

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF AMMAR THELEDJI- LAGHOUAT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



The Depiction of Nineteenth Century British Society in Literature Through Charles Dicken's *Our Mutual Friend*

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER DEGREE IN CIVILIZATION AND LITERATURE

By:

Oucheikh Lydia

Soumani Marwa

Mr. Bakhouché Salah
Mrs. Selt Djihad Affaf
Mrs. Mouissa Fatima

Supervisor
Examiner
Reviewer

Academic Year 2021-2022

Acknowledgments

Our deepest gratitude goes to our supervisor. This work would not have been possible without the incredible insight and intellectual knowledge of Mr. Bakhouchesaleh.

We would also like to thank Mr. Naoumi Mohammed for his help and guidance concerning the methodology part of this research.

We Thank the jury members for reading and correcting the work.

Dedication

A big thank you goes to my dearest mom and dad, my brothers and sister, and my friends. Who showed nothing but love, care, and patience. I wouldn't be the person who I am today without them.

MarwaSoumani

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the people who supported me throughout my educational path: my precious parents, my beloved sisters, and my best friends. Your love and support means the world to me.

Lydia Oucheikh

Abstract

Nineteenth century literature is highly concerned with the daily life of the British society, specially the social novel. The problems of society are the major theme that is tackled by Victorian novelists. Charles Dickens' novel "*Our Mutual Friend*" portrays the conditions of the Victorian society and class division in that period. The present study is an attempt to describe the Victorian age and society and explore how the society was depicted in literature particularly the social novel. It also aims to show how "*Our Mutual Friend*" depicts the 19th century social issues. In order to achieve that the study relied on the thematic analysis of social issues in Dickens' novel "*Our Mutual Friend*". Moreover, we used the critical concepts of Marxist Literary Theory to analyze the novel. The reason behind using this theory is that, it focuses on social selections and also social conflict.

Table of Content

Acknowledgment.....	I
Dedication... ..	II
Abstract... ..	IV
Table of content.....	V
General Introduction	1

Chapter One: Nineteenth century British society

Introduction... ..	6
1..Historical Overview of Nineteenth Century British Society.....	6
1.1. The Victorian Age.....	6
1.2. The Effect of The Industrial Revolution on The British society.....	8
1.2.1. Living and Working Conditions.....	10
1.2.2. The Emergence of The Middle Class.....	11
1.3. Class Conflict.....	12
Conclusion.....	15

Chapter Two: Nineteenth Century British Literature

Introduction... ..	17
2.1. Victorian Literature During the Nineteenth Century.....	17
2.2. The rise of the novel.....	19
2.2.1. The Victorian Social Novel.....	22
2.2.2. Major Victorian Novelist.....	24
2.3. The Marxist Literary Theory.....	25

Conclusion	28
------------------	----

Chapterthree:Representation of Victorian Social Classes in The Novel

Introduction	30
3.1. Overview of The Novel.....	30
3.1.1.Characters.....	30
3.1.2. Plot Summary	31
3.1.3. Themes.....	32
3.2. Social Classes in The Novel.....	32
3.2.1. Upper Class.....	33
3.2.2. Middle Class.....	35
3.2.3. Lower Class.....	36
3.3. Dickens Life and works	37
Conclusion.....	40

Generalconclusion

Bibliography.....	
ملخص.....	

General introduction

The Victorian period of English literature, or simply “ the Victorian literature “ refers to the English writing during the reign of Queen Victoria ,that began in 1837,and lasted until the queen’s death in 1901. During this era, Britain witnessed a major economic transformation that basically made the country an industrial one, rather than a rural agricultural one. Thus, the writers of the Victorian period focused on using their works to reflect the impact these changes on the Victorian individual and society as a whole. Alfred lord Tennpson, Matthew Arlond, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy are recognized as the most important literary figures of the period.

The basic quality of British people during the Victorian era changed dramatically due to the industrial revolution, a period innovations and industrialization that took place in Europe and the US during the 18 and 19th century. This revolution had created intense economic and social changes on the Victorian way of living as well way of thinking.

The Victorian literature highlighted the issue of social class and conflict between traditional and modern values of Victorian society and no one did that better than the Charles Dickens who treated the social class in many of his novels such as in *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield* and also in “*Our Mutual Friend*” which will be dealt with in this dissertation.

Dickens’ novel “*Our Mutual Friend* “is perhaps less famous than his other novels. However, just like in *David Copperfield* this novel follows the lives of different characters from different backgrounds social classes. Dickens who lived during the Victorian age believed that the novel is an important tool of social reforms. Therefore, many of his works focused on fixing the social issues of Victorian society that is why we put the stress on this novel in particular. Other motives behind choosing this novel is that it manifests other Victorian social issues such as choosing wealth owner morals, abuse of money, the good versus evil, the spread of violence.

Nineteenth century literature was very interested in portraying the social life of that period. Writers attempted to represent the issues of society in their works like social class, position of women and working conditions. Risdinato stated that, literature is the mirror of society, which means the depiction of society through literary texts. Writers transmit their messages by generating stories; they transform real life into a fictional one (2012). Novels were the dominant literary genre during the

nineteenth century. According to Wolder, nineteenth century novels were engaged with the events, circumstances, beliefs and attitudes of society. It portrayed social changes at a time when British society underwent massive changes mainly the French Revolution and the industrial Revolution (2000). The social novel of the nineteenth century was the unique form of the novel that depicted the social issues and turmoil that occurred in Britain. This genre represents the issues that have dominated the minds of society. It was practiced by such novelists: Benjamin Disraeli, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens (Nilson 2006).

Dickens and Kingsley portrayed social unrest in their society. They sympathized with the suffering of the lower classes and invited readers to feel sympathy for them. (Gazamain 2009)

The problem of this research is to reveal the British society representation in literature. In order to solve this problem, the following questions might be answered:

- How was the 19th century Britain represented in literature?
- To what extent does Charles Dickens depict Victorian social issues in his masterpiece *"Our Mutual Friend"*?

It is hypothesized that literature depicted the 19th century Britain and reflected the major events and the socio-economic changes occurred in Britain during the Victorian era. Victorian writers were interested in portraying Britain and the British Society. Dickens' novel *"Our Mutual Friend"* as 19th century fiction would represent largely the issues of the Victorian society.

The aim of our study is to describe the Victorian age and society, showing the impact of the industrial revolution on social structure, tackling the shape of Victorian literature specifically the Victorian social novel, analyzing the novel using the critical concepts of Marxist Literary Theory. The study also aims at investigating and analyzing

Dickens' representation of 19th century social issues in his novel.

The present study is mainly based on the thematic analysis of social issues in Dickens' novel *"Our Mutual Friend"* in order to explore Victorian society and to present the circumstances of British society during that period. We also used library research by using solely qualitative research in gathering data. In addition, we used the critical concepts of Marxist Literary Theory to analyze the novel. The reason behind using this

theory is that, it focuses on social selections and also social conflict.

In order to uncover certain social issues of Victorian age and society and to show how it was represented in the novel, we divided our dissertation into three chapters: the first chapter presents the British society during the nineteenth century; also it deals with social division and the effect of the industrial revolution on society. The second chapter is devoted to deal with the nineteenth century British literature and the social novel as the dominant genre in that period. The third chapter is an analytical study of Charles Dickens' novel "Our Mutual Friend" by revealing social class division. The study also shed light on the major themes and characters in the novel.

Lastly, through this paper we hope to fulfill our aim of revealing the social life and social class divisions in literature particularly in Charles Dickens' novel "*Our Mutual Friend*". Moreover, show how literature contributed in depicting British social life during the nineteenth century.

Chapter one

Introduction

19th Century Britain or The Victorian Age is described as the age of “Great Improvements”. It affected Britain’s finance, life, labour, and the structure of society. A person who is familiar with European or British history is definitely familiar with the term “The Industrial Revolution”. This term is used for outlining the huge economic growth via shifting from an agriculture-based economy to an industrial one. So, in this chapter we will handle the historical, social, and economic dimensions of 19th Century Britain. We start first with the historical background of Victorian society, then we move to the effect of The Industrial Revolution on the same society, and for last but not least, we will discuss the social structure within that society.

1. A Historical Overview of 19th Century British Society

19th Century British history can be categorized into two eras: Pre-Victorian Age (prior 1837) and The Victorian Age (post 1837). The Pre-Victorian era was highlighted by three major events : The defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815 that created a sense of pride among the British Population . Then there was the Industrial Revolution that made Britain an exceptional economic power for the rest of the century (Mitchell 1). The third Occurrence was The Reform Bill of 1832. The latter was passed to double the number of men who could vote which made the Parliament electoral system more just . This act is also known as the Great Reform Act (Mitchell 2).

1.1. The Victorian Age:

When *King William IV* passed away in 1837, his 18 years old niece Victoria became his Successor. The Victorian Age or Queen Victoria’s reign lasted for 63 years (William 87) . However, some historians believe that The Victorian Age started from the defeat of

Chapter one Century British Society

Napoleon in 1815 (Carter and McRae 85).

The young queen was highly admired for her intelligence and integrity in managing the affairs of state, her great political relations with the government's ministers, that helped to exercise her political and moral influence on the public. In 1840, she married her cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and became the mother of nine children until her husband died in 1861. Victoria was a national and moral symbol of family values and later became the "grand-mother of Europe" (Mitchell 5-11).

Victoria's reign was marked by many important events. Britain became the richest manufacturing country in the world and people from rural areas of Britain moved to work and live in the capital London. So by the end of the Victorian period, the population of London went from 2 million to 6.5 million inhabitants (Carter and McRae 115). The rise of the middle class was one of the main reasons of the huge rise of population and the dramatic growth and expansion of Britain's economic powers (McDowell 74). An example of this growth would be the railway system. The new form of transportation enabled thousands of people to go from one place to another in a very short period of time. It also helped to import and export huge amounts of commercial necessities. 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 of 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 theorist.

(Burgess Wilson 80)

From this quote, one can understand the significance of modern means of transportation during that time. Burgess also mentioned the decline of morals along with the poor living conditions that came with the revolution.

1.2. The Effects of The Industrial Revolution on the British society:

The term was coined in the mid-nineteenth century to describe the major shift from an agriculture based economy that relies primarily on the use of wood as a source of power to an industrial based economy that introduced the use of coal to drive the new steam engines. This revolution started in Britain, and later on spread in other parts of Europe as well as the United States Of America. (Taibi 32)

The drastic economic change during the Victorian era influenced other changes in different fields, especially the field of science. To keep up with the new revolution, scientists were both obliged and excited to come with new inventions using huge amounts of money and expensive primary resources that could not be there without that revolution in the first place (Husdon 64). Medical industries and educational institutions saw some positive changes.

Furthermore, the social realities of the Victorian era and the industrial revolution captured the eyes of many Victorian writers which led to an intensive production of literary works in that era, particularly novels. Novelists worked on describing the daily life and working conditions of the common British man (Cuddon 58).

The industrial revolution had some positive and negative effects on the British people. It is right to say that it affected many aspects of their lives depending on where they belong on the social scale. It helped the rich to be richer and gain more power socially and economically. On the contrary, the changes that were brought by the industrial growth were not in the favor of the poor people. In matter of fact, they were harmed by it (Taibi 33)

There are certain identifiable changes in the methods and characteristics of economic organization which ,taken together, constitute a development of the kind which we would describe as an industrial revolution .These include the following related changes :(1)widespread and systematic application of modern science and empirical knowledge to the process of production for the market ;(2) specialization of economic activity directed towards production for national and international markets rather than for family or parochial use ;(3)movement of population from rural to urban communities” (Deane1)

The effects of the industrial revolution are all interconnected. One could not exist without the other. Economy, science, and population changed tremendously in that period of time .

“...(4)enlargement and depersonalization of the typical unit of production so that it comes to be based less on the family or the tribe and more on the corporate or public enterprise ;(5)movement of labour from activities concerned with the production of primary products to the production of manufactured goods and services ;(6)intensive and extensive use of capital resources as a substitute for and complement to human effort ;(7)emergence of new social and occupational classes determined by ownership to the means of production other than land ,namely capital.(Deane1)

Although The industrial Revolution brought some difficulties for the common Victorian man , It is definitely undeniable that was a necessary transformation that facilitated many aspects of the life , for both the people and the government.

1.2.1. Living and Working Conditions of The Victorian Era :

The rise of the industries offered many British people jobs in factories, textile companies and mines . However, due to poverty, people were obliged to work for long hours in the worst working conditions for minimal wages . Every member of the common British family had to get a job even children of 5 and 6 years of age . Instead of going to school and getting a proper education and having a normal childhood , children were often exploited by the greedy and corrupted businessmen , who took advantage of their young age, energy, small body shapes, naivety, and desperation . Working children were obliged to work for 18 hours a day in dangerous places . They had to get in small places in mines that the adults usually will not fit into. Poor people slightly benefited from the industrial revolution but at the expense of their physical and mental health (Patrick 211)

Moreover, the working conditions were not satisfactory. Work places were unsanitary, overcrowded, and poorly ventilated. The majority of those who worked in factories got long term diseases that prevented them from getting other jobs for the rest of their lives. Children were crippled and deformed, pregnant women and old people lost their lives . There were no laws to regulate the working conditions of the employees. Therefore no compensations were granted to those who were physically harmed.

People who worked in factories were underpaid. Their wages were enough to only survive. they could never afford a decent house that's why urban slums came into existence. Stories of poor people who faced these conditions, lived in slums, and worked in factories, were often the subject of Victorian literary works (Patrick 212).

The rapid growth of cities during the industrial revolution caused horrible living conditions for their inhabitants . Of course the quality of life was never great for them but the industrial revolution only made it worse .

The industrial revolution changed the number of population in Great Britain. In the late eighteenth century. There were seven million people in Great Britain, by the late nineteenth century the number of population increased to 21 million , due to the movement of people from the rural country sides to the urban cities where factories offered jobs . This produced changes in number of population and their lifestyle (Hudson 211).

During the industrial revolution, thousands of people who worked in factories Constructed cheap houses near the factory since the bosses were not concerned in providing decent living places for their workers, these houses were called urban slums. They were tiny and overcrowded; families had to sleep in turns and share beds if they could afford them.

Others slept in their boats or on the streets. Later on., some charities helped workers to find places to sleep and it was only a matter of time before the government became concerned of the issue and slightly contributed in fixing the problem (Hudson 230).

The government and factory owners realized that the living and working conditions of the employees affected the level and quality of their productivity ,so , they introduced new Reforms that granted the access to better housing, cleaner and safer working places.

1.2.2. The Emergence of The Middle Class:

As a result of the industrial revolution, a new social group emerged within the British society, they were called the middle class . This social group gained representation in the British Parliament. They paved the way for many future reforms for the middle class to get equal advantages to the aristocracy meanwhile they influenced to lower classes to imitate their behavior . With the strong public support, the middle class managed to have a voice in the parliament . They became known for their morals, their great work ethic , and many other characteristics that helped them to become the most prominent social class during that era (infoplease).

The middle Class were not wealthy but they were resourceful. Just like the lower classes, the middle class had to work for a living . They did not possess lands but they did have some materialistic assets.

The middle class folks had a capitalist mentality; they continually used their money to get more of it. In addition, they sought to reduce the social and economic barriers between them and the aristocracy. In the meantime, they separated themselves from lower classes (infoplease).

As a member of the middle class, Charles Dickens became a powerful voice of Literature during the Victorian age causing the middle class as a whole to have a profound impression on Victorian literature (infoplease).

1.3. Class Conflict:

Class conflict refers to the tension between social groups that share the same social and economic interest . Generally, it is the struggle of power between the proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. The latter has the means of production that the former do not (Froster 37).

There are many forms to class conflict: the direct violence. Wars fought for resources and cheap labor are a great example of direct violence. Indirect violence can be intentional like the threat of pulling an investment or the threat of losing a job , or unintentional like promoting certain ideologies through advertising . Indirect violence can also take the form of deaths from poverty and poor living conditions (Froster 56).

Karl Marx had an interesting point of view about the issue of social conflict. He believed that this conflict will only be resolved if it is transformed from an economic to a political struggle. He wanted the working class to take the political power from the capitalists. Marx saw that class conflict developed initially from individual factories. He said that the class

Chapter one Century British Society

conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will lead to the downfall of capitalism.

The bourgeoisie always tried to preserve capitalism by preventing workers from revolting or demanding their rights by promoting false ideologies. In fact, Marx was mad that workers had no say in the business that they helped to grow. He believed that since they are an important part of the business, they should have a right in making decisions along with the rich owners who became that way by doing the bare minimum like simple office work while the dirty hard work was handed to the employees. In addition, Marx asserted that the conditions and labor of the workers limited their potentials and freedom. He actually wanted them to rebel and revolt and unite together to take over the business. Marx insisted on the idea that the common man deserves to run the business just like the rich men. Therefore, it was necessary for the social and economic struggle to become a political one (Alex 87).

1.4. The Social Structure in the nineteenth century British society:

Social class is a hierarchal system in which groups and individuals are classified on the basis of social prestige and economic success. It is the most decisive factor in one's quality of life and their relation with others (Mitchell 165).

- Social class was a major issue during the Victorian era, and it lasted to the 20th Century.

It was based on a variety of criteria such as the access to power, the level of authority, wealth, jobs, living conditions, lifestyle, life span, education, and background (Mitchell 166).

The social structure of Victorian society was changing mainly in the cities, where one's income and occupation contributed a lot in their lives. As a result, the British society was divided into three social classes : the upper-class, the middle-class, the lower-class

1.4.1. The Upper-Class:

The upper class are the aristocracy that includes the church, the nobles, the Royal

family, lords, and great officers of state. They had great power and influence. Their main source of income was the money that came from the inherited lands and investments.

Keeping a good social image was a priority for the upper class people. That's why they often attended big social events and parliamentary meetings. They were advantaged enough to the extent of not needing an occupation as well not paying any taxes for the government (Cody 15).

Upper-class folks lived in castles and big country houses. They were able to get a fancy education. Hence, they were well-mannered more than most of people from other classes. The men of upper classes were addressed as Sir (Cody 17).

The aristocracy and the gentility look down upon middle-class people thinking that they are uneducated and uncultivated. This class is divided into two groups: lower-upper class and the upper-upper class. The lower-upper class are the new money folks that became wealthy through investments not through inheritance. The upper-upper class are the high society families that have been wealthy for many generations. The latter group is far more prestigious than the former (Williams 114).

1.4.2. The Middle-Class:

This group grew largely during the Victorian period. It consisted of doctors, lawyers, bankers, small shop owners, clerks, merchants...etc. they were much needed to run the growing economy of the Victorian Age. This social group is also divided into three groups: the first group is the upper-middle class who took affluent jobs such as doctors and lawyers. The second one is the middle-middle class. They often worked as bankers and company employees. And for last, the lower-middle class who held jobs of clerks and shop owners. This group consists mostly of men. Meanwhile, their wives stayed at home to take care of the family. They valued hard work, traditional values, and individual responsibility

1.4.3. The Lower-Class:

The lower or the working class held low-income jobs, they had no political power. They rarely went to school. So they worked in factories and housekeeping, shops. This group of people faced many challenges and struggles. Being at the bottom of the social scale only worsened their lives. They often suffered from severe illnesses caused by their poor working and living conditions. They are divided into two groups: skilled workers such as plumbers and builders and unskilled workers like house servants and farm laborers. This social class did not own a political voice. Hence, they became rebellious and hostile towards upper classes. They rejected the conservative values of the British society. (Mitchell 188)

Conclusion :

To sum up the content of this chapter. It is right to say that the Victorian age is most known for the great industrial Revolution that played a pivotal role in changing the social structure of the British society causing a class conflict. That is why it is the industrial revolution is considered to be both a blessing and a curse depending on the social class that the Victorian individual belonged to .

Chapter two

Introduction

Nineteenth century literature refers to the literature produced during the 19th century in Britain. It covers the Post-Romantic era and the whole Victorian era. Literature is a reflection of society. We can perceive society through literature; it depicts the habits, values, way of thinking and lifestyle of society. The novel became the dominant literary genre during the period, particularly the Victorian novel which was highly concerned with issues. So, in this chapter we will talk about the Victorian literature and reveal the conditions that led to the rise of novel especially the social novel.

2.1 Victorian Literature during the Nineteenth Century

Literature is a depiction of society. It depicts the good values as well as the ills of society. Its role is to make society aware of its shortcomings and pitfalls. Writers transform real life events in society into literary texts. In fact literature is not only a depiction of society but also it has a didactic and a corrective function that makes society to change positively. (Duhan)

Victorian literature refers to the literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). It was preceded by Romanticism and succeeded by Edwardian era. It was a time of contrast of prosperity and poverty, morality and depravity, peace and progress. Victorian literature was influenced by the industrial and technological advance of the era.

Victorian reign witnessed a development in literature, particularly in fiction, carried out by Dickens, Thackeray, Thomas Hardy and George Eliot, in addition to the poetry of those major poets: Tennyson, Browning and Hopkins. Thinkers, novelists and poets effected the perception of Victorian people. (Alexander 259)

Victorian literature is regarded as a shift from romanticism to realism of the 20th century. The Victorian age produced great poets; the age is also remarkable for the excellence of its prose. The discoveries of science affected the literature of the age; literature became idealistic and more realistic. The Victorian age is distinguished as an age of doubt and pessimism. (McIlvain)

The Victorian literature is characterized by being involved with daily life issues

of society. It contributed in human progress. The literature of the age sounds like deviate from “art for art’s sake” and confirms its noble purpose. Victorian writers believed in their noble message to change the world. Victorian poets, essayists, thinkers and novelists glorified the great ideals of love, truth, justice and brotherhood. (McIlvain)

Fredric Harrison stated that:

Our literature to-day has many characteristics: but its central note is the dominant influence of Sociology, enthusiasm for social truths as an instrument of social reform. It is scientific, subjective, introspective, historical, archaeological: - full of vitality, versatility, and diligence: intensely personal, defiant of all law, of standards, of convention: - laborious, exact, but often indifferent to grace, symmetry, or colour [sic]: it is learned, critical, cultured: with all its ambition and its fine feeling, it is un sympathetic to the highest forms of the imagination, and quite alien to the drama of action. (13)

The Victorian literature was highly affected by sociology. They have a mutual interest in social changes and human experiences. Victorian literature was free from any constraints or standards. It mutinied on the exaggeration and imagination of the previous era.

Significant Victorian novelists and poets include:

Mathew Arlond, the Brontësisters (Emily, Anne and Charlotte), Christian Rossetti, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, Joseph Conrad, Samuel Butler, Edward Bulwer, Willkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, George Meredith, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Gissing, Richard Jefferies, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Houswan, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bran Stoker, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Philip Meadows Taylor, Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Makepeace Thackeray, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll and H.G. Wells.

2.2 The Rise of the Novel

The novel is a work of fiction characterized by a considerable length, characters and plot. It is written in a prose form. The novel creates stories about human experience inspired by real events or persons. (Prah)l

Prior to the Victorian period, poetry was still the dominant literary genre. Following romanticism poetry was influenced by the themes of earlier generation .while novelists and essayists were confronting society problems and sought reform. In the second half of the nineteenth century, poetry and poets knew a revolution. They developed their own style and tone giving rise to a new age of poetry focusing on realism. They became social oriented and got rid of tropes of the past. At some point in the Victorian era, the novel replaced the poem as the most dominant literary form. (Rahn)

The novel emerged as a critique of old literature. The rise of the novel usually associated with the disappearance of religious perspectives. It is associated with the bourgeoisie social structure and capitalism. William Hazlitt in his lectures on the English comic writers stated that: *"we find here a close imitation of man and manners; we see the very web and texture of society as it really exists, and we meet it when we come into the world, if poetry has something divine in it, this savors most of humanity"* (qtd. in Perkin). (Perkin4)

The novel subrogated poetry as the most effective literary genre, because it addresses directly the daily life issues of society. Fiction familiarizes the reader by engaging characters faced to the same problems and challenges the reader felt he faced to. Fiction also dominated the nineteenth century literature because it was obtainable through cheaper books, borrowing rights and part publication in monthly magazines. The high sales achieved by Charles Dickens's serialized novel *"The Pickwick Papers"* (1836) prompted many Victorian novelists like Thackeray, Gaskell, Trollope and Thomas Hardy to adopt serial publication for some of their works. (Moran55)

During the nineteenth century the audience of novel increased enormously. Britain's economic development contributed in the growth of novels popularity. The growth of cities provided central markets, in addition to the expansion of readership in

the colonies and cheap printing costs. Moreover, the Educational Act 1870 made education obtainable for ordinary people as a result the literacy percentage increased (David19). Furthermore, the social changes brought by the industrial revolution and changes in the class structures saw the rise of novel popularity. As a result of the growth of middle class, more people became educated. Also, due to the expansion of newspapers and periodical press, novels became more accessible.

Victorian fiction transformed from three-decker¹ form to a serial form. Serial publication succeeded to attract readers. Charles Dickens made a huge financial success from his serialized narratives; he also urged it on other writers (Ermarth103). Publishing became a major industry which contributed in the economic and technological advancement of the Victorian period. In the early nineteenth century books were considered as an extravagant luxury produced in small editions destined for the wealthy people. The sale of books was monopolized by group of book sellers who collaborated to keep newcomers out of the trade. (Brantlinger and Thesing12)

Since the three-volume novel was very expensive. Victorian publishers and novelists found alternative methods to reduce the price of novels and widen its popularity. They started with the part-publication; publication in cheap separated numbers. Charles Dickens also contributed to bring fiction to more audience through serialization in magazines. The final method is new types of reprint series, the first is collected edition of major novelists' published works, the editions were imitated and cheapened. The second method of series, called "libraries" reprinted the works. (Brantlinger and Thesing17)

The Victorian novel good reputation and popularity lies in its cleanness and rectitude. Victorian editors, writers, publishers and reviewers established a set of unwritten rules controlling the sanity of fictional content. The rules prohibited the direct declaration of any sensual or sexual overtones. *"...nothing, in other words, should appear in a novel that a middle-class British father would be ashamed to read aloud to his family or that might make his young daughter blush"* (Brantlinger and Thesing15). Before the advent of radio and television, novel reading and reading aloud in the family cycle were common middle-class leisure (wheeler2)

During the nineteenth century for the first time fiction became equivalent with

¹According to wikipedia Three-decker or the three-volume was a standard form of publishing for British fiction during the nineteenth century.

the other literary genres in critical esteem and its popularity even exceeded them, this attracted a group eligible writers. Victorian novelists represented their own styles of writing and expressed their points of view without any restrictions. They proved that they were able to combine the elocution and luxuriance of poetry beside their purposeful themes and social issues. Studying Victorian fiction is a unique chance for tracing the evolution of new literary genre. (Bloom48, 49)

The dominant pattern of fiction produced during the mid-nineteenth century was no longer the romantic idealism of the early period. Instead of this, a new realistic narrative style took hold among most writers. The realist narrative style was informed by journalist techniques of reporting facts and objectives. It is a combination between journalism and literature. (Rohan)

The art of novel is divided into a number of subgenres including: 1) The Bildungsroman, which is a model of realistic fiction. A novel denoted personal maturation from infancy to adulthood. The genre demonstrates middle-class confidence in individuals who can achieve success by themselves. 2) the social novel, the dominant genre during the Victorian period, it was concerned mainly with problems of the industrial society. 3) The public novel, the Victorian novel of public life, focuses on the operations of the great Victorian institutions, church, politics, law and business. Unlike the social novel, the public novel is less concerned with opposition to the bourgeoisie. 4) The historical novel, which is reflection of the Victorians interest in the past as both nostalgic ideal and the seed of present mischief fiction. Historical novel reconstructed past as sensational. 5) The religious novel, which indeed does not preach. However; it validates Christian teaching by combining romance plots with those of dutifulness, repentance and piety. 6) Comic fiction and satire, which is a hybrid genre, portraying follies, but drawing stylistically on the picaresque, parody and burlesque for breadth of canvas humorous diversions, and ready-made caricatures that add to the fun and mockery. (Moran58)

Novel was the best literary form that demonstrated the middle class and the British society. Writers' serial publication in periodicals and newspapers gave them more freedom to be more creative. They moved away from traditional themes like historical events and myths. Weekly installments in periodicals made novels more accessible for ordinary people. Writers attempted to make the main character from the

middle class and traced his life and the problems that the ordinary man faces. (L.R.Capuana)

2.2.1. The Victorian Social Novel

This type appeared in Great Britain and the United States in the mid-19th century. It is a work of fiction that represented a common social problem, such as race, gender or class divisions, through its impact on the character of the novel. (Britannica Editors)

Social fiction is related with the development of mid-century realism. The term “social fiction” covered industrial novels, condition of England novels, social problem novels, novels with a purpose. The social novel was embodied by a number of nineteenth century novelists and works by the examples of William Godwin, Thomas Carlyle, and early novelists like Harriet Martineau, in her *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-5), Mrs. Trollope, in *Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy* (1839-40), and Charles Dickens, in *Oliver Twist* (1837). The social novel as a genre does not adopt a stable political stand. (Keen114)

The social novel is a fictitious narrative depicting the situation of workers during the industrial revolution. It appeared as a response to the ill effects of the industrial revolution. The social novel narrative is concerned with consequences of this industrial change. The writers of this fictitious narrative wrote for two reasons : to expose the conditions of workers, hours of work, abuses and their lives and habits. The other reason is to develop the relationship between the middle class factory owners and the workers. (Mitchell731)

This sub-genre of novel is also known as the industrial novel. Through the Victorian era, industrialization made rapid progress that resulted in the division of society into two camps, the rich and the poor, the exploiter and the exploited. Although these two camps lived in the same place, there was a huge gap between them. The workers life was hard. The conditions of the workers became the storyline of industrial novels especially that during the Victorian era reading was a common activity among the middle class. Industrial novelists narrated harsh conditions of workers life. They tried to motivate the middle class to sympathize with the workers conditions. (Balkaya1)

Victorian novelists such as Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens drew attention to the necessity of reform as far as the living and working conditions of the poor were concentrated. Those novelists through their narrations of industrialized society invited both the middle class and the working class to develop better communication with each other to find solutions. Industrial novelists wanted to be the voice of the voiceless and oppressed class. (Balkaya2)

The Victorian period witnessed an enormous publication of novels dedicated to depicting social ills. This sub-genre of novel had arisen as a result of industrialization and urbanization. Early in the nineteenth century a number of novels were published called “precursor” or “example of social problem novels”, this kind of novels were devoted to exposing the conditions on lower class and use lower class characters and language. (Schellinger1232)

In 1838, Carlyle coined the term “condition of England Question” to spotlight on the ill effects of industrialization and economic policies on society. The term indicates the social novel of Victorian period devoted to express those vicious effects like Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* with its representation of the operation of New Poor Law and work house system, also the urban conditions giving rise to deviation and criminal underclass. The genre proposed that the bad effects of industrial capitalism can be improved through middle class values of incorruptibility, good sense and reliance on mutual understanding. (Moran 52)

The French critic Louis Gazmian (1903) studied novels that were devoted to exposing social ills, including novels by Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Kingsley which he identified “Social Novels with Purpose”. This genre began to appear in the late 1830s and early 1840s, combined the techniques of literary realism with a clearly marked didacticism. These novels claimed to be representations of actual social conditions in order to teach their primarily middle class readers about problems and to influence them to take action toward solving these problems. Some novels ended by securing the poverty-stricken protagonist into middle-class or even upper-class prosperity, while others had these character’s lives ended tragically. (Schellinger1233)

In many nineteenth century novels social injustice were presented in text

prominently to bring the reader attention. In Britain, the social problem novel is associated for most with Charles Dickens. Other Victorian novelists were known for their issue-driven novels, such as Elizabeth Gaskell, who focused on the conditions of the working poor in the industrial north England (*North and South* novel [1883]). Willkie Collins focused on the rights of the illegitimate children (*No Name* [1862]). (Taddeo and Miller 4)

2.2.2 Major Victorian Novelists

William Makepeace Thackeray (1849-50) was Dickens' competitor; they have nearly a similar style of writing. He was interested in the depiction of the situation of the middle class more than Dickens. His reputation started with the publication of his historical novel *Vanity Fair* (1847-48). The novel represented recent historical events during the Napoleonic wars. (Ghazali)

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) became the dominant literary figure during the Victorian age. His career started as a journalist. He published his first novel *The Pickwick papers* (1836-37), which brought him a great success and established him as a comic novelist; later Dickens adopted a more serious tone in his writing to draw reader's attention to the problems of society. The best example of that is his novel *A Christmas Carol* (1843), that depicted the struggle between the rich and the poor and *Oliver Twist* (1837-38) the novel that portrayed the poor children struggle in cities. (Carter and McRae 274)

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was the greatest figure in English literature in the late-Victorian period. Following the mid-century novelists Hardy published his novels in serial than he found success in non-serial novels. Like Dickens he was concerned with the issues of Victorian society like class distinctions, workhouses, and the legal system. However, Hardy had a desire to be known as a poet who wrote some fiction, rather than a novelist (Steinberg 170, 181). Hardy finished his career in fiction by the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), both novels show sympathetic representations of working-class characters. (Millgate)

Women writers and female characters joined the world of fiction writing. They were anticipated to write the subgenres of romance and sensation. Nevertheless,

female writers became part of the major Victorian novelists. They created independent and socially aware female characters and threw off the victim role that the male authors created. (Carter and McRae 261)

George Eliot (1819-1880), one of the major Victorian writers. Her real name is Née Marry Evans; she adopted a pseudonym to rise above the silly novels of romance which women of that time were supposed to write. She was highly concerned with society problems. Eliot published a number of novels between 1859 and 1876 include: the Mill of Floss, Silas Marner, Romola, Felix Holt, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda. Also, she wrote several short stories and poems as well as essays and reviews. (Poole225)

The Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne), contributed largely in the rise of the novel and strengthened women's position in society. They used pseudonyms (Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell) to hide the fact that they were women. Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, published in 1847, the novel was a bildungsroman depicted women's struggle in the Victorian society to achieve independence and self-reliance. Emily Brontë published her master work *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a novel full of love, passion and violence. In 1848, the youngest sister Anne Brontë wrote *the tenant of Wildfell Hall*. The novel represented women's suffering in unhappy marriage and marriage problems. (Carter and McRae262, 263)

2.3 The Marxist Literary Theory

Marxism was originated in the nineteenth century based on the thoughts of the German philosopher Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883). Marx stated that the modes of production affected the tenets and foundations of society, asserted that history is moving toward the prevalence of communism, and presented the theory of dialectic materialism, that history progresses as the result of conflict between contradictions. (Dobie 85)

Marxism is materialistic philosophy tended to explain the world in relation to the tangible world and the environment we live in. It rejects the idealistic and spiritual thoughts that control the material world. Karl Marx considered Marxism as a perversion from the previous philosophies. According to Marx the preceding philosophies tried to interpret the world. However, Marxism tried to change it.

(Mambrol)

Marxism was not prepared as a literary theory .However; its principles were applied in literature. It provided a new method of analyzing and perceiving literature (Dobie85). Marxist literary theories focus on the depiction of class conflict and class divisions through literature. Marxist theorists use traditional techniques of literary analysis but subordinate aesthetic concerns to the final social and political meanings of literature. Furthermore, Marxist theories explored a new method of understanding the relationship between economic production and literature. (Brewton)

According to Raymond Williams Marxist view, the rise of the Victorian novel is related to the class tensions that the Victorian Britain witnessed. Victorian novels gave rise to a new “historical consciousness” resulted from the hostility existed between the social classes within a capitalist society.Sea Purchase asserted that:

Williams takes a far broader Marxist view of the rise of the Victorian novel. He situates the long build-up of class tensions in Victorian Britain's hungry forties in terms of what he calls the new 'exploration of community in the period, that constructed by the flowering of novels in the 'twenty months between 1847 and 1848: 'Dombey and Son, Wuthering Heights, Vanity Fair, Jane Eyre, Mary Barton, Tancred Town and Country, The Tenant of Wild fell Hall. For Williams, these novels initiated a new and potentially destructive historical consciousness that was formed at that time, and which grew out of class antagonisms endemic to an industrial-capitalist society. (Purchase220)

Marxism is cooperation between Karl Marxand the political economist Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) to interpret the basics of communism and establish an international movement. They explained communism in the Communist Manifesto (1848). They considered class conflict as the reason behind history progress. They expected that class struggle will provoke workers to revolt against the capitalist

system and private property, as well as establish a new system where government controls economic production and distribute public property equally. As a result class struggle would vanish (Dobie85). Karl Marx work *Das Kapital* (1867), a theory of political economy, criticized passively capitalism and the central control of few people on the wealth and the cost of working class. Marx and Engels studied the impact of the industrial revolution on the British society. Engels focused his study on the conditions of the working class. Marx brought attention to class divisions, means of production, and the working-class exploitation. (Carter and McRae282)

Social relations between men are related with the way they organize their material life. The economic structure of society in the old feudal system includes the social relations on peasants to lord. In the capitalist system the economic structure of society involves the social relations between the capitalist class who owns the means of production, and the proletarian class whose labor is exploited by the capitalists for their own profit. In Marxism these relations are known as “economic base” or “infrastructure”. Above the economic base there is a superstructure refers to the consciousness of society (theology, politics, law, art and so on), which Marx identifies as ideology. It refers to the idea that the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class. (Eagleton 5)

Karl Marx in his work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) stated that: “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (qtd. in Eagleton5). Marx main point is that economics influences everything in life. Man’s social status determines his way of thinking and not the opposite. For Karl Marx, the economic base always affects the superstructure of society.

Karl Marx believed that communism would be the end of the class system. However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late twentieth century Marxism lost its credibility and was blamed for the failure of the communist revolutionary states. “Marxists frequently point out that *the communism of the revolutionary states which led to Stalinist Russia and Maoist China was not the types of communism Marx had in mind*”. (Purshase218)

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we deduce that literature is the picture of society. Through literature we can imagine the nature of society. During the Victorian era the novel was a dominant literary genre. Furthermore, the social novel was the most prominent genre during the era. The latter was concerned with social problems of the time. Charles Dickens was the leading figure in the nineteenth century fiction.

Chapter three

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to study one of Charles Dickens works which is *Our Mutual Friend*. Through this novel, Dickens revealed the issues of social classes within the Victorian society during the Industrial Revolution .So, in this chapter we will analyze the social structure through the novel's characters and society and shed light on Dickens' life and works. The aim of this chapter is to exhibit an array of characters from the three different classes of the Victorian society.

3.1 Overview of *Our Mutual Friend's* novel

Our Mutual Friend is the last completed novel for Charles Dickens before his death. It was published in 1864. Like Dickens' previous works, the novel was concerned with daily life issues of society.

3.1.1 Characters:

John Harmon: the protagonist of the novel, and the heir of his father's estate in condition to marry Bella Wilfer. He fakes his death and stays under the name of John Rocksmith and works as a secretary in the Boffins house. He did all of this to know how people would react to his death including Bella.

Bella Wilfer: A pretty girl who was born in a poor family. She was expected to get married to John Harmon but he died. She went to live with the Boffins. Bella undergoes a drastic moral change after being a slave to money for years; she becomes more mature and understands that materialistic possessions do not matter.

Lizzie Hexam: a kind and brave woman, always looking for the best for her family (father and brother). She is the love of two men from the middle class and later gets married to one of them.

Mr. Boffin: the faithful servant of the old Harmon. After it was believed the real heir of Harmon's fortune was dead, he inherited the fortune. His innocence and lack of education and financial experience put him at the risk of being scammed and manipulated.

Gaffer Hexam: Lizzie's father. He is a poor waterman who finds the body of John Harmon in the river.

Charley Hexam: Lizzie's brother, a young man who tries to climb the social ladder through getting education and becoming a class- master.

Mortimer Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn: two lawyers who had close relation with people from the upper class. Eugene falls in love with Lizzie and later marries her.

Mr. and Mrs. Lammle: an ambitious, yet severely corrupted couple. They fool naïve rich men driven by their hunger for money and their desire to belong to the upper class.

3.1.2. Plot Summary

The story starts when Gaffer Hexam and his daughter Lizzie find a dead body in the river that turns out to be the body of John Harmon, the heir of old Harmon, a greedy wealthy dust contractor. The old Harmon promised to give all of his fortune to his son only if he marries young woman called Bella Wilfer, the daughter of a modest clerk. But now since both of the father and the son are dead, Harmon's fortune goes to his loyal servants Mr. and Mrs. Boffins. Therefore, overnight the Boffins achieved a high social and economic status. Out of sympathy, the Boffins asked the poor Bella to live with them. The two men called Headstone and Eugene fall in love with Lizzie. Headstone attempted to kill Eugene and get him away from Lizzie. This plan had failed since Headstone died leaving Eugene to marry Lizzie.

As time passes many people that are close to the Boffins try to take advantage of them through manipulation and schemes of betrayal. Boffin's reader Silas Wegg tries to seize their fortune but he fails miserably, another failed attempt to con the Boffins was made by their friends Mr. and Mrs. Lammle. Catching these scammers was not going to be successful without the help of the Boffin's private secretary Mr. John Rocksmith.

About halfway through the novel, it is revealed that Harmon isn't actually dead. Instead, he was posing as Mr. Rocksmith. The dead body that was found in the river belonged to the man who tried to rob Harmon and ended up died. Harmon took the opportunity to put his personal documents into the robber's pocket and went to work for the Boffins using a false identity to know more about Bella Wilfer and to reveal her real intentions in getting married to John Harmon. The latter asked Mr. Boffin to be cruel to him in front of Bella to see how she would react. Harmon was very thrilled when Bella objected Mr. Boffin's behavior toward him. He then proposed to her, she agreed to marry him thinking that he is poor. Months later after the couple had a daughter; John Harmon revealed his true identity as the heir of old Harmon's fortune to his wife and the Boffins returned the fortune to its real owner.

3.1.3. Themes:

In *Our Mutual Friend* Charles Dickens touched on several themes such as: greed, education and marriage.

Greed: a prominent theme in the novel, it is manifested primarily in the behavior and the materiality of some characters towards money and power. The ambition to be accepted by the upper class is a major force in the novel. Perhaps the best example would be Mr. and Mrs. Lammle, their greed is led by a desire to gain power and social status within society.

Education: During the Victorian Era, people did not have equal access to educational institutions. For that reason, education was a huge tool of gaining social status. In *Our Mutual friend*, education seems to be a double-edged sword. We see well-educated characters like Silas Wegg use their occupation and knowledge to scam the less educated Mr. Boffin. So it is true to say that education had a dark influence on him. On the contrary, we have Charlie Hexam with - the help of his sister Lizzie was under the positive influence of education that helped him to become a prominent figure within his society. School teachers were highly respected and valued in the Victorian society.

Marriage: The issue about marriage in the novel is which choice is the right one? Marrying for love or for money and high social status? Mr. Harmon tried to use marriage as a weapon to control his son and put him under pressure, believing that he is entitled to enforce an arranged marriage. Nonetheless, the novel does portray love-oriented marriage such as that of Bella and John's, Lizzie and Eugene's. These couples are proof that people from different social classes and backgrounds can actually have happy successful marriages.

3.2 Social Class in *Our Mutual Friend*

Throughout *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens presents characters of different classes from the Victorian society and shed light on how your social class controlled where you live, your life style, job and education and how society perceives you. The author also shed light on the decline of morals and individual values as a result of the huge gap between social classes.

'I don't suppose at all about it... 'I ain't one of the supposing sorts. If you'd got your living to haul out of the river every day of your life, you mightn't be much given to supposing. Am I to show the way? (Dickens 46)

Gaffer says these words when the two lawyers accused him of robbing the dead body found in the river. Gaffer tried to distinct himself from suspicion. Gaffer here mentioned the distinction between the two educated lawyers and himself as a man working hard to feed his children and do not have time to be curious or nosy.

In the novel, Dickens shows that the class system is not just a label of society but also, a means of creating challenges among people to try their best to raise their social and economic status. Moreover, each character in the novel represents their social class based on the way they behave, particularly when they have to deal with persons from other social class.

'Morning, sir! Morning! Morning!'
('Calls me Sir!' said MrWegg, to himself; 'HE won't answer. A bow gone!')
'Morning, morning, morning!'
'Appears to be rather a 'arty old cock, too,' said MrWegg, as before; 'Good morning to YOU, sir.' (Dickens 92)

Mr. Boffin called Wegg who is a disabled peddler “Sir”. Wegg realized that this old man ignore the customs, because in a class society you wouldn’t say “Sir” to a poor paddler. Therefore, it is a must to analyze each class and the main characters of each one.

3.2.1. Upper Class

Dickens was highly sarcastic in describing the Victorian upper class. He chose to represent this particular class through the two upper class families: the Veneerings and the Podsnaps. Through those characters the author shows how much upper class people were arrogant, superficial, dishonest, and cruel when dealing with the lower classes.

...As is well known to the wise in their generation, traffic in Shares is the one thing to have to do with in this world. Have no antecedents, no established character, no

cultivation, no ideas, no manners; have Shares. Have Shares enough to be on Boards of Direction in capital letters, oscillate on mysterious business between London and Paris, and be great... (Dickens 225)

One character that stood out from the awful upper class was John Harmon. Unlike people from his class, he was well-mannered, kind and down to earth and not greedy for money. The fact that he was born in a rich family and inherited an enormous amount of money did not have a toxic impact on his personality and morals.

Not all upper class families were born into wealth .Some poor families were just lucky enough to successes in climbing the social ladder. The Boffins who were Mr. Harmon's servants and later became a wealthy family when they inherited all of their dead master's money. Despite the fact that they were uneducated and uncultivated, they managed to fit in the upper class by imitating their lifestyle.

" Now John Harmon was dead. All his father's money went to the old servant, NoddyBoffin, who hadhelped in the business for so many years. NoddyBoffin was a broad, round-shouldered old fellow with bright grey eyes. He wore thick, heavy clothes and always carried strong stick. He and his wife were simple and uneducated, but they were honest and kind people."(Dickens 564)

This quotation is a description of Mr. Boffin when he was a servant for the Harmons. In this novel, he represents the poor servants of the wealthy families. However, a turn of events later changed his life in a way that a man like him could never imagine.

"NoddyBoffin, the Golden Dustman, was happy with his new life and his grand house as he would ever be. Mrs.Boffiin took him into the best society and dressed herself in the latest fashions. Society accepted the Boffin's because they were rich." (Dickens 865)

" Mr and MrsBoffin had moved into their grand, new house. Its many large rooms were full of the finest furniture. MrsBoffin was dressed in the height of fashion. These two good people now had money and servants.

An excellent cook had just made them a delicious meal.” (Dickens 869)

“MrsBoffin and I are moving into a bigger house. MrsBoffin wants to go into society. And she wants go in for fashion in a big way!’ said MrBoffin to that strange man...we are going to live in a grand, new house. We will go everywhere and see everything. You mustn’t dislike us because of the money my dear.” (Dickens 875)

From the quotations above we can see that the servant became a boss now. The drastic socio-economic change of the Boffins status allowed them to achieve a swift upward social mobility. Now with their new money, they are highly accepted by upper class folks. As a result, they adapted a glorious way of life like any another upper class family, a big house, a fashionable sense of clothing, a housekeeping staff, and many other things that made life way more easier than when they belonged to lower classes.

3.2.2. Middle class

The Victorian age witnessed the rise of the middle class as the biggest and most prominent class. The majority of middle class people are educated and held clean jobs with medium wages, such as teachers, lawyers, clerks, and shopkeepers. This particular class was categorized into two further classes: there was the upper-middle class which was well-accepted within the upper class. To represent this category, the author used Eugene and Mortimer. The two were lawyers who had close relations with the upper class families. These relations were not work-based only but they were also invited for their dinners and parties. In the other hand, Dickens mentioned the lower-middle class through the characters of the Wilfer family.

...the existing R. Wilfer was a poor clerk. So poor a clerk, though having a limited salary and an unlimited family, that he had never yet attained the modest object of his ambition: which was, to wear a complete new suit of clothes, hat and boots included, at one time? (Dickens 65)

MsWilfer, was a clerk in Mr. Veneering office, like most of the lower-middle class workers, his income was insufficient.

3.2.3. Lower Class:

People from the lower class are obliged to do hard and dirty works to earn their living. Hexam family is the representative of this class. Like most of lower class Victorian families exercised what is called social mobility .This family in particular had a great ambition to get the higher class.

Being the love interest of two upper-middle class men, Lizzie Hexam had a great chance to transform her lifestyle and climb the social ladder.

“But if you married me, you could draw me to good. I would give you all you needed, you would be proud of my work...”
Said Mortimer to Lizzie. (Dickens 625)

This quotation shows that Mortimer knew the importance of money and higher class for a lower class girl like Lizzie. Knowing that she is not interested in him .This was the only way to seduce and convince her to marry him. For pretty and less educated Lower class women of Victorian age, marriage was the only way of positive social mobility.

Her brother, Charlie Hexam, was keen to belong to upper classes. And what is better that achieving that better than education. Education did not only provide an access to the aristocracy. But also changeinterests, goals, etiquette, and the way of thinking and behavior.

“your learning will take you away from the river and this terrible life. How I wish that I could read and write too! But father wouldn’t like it. Perhaps. One day. I can change him. I hate the river. It brings nothing but unhappiness “(Dickens 369)

These are Lizzie’s words to her brother Charlie; she wanted her brother to achieve what she couldn’t. Mr. Hexam opposed his daughter’s education due to their poverty. But Lizzie

made sure that her brother will not face the same fate.

“Lizzie had saved a little money. She gave some of this to her brother.

‘You must leave here, Charley,’ she said. ‘I will stay here with father, but you must go away.’

‘Must?’ repeated Charley. ‘Do you want to get rid of me? Isn’t there enough food for the three of us?’

‘You know that’s not true,’ said Lizzie. ‘You must go to a better school. They will teach you and help you to get a living. I’ll send you some more money when I can. Perhaps Mr. Lightwood will help a little.’ (Dickens 785)

“Charley Hexam, away from his sister, away from the old life on the river, was working hard. He went first to a poor school, and, later, to a better one. He studied hard and soon became a pupil-teacher... He had worked hard to become a schoolmaster, learning facts like a machine “(Dickens 799)

Both citations show the persistence of Lizzie to help her brother to make better life decisions. She saves and borrows money for him to become a school master. In other words, Lizzie wants her brother to achieve what she couldn’t do. She knew that what was once a dream of hers can be a reality for her beloved brother. And the only thing that can make this dream come true is money. If Charley gets an excellent education and a decent job, it will be only a matter of time for the Hexam Family to get out of the river. This only shows the significance of education in social mobility.

3.3 Charles Dickens’ Life and Works:

Charles Dickens was born on Friday 7th, 1812, at Land port, in the Island of Port Sea. His full name is Charles John Huffam. His father John Dickens was a clerk in the Navy pay office at Somerset house whence he was transferred to a similar post at Portsea Charles’ birthplace. The Dickens family moved to Chatham about four years after Charles birth, residing there till Charles was eleven years old. Charles went to school for the first time in

Chatham. (Chesterton 1)

John married Elizabeth, Charles' mother, in June 1809. She was known for her energy, good sense of humor and pleasant personality. She was well-educated also. John Dickens wanted to live the life of gentlemen of the upper class. He was spending more than his income and incurred debts. In 1822 when Charles was ten, his father's work called the family back to London. When they arrived to London his parents did not send him back to school. (History1-4)

At the age of 12, his father was arrested for his debts .They were obliged to mortgage all their possessions .Charles found a work in factory. He was very disappointed. Charles who dreamed of entering Cambridge, he is labeled bots and shoe blacking. When John get out of prison decided to send Charles back to school at Willington House Academy, despite his mother desire for him to keep working. In 1827, 15 years old Charles had to put a halt to his education. When his father could no longer pay for his school. (History 4, 5)

He started working as a solicitor's clerk. This experience provided a good material for many passages for his legal activity in his later Sketches and fiction. By 1828, he decided to try in journalism, a clean work with good rewarding. In November, 1828 he left the lawyer's office and worked as a mere court reporter at Doctor's common. (Salter10)

In 1829, Charles met Maria Beadnell and fell in love with her .However, their relation ended in 1833, because of Maria's father objection to this relation. Her father was a prosperous banker. He saw that Charles was not qualified to be his son –in- law. (Salter12)

After three years, Charles married Catherin Hogarth on April 2nd, 1836. She was known as Kate. She was born in Scotland. Charles and Kate honeymooned in Chatham. Kate gave birth to ten children. Charles blamed her for their large family and her failure as a homemaker. Charles and Kate marriage does not seem to be happy .In 1858, they broke up. Dickens had engaged with Allen a young actress. His children chose to stay with their father after their parents separated. His son Henry Fielding Dickens was very successful attended Cambridge and became a lawyer. He later devoted his self to reading his father's works and published books about his father's life. (Bookcaps)

Charles Dickens continued his secret relationship with Allen behind closed doors for 13 years. In June 8th, 1870 he had a stroke. On the second day, 9th of June 187, he died in his house in Gad s Hill Place. He was 58 years old.

According to John Foster Charles Dickens “*the most popular novelist of the century, and one of the greatest humorists that England had produced*” (2)

. Dickens’s prominence as the greatest English novelists is that at the beginning, Dickens and the other novelists considered the work he was publishing to be novels. The concept “novel” at that time was an extensive work of fiction published in three volumes (Schlicke 417)

He began his career as a writer when he submitted his first sketch to a monthly magazine, then published as the collection “*Sketches by the Boz*” a collection of short pieces of short stories of prose. (Daldry9)

During the Victorian period, novel reading was the chief occupation for the educated public. Dickens figure out a way to make the story entertaining first and hid some moral lessons within the context of the story. Dickens later adopted a more serious tone in his works, criticized his society realistically and supported the poor. However, he knew that this kind of serious and worthy themes would not interest the readers, for that he used comedy as a relief from the serious sections of his story.

Dickens, in his characteristically populist way, shares the anxieties of his time about potential disorder. Throughout his career, he was fascinated and yet repelled by anarchic forces within society. It is a fear of criminality and fear of mob of threatening herd of working class people. His novels were so effective because it offers a vivid sense of dangerous forces that threaten this society. (Peck and Coyle170)

Through his writings, Charles Dickens paints the Victorian period a time that was dirty and dark, especially for those who were living in the lower class. He wanted England to be better. He found the best way he could help is to write stories spotlight on social and political issues.

Oliver Twist is an ironic denunciation against the poor Laws and the society that produced them. Society did nothing to protect children against being exploited in the workhouses as thieves (Leavis). *Oliver Twist* was the second novel of Charles Dickens. It was began in February of 1837 and ended in April of 1839. The publication of *Oliver Twist* began before the monthly publication of *The Pickwick Papers* ended.

The first installment of *Nicholas Nickelby* was published in 1838 and the last installment was published in October 1839 by the London publisher Chapman and Hall. Dickens received a contract because of the formidable popularity of his previous novel, *The Pickwick Papers*. In the novel, Dickens used social critique tools by adopting his personal

experience, the 'Yorkshire Schools', institutions of the poor, illegitimated or unwanted boys.(Gale)

The semi-autobiographical *David Copperfield* (1849-50), it was published in a serial form. This novel achieved a great success. It was Dickens' favorite novel. The novel traces the life of David from childhood to maturity and how he could achieve success. (Carter and McRae275)

'Bleak House' is a monthly serial novel (1852-53). It was characterized by its double narrative. The first half was narrated by the first person of the heroine; the second half was narrated by an ironic narrator. The novel was considered as a social study. Additionally, Dickens started the weekly serial *Hard Times* in 1854. It was an anti-Utilitarian and examination of the life of an industrial society. They were followed by the monthly serial, *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), which was concerned with religion, self examination and misgovernment. (Baker and Womack278)

Dickens continued writing, published 'A Tale of two cities' in 1859 serialized weekly in all the year round, than he wrote 'The Great Expectations', which is a study of Dickens's times, money ethic, snobbery, class system and attitudes to sex and violence. The same may be true to 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864-65). He died in 1870, leaving unfinished 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'. (Baker and Womack 278,279)

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we focused on the literary analysis of *Our Mutual Friend* and tried to reveal the issues of social classes of the Nineteenth century Britain. In addition, we studied characters from three different classes: upper, middle, and lower. These classes define the way class affects personalities, mentality, and lifestyle of each character. We analyzed significant quotations from the novel. Also, we tried to reveal the major themes like education, marriage, money and greed which are discussed in the novel. And last but not least, we delivered a brief biography of the novel's author the great Charles Dickens.

General conclusion

During the Victorian Age, British society witnessed economic phenomena called the Industrial Revolution which affected the lives of British people. As a result, the daily life of a British commoner along with the social changes in the society influenced many novelists to depict these themes in their works. One of them is the novelist and social critic Charles Dickens, who used his last novel “*Our Mutual Friend*” to mirror the issues of the Victorian society.

Although we can’t deny the magnificent benefits that were brought by the Industrial Revolution, we can’t hide the fact that it made the rich richer and the poor poorer. The working class suffered from horrible working and living conditions, whereas the business Owners lived fancy lives. Socially, the industrial revolution caused a drastic social change. A new social class emerged that’s called the middle class causing a social conflict in the British society.

Victorian literature portrayed the problems and issues of society. The Marxist literary theory confirmed the notion of literature reflection of society; it deals with literary texts as a picture of society. Through analyzing the novel “*Our Mutual Friend*” we found out that social class divisions revealed in the novel depicted the real social structure of the British society during the nineteenth century.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter portrays the British society during the nineteenth century and the major events occurred during this period, and criticized the Victorian social classes and its conflict. The second chapter represents a general view of Victorian literature and how the social novel tackles the problems of society, particularly, the problem of social classes. The third and the last chapter is an analytical study of Charles Dickens’s novel *Our Mutual Friend* by revealing social classes of the Victorian age

Charles Dickens’ novel “*Our Mutual Friend*” is a social novel. It represented common social problems, such as class distinction, poverty, child labor, marriage and the position of women. Charles Dickens as a realist and reformist attempted to draw society attention to those problems.

The novel depicted the main three classes which the Victorian social system was built of and gives a description of the three classes through characters from each class, their life style, values and habits. Also, it declares Dickens’ antagonist attitude toward this social system.

General conclusion

Eventually, the theme of social class was discussed in the nineteenth century literature. In “*Our Mutual Friend*” Charles Dickens depicted the Victorian society. Thus literature depicted the nineteenth century British society.

Bibliography

Books

- Alexander, Michaela *History of English Literature*. 3rd ed., PlagraveMacMillan, 2013.
- Baker, William, and Kenneth Womack. *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Green Wood Press, 2002.
- Balkaya, Mehmet Akif. *The Industrial Novels: Charlotte Brontë's Shirley, Charles Dickens' Hard Times and Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Victorian Novel*. Chelsea House, 2004.
- BookCaps. *The Charles Dickens Companion*. BookCapsTM Study Guide, 2014.
- Brantlinger, Patrick, and William B. Thesing. *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Blackwell, 2002.
- Carter, Ronald, and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland*. Routledge, 1997.
- Chesterton, G.K. *The Life and Work of Charles Dickens: Critical Study, Biography, Appreciations & Criticisms of the Works by Charles Dickens*. Musaicum Books, 2019.
- Cody, David. *Social Class: Literature, History, and Culture in the Age of Victoria*. 2002, London.
- Cuddon, J.A. *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Penguin Books, 1998, New York.
- Daldry, Graham. *Charles Dickens and the Form of the Novel: Fiction and Narrative in Dickens*. Routledge, 2016.
- David, Deirdre. *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian novel*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Dickens, Charles. *Our Mutual Friend*. London: 1885.
- Dobie, Ann B. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. 3rd ed., WadsworthCengage Learning, 2012.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. Methuen & Co. Ltd, 2006.
- Ermith, Elizabeth Deeds. *The English Novel History 1840-1895*. Routledge, 1997.
- Forster, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens: Volume 1,2,3*. Outlook Verlag GmbH, 2020.
- Froster, John. *Class Struggle and the Industrial revolution*. 1974, London.
- Gale, Cengage Learning. *A Study Guide for Charles Dickens' "Nicholas Nickleby"*. 2015.
- Harrison, Frederic. *Studies in Early Victorian Literature*. Tredition GmbH, nd.
- History, Hourly. *Charles Dickens: A Life From Beginning to End*, 2018.
- Hudson, Pat. *The Industrial Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 1992.

- Keen, Suzanne. *Victorian Renovations of the Novel: Narrative Annexes and the Boundaries of Representation*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Leavis, F.R. *Dickens the Novelist*. Faber Finds.
- Mcdowall, David. *Illustrated History of Britain*. Longman, 1989.
- Mitchell, Sally. *Victorian Britain an Encyclopedia*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2011. books.google.dz/books/about/Victorian_Britain.html?id=yCNdsz5IlJwC&redir_esc=y. Accessed 23 May 2021.
- Moran, Maureen. *Victorian Literature and Culture*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006.
- Peck, John, and Martin Coyle. *A Brief History of English Literature*. 2nd ed., Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.
- Perkin, J. Russell. *Theology and the Victorian Novel*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009.
- Poole, Andrian. *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Purchase, Sean. *Key Concepts in Victorian Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
- Salter, Micheal. *Charles Dickens*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Schellinger, Paul. *Encyclopedia of the Novel*. Routledge, 1998. books.google.dz/books?id=FPdRAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Schellinger,+Paul.+Encyclopedia+of+the+Novel&hl=fr&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Schellinger%2C%20Paul.%20Encyclopedia%20of%20the%20Novel&f=false. Accessed 12 Sep 2021.
- Schlicke, Paul. *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens: Anniversary Edition*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Steinberg, Gillian. *Thomas Hardy: The Poems*. Routledge, 1997.
- Taddeo, Anne Julie, and Cynthia J. Miller. *Steaming Into a Victorian Future: A Steampunk Anthology*. The Scarecrow Press, INC, 2013.
- Taibi, A. *British and American Civilization*. Teachers of School of Humanities, 2008, Algeria.
- Wheeler, Michael. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2013.
- Williams. *A Comparison to 19th Century Britain*. 2004.

Articles

- Duhan, Roshin. "The Relationship between Literature and Society." (2015).

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Relationship-between-Literature-and-Society-Duhan/a2afd2c7f86204cf975222925e4a78b03bc900dd>. Accessed 02 sep 2021.

Ghazali, Bayu A. "English Literature." *Assembly Articles Free Encyclopedia*. (2009). www.cje.ids.czyst.pl/biblioteka/14106649-English-Literature.pdf. Accessed 22 june 2021.

McIlvain. "Characteristics of Victorian Literature." (2012)

Net Sources:

"The Rise of the Middle Class and the Novel." L. R. Capuana, 30 September, 2016. <https://lrcapuana.com/2016/09/30/the-rise-of-the-middle-class-and-the-novel/>. Accessed 30 June 2021.

Brewton, Vince. "Literary theory." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://iep.utm.edu/literary/>. Accessed 30 June 2021.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Social problem novel". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Invalid Date, <https://www.britannica.com/art/social-problem-novel>. Accessed 12 April 2021.

Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Marxism and Literary Theory." *Marxism and Literary Theory and Criticism*, 12 April 2016. <https://literariness.org/2016/04/12/marxism-and-literary-theory/#comments>. Accessed 12 september 2021.

Millgate, Michael. "Thomas Hardy". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Invalid Date, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Hardy>. Accessed 18 May 2021.

Prahl, Amanda. "What Is a Novel? Definition and Characteristics." *ThoughtCo*, Sep. 8, 2021, [thoughtco.com/what-is-a-novel-4685632](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-novel-4685632). Accessed 15 May 2021.

Rahn, Josh. "Realism". *The literature Network*. Jalic Inc., n.d. web. 14 May 2014 www.online-literature.com/periods/realism.php. Accessed 18 June 2021.

www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/history/industrial-revolution.html

ملخص

يهتم أدب القرن التاسع عشر بشدة بالحياة اليومية للمجتمع البريطاني. خاصة الرواية الاجتماعية. مشاكل المجتمع هي الموضوع الرئيسي الذي تناوله الروائيون الفيكتوريون. تصور رواية تشارلز ديكنز "صديقنا المشترك" ظروف المجتمع الفيكتوري والانقسام الطبقي في تلك الفترة. الدراسة الحالية هي محاولة لوصف العصر الفيكتوري والمجتمع واستكشاف كيف تم تصوير المجتمع في الأدب ، وخاصة الرواية الاجتماعية. كما تهدف إلى إظهار كيف يصور "صديقنا المشترك" القضايا الاجتماعية في القرن التاسع عشر. من أجل تحقيق ذلك ، تعتمد الدراسة على تحليل موضوعي للقضايا الاجتماعية في "صديقنا المشترك" لديكنز. علاوة على ذلك ، استخدمنا المفاهيم النقدية للنظرية الأدبية الماركسية لتحليل الرواية. السبب وراء استخدام هذه النظرية هو أنها تركز على كل من الاختيارات الاجتماعية والصراع الاجتماعي.