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Dedication

*I dedicate this work to my loving parents who provided me with all what I need
by their endless support, patience and encouragement.*

To all my family brothers and sisters without forget little one Hanan.

To my nieces and nephews Djamila, Rehab, Soumia, Achref, Hodhayfa and

Abdlekrim

I also dedicate this work to cheerful and dearest friends : Hafida, Soaad, Sara,

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To all who share with me happy time at university during the years of my study.

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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 spans over six decades, the year 1870 is often used to divide the era into "early Victorian" and "late Victorian." In general, Victorian literature deals with the issues and problems of the day which are the social, economic, religious, and intellectual issues and problems surrounding the Industrial Revolution, growing class tensions, the early feminist movement, 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, Matthew Arnold, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy.

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.

Throughout Contemporary British Society and Victorian People and Ideas, it is stated that British society is very class conflict. 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 speak about social problems of the Victorian time in their works as Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) who was the third daughter of the Bronte sisters, her finest work *Jane Eyre* (1847); it examines many sides of the circumstances of woman and their struggle within the Victorian society, Jane Austen(1775-1817) in *Pride and Prejudice*(1799), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was considered to be one of the novelists who wrote about the problems of the Victorians in the late nineteenth century, he showed the conflict between the traditional and modern values, and Charles Dickens who treats the social class in his novels especially in *Great Expectations*, and also in *David Copperfield* which is the subject of this paper.

In fact, Dickens himself was something of a social climber. He was personally ashamed of certain aspects of his past, such as his time as a child worker in a blacking factory, and had always dreamed of bettering himself. In 1856 he had bought a country house in Kent (Gad's Hill) which he had seen many times in his childhood when taken on walks by his father, and he had often fantasized about living in it one day. Therefore his novel *David Copperfield* his most popular novel about growing up shows the social background of English society at that time and class issues throughout the novel. Also he is one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era. Dickens showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of English society, and contributed to several important social reforms.

David Copperfield, is one of Charles Dickens's many famous literary works. It considers an autobiography by the many comparisons found to his true life, and follows the life of a young middle class boy named David. This novel, like many of Dickens's works, focuses on the one primary character; a Victorian novel written during Britain's Industrial Revolution. For this reason, the study aims at investigating and analyzing Dickens' representation of social class in his novel *David Copperfield*, 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 background of English society at that time. Some critics argue that he saw the novel as an important tool of social reform.

So, the choice of Charles Dickens is mainly based on our interest in his novel *David Copperfield* which reflected a picture of people who differ in the social classes in English society in the early of nineteenth century when the Industrial Revolution make change in it. Also, show the behaviors that each classes are dealing with.

David Copperfield's novel covers a slew of contemporary social issues ranging from the suppression of women and the abuse of children, to the undisciplined heart and good vs. evil. Moreover, there are many motives behind the choice of Victorian Literature, first because much of the writings of the Victorian period were concerned with social problems of that time such as the effect of the Industrial Revolution, also, because of an intensive production of literary works that this period witnessed, especially Novels that deal with social realities during the Industrial Revolution.

Through this paper, the following questions might be answered:

- To what extent does Charles Dickens depict the theme of social classes in his masterpiece David Copperfield?
- What are the reasons in David Copperfield's novel that make distinctions between classes?

We set the following hypotheses so as to attempt at finding appropriate answers to the questions:

- David Copperfield's novel would represent the social classes in Victorian society.
- Charles Dickens may introduce three different classes in the novel.

The present study is mainly based on the thematic analysis of social classes in Dickens's novel David Copperfield in order to explore the English society during the 19th century and to present the circumstances which English society underwent at that time.

As for methodology also, we have used the critical concepts of Marxist literary theory to analyze the novel. Noting that Marxism is a worldview and method of societal analysis that focuses on class relations and societal conflict. Thus, the choice of Marxist literary criticism as a methodology, had been its concern with the social movements throughout history and a revolutionary view of social change in 19th century.

Our dissertation is an analytical thematic study in order to uncover certain aspects of social classes of the nineteenth century in David Copperfield novel written by Charles Dickens. The study is divided into three chapters; each one investigates particular elements from the whole study. The first chapter is called the Victorian literature, deals with historical and background of Victorian era in the 19th century, Victorian social novel, focusing on Dickens as one of the greatest figures of that age and of all English literature history, and we discuss the theory to be used for the research study which is Marxism theory. The second chapter contains the main feature of literature which is social criticism depended on social structures and Industrial Revolution and its impact on England society, and class conflicts. The third chapter presents a practical part of the study that highlighted the literary analysis of the novel as a corpus, on which presented the overview of the novel and David Copperfield's society that divided into three classes which are upper, middle, and lower class, also, David's view on class.

The Theoretical Part

Chapter One

Victorian Literature

Introduction

Victorian age was characterized by rapid change and developments in nineteenth century from advance in medical, scientific, and technological knowledge to change in population growth and location. For the most part, nineteenth century families were large and patriarchal. They encouraged hard work, respectability, social deference and religious conformity. So, in this chapter we will speak about political and historical background of the Victorian age which considered the age of social criticism and the major features of society that involve the Victorian novel and its writers who were interested with social problems of that period.

1. Victorian Age, The Age of Social Criticism

The Victorian era, from the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 until her death in 1901, was an era of several worrying social developments that forced writers more than ever before to take positions on the immediate issues animating the rest of society.

Thus, it is continued the romantic ideals of promoting love and nature. However, scientific advances social upheavals seen around the world had a profound effect on literature. There was greater use of political and social themes as well as many attempts to educate the populous. Scientific discoveries that seemed to refute certain religious beliefs inspired many writers to conquer the topics of faith and truth in their works.

This era saw significant advances in nonfiction works and the invention of the modern novel. The poetry of this period was a direct reflection of the popular attitudes of the time. Several authors used these fantasy situations to provide an indirect social commentary. The most famous of these authors is *H. G. Wells*. *George Bernard Shaw* was the driving force behind radically new dramatic works. He displayed a powerful capacity for satire in his plays. He expressed his disdain for the existing social order in his highly entertaining plays.

Also, the social changes were so swift and brutal that Godwinian utopianism rapidly gave way to attempts either to justify the new economic and urban conditions, or to change them. The intellectuals and artists of the age had to deal in some way with

the upheavals in society, the obvious inequities of abundance for a few and squalor for many is an emphasis on public rectitude and moral propriety.

Victorian is an age of popular education, of religious tolerance, of growing brotherhood, and of profound social unrest. The slaves had been freed in 1833; but in the middle of the century England awoke to the fact that slaves are not necessarily negroes, stolen in Africa to be sold like cattle in the market place, but that multitudes of men, women, and little children in the mines and factories were victims of a more terrible industrial and social slavery. To free these slaves also, the unwilling victims of our unnatural competitive methods, has been the growing purpose of the Victorian Age until the present day.

1.1. Political and Historical Background

Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 until 1901. She became Queen at the age of 18 in 1837 when her uncle, *King William IV*, she died on January 22nd of 1901 after a reign of 63 years (Williams,2004), but the Victorian age is sometimes said to begin with the defeat of Napoleon in 1815(Carter and McRae,2001).

A history of its age records a period of economic expansion and rapid change. If change can be measured by change to the capital city of a country, then the history of the growth of London during this century is raveling. When Queen Victoria came to throne, the population of London was about 2 million inhabitants in 1801, the population has increased to 6.5 million (Carter and McRae, 1997).

Therefore Britain became the richest manufacturing country in the world (Carter, McRae, 2001). The growth of London and of other cities in great Britain marked a final stage in the change from a way of life based on the land to a modern urban economy based on manufacturing, international trade and financial institutions.

Three events before 1837 had a crucial impact on Victorian life and made Victoria's reign seem markedly different from earlier periods in British history. (1) *The Duke of Wellington's* victory over *Napoleon* at Waterloo in 1815 created an atmosphere of national pride. (2) The Industrial Revolution transformed England from an agricultural nation to one based on industry and made it for most of the century the world's greatest economic power. (3) The Reform Bill of 1832, which doubled the number of men eligible to vote, began a gradual progress towards democratic rule and governmental responsibility for the safety and well-being of all citizens (Carter and McRae, 1997).

Also, The Victorian period saw the real birth of the middle class that had fought for its rights in the 1820's grew wealthy and complacent with business as a force in politics and social structure. The rapid growth of the middle class was part of the enormous rise in the population (McDowell, 1989).The working class climbed to new heights, and agitated for

more. The 19th century saw the writings of Marx and Engels congeal from political philosophy into political party doctrine.

So an increasingly important commercial class, bigger markets, and expanded population made the Industrial Revolution possible.

During the Victorian heyday, work and play expanded dramatically. The greatest example of Britain's industrial power in the mid-nineteenth century was its railway system stimulated travel and leisure opportunities for all.

Indeed, it was mainly because of this new form of transport that six million people were able to visit the Great Exhibition, 109,000 of them on one day (McDowell, 1989). Within this context Burgess Wilson asserts that:

The Victorian Age thus had a large number of problem 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, 1982: 80)

In the political realm, historians often date the beginning of the Victorian age from the Reform Bill of 1832 rather than Queen Victoria's accession in 1837. In the early nineteenth century, only men who held property had the right to vote for representatives in the House of Commons (Mitchell, 2009). They believed in the perfection of their evolved representative government, and in exporting it throughout the British Empire. This age saw the birth and spread of political movements, most notably socialism, liberalism and organized feminism.(Ibid)

The growth and the movement of people to towns from the countryside forced a change in the political balance, and by the end of the century most men had the right to vote. Politics and government during the nineteenth century became increasingly the property of the middle class. The aristocracy and the Crown had little power left by 1914. However, the working class, the large number of people who had left their villages to become factory workers, had not yet found a proper voice (McDowell, 1989).

1.2. Victorian Literature During the Nineteenth Century

Victorian period is the period of colonial expansion of Great Britain during the 19th century, the period of wars and rebellions in British colonies. It is the last completed period of English Literature, almost coincident in extent with the reign of the queen whose name it bears (Victoria, queen 1837-1901), stands nearly beside the Elizabethan period in the significance and interest of its work (Fletcher,2002) . Like all ages it was an age of paradox, but the paradoxes of the mid-nineteenth century struck contemporaries as more stark and disturbing than those which had faced their ancestors. The Victorian age had its continuities, its revivals, and its battles of styles in painting and architecture as much as in literature (Ibid)

Therefore, Victorian literature speaks for an age which witnessed greater changes than any that gone before in all the conditions of life. The population of England represented various classes, occupations, and ways of life. Also the transportation of the period served as the forerunner of much of the transportation used today and the advances in medicine were also instrumental in changing the face of medicine forever.

The nineteenth century associates Victorian period with a realist works attempt to represent the world and the mind, it strives to reflect the Victorian world with its social concerns and should aim to express the personal private emotions of the writer and define what would be real in literary fiction (Mulder, 2012)

Most Victorian writers still thought of themselves as men of letters in the full meaning of the term. Victorian literature was predominantly a literature of ideas. Furthermore, it brought into direct relation with the daily concerns of the reading public.

So, writing during the period of Queen Victoria's reign includes sentimental novels. British poets include *Elizabeth Browning*, *Alfred Lord Tennyson*. *Charles Dickens* in his novels *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* exposed the social evils of the time. *Thackeray* exposed the middle class hypocrisy in his *Vanity Fair*. It was a great age for novels. Woman writers the *Brontë sisters*, *Mrs.Gaskell* flourished as never before. *Thomas Hardy* and *Henry James* were Victorian novelists too.

In spite of the uncertainty of terminology, there are some concrete statements that one can make regarding the nature of Victorian literature, and the intellectual world which nurtured that literature.

1.2.1. Victorian Society

The Victorian age is actually a period of great changes in the economic, social and scientific life, which deeply affected people's value, morals, principles and, in turn, had immense impact on literary criticism. At the beginning of the period, the social condition of the great body of the population was extremely bad (Fletcher,2002), but from 1837 to 1901, social and technological change affected almost every feature of daily extinct (Mitchell,2009)

The first years of the reign were marked by social and political turmoil, largely in response to the rapid changes that came with industrialization. In 1801, most people lived in villages or farms; by 1851 more than half of the population was urban (Mitchell,2009). This later is the effect of The Industrial Revolution which is one of the principal changes in the Victorian age. It resulted in the material prosperity of many people but it brought about new modes of behavior such as materialism, vulgarity and mammon worship, all of which had very bad effects on the values, principles and morals of the Victorians.

English society in the nineteenth century was still highly stratified, although some of the old class distinctions were beginning to distort by the end of the period (Mitchell, 2009). Therefore, Victorian society can be split up into three classes: upper, middle, and lower. Upper class; did not work, income came from inherited land and investments, Middle class; men performed mental or "clean" work, paid monthly or annually, and Working class; men and women who performed physical labor, paid daily or weekly wages.¹

Politics and government during the nineteenth century became increasingly the property of the middle class. The aristocracy and the Crown had little power left by 1914. However, the working class, the large number of people who had left their villages to become factory workers, had not yet found a proper voice (McDowell, 1989)

The idea of the close family slowly spread down the social order, and an increasing number of women found their sole economic and social usefulness ended when their children grew up, a problem that continued into the twentieth century(ibid). Many of the women became servants in the houses of the middle classes.

One major feature of the Victorian society was the abundant poor. Because of poverty, children were forced into child labor and forced to work as chimney sweepers and they could crawl up the twelve by fourteen inch chimneys, some as small as seven inches square, so that they would clean out the annual average of forty gallons of soot that was deposited there. Some boys became rat catchers and they were required to use arsenic to poison the rats, but as

¹ [http:// www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm](http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm).

this could be expensive, they could also use a ferret to flush the rats out and kill them (Kelsey, 1997)

The changes in women's social role occurred as the important members, they had opened up for professions which were not accessible before. They assumed skilled jobs in society as writers, journalists, nurses, and teachers (McDowell, 1989). Women relocate their place in society in the political, economic and social aspects for restricted their life.

In realm of Education in nineteenth-century, England was not equal - not between the sexes, and not between the classes. However, it was not compulsory, either legally or socially, for a gentleman to attend school at all. He could, just as easily, be taught entirely at home. A lady's education was taken, almost entirely, at home. There were boarding schools, but no University, and the studies were very different. She learned French, drawing, dancing, music, and the use of globes. If the school, or the governess, was interested in teaching any practical skills, she learned plain sewing as well as embroidery, and accounts.² Acton, like many of his contemporaries, was of the opinion that women were by nature sexually uninterested. Acton claimed that: *"The majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind."*

(Acton, William. 1862. 101)

1.2.2. The Victorian Social Novel

Social novel or the social problem novel is a work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem as gender, race, or class. More specific example of social problems that are addressed in such works, include poverty, conditions in factories and mines, the troubles of child labor, violence against women, and rising criminality.³ Victorian age is considered to be the age of social criticism, and disclosing the reasons that led to poverty, unemployment and common discontent. It is roughly estimated that the first "real" social novels started to develop around 1830. That's why the Victorian period can be considered also the golden age of the novel, which is described by Henry James as: *"An intricately in wrought aesthetic and psychological design, and a subtle Balancing of formal and moral tensions."*

(Makati, 2008: 29)

² [http:// www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm](http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm).

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sovial-novel>

One of the most significant literary changes in the nineteenth century is the rise of the novel. The term 'novel' did not become broadly used until the end of the eighteenth century, which had seen the development of the form through autobiographical narratives and the epistolary novel (Williams, 2004). According to *Watt*, historians of the novel have defined 'realism'. In the nineteenth century, this realist perspective materialized in various forms: the historical novel, the social problem novel and the community novel (Ibid)

The 19th century saw the novel become the leading form of literature in English (Ghazali, 2009). Also, after an initial period of experimentation, the novel had become the artform most capable of reflecting the increasing complexity of the modern world. In addition to that it was the main source of entertainment for the educated middle class.

So the novel required to do for society in this age precisely what *Lyell* and *Darwin* wanted to do for science to find the truth, and to show how it might be used to uplift humanity. Associated with the development of mid-century realism, "social fiction" is the broadest of the terms encompassing industrial novels, Condition of England novels, and social problem novels.⁴

The social novel started to flourish in public and its authors tried to criticize the circumstances of bad living conditions of the lower classes in factory cities, the automation of industry and the huge birth surplus in the country all throughout Great Britain. Furthermore, there were waves of migration into the huge cities and more capitalists that could be found in parliament, widely supporting political industrialization, completely neglecting the working conditions of their employees.

The novel was very important to convey social criticism, as it could be widely spread among the reading public. And especially for those, who didn't know about those social problems from their own experience, these novels were an interesting means of enlightenment, with regards to the criticism of the system. Many of the social novels appearing at that time were serialized, as they could be made more affordable being published that way.

The Victorian Social Novel can roughly be divided into three different stages: the Early Victorian Social Novel (1830 - 1850); the industrial system was to blame for the bad

⁴ <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/problem.html>

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 work. The main feature of the Middle Victorian Social Novel (1850 – 1880) was no longer the attempt to present solutions to current social problems, but rather the reflection of the “*Golden Age Of British Capitalism*”, and the power of the system and its institutions was made responsible for many social misstandings 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 deduced from the name, the mostly bad living conditions in slums and contained lots of pessimistic components.

After mid-century, writers for older children produced increasingly realistic stories about ordinary children and their doings, as well as adventure tales, school stories, historical novels, and other genres of popular writing (John and Martin, 2002)

The most popular form of literature was the novel and the novelists responded with a will. The reign of the novel has now 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 (Pollard, 1993). In addition to that, they try to show their readers that there were many problems behind the beautiful picture of the Victorian society (Carter and McRae, 2001).

The most important novelists in nineteenth century may be considered in that order below:

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is probably the most representative literary figure of the whole Victorian age. Most of his novels are set in London, *Dickens* claimed to know London better than anyone else on earth. He treated the comedy and criticized certain aspects of the Victorian compromise, in addition to the problems of the society like poor. He wrote thirteen novels between *Sketches by Boz* (1836), and the *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, published in the year of his death, 1870 (Carter and McRae, 2001). The work was well-received, but its reception was nothing compared to the international acclaim he received with the publication of *The Pickwick Papers* in the following year which came out in parts and gave English literature some of its most charming and amusing characters (Thorney, Robert, 1984). But *Dickens* moves directly from this view of England. He writes about social problems of young boys in *Oliver Twist* (1837-8) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9); the two novels represent the

suffering of children were a main theme of Dickens' writing (Carter and McRae, 2001).

Within this context *Sharpe and Henderson* claims that:

Child protagonists featured in countless Victorian novels. The first child hero, Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837), was soon followed by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Brontë's *Cathy Earnshaw* and *Heathcliff*, William Makepeace Thackeray's *Amelia Sedley* and *Becky Sharp*, George Eliot's *Tom and Maggie Tulliver* and of course, a host of subsequent child protagonists in Dickens's own novels, from *David Copperfield* to *Pip*. The youthful characters who filled the pages of nineteenth century fiction served, in part as vehicles for the authors to come to terms with their own early years.

(Sharpe and Henderson, 2004:795)

In 1840, and over the next ten years he published many of his most famous novels in serial form, including *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1), *A Christmas Carol* (1844), and *David Copperfield* (1849-50), perhaps the most autobiographical of all his novels.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63) was Dickens' great rival at the time, began his literary career as a journalist. He also tended to depict situations of a more middle class flavor than *Dickens* (Ghazali, 2009). His writing was filled with wit, humor, satire, and pathos. It is impossible to list here his many works of literature. The best known are *Vanity Fair* (1847-48), the novel is critical of the shallowness of the Victorian world, which is based on money and appearances (James, 2006). Also, *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq.* (1844), *Pendennis* (1848-50) *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.* (1852), *The Newcomers* (1853-55), and *The Virginians* (1857-59).

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), is famous for his published works such as poems and novels, generally regarded as one of the greatest figures in English literature. Though he considered himself as a poet who only wrote novels for money, he was more famous for his novels rather than his poems (Andrew, 1994). Like *Dickens*, *Hardy's* novels were published in serial forms in magazines that were popular in both England and America. His first popular novel was *Under the Greenwood Tree*, published in 1872.

The next great novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) was so popular that with the profits, *Hardy* was able to give up architecture and marry *Emma Gifford*. Other popular novels followed in quick succession: *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the*

Obscure (1895). In addition to these larger works, *Hardy* published three collections of short stories and five smaller novels, all moderately successful. However, despite the praise *Hardy's* fiction received, many critics also found his works to be too shocking, especially *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. The outcry against *Jude* was so great that *Hardy* decided to stop writing novels and return to his first great love, poetry (Grellet, 2002).

The Victorian era is known for the galaxy of female novelists that it threw up. The most important women novelists, who yet are quiet important are:

George Eliot (1819-1880), among the best of the Victorian writers, *Eliot* deals with themes of social change and triumphs of the heart and has a remarkable talent for showing us the depth and scope of Provincial English life: its classes, pretensions, and hypocrisies. Many of her novels today are included in the canon of classic 19th century literary works. Some have been adapted to film, many still in print today (Carter and McRae, 2001). Her first work was a collection of stories and sketches about the people of Warwickshire, the town of her youth. This collection, called *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857-8), was quickly published in *Blackwood's* magazine. Her next writing venture, the novel *Adam Bede* (1860), was a popular and critical success. She went on to write her most celebrated novel, *Middlemarch*, between 1871 and 1872, and became a great success, making *George Eliot* even more famous, followed by *Daniel Derornda* in 1876.

The Lifted Veil (1859) reflects the personal struggles *Eliot* went through as a woman and author in the spotlight since the success of *Adam Bede* (James, 2006).

Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne), who introduce the female character. They describe a picture about women and their struggles in Victorian England. *Charlotte Brontë* (1816-1855) depicts women in Victorian society, also, criticized the nineteenth century social structure in her finest novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). It made a considerable critical approval (Carter and McRae 1997). *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by *Emily Brontë* (1818-1848), it is a novel of passion, an early psychological novel. The novel is very original in the way it is written; it represents a new view of women and their emotions. In addition to the youngest *Brontë sisters*, *Anne Brontë* (1820-1849) wrote the tenant of *Wildfell Hall* (1848), also, with an unusual central female character and involving complex relationships and problems (Carter and McRae, 2001)

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) often referred to simply as *Mrs. Gaskell*, was a British novelist and short story writer during the Victorian era. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of society, including the very poor, and are of interest to social historians as well as lovers of literature. *Gaskell* was also the first to write a biography of *Charlotte Bronte*, *Life of Charlotte Bronte*, which was published in 1857.

Charles Dickens admired *Elizabeth* so much that he serialized her next novel, *Cranford*, in his journal, *Household Words* (1851-1853). More novels followed in rapid succession, including *Ruth* (1853), *North and South* (1855), and *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863). These books did not represent her sole literary output. *Elizabeth* wrote several novellas, of which *Cranford* was one, as well as short stories and articles for periodicals.

Moreover, the development of the novel as popular form in the 19th century was European phenomenon, and one of the most remarkable features of its history is the speed with which it matured. From nowhere, so it seemed, great novelists sprang up and produced novels which became and remained classics (Cuddon, 1998). Thus, the novel was an instrument that the novelists used to deliver social criticism. Also, it was the source that gave the reader a clear picture of what was happening during that time (Fletcher, 2002). In addition to *Dickens's* novels became a potent tool for exposing social injustice, poverty, and the inadequate responses of government to these problems. As *Roger Ebert* recently put it:

Dickens grew up in a world of workhouses for children, child prostitution, "charity" institutions run with cruelty and greed, schools that taught nothing and were run for profit, and people, who preyed on children, starved and mistreated them, and praised themselves for their benevolence.

(Roger Ebert, 2005: 15)

1.3. Charles Dickens as a Novelist

According to *David Cecil*, Dickens is

The most representative of Victorian novelists. Some will contend that he is also the greatest. No doubt he lacks the profundity of George Eliot, the consuming passion of the Bronte sisters, and the peculiar éclat of Thackeray, yet he

surpasses them all in his basic humanity, a childlike naïveté, and an amazingly fecund imagination.⁵

These qualities place him among the foremost of all English novelists. *Dickens* achieved in his lifetime wide popularity among all sections of readers. He was a prominent Victorian novelist who became popular because of this attention to detail and his ability to fascinate their readers.

Thus, *Dickens* was a man of great kindness and sympathy with weakness and suffering, and these characteristics led him not only to engage in practical philanthropies, but also to use his art for the purpose of social reform (Eliot, 2001). That's why in his novels he strikes from first to last a loud and clear note of humanitarianism, which is the most attractive note in the Dickensian orchestra. He can be called one of the greatest social reformers of his time. Many a novel of *Dickens* seems to have been built around a particular social theme.

At the age of fifteen, *Dickens* became a clerk in a law firm, and later worked as a newspaper reporter. He published his first fiction in 1836 - a series of character sketches called *Sketches by Boz*. *Dickens* took on the job as editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*, a literary magazine in which a number of his early works were serialized, including *Oliver Twist* (1837-9) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9). *Dickens* also spoke out on a variety of social issues, including American slavery and the lack of copyright laws that made it far too easy for unscrupulous people to steal his writings, as well as the abuses of industrial society that play such a prominent role in his novels.

Charles Dickens wrote about the workhouse in his novels. His descriptions of the life of crime and misery into which poor people were forced shocked the richer classes, and conditions slowly improved (McDowell, 1989).

Also, he is a poet in the imagery which in his early works animates scenes and human portraits becomes in his later works a unifying principle whereby characters, events and background are symbolically related (Blamires, 1984).

In the hands *Charles Dickens*, the English novel became the ideal instrument for spreading the message of outrage and sympathy. The *Edinburgh Review* wrote of *Dickens* in 1838:

[The quality] we most admire in him is his comprehensive spirit of humanity. The tendency of his writings is to make us practically

⁵ <http://neoenglishsystem.blogspot.com/2010/12/art-of-cgarles-dickens-as-novelist.html>

benevolent—to excite our sympathy in behalf of the aggrieved and suffering in all classes.

(Edinburgh Review, 1990: 75)

Today, the novels of *Dickens* often strike modern readers as overly sentimental or, from a feminist perspective, downright insulting to women—his female characters are all too often, little stereotypes of feminine weakness (Forster, 2007).

His novels are full of emotional death scenes for angelic children carried off by some disease or other. He raged against the sins and injustices that permeated his society: the heartlessness of the rich, the harshness of the law, the cruel treatment of children, and the inhuman conditions of the prisons.⁶

There is also humor which is the very core of *Dickens's* work. It presents his novels from becoming annoying and itself is not tiresome. *Dickens's* humor arises from a deep human sympathy and is ever bright and stimulating. It is customary to compare him with such great humorists before him as *Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Fielding*. Sometimes his humor is corrective and satiric but it always has the quality of sociability, charity, and tolerance (Marzials, 2005).

Dickens's humor is superficial rather than profound. Very often it is of the nature of full-blooded farce or caricature. As well as his pathos is achieved with real tenderness and great poignancy, but at times it strikes the modern reader as somewhat too deliberate and even forced (Eliot, 2001). *Dickens* is wonderfully successful in delineating the pathos of child life.

As a novelist, *Dickens* is a traditionalist, as he accepts the formal pattern of the novel handed over to him by *Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett*—his love from childhood. Some of his novels depict the career of the hero from his infancy till manhood. This naturally involves him in the handling of a mass of changes as variegated as life itself. To impose even a passable unity on the sprawling episodes representing these variations is definitely beyond him.⁷

1.3.1. Dickens Life and Society

The English author *Charles John Huffam Dickens*, the most popular novelist of the century, and one of the greatest humorists that England has produced, was born at Landport in

⁶<http://suu.edu/faculty/ping/pdf/dickensandthesocialnovel.pdf>

⁷<http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/category/literary-and-critical-essays/page/25/>

Portsea on Friday, the 7th of February, 1812 (Forster, 2007). *Charles* had one elder sister, and six other brothers and sisters were afterwards added to the family; and with eight children, he is the second one to *John Dickens* (1785–1851) and *Elizabeth Dickens* (1789–1863). His father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office and was temporarily on duty in the district and was employed in the Portsmouth Dockyard when little *Charles* first came into the world (Marzials, 2005). Very soon after his birth the family moved to Norfolk Street, Bloomsbury, and then, when he was four, to Chatham, Kent, where he spent his formative years until the age of 11.

At the age of 12, his father was imprisoned for debt, and he was forced to work in the cellar of a London shoe–blacking factory and went to live with a family friend. On his proud and sensitive disposition this humiliation, though it lasted only a few months, inflicted a wound which never healed; years after he was famous he would cross the street to avoid the smell from an altogether different blacking factory, with its reminder 'of what he once was' (Fletcher, 2002).

At fifteen, he found employment as a clerk, while he studied shorthand at night. In 1830 he fell in love with *Maria Beadnell*, the daughter of a banker. But in 1833, his relationship with *Maria* ended, probably because her parents did not think he was good enough for their daughter (Marzials, 2005).

From fifteen to seventeen he was a lawyer's clerk, and it was during this period that he picked up the knowledge of law and lawyers that is shown in his attacks on legal abuses and in his portraits of members of the legal profession (Ibid).

After several months, an unexpected inheritance relieved *Dickens's* father from his debt, and *Charles* eventually left the factory and returned to school. Still, *Charles's* job gluing labels on bottles traumatized him, leaving a deep impression that would haunt him for the rest of his life. These difficult times inspired *Charles Dickens* to include many economic and child labor issues in his fiction. Therefore, his loneliness as he wandered the streets of London, slowly sinking into the dirt and misery of those other poor drudges living on the edges of recognition, never more than a few shillings away from his 'vagabond existence' hardening into a permanent way of life (Poole, 2009).

In 1835, he became engaged to Catherine Hogart. He and *Catherine* got married on April 2nd, 1836. In the same time, he met *John Forster*, who would become his best friend as well as his first biographer. In 1836, when he also gave up reporting, he was regarded as the greatest expert in the gallery of the House (Eliot, 2001).

Meantime, the elder *Dickens* had become a parliamentary reporter, and his son, the first of ten children was born in 1837, set himself to learn shorthand and expand his reading with a view to following the same occupation.

Charles had transcribed in his books nothing more than he had seen in life, because the period of hardship in *Dickens's* life obviously played an influential role in many of his novels. The ability to depict real life situations was greatly influenced by his unpleasant experience as a young man, which included being a victim of child labour.

When a young actress named *Ellen Terman* joined the cast in August, *Dickens* fell in love with her.

In 1858, he separated from his wife. Though his ten children remained with him in his huge country house, he was bitterly disappointed by his sons' failures. Melancholy, restless, and irritable, he continued to write novels, but they became tinged with pessimism about human nature and society. He tried to stave off depression with more and more work; he was engaged in the composition of "Edwin Drood" when in 1870 he dropped dead from the bursting of a blood vessel in the brain. He was buried privately in Westminster Abbey (Eliot, 2001). But death was a long way forward in those old Chatham days; nor, as the time slipped by, and his father's pecuniary embarrassments began to thicken, and make the forward ways of life more dark and difficult, could the purchase of Gad's Hill Place have seemed much less remote.

Charles was a sickly boy, more given to reading than sports within this context *Frank Marzials* in his book life of *Charles Dickens* states that:

A small boy who was sickly and delicate, and could take but little part in the rougher sports of his school companions, but read much, as sickly boys will-read the novels of the older novelists in a "blessed little room," a kind of palace of enchantment, where "'Roderick Random,' 'Peregrine Pickle,' 'Humphrey Clinker,' 'Tom Jones,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Don Quixote,' 'Gil Blas,' and Robinson Crusoe,' came out, aglorious host, to keep him company."And the queer small boy had read Shakespeare's "Henry IV. (Marzials, 2005:7)

1.3.2. Dickens's Works

Charles Dickens, the most popular novelist of the century, and one of the greatest humorists that England has produced. He is English writer of novels and short stories. The novels of *Charles Dickens* concerned with the problems of society at that time (Carter, McRae, 2001).

Charles Dickens wrote thirteen novels, the first series of a collection of stories “Sketches by Boz” was published in 1836 the kind of light humorous writing which had been popular for more than a century (Carter, McRae, 1997), and the successful series of lively dealing with people and scenes about London was preliminary to *The Pickwick Papers* was the first novel of *Charles Dickens*. The novel was initially published in monthly installments from March of 1836 until November 1837. It made the author famous at the age of twenty-four and established him as a comic novelist in the eighteenth-century tradition represented by Smollett, whom he acknowledged as one of his masters (George, 2001).

Oliver Twist was the second novel of *Charles Dickens*. It was began in February of 1837 and ended in April of 1839. It highlighted the problems of poor city children who after the Poor Law Act of 1833 ended up in the workhouse; this is the way in which Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century was having to introduce new legislation and new mechanisms of social regulation in order to control an increasingly complex society (Carter, McRae, 1997). The publication of *Oliver Twist* began before the monthly publication of *The Pickwick Papers* ended. The two novels overlapped for nine months.

Additionally, *Dickens* started *Nicholas Nickleby* before *Twist* finished publication. Those two novels overlapped for nine months as well. *Nicholas Nickleby* was the third novel of *Charles Dickens*. The first installment was published on March 31st, 1838 and the last installment was published on October 1st, 1839. It depicted the suffering of children continues in the Yorkshire schools describe; money emerges as the main influence behind the action here (Thornley, Robert, 1984).

The Old Curiosity Shop was published in installments in the periodical “Master Humphrey’s Clock”. It was printed in April of 1840 and the last was printed in February of 1841. *The Old Curiosity Shop* which *Dickens* published along with short stories in his weekly serial *Master Humphrey's Clock*, it had been essentially a tale of modern life and it was so popular that New York readers stormed the wharf when the ship bearing the final installment arrived in 1841. Queen Victoria read the novel in 1841, finding it "very interesting and cleverly written (Fielding, 1965).

Barnaby Rudge, A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty', appeared in November, 1841 *Dickens* threw himself back into the last century. Was one of two novels (the other was *The Old Curiosity Shop*) that *Dickens* published in his short-lived (1840–1841) weekly serial *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

Martin Chuzzlewit, is part of which was set in a not very flatteringly portrayed America, was begun in January, 1843, and ran through July 1844. Selfishness the central idea of "Martin Chuzzlewit". It reveals the conditions that breed violence and the consequences that ensue. Though mob violence is now uncommon, violence in our society remains endemic.

Dombey and Son began in 1846 and ran through 1848, considered *Dickens* first artistically mature work, he began using notes he called "mems" to outline how the novel would progress. It was after *Dombey and Son* was published that *Dickens's* reputation as a world class author was established. It is a powerful tragedy of a distant, cold businessman who comes to realize too late the value of his worthy daughter, Florence, after the death of his beloved son, Paul – *Dickens's* most famous death scene after that of the famous Little Nell of *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

David Copperfield was published between May, 1849, and the autumn of 1850, and marks Like most of his works, it originally appeared in serial form during the two preceding years. Many elements of the novel follow events in *Dickens's* own life, and it is probably the most autobiographical of his novels. In the preface to the 1867 edition, *Dickens* wrote, "like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is *David Copperfield*." The story traces the life of *David* from childhood to maturity.

Furthermore, the years 1852–57 saw the publication of "*Bleak House*," "*Hard Times*," and "*Little Dorrit*". Also, he continued writing of his novels, "*A Tale of Two Cities*," "*Great Expectations*," and "*Our Mutual Friend*" appearing between 1859 and 1865. In 1867–68 he returned to America, where He was engaged in the composition of "*Edwin Drood*" 1870, which was his last novel that *Dickens* died and left it unfinished (Eliot, 2001).

1.4. Marxist Literary Theory

The Marxist analysis has got nothing to do with what happened in Stalin's Russia: it's like blaming Jesus Christ for the Inquisition in Spain.

(Tony Benn, 1925:79)

Marxism is a critical theory and movement in the valuation of literature. It has a long and complicated history. Although it is often thought of as a twentieth-century phenomenon, partly because it was the basis of the social-governmental system of the Soviet Union, it actually reaches back to the thinking of *Karl Heinrich Marx*, a nineteenth-century (1818-1883) German philosopher and economist.

Meanwhile, the political economist *Friedrich Engels* (1820 -1895) discovered that he had arrived at similar views of Marx. That's why they decided to collaborate to explain the principles of communism (later called Marxism) and to organize an international movement (Eagleton, 1976).

Marxist theory also, considered a sociological approach to literature that viewed works of literature or art as the products of historical forces that can be analyzed by looking at the material conditions in which they were formed. In Marxist ideology, what it often classify as a world view (such as Victorian age) is actually the articulations of the dominant class (Culler, 1997).

Marxism generally focuses on the clash between the dominant and repressed classes in any given age and also may encourage art to imitate what is often termed "objective" reality.⁸ The Frankfurt School is also associated with Marxism and rejected realism (Cuddon, 1998)

Marxism developed primarily as a way of examining historical, economic, and social issues, Marxist doctrine does not deal explicitly with theories of literature; consequently, there is no one orthodox Marxist school (as there is an orthodox Freudianism)⁹, but rather a diversity of Marxist readings. Thus, in the preface of the book of *Terry Eagleton Marxism and Literary Criticism*, *Eagleton* writes ironically:

No doubt we shall soon see Marxist criticism comfortably wedged between Freudian and mythological approaches to literature, as yet one more stimulating academic 'approach,' one more well-tilled field of inquiry for students to tramp.

(Terry Eagleton, 1976:81)

Marxism emphasizes the idea that social life is based upon "conflicts of interest". The most fundamental and important of these conflicts is that between the Bourgeoisie; means capitalist, or management. Those who control the means of production, and the Proletariat; The industrial working class wage labor. But Marxists look very carefully at who belongs

⁸ <http://www.kristisiegel.com/com/theory.htm>

⁹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/marxism>

here no artisans, no peasants, no farm laborers. The Proletariat is the factory workers, "Those who have nothing but their hands."¹⁰

Marx believed that the economic means of production in a society (the base) both creates and controls all human institutions and ideologies (the superstructure). This superstructure includes all social and legal institutions, all political and educational systems, all religions, and all art. These ideologies develop as a result of the economic means of production, not the reverse. Also, he introduced the concept of dialectical materialism, argued that the means of production controls a society's institutions and beliefs, and contended that history is progressing toward the eventual triumph of communism.

The concept of socialist realism marked an important advance in the development of Marxist (Cuddon, 1998). It was considered to be a continuation and development of bourgeois realism at a higher level. Socialist realism as the official Communist 'artistic method', seemed drab and blinkered to Western readers and treat the class nature of art as a simple matter of the writer's explicit class allegiance (Selden, 2005).

Conclusion

Through this part, we deduce that Victorian period has many characteristics, which differ it from other period in its society and authors, who interested with Victorian social novel. This last became more popular than other genre in this era, whereas Charles Dickens is a prominent novelist with his novels that treat the problems society at that time. Also, we examined the Marxist theory that critics to establish the concept of class and class conflict.

¹⁰ <http://prezi.com/kljjavsu4ln3/marxist-criticism/>

Chapter Two

Social Criticism

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 exceed in this period. Therefore, we may exposed in this chapter the social structure and the effects of Industrial Revolution on society with big changes at that time, also we examine the division of social classes and its conflict.

2. Social Criticism as a Main Feature of Literature

Social criticism is criticism of social structures in a society. These criticisms point out the negative aspects of these social structures. When criticism becomes overwhelming, certain things may happen. This could include reform to change the problems that are occurring within the social structure.¹ Sometimes, if reform or changes are not made, people within 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 the people.

Also, it is an expression used to distinguish literature that addresses specific political, social, economic, cultural, or religious issues. Therefore, literature has been used as a medium for social criticism for the greater part of literary history. 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 (Sara Petersson, 2011). It was, according to *Terry Eagleton*, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that literary criticism began to change into something more modern. People began to come together and discuss how what was written in literature had 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 foregrounded as the medium of vital concerns deeply rooted in the general intellectual, cultural and political life of an epoch... It has only been when 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.

(Sara Petersson, 2011: 107-108)

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social-criticism>

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, runs parallel to arguments made in recent years by European philosophers.

However, a number of critics have discussed how the *Bildungsroman* and the dystopian novel, in particular, have strong aspects of social criticism. The *Bildungsroman* genre grew in popularity in the 19th century. Throughout the history of English literature, writers have based their works on such issues (Michael, 1985).

In the early 18th century Jonathan Swift's Fantasy *Gulliver's Travels* served as social criticism by satirizing political ideas and practices that Swift felt were either wrong or downright absurd.

In 19th century, Charles Dickens was one of the most important social critic who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social and moral abuses in the Victorian era (Kailash, 2012), and to expose the darker side of England's industrial development. He conflicts the social problems at that time in his works, for example *David Copperfield* which is very important to convey social criticism such as child labour, family conflicts, crime in society, monetary problems, flaws in the educational system, class conflicts, also, *A Tale of Two Cities* which Dickens examines the inner soul, and shares with us how people are driven to the valley of human emotions, where anxiety and anger reign, and what could happen afterwards if we let these emotions build up inside. Besides the central theme of love, is another prevalent theme, that of a revolution gone bad. He shows us that, unfortunately, human nature causes us to be vengeful and, for some of us, overly ambitious. It is an example of social criticism in literature.²

In addition to *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), which has heavy undertones of criticism of how children were treated in English society during the 19th century and *Hard Times* is more than any other of his condition of England novels influenced by Carlyle's social criticism. It deals with a number of social issues: industrial relations, education for the poor, class division and the right of common people to amusement.

Writers of the 20th century have often used literary works as commentary on the effects of war, the deplorable conditions of poverty, the results of oppression, and the flight for civil

² <http://www.novelguide.com/reportessay/literature/novels/social-criticism-literature>

rights. For example, English poet *Siegfried Sassoon* wrote poems that graphically depicted the horrors of World War I in order to make a statement about the effects of war.³

Animal Farm by *George Orwell*, written in 1944, also typifies this kind of literature. It is a book that tells the animal fable of a farm in which the farm animals revolt against their human masters. Orwell satirized the events in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. He anthropomorphizes the animals, and glimpse each one to a counterpart in Russian history.

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.

These genres is created that criticizes certain parts of society and tries to convey a message to readers, especially to those who are in a position to change society for the better, namely the young adult readers.

In general, the writers whose works contain social criticism hope to do more than entertain readers. Although their reasons for addressing political and social problems may differ, most writers's motives may be personal, based on direct experiences; in other instances, the writer may be presenting thoughts on a problem that has concerned him or her (Michael, 2006).

2.1. Social Structures

Social structure is the organized pattern of social relationships and social institutions that together compose society. Social structures are not immediately visible to the untrained observer; however they are present and affect all dimensions of human experience in society.⁴ It is often treated together with the concept of social change. Also, it has always been one of the central concepts in sociological theory and analysis (Lopez and John, 2000). Indeed social structure as a term loosely applied to any recurring pattern of social behavior; or more specifically, to the ordered interrelationships between the different elements of a social system or society.⁵

Studies of social structure attempt to explain such matters as integration and trends in inequality. In the study of these phenomena, sociologists analyze organizations, social categories, or rates. Also, in the study of social structure the concrete reality with which we

³ <http://www.knomi.net/filesserver/textbook/English/britishlit/data/u6-litwkshp-litature-se.pdf>

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social-structure>

⁵ <http://www.perservearticles.com/2014041233446/social-structure-definition-and-elements-of-social-structure.html>

are concerned is the set of actually existing relations at a given moment of time which link together certain human beings (Lopez and John, 2000).

An interpenetrating set of social structures are the social forms in which people live out their lives and which to varying degrees are built into specific social formations such as communities or societies (Crothers, 1996).

According to *José Lopez and John Scott*, social structure points to three independent and complementary aspects of the social: the institutional, the relational and the embodied. *Institutional structure* is comprising those cultural or normative patterns that define the expectations that agents hold about each other's behavior and that organize their enduring relations with each other. While, *relational structure* is comprising the social relations themselves, understood as patterns of ... interconnection and interdependence among agents and their actions, as well as the positions they occupy. Finally, *embodied structure* is found in the habits and skills that are inscribed in human bodies and minds and that allow them to produce, reproduce, and transform institutional structures and relational structures (Lopez and Scott, 2000).

From other point of view, social structures are, simply, the context in which social action happens and develops. According to another exponent of this current, *Rytina* (1992), social structure:

Is a general term for any collective social circumstance that is inalterable and given for the individual. Social structure thus provides a context or environment for action. The size of organizations, distribution of activities in space, shared language, and the distribution of wealth might all be regarded as social structural circumstances that set limits on feasible activities for individuals.

(Rytina, 1970:45)

According to *Homans* (1967), any structure is created and maintained throughout time by the action and interaction of individuals. Thus, 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 behaviorist paradigm does not conceive the social structure to be an entity that is separate and autonomous of individual action. In one of his latest works, *Homans* (1987) claims,

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.

(Homans, 1987:23)

Nineteenth-century British society was characterized by a transformation in social structure and what Perkin termed ‘the rise of professional society’ (John Levi Martin, 2009)

2.2 The Effects of Industrial Revolution on the English Society

During the late 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 French revolution. Industrial Revolution at its core occurs when a society shifts from using tools to make products to using new sources of energy. It’s a shift from the home to the factory, from the country to the city, from human or animal power to engines powered, 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.

Industrial revolution increased tremendously, bringing wealth and power to Great Britain throughout the 19th century. Since the Industrial Revolution was so new at the end of the 18th century, there were initially no laws to regulate 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 constraints. As *Garfield* describes it: *Industrial revolution came with intense social unrest.*

(Garfield Newman, 1990:102)

Scientist Richard *Trevithick* and American inventor *Oliver Evans* devised successful engines using high-pressure steam. This invention beside the development of other machinery introduced the Industrial Revolution which creating profound changes in the British society and in the personality of the English nation.⁶

Therefore, the Victorian Era of Great Britain is considered the height 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 (John and Martin, 2002). It changed the whole civil society; one, the historical importance of which is only now beginning to be recognized (Hudson, 1992).

Moreover, the Victorian period saw an intensive production of literary works, especially novels dealing with social realities during the Industrial Revolution (Cuddon, 1998). It saw

⁶ <http://www.studymode.com/essays/The-Impact-Of-The-Industrial-Revolution-933578.html>

many effects of industrialization which are on society, on the daily living and the working conditions of common people.

2.1.2 Working Conditions

Industrial revolution has a positive effects as well as a negative effect in the British society during the nineteenth century. Work became more regimented and disciplined, and began to take place outside the home. The whole family had to work in factories, even kids. Therefore, *Engles* argued that

The Industrial Revolution's mainly development 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.

(Lane, 1978:16)

During the industrial revolution, instead of learning a trade, children were paid menial 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 laboring class had come from a hard and bitter experience from factory labor. Workers benefited eventually, but at first they suffered bad working conditions. Because kids had to work, they weren't going to school and getting an education, and they weren't healthy. They had to work about 18 hours a day (Patrick, 2006).

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 Revolution⁷ Workplaces were often poorly ventilated, over-crowded, and replete with safety hazards. Men, women, and children in a similar way were employed at survival pay in unhealthy and dangerous environments. It left children crippled, deformed and without a future employment for the rest of their lives. This greatly effected not only the child, but the family as well. There was no compensation or laws to support these families affected by the terrible working conditions from the Industrial Revolution.

⁷ Industrial Revolution – Effects Of The Industrial Revolution – Workers, Growth, Conditions.

Workers were able to afford no more than the simplest housing, resulting in the rise of urban slums. Stories of the implausible work conditions in mines, textile factories, and other industrial plants soon became a staple of Victorian literature.

However, Reformers pushed for changes to make society better. They passed three acts that helped regulate child labor which are *Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802*, *The 1819 Cotton Mills and Factories Act*, and *Reform Act 1832* or also know was *the Great Reform*.

2.2.2 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 the Industrial Revolution intensified the problems in the first half of the nineteenth century and made these miserable conditions all the more apparent.

The industrial revolution changed the population of Great Britain in the late eighteenth century which was about seven million just before the start of it. During the Revolution, the population was 12 million at 1811. By 1851 the population of Great Britain had reached over 21 million because the movement of the population to the cities from the countryside to seek jobs in the new factories. Therefore, it produced dramatic changes in lifestyle.

Living conditions varied from the splendor of the middle class to the immorality of the lower class laborers. Social commentators such as Toynbee, the Webbs, the Hammonds and novelists such as *Charles Dickens* stressed the “rapidity of change and the terrible effects of industrial transformation upon the living standards of the masses” (Hudson, 1992).

Before housing was recognized by government as concern to the nation, it had been in the hands of charities and private enterprises. During the Industrial Revolution thousands of new cheaply built 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 fishermen sleep in their boats.

When the Industrial Revolution started in the 18th century, the great majority of people lived in the countryside. But, the growth of cities coincided with the growth of industry, and rapid urbanization continues to increase in contemporary times. By 2008, for the first time in human history, more people in the world lived in cities than in rural areas.

In general, living conditions and sanitation in urban centres were often deplorable. However, this Revolution encouraged the growth of capitalism and science.⁸

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.

2.2.3. The Emerging of Middle Class

During the 19th century, a new class of citizenry emerged in British society known as "The middle class" as a result of industrial revolution and it gain representation in parliament to vote. They had also paved the way for future reforms members of the emerging middle class sought to equal or exceed their aristocratic exemplars in genteel refinement while encouraging members of the lower classes to imitate their middle-class behavior.⁹

The rising middle class, bolstered by strong public support, launched a campaign to press for a bill that would allow them the voice they needed in government, also, it became the harbingers of morals, the work ethic, and numerous other characteristics that have become part of our fabric of society.

The rise of industrial capitalism produced a new middleclass group. The bourgeois or middle class was not new; it had existed since the emergence of cities in the middle Ages. These were the people who constructed the factories, purchased the machines, and figured out where the markets were. Their qualities included resourcefulness, single-mindedness, resolution, initiative, vision, ambition, and greed.

Moreover, middle class was the change in personal relationships. The paternalist landlords had become employers, small close knit communities were dissolved, and family relationships were restructured. Before the middle class became a dominant social reality, personal relationships were built on long standing traditions. As the growing middle class struggled in it's goal to be like the upper class, they further distanced themselves from the working class.

The middle class also had to work for a living and had little or no land assets, but they did have significant liquid and material assets, which they used as leverage to create additional wealth, thus leading *Peter Earle* to his definition of the middle class: The majority [of the middle class] were commercial or industrial capitalists who had a stock of money, acquired by paternal gift, inheritance or loan, which they continually turned over to make more money.

⁸ <http://webs.bcp.org/sites/vcleary/ModernWorldHistoryTextbook/IndustrialRevolution/IREffects.html>

⁹ <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/history/industrial-revolution.html>

At the same time the members of the industrial middle class were seeking to reduce the barriers between themselves and the landed elite, they also were trying to separate themselves from the laboring classes below them.

In addition, England's rising middle class had a profound impact on the literature of The Victorian Age. *Charles Dickens*, a member of the middle class himself, became an immensely popular and powerful voice in Victorian literature.

The development of a wealthy industrial middle class presented a challenge to the long-term hegemony of landed wealth. Though that wealth had been threatened by the fortunes of commerce, it had never been overturned. But the new bourgeoisie was more demanding.

2.3. The Social Classes in Victorian Period

Social class is a status hierarchy in which individuals and groups are classified on the basis of esteem and prestige acquired mainly through economic success and accumulation of wealth. Social class may also refer to any particular level in such a hierarchy.

Thus, as *Şakir Berber* suggests 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/her relations with other people (Mitchell, 2009).

Three common social classes recognized in many societies. Also, it is based on a variety of criteria 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.

Social class became a major issue in the 19th century and this lasted well into the 20th century and it can be distinguished by inequalities in such areas as power, authority, wealth, working, and living conditions, life styles, life span, education, religion, and culture.

Therefore, British society in the 1800's encompasses 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 the 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.

("Social Class" The Victorian Web. 2002)

Their class system is famous for its stringency, and cultural ties. *David Cannadine*, author for *The New York Times* wrote that:

In part this is because Britain retains intact an elaborate, formal system of rank and precedence, culminating in the monarchy itself, which means that prestige and honor can be transmitted and inherited across the generations.

(Cannadine, Web, 1999).

This class structure has the primary classifications previously mentioned, but in truth, the ranged class structure, once broken down, goes all the way up through the royal family.

Britain's social classes were becoming more integrated in the new cities. But the structure of society was changing. It was less industrially driven than in the early decades.

Furthermore, Mundra (2001) says that 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 (Azmir, 2011).

David Cody (2002) states also, that class is a complex term, in use since the late eighteenth century, and employed in many different ways. Classes are the more or less distinct social groupings which at any given historical period, taken as a whole, constitute British Society (Ibid).

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 reveals one's class because people in the same social class are naturally grouped together in certain areas. As a general, 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 such as Spain, Italy and France.

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

In the Victorian period in English history there were distinct class differences in its society. There were three classes in England. These were the Aristocracy or upper class, the Middle-Class and the working class or lower class. Each class had specific characteristics that defined its behavior (Mitchell, 2009).

An upper classes 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, they are addressed as *Sir* (Ibid).

Therefore some aristocrats who have neither, became obliged to open their stately homes to visitors, charging huge admission fees. Aristocrats who can't afford to pay 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 includes 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 wealthy people live off the income from their inherited riches. The upper-upper class is more prestigious than the lower-upper class.

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 neighborhoods, 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.

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 but 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 products 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 such occupations as lawyers, medical doctors and top managers, middle- middle including, for example, intermediate occupations like bankers and company

employees, and lower-middle incorporating such jobs as clerks, secretaries and some owners 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 professionals Farmers (who employed farm laborers to do the actual physical work on the land) were also part of the middle class (Mitchell, 2009).

The lower class or working class had almost no political power. They were industrial laborers, farmers, domestic servants, tailors, bricklayer, bakers, commercial clerks and other professionals and they rarely went to school. Also, the working classes (both men and women) did visible work. Their labor was physical and often dirty; it showed in their clothes and their hands. They were paid a daily or weekly wage. Men of the middle classes did clean work that usually involved mental rather than physical effort. It is often further 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 laborers and cleaners. Most working people earned just 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 unemployment (Mitchell, 2009).

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 behavior 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 justify their departure from the illusionary "traditional" values the middle class promoted and their adoption of a system fitting to their social environment.

Early in the nineteenth century the labels "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming into common usage. Early In the nineteenth 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 but the middle 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 published during the Victorian period. Victorians are famous for their class-consciousness and conservatism, which make it more difficult for the individuals to change their social class. In other words, 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, 1989).

2.4. Class Conflicts

Class conflict refers to the concept of underlying tensions or antagonisms which exist in society due to competing socioeconomic interests and desires between people of different classes. Class conflict is thought to play a fundamental role in history of class societies (such as capitalism and feudalism) by Marxists as *Karl Marx* in his book *The Communist Manifesto* and the anarchist *Mikhail Bakunin*. Generally this class struggle-or class conflict is conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the social class which doesn't have means of production that the bourgeoisie has (Forster, 1974).

Moreover, class conflict can take many different forms. Direct violence, such as wars fought for resources and cheap labor; indirect violence, such as deaths from poverty, starvation, illness or unsafe working conditions; compulsion, such as the threat of losing a job or pulling an important investment; or ideology, either intentionally (as with books and articles promoting capitalism) or unintentionally (as with the promotion of consumerism through advertising).

As *Marx* saw the development of class conflict between classes was initially confined to individual factories. He predicted that class conflict between life conditions the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would lead to capitalism's downfall, and the increasing homogenization within each class, individual struggles become generalized to coalitions across factories. Increasingly class conflict is manifested at the societal level.

The bourgeoisie try to preserve capitalism by promoting ideologies and false consciousness that keep workers from revolting.

Karl Marx was mad that the workers were forced to work without any say in the business. He believed that since the workers make the things, they should say where they go and for how much, instead of the rich owners. They had to work hard to earn a living, while making the rich richer just doing simple office work. Since they had to earn money to buy food, and jobs were the only things that give money, they had no choice but to work for the rich who made the business. The rich became richer while the worker hauled and lifted and did all of that hard manual stuff no one really likes to do. *Karl Marx* thought that their labor limited their freedom. He wanted the workers to unite and take over the business, so that they could all be prosperous. He thought that the common man deserved to run the business, and that the rich were not better than the commoner

So the class struggle of the working class can succeed only if it is transformed from an economic into a political struggle, that is, into the 'struggle of class against class' in which workers become aware of their historic interests and seek to wrest political power from the capitalists. *Marx* believed that the economic class struggle in fact had an inherent tendency to become political (Alex, 1983).

Thus, the class struggle is transformed into a proletarian revolution. The workers' triumph will eliminate the basis of class division in property through public ownership of the means of production. With the basis of classes thus wiped away, a classless society will ensue, and since political power to protect the bourgeoisie against the workers is unnecessary, political authority and the state will wither away.

It is important to recognize that *Marx* viewed the structure of society in relation to its major classes, and the struggle between them as the engine of change in this structure.

During the age of industrialism, the whole society was dominated mainly by a two-class system. That is, there was a huge gap between the rich and the poor, a social middle-class was more or less non-existent. As a consequence, a huge contrast developed between the higher and the lower social classes. They also suggested that history was itself the unfolding product of successive stages of class conflict which by the nineteenth century had in Britain reached the stage of struggle between the middle and working classes (Williams 2004).

Before the mid-1880s class conflict was most visible not in national but in more intimate local contexts. In many of the new towns and cities conflict in the first third of the century was bound up in the efforts of a new middle class to wrest control of the institutions of local

government from entrenched gentry elites, followed by their effective defense of this newly acquired authority against the claims of the working class.

In the final years of the century, class divisions and class conflict re-emerged at the national level.

In general speaking, the class struggle should therefore not be seen as an objective necessity, a law of history, but should instead be reinterpreted in subjective terms, as a sort of social poetry. In other words, the idea of the class war is a myth (Gregory, 2005).

Conclusion

To sum up, Victorian era is well known by social criticism as a result of the great development of the industrial revolution. It caused by many changes and transformation especially in social classes and its emergence and conflicts which point out in this chapter. That's why industrial revolution is a blessing and a curse at British society during the nineteenth century.

The Practical Part

Chapter Three

*Revealing The Social Class in The
Novel*

Introduction

In this chapter we shall spotlight on the best works of *Charles Dickens* which is *David Copperfield*. Through his novel, he intends to uncover several issues that the Victorians had survived. Moreover, *David Copperfield* novel has been done a superb representing the Industrial Revolution. So, this analysis will focus on the society of David and the social classes structure in his society. The aim of this chapter is to present an array of characters from all classes of British society.

3. Overview of David Copperfield's Novel

David Copperfield is one of *Charles Dickens* famous literary works. First published in 1850, since many subjects and events in the story are based on Dickens' life from early childhood to maturity. *Dickens* wrote of *David Copperfield*:

Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them...But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is DAVID COPPERFIELD.

(Charles Dickens, 1850:5)

It told from a first-person point of view, *David Copperfield* is considered a fictional-autobiography by many comparisons found to his true life, this *bildungsroman* follows the life of a young middle class boy named David.

David Copperfield is the story of a boy whose born into the world without a father; he died six months before David birth. As David says in the novel:

My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months, when mine opened on it.

(Dickens, 1850. Ch 1: 9)

Young *David* lived his early years happily with his mother and his beloved housekeeper *Peggotty* until his mother's second marriage to *Murdstone*, who was very cruel; beats David severely. Soon *Murdstone's* sister came to live with the family. Now David and his mother *Carla* were at the mercy of *Murdstone's*.

David struggles to make his way in life with an ill mother, as a result of the treatment of an abusive step-father, and a laundry list of unexpected hardships. *Murdstone* sends *David* to *Salem House*; a school presided over by a master as cruel as *Murdstone* himself.

Moreover, David go from a naive young boy to a creative young man, and eventually a mature gentleman. When he was in *Salem House School*, he met friends who are *Tommy*

Traddles and *James Steerforth*. From starting his education at an violent, run-down boarding school, to losing his mother and working in his cruel step-father's wine bottling plant, *David* perseveres, always fighting to return to the social class he was born into.

After the funeral, *Murdstone* decided to send *David* to London to work in his warehouse in London when *David* lived with *Wilkins* and *Emma Micawber*.

During his stay, *David* remembered that his mother had talked about an aunt who lived near Dover. One day, *David* decided to go to his aunt. After meeting *David*, aunt *Betsey* sent him to *Dr. Strong's* school in Canterbury. There he received a good education and lived with *Mr. Wickfield* and his daughter *Agnes*. After finishing school he decided that he wanted to become a lawyer at *Mr. Spenlow's* office.

Even through all this, *David* gets himself through school and becomes a Proctor for *Mr. Spenlow*, where he meets *Spenlow's* beautiful daughter, *Dora*. *David* married *Dora*, but few years later she died. Soon after, *David* met his school friends again, but after a series of events his friend *Steerforth* drowned.

After that, *David* takes a trip to discover himself, and then settles down with the love of his wife, *Agnes*. With his life in place, and the hardship behind him, *David* becomes a successful writer, and he and his wife *Agnes* settle down with their children and live a happy, content life.

3.1. David Copperfield's Society

David Copperfield depicts the social problems of Victorian society, this period of *David's* life is portrayed as a very happy and cheerful period.

David in the beginning of his life spends some happy days with his mother and under the care of his nurse *Peggotty*. But *David's* happiness ends when his mother married the cruel man *Mr. Murdstone* who treat *David* as an animal. From this time the society described as violent in the view of *David*

He walked me up to my room slowly and gravely –I am certain he had a delight in that formal parade of executing justice –and when we got there, suddenly twisted my head under his arm.

Mr. Murdstone! Sir "I cried to him. "Don't! Pray don't beat me I have tried to learn ,sir, but I can't learn while you and Miss Murdstone are by I can't indeed

(David Copperfield Ch 4: 98-90).

Furthermore, *Mr. Murdstone* treated *David* very harshly and in order to escape from the unhappiness of his life.

Also, the society was unfairness with *David* when his mother died, she is regarded as a very naive and girlish person, she devotes all her life to *David* and his upbringing. It is *David's* mother who represents home for him and in the opening chapters her irreplaceable role in *David's* life is emphasized. When he returns home from his trip with *Peggotty* and thinks of their home, he becomes aware that without his mother his home would mean nothing:

...and I felt, all the more for the sinking of my spirits, that it was
my nest, and that my mother was my comforter and friend.

(David Copperfield Ch 3: 65).

After the death of his mother, he became an orphan and removed from school. In the same time *Peggotty* married *Mr. Barkis*. Therefore, *David* became neglectful from his society especially from *Mr. Murdstone*; so, he had to stick out on his own to overcome. During this time *David* feels that he was ignored and express it as follow:

And now I feel into a state of neglect, which I cannot look back upon without companion. I feel at once into a solitary condition, - apart from all friendly notice, apart from the society of all other boys of my own age ... all this time I was so conscious of the waste of any promise I had given, and of my being utterly neglected, that I should have been perfectly miserable.

(David Copperfield Ch 10: 224-226).

In contrary, although the life in school is hardest and harshly, *David* is interested by the benefit of friends.

When *David* had ten age take away to work at the blacking factory in London. *David* described the status of his suffering that he was thrown away in a very little age. At that time, *David Copperfield* seems to be concerned with different kind of society. The first is society, like human community. This is the kind of society that rejects *Emily* for running away from *Ham* and that excludes *David* from comfort when he is a factory worker. Every community has an inside and an outside, and being outside is always distressing. This general kind of society can be cruel, but it also shelters those who obey its rules, so it has a practical, positive side.

The second society we find in *David* is much more specialized: it is the restricted community of the wealthy upper-class in England in the nineteenth century. This is the kind of society that *Steerforth* occupies. Its primary characteristic is that it is not productive:

Steerforth belongs to this society by an accident of birth. He doesn't have to work at anything, not even at his education, to belong to it. And belonging to high society means that *Steerforth* doesn't have to have any interest in or sympathy for people in social classes below him.

3.2.Social Class in David Copperfield

Throughout *David Copperfield*, Dickens presents an array of characters from all classes of British society whose interrelationships bring out the best and the worst in human behavior. He also, through the character of *David*, celebrates the success of the rising middle class as they assume their place in British society. He also, criticizes his society's view of wealth and class as measures of a person's value. His characters spread across all class lines, at times blurring and at other times accentuating the distinctions between them.

From the beginning of the novel there are two prominent classes between the *Steerforth* family and the *Peggotty* family. As show below:

Your home! Do you imagine that I bestow a thought on it, or suppose you could do any harm to that low place, which money would not pay for, and handsomely? *Your home!* You were a part of the trade of your home, and were bought and sold like any other vendible thing your people dealt in.

(David Copperfield Ch 50: 1070)

This speech is delivered by *Miss Rosa Dartle* to *Emily* just before *Emily* is rescued by *Mr. Peggotty*. Here, she lies to *Emily's* face by telling *Emily* that she is, basically, a prostitute, that when *Emily* lived with *Mr. Peggotty*, she was for sale in the same way that *Mr. Peggotty's* fish were for sale. However, we have seen that *Mr. Peggotty* refuses *Mrs. Steerforth's* offer of money to buy him off once *Emily* runs away with *Steerforth*. *Miss Dartle* falls into the nasty trap of assuming that all poor people must consider everything available to be "bought and sold," including their own children. But as *Mrs. Steerforth* learns, even poverty cannot interrupt the bonds of love for good men like *Mr. Peggotty*.

In *David Copperfield*, the class system serves as more than just a labeling system; in this novel, the class system is a tool used to create challenges for people to try to raise their status, and fears to motivate others to hold onto theirs. Beyond that, the characters in this novel present their status in society partially based on the way they behave, especially when dealing with people from other social classes. Let's analyze the three primary social classes, and the prominent characters from each one.

3.2.1. Upper Class

Dickens is far less charitable when he pens the few characters he chooses to represent the upper class: *Steerforth*, *Mrs. Steerforth*, and *Rosa Dartle*. Their behavior is superficial, deceitful, arrogant, and insensitive, also they behave with contempt and cruelty when dealing with middle and lower class characters. In a powerful picture where *Rosa Dartle* confronts *Em'ly* about her affair with *Steerforth*, the depth of Rosa's contempt for *Em'ly's* lower-class status and her cruelty born of jealousy is staggering:

'Here' she said, stretching out her hand with her contemptuous laugh, and looking down upon the prostrate girl, 'is a worthy cause of division between lady-mother and gentleman-son; of grief in a house where she wouldn't have been admitted as a kitchen-girl; of anger, and repining, and reproach. This piece of pollution, picked up from the waterside, to be made much of for an hour, and then tossed back to her original place!'

(David Copperfield Ch 50: 1071)

Also, in another picture that stuck out most with *James*, is his argument with professor *Mell* during class. Where the situation of his teacher *Mr. Mell* that his mother lived in an almshouse, make *James* feels superior to him. In response to chastisement from *Mr. Mell*, *Steerforth* says:

When you take the liberty of calling me mean or base, or anything of that sort, you are an impudent beggar. You are always a beggar, you know; but when you do that, you are an impudent beggar.

(David Copperfield Ch 7: 147)

In this quotation, *Steerforth* is using his upper class status as a motivator to get out of respecting his teacher, which is only made worse when the headmaster, *Mr. Creakle*, fires *Mr. Mell* for being poor. By doing this, *Mr. Creakle* reinforces *Steerforth's* belief that he is better than *Mr. Mell*, simply because he was born with money.

According to *Mrs. Steerforth's* description of her son's character:

My son's high spirit made it desirable that he should be placed with some man who felt its superiority, and would be content to bow himself before it;...

(David Copperfield Ch 20: 443)

Basically, *Steerforth* is telling them that the *Peggotty's*, being lower class, are so base, that they don't feel emotional pain like an upper class or middle class person would. They are like

animals to him, it means nothing to him when he speaks down to or about them, because he has persuaded himself it doesn't really harm them.

As for his mother, *Mrs. Steerforth*, she shows her disregard for the lower class when she finds out that *Steerforth* has run away with little *Emily*. After reading *Emily's* letter, she says that *Steerforth* could never be with *Emily*, even if she was not a virgin when she returned. *Mrs. Steerforth* insults *Emily*, and after a short argument with *Mr. Peggotty*, says that

Since you oblige me to speak more plainly, which I am very unwilling to do, her humble connexions would render such a thing impossible, if nothing else did.

(David Copperfield Ch 32: 697.)

Because she is upper class, her son is also upper class, fears that connection with *Emily* would stain her son's reputation. In revealing why she picked the broken down school she did for *Steerforth's* education [Salem House] because she wanted her son to be treated with reverence:

It was not a fit school generally for my son, 'she said; 'far from it; but there were particular circumstances to be considered at the time, of more importance even than that selection. My son's high spirit made it desirable that he should be placed with some man who felt its superiority, and would be content to bow himself before it; and we found such a man there.

(David Copperfield Ch 20: 443.)

Mrs. Steerforth is obsessed with her son, and his status as an upper class man, that she would send him to a less worthy school with bad employees and conditions, because there, her son would be treated like royalty. The characters in this novel that represent the upper class are clearly lacking in moral compass, considering themselves to be above everyone else.

By restrictive his characterization of the upper class of the *Steerforths* and *Rosa*, *Dickens* show that wealthy, powerful, and noble are more likely to corrupt than improve a person's character.

Betsy Trotwood was in the upper social class, she was *Copperfield's* great aunt and she was very wealthy. *Betsy* had a servant and had many living very well with her. Now there were cases where a person could easily fall from their class and in rarer cases a person could rise in social class. *Betsy Trotwood* is an example of falling out of your upper social class. She was scammed out of her wealth and lost her home and had to live with *David Copperfield* in his apartment.

Aunt *Betsey*, unconventional though she may have been, according to traditional gender roles for Victorian women, also represented the good side of human nature. She displayed her firm belief in the importance of principles when she advised *David*:

‘Never . . . be mean in anything; never be false, never be cruel. Avoid those three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you’

(David Copperfield Ch 15: 337)

Her advice challenged *David* to be the kind of man who would always be kind and just to others, a true man of principle.

3.2.2. Middle Class

England’s rising middle class had a profound impact on the literature of The Victorian Age. *Charles Dickens*, a member of the middle class himself, became an immensely popular and powerful voice in Victorian literature.

Most middle class characters are successful business owners as teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.

Dickens is purposefully biased in his characters and their behaviors. While the *Murdstones*, *Mr. Creakle*, and *Uriah Heep*, all members of the middle class, could certainly be categorized as some of the worst examples of human behavior, *Dickens* is careful to pen the majority of his other lower and middle-class characters with admirable human qualities--a caring nature, compassion, respect, sensitivity, and the willingness to help others. It appears that *Dickens* is making a strong statement about human behavior, that goodness and decency are not bound by class distinctions.

The middle class characters in *David Copperfield* are much the same in context of social viewpoints; however, some difference and similarities exists in the middle class characters, especially between *David Copperfield* and *Uriah Heep*. This issue really speaks to the chaos which ensues if characters do not have safety and stability in their lives, as mentioned by *Bert G. Hornback* in his article “Frustration and Resolution in *David Copperfield*,” *Hornback* says that

The world of *David Copperfield* is fully a world of chaos, and the threats of chaos, and what the good people must do, for their own safety and sanity, is find and re-establish order.

(Hornback, 1968: 653)

Both characters' childhoods are similar stories. *David* and *Uriah* were raised in middle class families, and both also grew up without fathers. The things that are obvious, the way of both *David* and *Uriah* are fighting to hold on to the pride of being middle class.

Differences that *David's* and *Uriah's* moral compass. *David*, growing up sheltered and spoiled by his mother and *Peggotty*, has a mild sense of entitlement. As he goes through the story with his naivety when he supports *Steerforth* over his teacher, when he refuses to associate with the other kids at *Murdstone* and *Grinby*, and when he romanticizes the life of the *Peggotty's*, but what's most important is how he grows as a character through the progression of the novel. With his first wife, *Dora*, we see *David* acting much the same as his step-father, *Mr. Murdstone*, did with his own mother. But after her death, and his hiatus away from Britain, *David* comes back as a more experienced man, marries the woman of his dreams, and becomes a writer.

In contrast in the changes of *Uriah Heep*. From the beginning, *Uriah* is described as a shady character, when *David* describes him as "cadaverous". *David* goes on to say,

We got out; and leaving him [*Uriah*] to hold the pony, went into a long low parlor looking towards the street, from the window of which I caught a glimpse, as I went in, of *Uriah Heep* breathing into the pony's nostrils, and immediately covering them with his hand, as if he were putting a spell upon him.

(*David Copperfield* Ch 15: 330)

Uriah embodies all the wrong choices from the very beginning. There is no naivety image in him; instead, he is shown as a cold, calculated character. His initial negative actions include encouraging *Mr. Wickfield* to drink, and falsifying documents to blackmail him into making *Uriah* a partner in his company. Like *David's Agnes*, *Uriah* is given the chance for redemption via prison, but unlike *David*, he refuses to change his way, continuing to play the part of deceitful and "umble," even in prison. As what he said:

... 'Me, Master Copperfield?' said *Uriah*. 'Oh, no! I'm a very umble person.' ...

... 'I am well aware that I am the umblest person going,' said *Uriah Heep*, modestly; 'let the other be where he may. My mother is likewise a very umble person. We live in a numble abode, Master Copperfield,

but have much to be thankful for. My father's former calling was umble. He was a sexton.'

(David Copperfield Ch 16: 353.)

Beyond this, it is draw conflict between these two men because of another middle class character, *Agnes Wickfield*. This quotation represent her father as a middle class

'...Mr. Wickfield; for I soon found that it was he, and that he was a lawyer, and steward of the estates of a rich gentleman of the county;...' '...He had a very agreeable face, and, I thought, was handsome. There was a certain richness in his complexion, which I had been long accustomed, under Peggotty's tuition, to connect with port wine; and I fancied it was in his voice too, and referred his growing corpulency to the same cause. He was very cleanly dressed, in a blue coat, striped waistcoat, and nankeen trousers; and his fine frilled shirt and cambric neckcloth looked unusually soft and white.

(David Copperfield Ch 15: 331.)

Agnes is the third corner of a love triangle with *David* and *Uriah*. She can be seen as a sort of middle class clarification; whichever character manages to get her has achieved middle class success.

Of all the characters in the novel, *David* himself seems to exemplify the hopeful promise of England's rising middle class. He endures and overcomes physical and emotional hardship, he applies himself with diligence toward his trade, and he achieves, in the end, financial security, professional recognition, and personal happiness. *David* is well aware that he has earned what he has achieved:

Some happy talent, and some fortunate opportunity, may form the two sides of the ladder on which some men mount, but the rounds of that ladder must be made of stuff to stand wear and tear; and there is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, and sincere earnestness.

(David Copperfield Ch 15: 331.)

In the eyes of the middle class, *David* would certainly have been viewed as a true hero.

3.2.3. Lower Class

Dickens attempts to portray the lower classes in a manner that will raise social awareness of their material conditions and ultimately lead to consciousness-raising in Victorian society. The lower class, at least in *Charles Dickens's* eyes, is where the majority of just and moral characters reside. So because there is an emphasis on families within the lower class, the novel represent two complete families: *The Peggottys* and *The Micawbers*.

In the *Peggotty* family has *Mr. Peggotty* who is poor. He lives in an upturned ship on the coast, and makes his living as a fisherman.

'Oh, what an agreeable man he is!' cried Peggotty, holding up her hands. 'Then there's the sea; and the boats and ships; and the fishermen; and the beach;...

(David Copperfield Ch 2: 43.)

The poverty also evident from the place which they live as David said:

...You never saw such a good house, Steerforth.
It's made out of a boat!' 'Made out of a boat, is it?' said Steerforth.
'It's the right sort of a house for such a thorough-built boatman.'

(David Copperfield Ch 7: 158.)

Although, *Mr. Peggotty*, a poor but honest fisherman and member of the lower class, portrays a depth of devotion and love toward *Em'ly* that displays admirable behavior of the highest order. Even after she has run away with *Steerforth*, shamed herself, her fiancé Ham, and her family, *Mr. Peggotty* seeks only to save her from her mistake:

I never doubted her No! Not a bit! Many a time in my sleep had I raised her up, and whispered to her, 'Em'ly, my dear, I am come fur to bring forgiveness, and to take you home!'

(David Copperfield Ch 40: 871)

Dickens describes his lower class characters with very good human qualities; a supportive nature, sympathy, and the motivation to do the charity towards the other.

Also, *Emily*, *Mr. Peggotty's* niece is one from the family which is lower class whereas her family was a fisherman as appear in this quotation

‘Besides,’ said Em’ly, as she looked about for shells and pebbles, ‘your father was a gentleman and your mother is a lady; and my father was a fisherman and my mother was a fisherman’s daughter, and my uncle Dan is a fisherman.’

(David Copperfield Ch 3: 56)

Also, *Ham* represents a life of lower under the familiar material conditions. But he worked hard to make Emily happy.

He was dressed in a canvas jacket, and a pair of such very stiff trousers that they would have stood quite as well alone, without any legs in them. And you couldn’t so properly have said he wore a hat, as that he was covered in a-top, like an old building, with something pitchy.

(David Copperfield Ch 3: 48)

The Peggotty family is very poor, but at the same time stable.

Other lower class family however, creates more amusing situations with their financial woes. *The Micawbers*, who are made up of *Mr. Micawber*, his wife, *Mrs. Micawber*, and their slew of children.

‘...This baby was one of twins;... There were two other children,...’

(David Copperfield Ch 11: 237-238)

Mr. Micawber is debatably the most interesting character in the whole novel. Believed to be modeled off of *Dickens’s* own father, *Mr. Micawber* and his family spend the entire novel trying to usurp the middle class, with get rich quick schemes and dramatic rhetoric. The two families can also be recognized in their way of speaking, e.g.

‘No, sir. I never giv him no name.’

“Why, sir, his father giv it him”,

(David Copperfield Ch 3: 53)

Instead of the more clearer “No, sir. I never gave him no name” and “Why do you ask, sir, his father gave it to him”. It is a very common phenomenon that in social novels the characters can be categorized by their way of speaking, which is no longer called dialect then,

but sociolect. And it is evident that *Dickens* employs this device here to make clear which class he wants his protagonists to belong to.

Steerforth describes *the Peggotties* as people who do not have many feelings and who are rather insensitive towards shock or pain. He is of the opinion that they do not have proper manners and that nothing can harm them easily. It is most clearly expressed in the conversation between *Steerforth* and *Rosa Dartle* about the *Peggottys* :

‘That sort of people. - Are they really animals and clods, and beings of another order? I want to know so much.’
‘Why, there’s a pretty wide separation between them and us,’ said *Steerforth*, with indifference. ‘They are not to be expected to be as sensitive as we are. Their delicacy is not to be shocked, or hurt easily. They are wonderfully virtuous, I dare say - some people contend for that, at least; and I am sure I don’t want to contradict them - but they have not very fine natures, and they may be thankful that, like their coarse rough skins, they are not easily wounded.’

(David Copperfield Ch 20: 440)

Dickens wants to draw attention to the fact that the lower-class was regarded by the aristocrats almost as animals, who have neither feelings, nor emotions nor any kind of education, whatsoever. While the lower classes maintain their strength of character.

3.3.David' View on Class

The novel progresses are given a window into all aspects of *David's* life. The feeling, vision and thinking is reality as the reader's one. This is important to the class structure concept, because *David* offers a personal view of how people saw others around them based upon their class. His view allows people to know the characters who live various lives of different social classes. For *David*, life was a struggle to keep the middle class lifestyle that was, in the eyes of the 1800's British class system, his birth right. The rise of a new middle class not only redefined England's class structure, it also brought about significant reforms in its political system. The sense that some of the old was giving way to the new pervaded social consciousness.

After *Mr. Murdstone* sends *David* away for school, *James Steerforth* becomes *David's* best friend, and mentor. Immediately, *David* notices his standing as a member of the upper class,

and becomes enamored with him, and everything he stands for. Seeing too *David* giving *Steerforth* his money, trusting him with its care and usage, and even making excuses for *Steerforth* when he behaves so disrespectfully to *Mr. Mell*. Even when *Steerforth* and *Emily* run away, *David* never truly comes to the point of hating him. In the time *David's* character lived, people idolized the upper class, as *Emily* in his speech with *David*.

‘You would like to be lady?’ *David* said, *Emily* looked at me, and laughed and nodded ‘yes’. ‘I should like it very much.

(*David Copperfield* Ch 3: 57)

That, if nothing else, should explain the way people felt about the upper class. The middle class: the doctor, lawyer, accountant, author, was the average well to do person. Someone who didn't make enough money to do whatever they wanted, but never had a need for a breadline either. To *David*, the middle class is his destiny or birthright. He grew up neglected by *Mr. Murdstone* and his sister, and throughout the novel, also, *David* struggle with the fear that he won't live up to his potential. When working at *Murdstone* and *Grinby*, *David* says that he needs to be the best, in order to keep himself from being like the other kids that work there:

I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first, that, if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manner were different enough from theirs to place a space between us.

(*David Copperfield* Ch 11: 244)

David never thought about the situation that brought these other boys to work at *Murdstone* and *Grinby*. As far as he is concerned, he is too superior to even socialize with them, because they are in a position more natural to their station, in his opinion.

The way *David* looks down on his fellow employees also shows his view of the lower class. While he loves *the Peggottys* and *the Micawbers* for their loving natures, he clearly respects the divide in classes, and considers himself above them. Most of the lower class characters focus on his youth. This alludes to the idea that *David* only considered the lower class worth his time when he was an immature child.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to focus upon the literary analysis of David Copperfield, focusing on the social classes in 19th century Victorian England through the novel which is one of the most successful novel of this age. Also, we discussed many characters who belong to each class and the view of David in it.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

During the Victorian period, English society saw many challenges as a result of a phenomenon called the Industrial Revolution which is one of the principal changes in many aspects of life. Moreover, many novelists were influenced by the social problems at that time which led them to reflect this theme in their works. Charles Dickens is one of them who often writes in his novels about his real social life.

Thus, Dickens as a social critic exerted a profound influence on later novelists committed to social analysis. A part from his works, Dickens's active involvement in promoting social reforms raised public awareness in the fight against poverty, deprivation of education, child labour and prostitution.

Therefore, *David Copperfield* is one of the most popular novel and is told almost entirely from the point of view of the first person narrator, David Copperfield himself, also it was the first Dickens novel to be written as such a narration. Social status and class differences are ubiquitous as issues throughout the novel. In fact, the novel can be viewed in large measure as a commentary on social status and class-based wealth.

David Copperfield is the semi-autobiographical life of author Charles Dickens. The story deals with the life of David from childhood to maturity. David's father had died six months before he was born; David struggles to make his way in life with the remarries of his mother with the abusive step-father who sent David to boarding school. David from one hand meet light and beauty character throughout the novel, from other hand dark and ugliness character, the images that come into sharp contrast. When David arrives at Miss Betsey's, the tone of the novel changes to reflect David's increased tolerance for the harshness of his world. She provides David with physical comfort and is herself a quirky, humorous character, which contrasts the tragic drama of the first chapters.

From our analysis, we discovered that *David Copperfield* focused on three social classes structure and how it is necessary for order, and that people of the lower classes come off as better people, in a moral context, which may allow some characters to transcend their class.

Also, we point out that Dickens gave the contemporary social picture and attacked the various vices of the Victorian age, as well as his life, although he hated the social system into which he had been born. Though *David Copperfield* as a novel offers a realistic depiction of the harsh aspects of daily existence for women, children, and underprivileged.

At last, we can say that Charles Dickens was a great social reformist as well as great social critic of Victorian period. Also, in *David Copperfield*, Dickens combined vibrant characters and an engaging story to speak to his audience. Though he gave them a portrait of themselves that was sometimes good and sometimes bad, it was always given with a sense of hope and optimism for their own lives and for society. Charles Dickens shows the reader that although people can be good or bad whatever social class they are, it is the higher classes who are more welcomed and admired.

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Glossary of Terms

Whilst reading this dissertation, the reader might face some ambiguous words which are set in order to refer to a specific literary sense. So, the following are explained according to their meaning in the text.

Bildungsroman

The term *Bildungsroman* denotes a novel of all-around self-development. A Bildungsroman is, most generally, the story of a single individual's growth and development within the context of a defined social order. The growth process, at its roots a quest story, has been described as both "an apprenticeship to life" and a "search for meaningful existence within society."

Class system

The class system is universal phenomenon denoting a category or group of persons having a definite status in society which permanently determines their relation to other groups.

Communist Manifesto

It is a short 1848 publication written by the political theorists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It has since been recognized as one of the world's most influential political manuscripts. The Communist Manifesto reflects an attempt to explain the goals of Communism, as well as the theory underlying this movement. It argues that class struggles, or the exploitation of one class by another, are the motivating force behind all historical developments.

Medieval feudal system

The Medieval Feudal system worked well for many hundreds of years. The decline of the Feudal System came when rich nobles were allowed to pay for soldiers rather than to fight themselves. Life lived under the Medieval Feudal System demanded that everyone owed allegiance to the King and their immediate superior.

Proletariat

proletariat is a term used to describe the class of wage-earners (especially industrial workers) in a capitalist society whose only possession of significant material value is their labour-power (their ability to work), it is the lowest or one of the lowest economic and social classes in a society.

Reform Bill

The Reform Bills were a series of proposals to reform voting in the British parliament. These include the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884. The bills reformed voting by increasing the electorate for the House of Commons and removing certain inequalities in representation.

Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate and to analyse the social classes which Charles Dickens intervene in his novel David Copperfield. The present study expresses the author's society which is 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 age. Also, it discusses the life and works of the authors with the essential theory that can be applied in social classes. Its aim is to show the Victorian society and how a social novel draw this phenomenon, and the interesting of writer to express it in his works. The second chapter studies the main features of literature which is social criticism that concerned with the social structures, and the effects of Industrial Revolution which make change in British society. The aim of this chapter to criticize the society of Victorians and show the social classes and its conflict. Third chapter centers on the analysis of the novel focusing on the content through a discussion of the social class in 19th century England.

Key Word: David Copperfield, The Victorian society, social classes, class conflict.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص وتحليل الطبقات الاجتماعية التي لجأ إليها الكاتب تشارلز ديكنز في روايته ديفيد كوبرفيلد. حيث أنها تعبر عن مجتمع الكاتب ألا وهو المجتمع الفيكتوري. فمن الواضح أن ديكنز كان أكثر الكتاب نجاحاً من سابقه في عرض معاناة المجتمع من الجانب الصناعي بما في ذلك الانقسام الطبقي، والفقر. إن هدف الدراسة هو لفت الانتباه إلى خصائص كل طبقة، من خلال دراسة أدبية للمدونة المختارة. في هذا الصدد، ينقسم هذا البحث إلى ثلاثة فصول. الفصل الأول يتضمن لمحة عن العصر الفيكتوري كما ينطوي على حياة الكاتب و أعماله بالاستناد إلى النظرية التي تعالج موضوع الطبقات الاجتماعية حيث تهدف إلى معرفة المجتمع الفيكتوري، بالإضافة إلى اهتمام الكاتب بهذه الظاهرة معبراً عنها في أعماله. و من خلال الفصل الثاني نبرز أهم ملامح النقد الاجتماعي المتعلق بالهياكل الاجتماعية، وآثار الثورة الصناعية على المجتمع البريطاني. والهدف من هذا الفصل هو دور المجتمع الفيكتوري في ظهور الطبقات الاجتماعية وصراعها. الفصل الثالث يتمركز على تحليل مضمون الرواية من خلال مناقشة الطبقات الاجتماعية في القرن 19 في انكلترا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دافيد كوبر فيلد، المجتمع الفيكتوري، طبقات المجتمع، صراع الطبقات.