

The Impact of Society and Culture on Victorian Novels: Study on Charles Dickens's Hard Times Novel

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian age saw a notable change in the society and culture. During the Victorian period, Britain was an influential nation with a rich culture. It had a steady government, a growing state. It controlled a large kingdom, and it was wealthy, in part because of industrial revolution and its grand assets. Charles Dickens is the most famous Victorian novelist; he is one of the famed literary personalities in the Victorian phase. Victorian Age was a long period of success in the English history. Dickens concentrated on the social and cultural troubles of his period, his works tell the tales of victimization, to improve social conditions and to help the person who reads to become aware of many of the difficulties of the Victorian humanity. This paper attempts to investigate the social and cultural influence on Victorian novel; taking as a case-study Charles Dickens's Hard Times. The paper highlights how Charles Dickens represents the Victorian society in his literary work Hard Times. The researcher adopted descriptive analytic methods. The sample consists of one literary work written by Charles Dickens focusing on society and culture, and collecting the data from the relevant tools of the previous studies such as the books, journals, and the novels under the study as primary sources. The researcher reached to a finding that society and culture had influenced the literature of the Victorian period and Victorian literary works are considered as a means of social and cultural reform. Hard Times shows the social and cultural setting of English community through the Victorian era. Dickens novels tell the narratives of sufferers; they are printed to reform and progress social situations. Finally the researcher recommends that the literary works should be taught and learnt by the students, so that they can develop both linguistic abilities, and social culture.

Key words: Society, Culture, Victorian novel, Hard Times, Victorian society

المستخلص

شهد العصر الفيكتوري تغييراً ملحوظاً في المجتمع والثقافة. خلال الفترة الفيكتورية، كانت بريطانيا دولة مؤثرة ذات ثقافة غنية. كان لديها حكومة مستقرة ودولة ناهضة، ويرجع ذلك جزئياً إلى الثورة الصناعية وأصولها العظيمة. شارلس ديكنز هو من أشهر الروائيين في العصر الفيكتوري كما أنه أحد الشخصيات الأدبية الشهيرة في المرحلة الفيكتورية. كان للعصر الفيكتوري فترة طويلة من النجاح في التاريخ الإنجليزي. ركز ديكنز على المشاكل الاجتماعية والثقافية في فترته، وأعماله تحكي حكايات الإيذاء، لتحسين الظروف الاجتماعية والثقافية ومساعدة الشخص الذي يقرأ هذه الروايات على إدراك العديد من الصعوبات التي تواجه البشرية الفيكتورية. تحاول هذه الورقة البحث في التأثير الاجتماعي والثقافي على الرواية الفيكتورية. مع الأخذ في الاعتبار دراسة الحالة الأوقات الصعبة لشارلس

ديكنز. تسلط الورقة الضوء على كيفية تمثيل شارلس ديكنز للمجتمع الفيكتوري ودور المجتمع والثقافة في عمله الأدبي الأوقات العصيبة. اعتمد الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. تتكون العينة من عمل واحد كتبه تشارلز ديكنز يركز على المجتمع والثقافة ، وجمع البيانات من الأدوات ذات الصلة بالدراسات السابقة مثل الكتب والمجلات والروايات قيد الدراسة كمصادر أولية. توصل الباحث إلى نتيجة مفادها أن المجتمع والثقافة قد أثرتا على الأدب في العصر الفيكتوري وأن الأعمال الأدبية الفيكتورية تعتبر وسيلة للإصلاح الاجتماعي والثقافي. وأظهرت رواية الأوقات العصيبة الوضع الاجتماعي والثقافي للمجتمع الإنجليزي خلال العصر الفيكتوري. تحكي روايات ديكنز حكايات من يعانون ؛ تتم طباعتها لإصلاح الأوضاع الاجتماعية والتقدم فيها. وأخيراً ، أوصى الباحث بضرورة بتدريس الطلاب الأعمال الأدبية وتعلمها ، حتى يتمكنوا من تطوير كل من القدرات اللغوية ، والثقافية والاجتماعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المجتمع ، الثقافة ، الرواية الفيكتورية ، الأوقات العصيبة ، المجتمع الفيكتوري.

INTRODUCTION:

Victorian era remained as a unique one of the greatest significant ages in the antiquity of English Fiction. Queen Victoria time (1837–1901) comprised an era of party-political, community, and cultural novelty and revolution, it stayed lengthy period of peacetime, success, culture, great developments in knowledge, and self-assurance for Britain. Victorian England witnessed great development of treasure, authority, and cultural values. The Victorians made major improvements in technology, art, and the skills, discovered imaginative explanations to the social difficulties, and formed works that attract and motivate readers, and researchers. Early Victorian writers identified themselves to have a moral and social responsibility and they analyzed their society paying attention not to hurt the moral code of the period; their purpose was instructive; they reviewed the novel to correct the fault and weakness of their societies and culture.

The society and culture had a profound effect on the literary works of the Victorian time. Certain works in literature opposed industrial age, they portrayed the

conditions in factories, the status of kids work, the differentiation in contradiction of females, and other community cases, such fictional works were resources of social improvement. Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton stayed as the main novel to advice against the snags of industrial development. Charles Dickens' novel Hard Times considered as the themes of the role of society in Victorian age and children misuse, lack, urban poverty, corruption, and corrupt pedagogical systems. Therefore, English literature plays an important role in society and human life. This paper seeks to explore that the novel Hard exemplify a number of interesting objects such as poverty, grief of the social classes, cultural contexts, deserted children, and family life.

Dickens' time matches with the greatest period of penal and lawful reform in British history. During that period many studies were carried out on the reasons of crime, and how to remove them. This led to growths in educational and generous institutions. This study comes to emphasize and intensify the important role of the society and culture of the Victorian literature.



During the nineteenth century, Victorian society experienced a significant change on account of the industrialization and urbanization that brought prosperity to the English. The emergence of new technologies, scientific discoveries and the improvement of education were also factors that contributed to this development.

Victorian period is an impressive history and cultural reality, defined by events and attitudes which opened the way to modern life, democracy and education. The pattern of Victorianism contains of a variety of approximate and divergent tendencies. The age when it was viewed in terms of middle-class complacency and traditionalism and of reactions against that spirit is past. Victorian time is the meeting-point of tradition and modernity and a point of reference for contemporary culture.

Hard Times, a social protest novel of nineteenth-century England, is aptly titled. Not only does the working class, known as the "Hands," have a "hard time" in this novel; so do the other classes as well. Dickens explores how drastically the Industrial Revolution changed lives of people particularly farmers. This literary work does not merely inspire readers and students but it also proves that Dickens is interested in politics and social affairs of people especially England. The novel covers the lives of both lower and middle class who suffered oppression and poverty.

The Objectives of the Study

The present study aims at investigating the influence of society and culture on Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* novel, to show the social and cultural impact on the

Victorian period, to highlight how Charles Dickens represents the Victorian society in his literary work *Hard Times* and to show the Victorian views of children as reflected in Charles Dickens novel *Hard Times*.

Questions of the Study

1. To what extent do society and culture have an impact on the literature of the Victorian period?
2. To what extent does Charles Dickens portray the Victorian society in his novel *Hard Times*?
3. How is the Victorian view of children reflected in Charles Dickens novel *Hard Times*?

This study is important because it seeks to explore that the novel *Hard Times* exemplify a number of interesting objects such as poverty, grief of the social classes, cultural contexts, deserted children, and family life. The study indicates that the society and cultural norms influenced on the Victorian age. It is hoped that it should be of use to researchers and readers who try to develop their knowledge about the Victorian age. Also, it is supposed to be of great value for researchers who are interested in this area. In other words, it may help them continue studying to enrich this field.

Literature Review

Background of the novel *Hard Times*

Hard Times, a social protest novel of nineteenth-century in England, Dickens explores how drastically the Industrial Revolution changed lives of people particularly farmers. This literary work does not merely inspire readers and students but it also proves that Dickens is interested in politics and social affairs of people especially England.

The novel begins with Mr. Thomas Gradgrind sternly lecturing a room full of school children on the importance of facts. He believes that facts, and not imagination or emotion, are the key to a good education, and he educates all the children of the school and his own children, Louisa and Tom, according to this philosophy. When one of his worst students, Sissy Jupe, is abandoned by her father (a circus performer), Mr. Gradgrind takes in Sissy to educate her along with his children according to his sacred system of facts. Thomas Gradgrind, one of the wealthy leaders of Coketown, a fictional industrial city in northern England, runs a school where curriculum is based entirely on factual knowledge. His oldest children, Tom and Louisa, attend the school alongside children of modest means, among who are Sissy Jupe, a circus performer's daughter, who is not good with facts, and a boy known as Bitzer, who is. The students spend their days being drilled about facts and scolded if they express any evidence of imagination. One day Mr. Gradgrind catches Tom and Louisa peeping into the circus tent, owned by Mr. Sleary, on their way home from school. Their parents and their father's friend Mr. Josiah Bounderby, a banker and factory owner, reprimand them for wasting time on useless "fancy." Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby later find Sissy Jupe running through the streets, trying to escape from Bitzer's taunts. When they escort her back to the circus, they discover Sissy's father has abandoned her in hope she will get an education and live a better life without him and away from the circus. Mr. Sleary offers to let Sissy stay with the circus, but Mr. Gradgrind agrees to take

charge of Sissy's schooling and allow her to live in his home and assist his wife. Sissy goes with Mr. Gradgrind because she thinks her father wants her to go to school. Sissy tries hard to learn at school but finds the emphasis on facts difficult. Her answers to questions about facts and figures are usually based on her own questions about the people who are affected by those facts and figures. She shares her insecurities with Louisa, who sympathizes and asks Sissy about her father and the circus. The two develop a friendly relationship, although Mr. Gradgrind does not fully approve of it. A factory worker, Stephen Blackpool, visits Mr. Bounderby to obtain advice on how to divorce his wife, an alcoholic who is usually absent but who wreaks havoc on the rare occasions when she returns home. Mr. Bounderby and his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit, are appalled by the suggestion of divorce and tell Stephen he took his wife for better or worse, adding he cannot afford a divorce anyway. Stephen is frustrated by this news because he is in love with another worker, Rachael, and now knows he will never be able to marry her. When he leaves Mr. Bounderby's house, he meets a mysterious woman who asks questions about Mr. Bounderby. When Stephen returns home, he finds Rachael taking care of his incapacitated wife, making his love for Rachael stronger and their impossible situation more frustrating. Years pass, and when Mr. Gradgrind advises Sissy to leave school because she is a poor student, she agrees and apologizes. However, Mr. Gradgrind praises her for her goodness and wants her to remain in service to his family.



Tom Gradgrind takes an apprenticeship with Mr. Bounderby at the bank and embraces his freedom. When Mr. Bounderby asks Louisa to marry him, Tom pressures her to accept the proposal to help smooth his indiscretions. Mr. Gradgrind advises Louisa to approach the proposal rationally. Louisa accepts, but her engagement and marriage cool her relationship with Sissy. After Mr. Bounderby marries Louisa Gradgrind, he moves his housekeeper, Mrs. Sparsit, to a position at the bank where she lives, continues to receive a salary, and appears content. A new teacher at the Gradgrind school—the spoiled, privileged, and usually bored James Harthouse—develops a friendship with Mr. Bounderby, Tom, and Louisa, to whom he is attracted. He becomes close to Louisa by expressing interest in Tom's situation after Tom informs him she never loved Mr. Bounderby and married him out a sense of duty to her father and himself. He spends time at the Bounderbys' home in Coketown and at their newly purchased country estate. In the meantime, the men at Mr. Bounderby's factory begin organizing a union, which Stephen Blackpool refuses to join because he has promised Rachael to stay out of trouble. Although the union men allow Stephen to continue working, they ostracize him. Looking for information about the union, Mr. Bounderby summons Stephen, but Stephen tells him little about the meeting. He does, however, tell Mr. Bounderby he doesn't think the union can solve the deep-rooted problems of poverty and the harsh conditions in the factories, nor does he think factory owners care about their workers. Mr. Bounderby is furious and

fires Stephen on the spot. Stephen encounters Rachael and the mysterious old woman, Mrs. Pegler, after his meeting with Mr. Bounderby and invites them to his home for tea. Louisa and Tom visit Stephen at home to express their sympathies. Louisa offers him some money, but he accepts only two pounds as a loan for travel expenses. With the pretense of being helpful, Tom, who has excessive and pressing gambling debts, tells Stephen to wait outside the bank for a few nights during the week to see if Tom has any leads on work for him. When the week ends with no leads, Stephen Blackpool leaves Coketown to find work elsewhere.

Shortly after Stephen leaves, the bank is robbed. Mr. Bounderby immediately suspects Stephen because of their quarrels and because Stephen was spotted loitering around the bank. Louisa vaguely suspects Tom might be behind the robbery, but Tom and James Harthouse convince her Stephen is probably guilty. She and James Harthouse become closer as both are concerned for Tom, and James Harthouse insinuates himself more into Louisa's life. To calm her nerves, Mrs. Sparsit comes to stay at the Bounderbys' country house after the robbery and observes Louisa and James Harthouse together. She begins to hope for Louisa's downfall and in private expresses contempt for Louisa and for Mr. Bounderby.

Mrs. Sparsit gets her wish when Mr. Bounderby is called away one weekend on business. She hurries to the country house to spy on Louisa who should be there alone. She spots Louisa and James Harthouse talking in the garden.

Seeing Louisa leave the house shortly after Harthouse departs, Mrs. Sparsit follows Louisa on a train back to Coketown. Losing sight of Louisa after they leave the train station, she remains unaware Louisa is not meeting Harthouse but is going to her father's house to confess the near-affair and beg her father to help her because her education never taught her how to experience emotions properly. In the midst of a breakdown, Louisa falls to Mr. Gradgrind's feet. Her father is at a loss as to what to do. Louisa recovers from her breakdown in her childhood bedroom. She and Sissy resume their friendly, even sisterly, relationship. Mr. Gradgrind apologizes for his role in Louisa's education and begins to question his philosophy that values facts over all else. Sissy goes to James Harthouse and quietly but firmly convinces him he must leave town to mitigate the damage he has caused. He is embarrassed about taking orders from Sissy but complies nonetheless. Mrs. Sparsit goes to London to inform Mr. Bounderby about his wife's activities. Mr. Bounderby rushes back to Coketown and confronts Mr. Gradgrind. He learns Louisa did not actually have an affair, but he still demands she get over her emotional problems and come home right away. Louisa does not return, and the marriage effectively ends. Stephen's presumed guilt in the bank robbery becomes a common assumption throughout the city. Rachael writes to urge him to return to Coketown and defend himself, but he neither replies nor returns. Messengers sent to his new

address fail to find him, and Rachael and Sissy worry something has happened to him. They do not rule out foul play and agree to search for him if he does not respond within one more day.

Meanwhile Mrs. Sparsit arrives triumphantly at Mr. Bounderby's house having nabbed Stephen's suspected accomplice, Mrs. Pegler. However, rather than showing gratitude or appreciation, Mr. Bounderby is furious. Mrs. Pegler's presence exposes his lifelong stories about being abandoned by his mother as an infant and making himself successful after years of abuse and neglect as a fraud. Mrs. Pegler is in fact Mr. Bounderby's mother, and she tells Mr. Gradgrind and others in Mr. Bounderby's house about how hard she worked to ensure her son got all the advantages possible. She is offended they would accuse her of being a bad mother when her son is right there to refute the claim—a claim he himself initiated with years of boasting about being entirely self-made. The episode ruins Mr. Bounderby and Mrs. Sparsit's relationship. They quarrel, and he fires her from her post. Five years later he dies while walking down a street in Coketown.

Sissy and Rachael search for Stephen and find he has fallen into a coal pit while walking back to Coketown to defend himself. A large rescue effort mounts, and Stephen is pulled from the pit. Badly hurt, he is able to tell the world he is innocent and bid Rachael a sad goodbye before he succumbs to his injuries and dies.



Tom realizes his role in the robbery is about to be exposed, so he escapes to Mr. Sleary's circus on Sissy's advice. The Gradgrinds and Sissy catch up with Tom and the circus. Sissy and the performers enjoy a reunion, and Mr. Sleary agrees to help the family get Tom to a ship that will take him abroad. Bitzer has followed the family, though, and plans to take Tom back to Mr. Bounderby in exchange for a promotion. Mr. Sleary and the performers subdue Bitzer and help Tom escape. Then Mr. Sleary tells Mr. Gradgrind he believes Sissy's father has died because his old dog returned to the circus looking for Sissy before the dog also died. Mr. Sleary and Mr. Gradgrind agree to spare Sissy this news. Mr. Gradgrind's change of philosophy, from facts to emotion, costs him his seat in Parliament, but he does not seem to mind. Tom forgives Louisa and tries to return to see her but gets sick and dies during the journey. Louisa does not remarry, but she is beloved by Sissy's children and devotes her life to promoting happiness and imagination among the people of Coketown.

Victorian Era: Social and cultural Impact

The period of Queen Victoria (1837–1901) comprised an era of enormous political, social, and cultural invention and change. The Victorians made great developments in knowledge, technology, and the arts, sought creative solutions to social problems, and produced a body of literature that continues to attract and inspire readers, artists, and scholars. Our fascination with the Victorian era, its ongoing influence on our lives, and the overabundance of existing primary source

material, make it a rich period for exploration. While scholars have a wealth of print resources available in this area, it is also useful to use Web as a source of scholarly information. The reform of 1832 gave the middle class the political power it needed to combine and to hold the economic position it had already accomplished. Industry and commerce burgeoned. While the prosperity of the middle class increased, the lower classes, thrown off their land and into the cities to form the great urban working class, lived ever more miserably. The social changes were so rapid and ruthless that Godwinian utopianism rapidly gave way to tries either to justify the new economic and urban situations, or to change them. These changes affected on Victorian writers and make them write their novels according to the situation of the society.

The intellects and artists of the age had to deal in some way with revolts in society, the clear injustices of profusion for a few and squalor for many, and, originating from the throne of Queen Victoria (1837–1901), an emphasis on public righteousness and moral politeness. The Victorian epoch was the great age of the English novel truthful, thickly plotted, packed with characters, and long. It was the ideal form to describe current life and to amuse the middle class. The novels of Charles Dickens, full with drama, funniness, and an endless variety of bright characters and plot complications, nonetheless spare nothing in their representation of what urban life was like for all classes. William Makepeace Thackeray is best known for *Vanity Fair* (1848), which wickedly satirizes hypocrisy and greed.

Emily Brontë's (see Brontë, family) single novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), is a single masterpiece pushed by a vision of essential desires but controlled by an inflexible artistic sense. The good novels of Emily's sister Charlotte Brontë, particularly *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853), are more rooted in agreement, but bold in their own ways. The novels of George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) appeared during the 1860s and 70s. A woman of great knowledge and moral fervor, Eliot was worried with moral conflicts and social problems. George Meredith produced comic novels noted for their psychological perception. Another novelist of the late 19th century was the creative Anthony Trollope, famous for arrangements of correlated novels that explore social, religious, and political life in England.

Thomas Hardy's deeply pessimistic novels are all set in the harsh; punishing Midland County he called Wessex. Samuel Butler formed novels ridiculing the Victorian philosophy, and Robert Louis Stevenson, a master of his craft, wrote attractive venture fiction and children's verse. The statistician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, writing under the name Lewis Carroll, produced the complex and sophisticated children's classics *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Lesser writers of considerable value include Benjamin Disraeli, George Gissing, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Wilkie Collins. By the end of the period, the novel was considered not only the best form of entertainment but also a primary means of analyzing and contribution solutions to social and

political problems. Social and cultural changes encourage high quality unique work concerned with all areas of Victorian literature; culture including music and the arts.

Portraying Society in Hard Times

Hard Times generally means a time of economic problems with lack of food and unemployment. *Hard Times* means general circumstances in which the lives of people are restricted. People cannot have a free and spontaneous growth of their natural feelings and sentiments. The Society of England was industrialized and machinery occupied the top priority in life. Industrialization raises the conflict between the capital and labor due to which the trade unionism was increasing. Dickens' power of explanation was notable. Most of his novels are located in London. In *Hard Times*, he portrays an industrial polluted town. He gives a town the name of "Coketown", which is the main part of the story.

Coketown is also defined as an "ugly citadel, where nature was powerfully bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in" (*Hard Times*), and shows that the town is the worst place that people live in. *Hard Times* was written in 1854 when Dickens visited one town of England, which he represented and based his novel and gave it the name of Coketown. The name indicates many factories there in determined by coke. Coketown environment is heavily industrialized "Time went on like its own machinery..., it brought its varying seasons even into that wilderness of smoke and brick" (*Hard Times*).



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The unpleasant atmosphere of Coketown changed when Louisa and Rachael went in a walking tour outside its boundaries: “Engines and pits mouths, and lean old horses that had worn the circle of their daily labor into the ground, were alike quiet; wheels had ceased for a short space to turn; and the great wheel of earth seemed to revolve without the shocks and noises of another time” (Hard Times) Life in Coketown according to Dickens was like unhealthy life with sadness and hopelessness:

It [Coketown] contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out of the same hours with the same work, and to whom everyday was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next (Hard Times.22).

Coketown in the novel represents the place where the characters live and work, and the mechanical perspective of an industrial society. The reader with Dickens’s descriptions feels like part of this location. Each writer has his own special way of characterization. As Madam Saadoun said; in the lecture that Kim Kay “ideas of characterization show the importance of the writer’s creation of his characters within the literary work. In which Kim Kay claims that: Character traits fall into three main categories: physical, identity, and social/moral. Physical traits refer to the character’s appearance, not only their looks, but also their style of clothing and body language. A character’s identity is made up of personality traits, such as habits and

quirks, vices, psychological/emotional problems, and behavior. Their identity also includes external things, such as occupation, education, and hobbies. Social/moral traits define how a character interacts with others and his or her code of ethics. Dickens has a special use of characterization in which they may seem real for the reader, as T.S Eliot remarked that “Dickens’s characters are real because there is no one like them.” (Quoted in Bloom, 2004:7) Not only can the description of Coketown reveal the picture of society, but also the detailed description of each character. Dickens characterization portrays the different social classes in an Industrial town, in which the three characters; James Harthouse, Josiah Bounderby and Stephen Blackpool, are representatives of the upper, middle and working social classes. Dickens in Hard Times tries to expose the differences between the three social classes, their education, work, living conditions, and even the dialects in the novel can reveal a lot about the class’s differences in the Victorian society. The main character, Mr. James Harthouse is the representative of this class. Mr. James Harthouse a rich man, an aristocratic member of society visited Coketown because he becomes bored with life, and he is looking for something new. Who dickens describes him as follow:

When he arrived to Coketown, Mr. Harthouse’s the only goal was tempting Louisa to find his lost love. James Harthouse, a young politician without heart or principles, comes to Coketown, takes advantage of Louisa’s unhappy life with Bounderby and attempts to seduce her.” (Drabble, 2000). Mr.

Harthouse bored because he was from a rich family and ten hours of work to feed oneself was not his concern or a part of his regime. There is no much description of the living conditions in the upper class's family. There is little evidence from the late nineteenth century to support the family picture of the bourgeois family at the light of the Industrial Revolution as a secure emotional refuge from the physical and moral horrors of an encircling market economy." (Harris,1994).

Mr. Josiah Bounderby is a representative of the middle class. He is "a rich man: a banker, a business and a manufacturer."

Mr. Bounderby leads everybody to believe that he worked hard to reach the position of a wealthy man and a factory owner, and claims that each member from the middle class has worked very hard to get the honor of being where he is. In any conversation involves his presence he speaks about his sad childhood and how his mother has abandoned him and left him to his drunken grandmother to attract peoples' sympathy "I hadn't a shoe to my foot. As to a stocking, I didn't know such a thing by name. I passed the day in a ditch, and the night in a pigsty. That's the way I spent my tenth birthday [...]" (Hard Times). To the point when his mother, Mrs. Pegler appears and uncovers the reality that she did not abandon him. He has no interest in helping and speaking with people whose class is lower than him as he says to Mr. Jupe "[...] we are the people who know the value of time and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time." (Hard Times), he also keeps mocking and laughing at the people of Circus speech's also his bad manner when Mr. Blackpool

asked for his help. He never makes any consideration to other people's feelings because he always sees them as workers that can be replaced easily any time.

Mr. Stephen Blackpool is a representative of the working class. A worker in Bounderby's factory and lives a hard life with his drunk wife. People called him old Stephen although he is forty years old. Dickens describes him as: A rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-grey hair lay long and thin, old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition (Hard Times.54).

Although he always knows that what he wants is something difficult and comes to be impossible, he is so pessimistic character and always honest. He fell in love with Rachael who is also from the same class and works at the same factory with him. Getting married with Rachael was his only dream which was something impossible just like Bounderby tells him when he asked for divorce. Stephen's dying prayer can be considered as the target message that Dickens intended to convey through Hard Times.

Victorian view of children in Hard Times

In Victorian era before the reforms of the 1840s became disreputable for the employment of children in factories and as funnel sweeps. Child labour played an important role in the Industrial Revolution from its outset; Charles Dickens, for example, worked at the age of 12 in a blacking factory, with his family in a debtors' prison.

Reformers wanted the children in school; in 1840 only about 20 percent of the children in London had any schooling. In 1860 about half of the children between 5 and 15 were in school.

The abuse of children is the most serious problem in Dickens's works. In the developed time the children were not safe when it came to thorough work in factories. The youngsters were separated into two basic groups, the 'parish apprentice' and the 'free labor' dependent on whether they were fortunate to have parents or not. The first fit to the lucky ones who, forced to work, at least had a family. They were under parental management and allowed to leave any time they want, without the administration's interfering; "Private factory owners could not compulsorily conquer "free labour" children; they could not force them to work in circumstances their parents found unacceptable" (McElroy). The second group contains of orphans with no care for their happiness, except for the ones who could not care less, the government administrators. The orphans were browbeaten to the dangerous, and as if it is not enough that they work for free, they do not get as much as decent food for a prize. These children were poor and starving; their only sanctuary was the factory; it protected them, in the severe sense of the period, from death by hunger. They were viewed as some kind of rubbish that was continually in the way and wanted to be disposed of. The mindset of the 19th Century England people is in this aspect best noticeable,

for instead of investing effort in finding a appropriate home for the deprived children, the government cannot delay to get rid of them: "since the passing of Hanway's Act in 1767 the child population in the workhouse had enormously increased, and the parish authorities were anxious to find relief from the burden of their maintenance" (Lawrence).

Dickens criticizes a warped society, where a child never gets knowledge and experience to live happy childhood. With the situation of these children in mind, Dickens draws an equivalent with his life experience and the things he has been through the youth period. Also, beside the factory work, he goes into the problem of children's education and upbringing.

Methods:

In this research the descriptive analytical method is followed. Moreover, Dickens' novel is analyzed and discussed focusing on society and culture as can be inferred from the selected novel.

Conclusion

According to the discussion and analysis, the study indicates that the society and cultural norms influenced on the Victorian age, some Victorian literary works consider as a means of social and cultural reform, and Victorian view of children reflected in Charles Dickens novel *Hard Times*. The social and cultural norms had a profound effect on the literary works of the Victorian time and Victorian writers were influenced social conditions such as the poverty and social classes.



Certain works in literature opposed industrial age, they portrayed the conditions in factories, the status of kids work, the differentiation in contradiction of females, and other community cases, such fictional works were resources of social improvement.

The researcher extremely recommends that: The literary works should be taught and learnt by the students, so that they can develop both linguistic abilities, and social culture. Children are the promising future of every nation, so they must be looked after in their life, health, and education.

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