social criticism is criticism of social structures in a society. These criticisms show the negative points of these social structures. When criticism becomes extreme, certain things may happen. This could create reform to change the problems that are in the social structure. Sometimes, if reform or changes are note made, people in the social structure may revolt against the government in order to demand that things change in certain ways to make the social structure work for everyone.

Also, it is an expression used to distinguish literature that addresses specific political, social, economical, religious, or cultural issues. That is why, literature has been used as a tool for social criticism in the history of literature. Genres such as the novel of social criticism and the social novel are the ones most used when wanting to have an undertone of social criticism. It was, according to *Terry Eagleton,* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that literary criticism began to change into something more modern. People started to come together and discuss how and what was written in literature can have a connection to the society they were living in. This is still present in today's society, in the form of social criticism. *Eagleton* states that criticism:

> Was only ever significant when it engaged with more than literary issues-when,
>
> for whatever historical reason, the 'literary' was suddenly for grounded as the

medium of vital concerns deeply rooted in the general intellectual, cultural and political life of an epoch... It has only been criticism, in the act of speaking of literature, emits a lateral message about the shape and destiny of a whole culture that its voice has compelled widespread attention, it was only when 'culture' became a pressing political project, 'poetry' a metaphor for the quality of social life, and language a paradigm for social practice as a whole, that criticism could claim any serious title to exist. (3)

According to *Eagleton* social criticism is the most important form of criticism. He continues that it is not applied as much today as it was in the 19th century. Social criticism is best understood as critical interpretation, it is similar to arguments that were made in recent years by European philosophers.

In 19th century, *Charles Dickens* was one of the most important social critics who used fiction to criticize economic, social and moral abuses in the Victorian era, and to reveal the dark side of the industrial England. He illustrated the social problems at that time in his works; for example "*Hard Times*" which is very important to give social criticism such as class conflicts, child labour, family conflicts, crime in society, flaws in the educational system, also, "*A Tale of Two Cities*" which Dickens examines the inner soul, and shares with us how people are driven by the human emotions, like anxiety and anger, and what could happen if we let these emotions grow inside of us. He shows us, unfortunately that human nature causes us to be vengeful and, for some of us, ambitious. It is an example of social criticism in literature.[1]

In addition to "*Great Expectations*" (1860-1861), which has undertones of criticism of how children and women were treated in English society during the 19th century and "*David*

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[1] "Obo." *Social-Problem Novel - Victorian Literature - Oxford Bibliographies*, 02 Apr 2017, www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0011.xml. 02 Mar 2019.

Copperfield" is more than any other of his condition of England novels influenced byCarlyle's social criticism. It deals with a number of social issues: Industrial Revolution, child suffering, education of the poor, class division and the right of common people to amusement.

Writers of the 20th century have often used literary works to criticise the effects of war as the conditions of poverty, the results of oppression, and the fight for civil rights. For example, English poet *Siegfried Sassoon* wrote poems that graphically depicted the horrors of World War One in order to make statement about the effects of war.[2]

"*Animal Farm*" by *George Orwell,* written in 1944, also has this kind of literature. It is a novella that tells the animal fable of a farm in which the animals revolt against their human masters. Orwell satirized the events in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. He illustrated the animals, and gave each one of them a role to what happened in the Russian revolution.

George Orwell and *Charles Dickens* wrote "*Animal Farm*" and *A "Tale of Two Cities*", respectively, to express their disappointment with society and human nature. Both these books are similar in that both describe how, even with the best of intentions, our ambitions get the best of us. This genre is created to criticize certain parts of society and tries to send a message to the readers, especially to those who are in a position to change the society for the better. (Michael, 83)

2.2 Social Structures:

Social structure is the organized social relationships and social institutions that compose society. Social structures cannot be seen or touched; but they are present and affect all dimensions of human experience in any given society. It is treated with the concept of social change. Also, it has always been one of the main concepts in sociological theory and analysis.

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[2]. "Obo." *Social-Problem Novel - Victorian Literature - Oxford Bibliographies*, 02 Apr 2017, www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0011.xml. 08 Mar 2019.

Social structure as a term is sometimes applied in a wrong way when other concepts like custom, tradition, role, or norm would be accurate.

Studies of social structure try to explain matters like integration and inequality. In the study of these phenomena, sociologists analyze organizations, social categories like age groups, or rates like crime or birth. Also, in the study of social structure the reality with which we are concerned is the set of existing relations at a given moment of time which link certain human beings together. (Lopez and Scott, 104)

According to *Homans* (1967), any structure is created and maintained throughout time by the action and interaction of individuals. In this context *Homans* claims that:

> When I speak of social structures I shall mean any features of groups that persist for any period of time, though the period may not be long. I shall not attempt, nor shall I need to attempt, any more sophisticated definition. (23)

To explain a social phenomenon, it is necessary to reduce it to psychological propositions about human conduct and, in particular, to the actors' optimizing intentions. It is important to note that the behaviourist paradigm does not conceive the social structure to be an entity that is separate and autonomous of individual action.

2.3 The Social Classes in the Victorian Period:

Social class is a position in which individuals and groups are classified on the basis of esteem and prestige acquired through economic success and wealth. Social class also refers to any particular level in such hierarchy. So as Sakir Berber said in his article entitled "*Social Classes as a Modern Phenomenon*" one's class is one of the most decisive factors in one's daily life and in his or her relations with other people.

Three common social classes recognized in many societies. Also, it is based on some conditions such as access to economic power, the level of economic reward, the values,

expectations, beliefs and experiences of a social group. There are many other indicators to determine one's class. (McDowall, 65)

Social class became a big issue in the 19th century and this lasted well into the 20th century and it can be distinguished by inequalities such as power, authority, wealth, working, and living conditions, life styles, life span, education, religion, and culture. That is why British society in the 1800's had three primary social classes: the upper class, middle class, and lower class. *David Cody* Associate Professor of English at Hartwick College describes the Victorian class structure:

> Early in the nineteenth century the labels "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming into common usage. The old hereditary aristocracy, reinforced by the new gentry who owed their success to commerce, industry, and professions, evolved into an "upper class" (its consciousness formed in large part by the Public Schools and Universities) which tenaciously maintained control over the political system, depriving not only the working classes but the middle classes of a voice in the political process.[3]

This class structure has the primary classifications previously mentioned, but in fact, the class structure, once broken down, it goes all the way up through the royal family. Furthermore, the Victorian age is one of the most remarkable periods in the history of England. It was an era of material affluence, political consciousness, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, social unrest, educational expansion, empire building and religious uncertainty.

Housing, in particular home ownership, is a good measure of social class, and is related to income and occupation. It is also important to point out that the area in which one lives, and

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[3]. "Wuthering Heights." *Class Structure*, 01 May 2008. www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/w/wuthering-heights/critical-essays/class-structure. 20 Mar 2019.

reveals one's class because people in the same social class are naturally grouped together in certain areas. In other words, house prices for the same type of houses in middle-class areas are more expensive than those in working-class areas. Some wealthy middle-class people nowadays have second homes in Britain or overseas countries like Spain, Italy and France.

Although there are several classifications, the most widely recognized one is to divide people into three main social classes. The main access to life is through occupation and this has become the most important method of dividing people into class grouping.

In the Victorian period in English history there were distinct class differences in its society. There were three classes in England; the Aristocracy or upper class, middle-class, and the lower class or working class. Each class had specific characteristics that defined its behaviour (Mitchell, 74).

2.3.1 The Upper Class:

An upper class man, who has been educated at public school, usually has better manners than a man from other classes. Many upper-class people still own large country houses, castles and land, but maintaining such houses requires much money and many employees, and they are addressed as "Sir".

Therefore, some aristocrats who have neither became obliged to open their stately homes to visitors, charging huge admission fees. Aristocrats who cannot afford huge amounts of inheritance tax have to part with their old family homes and land.

The aristocracy and the gentility look down upon the bourgeoisie on the assumption that they are uneducated and uncultivated. Although aristocrats, who spent half the year in London attending to parliamentary business, were nationally important, the major local influence in the English countryside rested with the landed gentry. The elite or upper classes did not work for money. They included the aristocracy and the landed gentry. Their income came from inherited land or investments.

This class divides into two groups: lower-upper and upper-upper. The lower-upper class included those with "new money", or money made from investments, business ventures, and so forth. The upper-upper class includes those aristocratic and "high-society" families with "old money" who have been rich for generations. These extremely rich people live off the income from their inherited riches. The upper-upper class is more prestigious the lower-upper class.[4]

Wherever their money comes from, both segments of the upper class are exceptionally rich. Both groups have more money than they could possibly spend, which leaves them with much leisure time for cultivating a variety of interests. They live in exclusive neighbourhoods, gather at expensive social clubs, and send their children to the finest schools. As might be expected, they also exercise a great deal of influence and power both nationally and globally.

2.3.2 The Middle Class:

When examining occupations more closely, the middle class grew in size and importance during the Victorian period. It consisted of bankers, merchants, ship-owners, smaller factory owners, mine owners, barristers, solicitors, engineers, architects and all the most successful doctors, as a result of the Industrial Revolution which helped middle classes rise to provide opportunities for shopkeepers and merchants to sell the product of the factories. Clerks and managers were needed to run the growing economy and the expanded cities. The government also expanded, creating new jobs for the middle class.

Moreover, the middle class can be also further divided into three more classes, which are upper-middle, comprising occupations such as lawyers, medical doctors and top managers, middle-middle including, for example, intermediate occupations like bankers and company employees, and lower-middle incorporating jobs such as clerks, secretaries and some owners

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[4] *An Extensive Study of the Victorian Era: Step Back into an Age of Paradox and Power; The Victorian Age Was Not One, Not Single, or Simple. The Victorian Era*, 10 May 2018. www.avictorian.com/social_rituals.html. 27 Mar 2019.

of shops. The middle class held to two basic ideologies that served in the exploitation of the lower order of the British society.

Within the middle class, those with the highest social standing were the professional farmers (who employed farm labourers to do the actual physical work on the land) were also part of the middle class (McDowall, 74).

2.3.3 The Working Class:

The lower class or the working class had almost no political power. They were industrial labourers, farmers, domestic servants, tailors, bricklayers, bakers, commercial clerks and other professionals and they rarely went to school. Also, the working classes (both men and women) did visible work. Their labour was physical and often dirty; it appeared in their clothes and hands. They were paid a daily or weekly wage. Men of the middle class did clean work that usually involved mental rather than physical effort. It is often divided into three layers, which are skilled occupations such as builders and plumbers, partly skilled occupations such as fishermen and waiters, and relatively unskilled occupations such as farm labourers and cleaners. Most working people just earned enough to stay alive, and could be thrown into poverty by illness, layoffs, or a sudden misfortune such as a factory fire that caused even short-term employment (McDowall, 81).

The working classes of Britain, throughout the industrial revolution and through the Victorian age, remained shut out from the political process, and became increasingly hostile not only to the aristocracy but to the middle classes as well. This behaviour was termed rebellious by the middle class and aristocracy of British society. The expression "rebellious" characterized their deviation from the conservative norms established by the middle-class. This allowed the working class to be promoted and their departure from the illusionary "traditional" values the middle-class and their adoption of a system fitting to their social environment.

Early in the 19th century the labels "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming into common usage. Early in the 19th century "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming in the society. The old hereditary aristocracy, reinforced by the new gentry who owed their success to commerce, industry, and the professions, evolved into an "upper class" which tenaciously maintained control over the political system, depriving not only the working classes of a voice in the political process. The increasingly powerful middle classes, however, undertook organized agitation to remedy this situation.

In England during the Victorian era, social divisions of class were a major part of people's daily lives. Victorian views on class and social division in general are described in great detail by *Charles Dickens* in many of his novels during the Victorian period. Victorians are famous of their class-consciousness and conservatism, which make it more difficult for the individuals to change their social class. In other terms, social mobility is very difficult and very rare in Victorian England. In the eye of the gentility, the bourgeoisie does not deserve to be shown respect, regardless of their increasing financial power. On the other hand, power wise, it is an undeniable socio-historical fact that the bourgeoisie is on the rise, whereas the aristocracy is on the decline in the Victorian era (McDowall, 113).

2.4 Marxist Criticism:

Marxist criticism deals with political and economic issues created by the German philosopher Karl Marx and the German sociologist Frederick Engels. They also called their theory "Communism" and announced it in their book "The Communist Manifesto" in 1848. Marxist criticism is also applied in literature; it gives the reader a meaningful way to understand any piece of writing, because it deals with ideology, history, society and economy.[5]

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[5] McLellan, David T., and Henri Chambre. "Marxism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 May. 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/Marxism. 15 Apr 2019.

2.4.1 Base and Superstructure:

In Marx's criticism in literature there are two main points of interests, the first point is the relationship between base and superstructure. The second point is our own relation in the present with past art and literature. According to Marx, the base or the infrastructure is about the relationship between men and the means of production such as machines, factories, land (all things needed to produce). And from the base comes the superstructure, in other terms, the base shapes the superstructure in which we find laws, politics, religion, literature, family, and the superstructure legitimizes the power of the social classes that are formed in the infrastructure.

The second point is about our relation as moderns to the cultural products of the past and that we still find aesthetic appeal in them. Marx argued that it is our own history that links us to those ancient societies, and we see an old image of measure in them between man and nature which is destroyed by the capitalist. (Eagleton, 10)

The Marxist criticism in literature will take the items of the superstructure into consideration to reflect the social issues at a specific period from which the text was written, it crosses the edge of words and unmask the concerns at a given time. Moreover, from a Marxist point of view, the literary works are products that combine between the author's personal inspiration and the way he is affected by the ruling system.

2.4.2 Class Conflict:

Class Conflict, is a tension or antagonism in the society because of the different interests of the different groups of people. According to Marxism, there are two main classes of people in the society of the Capitalist system; the first one is the "Bourgeoisie" as Marx calls it or the ruling class that controls the means of production. The second one is the "Proletariat" as Marx

calls it or the working class, the one that sells its labour power for low wages to serve the Bourgeoisie.

Karl Marx was mad that the workers were forced to work without even say anything in the business. He believed that since the workers are doing the things, they have the right to say where they go and for how much, instead of the rich owners do. In other words, they had to work hard to earn a living, while making the rich richer, and this latter are just doing a simple office work.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels consider that throughout history, there has been always this struggle between those two classes. This struggle is known as Class Conflict or Class Struggle.[6]

2.4.3 Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus:

According to the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, the ruling class uses the "Repressive State Apparatuses" (RSA) to control and dominate the working class to guarantee the continuity of producing. The social role of the RSA such as government, police, military forces, courts, etc is the intervention when it is necessary to politics in favour of the interests of the ruling class, whether this intervention is violent or non-violent. When someone or some political group threatens the social order made by the ruling class, this latter uses the RSA to take control of the social order again.

The second method that the ruling class uses is indirect, the "Ideological state Apparatuses" (ISA), this latter according to Althusser use other methods than violence in order to achieve the same objective as RSA which is the continuity of reproduction. And in

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[6] "Marx's Sociology Theory of Class Struggle." *Your Article Library*, 1 Dec. 2014, www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/marxs-sociology-theory-of-class-struggle/43763. 20 Apr 2019.

this method, they may use education (schools), religion, social and sports clubs, etc. So they can control people's minds and brainwash them to fear of the social rejection.[7]

Overall, Louis Althusser's essay in which he advances his theory of ideology has remained influential since it was written. Because it enables us to talk about how a literary text from a specific ideology speaks to us directly.

2.4.4 Reflectionism:

Reflectionism is a notion created by the Hungarian Marxist critic Georg Lukacs, it refers to the idea that a text reflects the society that has produced it. He claims that the Reflection theory is to explain in social and historical quality and greatness of literature, as well as its content, style and forms.

In order to analyse a literary work from a Marxist approach, we do not have to be Marxists, because with reflection theory, a Marxist interpretation reads the text as a mirror of contemporary class struggle. Literature is not just a matter of personal expression or taste; it somehow relates the social and political conditions of the time. In this context Terry Eagleton defines Marxist Criticism in literature as follows:

> Marxist Criticism is not merely a 'sociology of literature', concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles, and meanings. But it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the products of a particular history. (Eagleton, 3)

The economic conditions are in the base, and from this latter comes the superstructure, which is Marx's term for society, culture, and ideology. Literature according to Marx belongs to the superstructure, and often he treated it as "propaganda" for the ruling class. But many

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[7] "Marx's Sociology Theory of Class Struggle." *Your Article Library*, 1 Dec. 2014, www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/marxs-sociology-theory-of-class-struggle/43763. 22 Apr 2019.

years later Marxists were unhappy with Marx's naive characterization of literature as propaganda. The Italian communist Antonio Gramsci used the concept of "Hegemony" (the influence or control over another group of people) to describe the way in which ideology is not just oppressive and coercive, but also involves an element of agreement. (Eagleton, 45)

More recently, the cultural Marxist critic Terry Eagleton suggested in "*Marxism and Literary Criticism*" (1976) that every historical time period has different hegemonies. Firstly, the dominant hegemony that promotes the interests of the ruling class, then, the remaining hegemony that defends the culture and beliefs system of the previous era, and finally the emergent hegemony that shares revolutionary ideas that may later become the dominant hegemony. (Eagleton, 47)

So literature reveals to us the spirit of the times, the problems that mattered to people, it also enables writers to express their feeling according to them, maybe through love, happiness, hatred, or revenge. Literature is not just an entertainment; it is a manifestation of class struggle.

Conclusion:

To sum up, the Victorian age is characterised by many characteristics like inequalities between social classes, and a single literary text can be seen from different angles. In sociology literature can be used as a source of information about society, and a literary theory is an attempt to read, understand and analyse a work of literature.

Chapter Three:

Revealing the Social Layers in Charles Dickens' Hard Times

Chapter Three

Introduction:

In this chapter we shall spotlight on one of remarkable works of Charles Dickens which is the novel "*Hard Times*". Through his novel, he intends to uncover several issues that the Victorians had survived. Moreover, "*Hard Time*" novel illustrates the mechanized Victorian society which is embodied in the fictional setting and characters. With the setting and characters Dickens pictures the Victorian society and the differences between its layers through dimensions like education, language, and living conditions.

3.1 Overview of "*Hard Times*" Novel:

"*Hard Times-For These Times*" (commonly known as "*Hard Times*") is the tenth novel by Charles Dickens, first published in 1854. The novel surveys English society and satirises the social and economic conditions of the era.

Mr. Gradgrind, an educator in "Coketown" is an industrial city. He is a man of facts believes only in facts and statistics. He is a father of two children, Louisa and Tom. The story events started in Mr. Gradgrind's own school where he insisted on the importance of facts addressing his pupils, "*NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life.*" (Hard Times, 5). One of his pupils Cecilia Jupe is the only one that is not filled with facts, while another pupil Bitzer is a model of Mr. Gradgrind's principles that he wants to achieve (Hard Times, 12). Bitzer shows that in his definition of a horse (Hard Times, 9). In Mr. Gradgrind's way home, he discovers that Louisa and Tom are in the circus. He blames them, and he ascribes that to the influence of Sissy who was a performer in the circus. Therefore, Mr. Gradgrind tells Sissy's father Mr. Jupe that his daughter could no longer attend his school. He hears that Mr. Jupe left the town and he will never come back again. So, Mr Gradgrind offers to receive Sissy in his home if she accepts his condition which was to cut her relationship off with the circus; Sissy agrees with hope to

meet her father again. Mr. Josiah Bounderby, Mr. Gradgrind's friend was against this decision and warned him about the results. Mr. Bounderby is fond of Louisa, although he is much older than her. Louisa accepts to marry him to please her father and to serve her brother, Tom, so he can work at Bounderby's bank. Mr. Stephen Blackpool, a worker in Mr. Bounderby's factory, who received him in his house at his mill. Stephen wants to divorce his alcoholic wife. He has been married for 19 years and he is unhappy. Stephen falls in love with Rachael and he wants to marry her. Bounderby refuses the idea of divorce and tells him that the process costs money which Stephhen can never offer. Mr. Bounderby offers to Mrs. Sparsit, his housekeeper, to move to reside in his bank just after his marriage with Louisa.

James Harthouse, a rich man comes to Coketown to visit Bounderby and tries to seduce his wife Louisa. At a later stage of the story Mrs. Pegler appears and tells everybody about Mr. Bounderby's mother and his real story. The story events change to become detective; where Tom robs money from the bank and the suspect is the poor Stephen. At that time, Stephen decides to leave Coketown, then the truth and the real thief, Tom Gradgrind was discovered. At the same time the relationship between Louisa and Harthouse becomes much closer, but Louisa decides to escape to her father's house. The end of the story, presents the future of the main characters. Bitzer rising in business, Bounderby dying in the street. Mr. Gradgrindd realises the importance of other values beside facts which are faith, hope and love, Tom dying, Sissy marrying and living in a happy family, and Louisa remaining unmarried, her relationship with Sissy and her children remains.

3.2 Portraying Society through the Setting:

Dickens' description was remarkable in "*Hard Times*", Dickens portrays an industrial polluted town. He gives a town the name of "Coketown", which is the main part of the story, and if we take the name of the town and divide it into two parts, we get "Coke" and "Town", and from the first part we get the tone of the word "Smoke" and the Victorian society is well

known for its polluted environment because of the industries. Dickens describes it in a gloomy way as:

> It was a town of red brick or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled (Hard Times, 29).

Coketown is also described as an "ugly citadel, where nature was strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in" (Hard Times, 54), which shows that the town is the worst place that people live in. The ugly atmosphere of Coketown changed when Louisa and Rachael went in a walking tour outside its boundaries:

> Engines and pits mouths, and lean old horses that had worn the circle of their daily labour into the ground, were alike quiet; wheels had ceased for a short space to turn; and the great wheel of earth seemed to revolve without the shocks and noises of another time (Hard Times, 213).

Life in Coketown according to Dickens was like unhealthy life with sadness and hopelessness. "Coketown" in the novel represents the place where the characters live and work, a society with a capitalist system. The reader with Dickens' descriptions feels like part of this setting.

3.3 Dickens Portrayal of the Influence of the Individual on Society:

In "*Hard Times*", Dickens speaks about the influence of the individual on society, for example, the wealthy on the poor, the powerful on the weak, and the teacher on student; it was illustrated in his fictional characters.

So the process of the influence of the individual in "*Hard Times*" does not occur in working places only, but rather in schools, it starts with those innocent pupils, where Mr.

Gradgrind put his principle ideas such as facts and statistics in their minds, and the children's minds are like a sheet of white paper. On this sense Kevin Manton, a historian from the university of London, indicates that socialists of the late nineteenth century in England "frequently condemned both working-class parents and teachers for exploitive brutal behaviour in part to environment influence" (22). And here we understand why Dickens characterizes Mr. Gradgrind as a man who goes on upon the principle of two plus two equals four and nothing over, and also as a man who believes that nothing is important in life apart from facts and calculations and from the educational system of Mr. Gradgrind the "Brainwash Society" begins and it turns its members to a working zombies.

Sissy Jupe represents the qualities of imaginations and emotions in social life, and her rejection for Mr. Gradgrind's ideas is a proof that the human values like emotions or imagination are something natural and we cannot deny them in life, especially when it comes to our social relationships. And Russell, the British philosopher, indicates in this context that: "the moralist is tempted to ignore the claims of human nature, and, if he does so, it is likely that human nature will ignore the claims of the moralist." Therefore, respecting these so natural values is a factor to have a social life in the right way.

Like this, Dickens in his novel "*Hard Times*" tries to show how the social reality was, and pushes us as readers to understand whether such life without emotions of help, compassion, friendship between rich and poor, teacher and student and employee and employer, is possible or not.

Louisa Gradgrind is another victim of Mr. Gradgrind's instructions, she was influenced, and she became unable to express her natural values such as feelings and imagination. Here, Dickens wants to show us how the educational system in the nineteenth century reached a point where it made of human beings like machines, and this process can be seen in Mr. Gradgrind's attitude, his way in which he treats his children. As it can be seen also in his

friend, Mr. Bounderby, his behaviour toward his workers in his factory, he sees them as objects among his factory equipments that are used in self interest.

In the fifth chapter, Dickens describes the life of "Coketown" people as a boring and miserable, and workers are working side by side with machines like "head of elephants in a state of melancholy madness" (Hard Times, 31), which means they are condemned to live this way, without hope and uncertain future.

3.3.1 Marriage the Golden Cage of Melancholy:

Concerning the process of influence of the individual in the novel "*Hard Times*" among characters, there are many unhappy marriages as a result to it, and no single one ended happily. It is noted that Mr. Gradgrind's marriage to his complaining wife is not a source of misery exactly but they are not happy at all with each other, even with their own children. The Gradgrind's family is not a loving one.

The main unhappy marriage that was obvious to the reader is the one between Louisa Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby, and this latter was much older than her. Louisa marries Mr. Bounderby for two reasons, the first one is that her father forces her to marry him, and it was just for his own self interest; which is to be a parliament member in the near future by the help of the businessman Mr. Bounderby. And for the second reason, is that her brother Tom was always begging her to say "yes I do" so that his chances to work for Mr. Bounnderby at the bank can be raised. In this context the following quote asserts that:

> 'Father,' said Louisa, 'do you think I love Mr Bounderby?' Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. 'Well, my child,' he returned, 'I – really – cannot take upon myself to say.' 'Father,' pursued Louisa in exactly the same voice as before, 'do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?' (Hard Times, 117)

The only solution to this marriage is that Louisa later on in the story nearly runs away with another man. Mr. Harthouse, her secret lover, because she will never be happy with another man except when she is with Mr. Harthouse.

The poor Mr. Blackpool is also marked to be stuck with unhappiness in this life because of his marriage, and from his name we understand that Mr. Blackpool is sinking in a pool of blackness (darkness). The girl who seemed so sweet when he married her many years ago, becomes later a sick drunk woman who is the misery of his life, so he comes to ask for help from Mr. Bounderby on how get rid of his drunk wife. Bounderby is like "Well, marriage is forever, for better or worse." (Hard Times, 88) then he immediately says that people with influence can get actually a divorce, so Stephen Blackpool's only way out is death whether his or his wife's, but rich people like Bounderby can get divorced without too much bother.

3.4 Portraying Social Layers through Characters:

Dickens has a special use of characterization in which they may seem real for the reader. Not only the description of Coketown that reveal the picture of society, but also the description of each character. Dickens characterisation shows the different social classes in an industrial town, in which the three characters; James Harthouse, Josiah Bounderby and Stephen Blackpool, are representatives of the upper, middle, and working social classes. Dickens in "*Hard Times*" tries to reveal the differences between the three social classes, their work, living conditions in the Victorian society.

The main character, Mr. James Harthouse is the representative of the bourgeoisie class. Mr. James Harthouse is a rich man, an aristocratic member who visited Coketown to find something new in it because he got bored with his previous life. Who Dickens describes him as follow:

> Now this gentleman had a younger brother of still better appearance than himself, who had tried life as a Coronet of Dragoons, and found it a bore; and had afterwards tried it in the train of an English minister abroad, and found it a

bore; and had then strolled to Jerusalem, and got bored there; and had then

gone yachting about the world, and got bored everywhere. (Hard Times, 148)

From the time that he arrived to "Coketown", Mr. Harthouse's only goal was seducing Louisa and finding his lost love which he has been searching for his entire life. James Harthouse, a young politician without heart of principles, comes to "Coketown", takes advantage of Louisa's unhappy marriage with Bounderby and attempt to seduce her. Mr. Harthouse bored because he was from a rich family and ten hours of work to feed oneself was not part of his regime or his concern. There is no much description of the living conditions in the upper class's family. There is little evidence from the late nineteenth century to support the family picture of the bourgeois family at the light of the Industrial Revolution as a secure emotional refuge from the physical and moral horrors of an encircling market economy (Harris, 127).

Mr. Josiah Bounderby is a good example of the middle class; he is a rich man, a banker, a merchant and a manufacturer, and from his name we see that Mr. Bounderby is a man of bounders; which simply means a man of objectionable social behaviour. Dickens describes him as:

A big, loud man, with a stare, and a 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 lit his

eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like

a balloon, and ready to start. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself

a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy

speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A

man who was the bully of humanity (Hard Times, 20).

Mr. Bounderby leads everybody to believe that he worked hard to reach the position of a wealthy man and a factory owner and claims that each member from the middle class has worked very hard to get the honour of being where he is. In any conversation involves his presence he speaks about his sad, miserable childhood and how his own mother has abandoned him and left him coldheartedly to his drunken grandmother, and all this just to attract people's sympathy "I hadn't a shoe to my foot. As to a stocking, I didn't know such a thing by name. I passed the day in a ditch, and the night in a pigsty. That is the way I spent my tenth birthday. Not that a ditch was new to me, for I was born in a ditch".(Hard Times, 21) To the point when his mother, Mrs. Pegler appears and uncovers the reality that she did not abandon him. He has no interest in helping and speaking with people whose class is lower than him as he says to Mr. Jupe "... we are the people who know the value of time and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time." (Hard Times, 29) He also keeps mocking and making fun of the people of the circus and also his bad manner when Mr. Blackpool asked for his help. He never makes any consideration to other people's feelings and emotions because he always sees them as workers that can be replaced easily and so fast at any time.

Mr. Stephen Blackpool is a representative of the working class, a worker in Bounderby's factory and lives very hard life with his drunken wife. People called him old Stephen although he is only forty years old. Dickens describes him as:

> Stephen looked older, but he had had a hard life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns; there seemed, however, to have been a misadventure or mistake in Stephen's case, whereby somebody else had become possessed of his roses, and he had become possessed of the same somebody else's thorns in addition to his own. He had known, to use his words, a peck of trouble. He was usually called Old Stephen, in a kind of rough homage to the fact. A rather

stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-gray hair lay long and thin, Old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition (Hard Times, 77-78).

Although he always knows that what he wants is something difficult and comes to be impossible, he is a so pessimistic character because of his marriage but always honest and loyal. Stephen fell in love later with Rachael who also belongs to the same class as he, and works actually at the same factory where he works. Getting married with Rachael was Stephen's only dream which was something really impossible just like when Bounderby tells him when Stephen went to ask about what to do in order to divorce his drunken wife and start a new one with Rachael, his co-worker, his love.

Stephen's dying prayer can be considered as the target message that Charles Dickens intended to convey through his novel "*Hard Times*":

In my pain an trouble, looking up yonder,-wi'it shinin'on me- I ha' seen more clear, and ha' made it my dying prayer that aw th'world may on'y coom together more, an get a better unnerstan' in o'one another, than when I were in't my own weak seln (Hard Times, 235).

From his prayers the reader can capture what a miserable life Stephen has because of the capitalist system that rules the society. The poor Stephen is asking for God's help because he finds himself alone and no one else stands alongside or at least provides him with a solution to his issue.

3.5 The Employers and Employees' Relationship:

Dickens also wanted to show the bad relations between the factory owners (Bourgeoisie) and the workers (Proletarians) or the "hands" as Dickens describes them. The factory owners

in the story treated their workers as machines and used them only for their own interest which is the continuity of production, like Mr. Bounderby who gets rich on what the factories produces, but he never bothers himself to know any of his workers at a personal level, he treats them as if they were not humans with feelings or families or dreams. Stephen Blackpool is a hand at Mr.Bounderby's factory, and Dickens describes his situation as a very old man who had a very hard and painful life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns, but when it comes with Stephen Blackpool this cannot be seen in his case, because when a person is possessed of his roses, the poor Stephen is possessed of the thorns of that person in addition to his own.

The obvious solution that was given in the story is that the workers should organise a union, a group of the factory workers who fight against the injustice they get form the factory owner, but this solution was not shown in a good way by Dickens, because this union instead of helping workers like Stephen Blackpool, it hurts him just as much as the factory itself does, the union that was created cares only about power than people. When Stephen was summoned to Mr. Bounderby's house and this latter shouted at his face and embarrassed him in front of the guests for not giving him information about the union and later on got fired, the union did not even know about it.

It is obvious from Stephen Blackpool's case how the factory owners used to behave and deal with their workers in the Victorian capitalist society, despite the fact that Stephen is an honest hand in the factory. But when it comes to money, he is treated as a factory tool when it is damaged and the owner has to replace it unfortunately.

Conclusion:

Through the character's actions, the setting, and the characterization in "*Hard Times*", Charles Dickens portrays certain social facts of an industrial society and tries to picture a

social reality. He leads the reader to hope for social and economic reform that may give birth to social justice and equality. Dickens creates a tale that reflects the issues of the Victorian era including the class division that existed during this era.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion:

Literary text reflects society and deals with its phenomena, morals and values. Marxism as a literary theory holds this idea and deals with a literary text as the mirror of the society that is created by writers from that society during a period of time. After the analysis of Charles Dickens' "*Hard Times*" by the Marxism literary theory, it can be said that social class differences' in Dickens' novel reflect the real conditions in England during the Victorian era.

Through the analytic reading of the novel "*Hard Times*" and using the Marxist literary theory, it can be realized that the description of the setting and the characters seem real. They are reflections of some realities. In which Coketown reflects an industrial town and the characters are representatives of social classes during that time. The events of the novel reflect the conditions and the hard times in the British society after the Industrial Revolution.

The upper class is represented through the character Mr. James Harthouse in the Victorian society. The way of characterization that Dickens uses provides the reader with the way people from this class lives just as the aimless life of Mr. James Harthouse, and what their concerns are. Mr. Harthouse was looking for new thing to get rid of his poured life, thus he tries to seduce the married character Mrs. Louisa.

Mr. Josiah Bounderby is represented as a man belongs to the middle class. In addition to other characters like; Thomas Gradgrind, Louisa Gradgrind, and Mrs. Sparsit. He tries to convince people that he worked hard to reach the position of a wealthy factory owner, and he can be a strong example of the belief that obstacles like poverty and lack of education never stop anybody from reaching his goal, but the hard work. Dickens used caricature to describe many details concerning Mr. Bounderby.

Mr. Stephen Blackpool is a representative of the working class. He was a worker in Bounderby's factory; he was suffering from the hard life conditions. He cannot divorce his

wife to marry the woman he is in love with, because divorce costs him a lot of money and he cannot afford that.

At the end, the Marxist way of analyzing a text which based on how authors reflect realities through characters, setting, or other aspects of a literary text that lead to the conclusion that Dickens tries to illustrate the real life by representing thoughts, feelings, and ways of living of characters from a variety of social classes. The literary text "*Hard Times*" reflects the social issues in the Victorian society.

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