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POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN CHARLES DICKENS'S NOVELS:  
*OLIVER TWIST, HARD TIMES, AND DAVID COPPERFIELD*

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Yoksulluk, Çocuk İstismarı, Endüstri Devrimi, Baskı.

## ABSTRACT

The Industrial Revolution had a great impact in the nineteenth century England. It changed various things in the country, especially the living and working conditions of its people. It was an advantage for the economy in Victorian England as there was a progress in the production due to the free market economy. The level of inequality between the classes increased. While the wealthy became wealthier as a consequence of the progress in the production, the condition of the poor worsened. It was the time for mechanical trade in factories. The working-class was trying hard to get used to the long and tiring working hours. Although they worked so hard, they could not earn enough to make their living. As a result of this, the children of the poor, no matter how young they were, had to work for long hours too, to earn only a few shillings. The child labour increased consequently because they were in need. Cheap labor was something that the industrialists could not refuse. Child abuse was not only in factories but it was also in most of the schools in that period. Some children suffered from the dominance of factory owners while the others suffered from the discipline of the educators who abused their power on the children. Charles Dickens, in *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, and *David Copperfield*, reflects the bad conditions of the working-class and child abuse in this period. The aim of this thesis is to analyze Dickens's three novels in the light of Marxist criticism and New Historicism.

Key words: Poverty, Child abuse, Industrial Revolution, Oppression.

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduđum “Poverty and Child Abuse in Charles Dickens’s Novels: *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, and *David Copperfield*” adlı alıřmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı dűşecek bir yardıma bařvurmaksızın yazıldıđını ve yararlandıđım eserlerin bibliyografyada gösterilen eserlerden olduđunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmıř olduđumu belirtir ve bunu onurumla dođrularım.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution had a great impact on the countries in the world owing to its effect on the relationship between the rich and the poor. It is also regarded as the time of great change in English history in the Victorian Period (1837-1901). Owing to the policy of laissez-faire - the free market economy -, the manufacturers bought their materials in the cheaper markets and sold them with higher prices (Thomas 3). These factory owners also used the new technological developments in the process of production. However, the machines which they used in their factories neither decreased the number of the workers working there nor lessened their pain. The workers in the factories were still in the process of production. Therefore, the working class had several difficulties to endure the hard conditions of labour during the Industrial Revolution. Even though they worked for long hours, they earned inadequate wages. They tried hard to meet the needs of the factory. As a result of this, the rich factory owners who used the new technological developments and the cheap labour in their factories became richer while the poor who suffered under these difficult working and living conditions were oppressed and became poorer. Thus, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the working-class was under a heavy oppression.

The Industrial Revolution led to many problems due to the power relations in the Victorian period. As a result of the revolution, the gap between the classes increased and poverty was widespread among the people of England. Charles Dickens lived in this period of great changes in England. He observed those problems and reflected them well in his novels. Dickens also came from a working-class background and experienced the hard conditions while he was working in factories at a very young age. It is important to note that he had a real-life observation of the industrial world to describe it with all its details. In his novels, Dickens reveals the gap between the rich and the poor. While the rich were filling their pockets by employing the working-class with little wages and becoming more powerful, the working-class people were living in the edge of death owing to the hard working conditions and becoming poorer. These people in poverty did not have any social and economical security. Among the poor families, women and children suffered more than men did. The poverty and abuse of

those people, especially the children are the core of Dickens's novels, especially of *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield*.

In those times, there was an inequality between the rich and the poor. The industrialists and the factory owners focused on making more profit, thus they abused their power by imposing it on their workers. The women and the children were among their workers and they were affected more adversely than the men. As a result of this situation, there was inevitably a class difference between the workers and the wealthy factory owners. Dickens threw light on the lives of poor who were suppressed in the Victorian period in England. As Dickens himself suffered from poverty as a working-class member, he analyzed the lives of poor, neglected and abused people in his novels. He took attention to the underlying reason of the sufferings of those people; the abuse of power by the rich. From this perspective, there are some similarities between what Dickens and Marx said. Both of them highlighted the inequality between the rich and the poor – in Marxist sense, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat – in the process of the Industrial Revolution. The rich made the poor work for long hours under difficult conditions to make more income. Those people were suppressed not only under poverty, but also under the profit-minded factory owners. No matter how hard they worked, they could not get what they deserved. As a result, they either lived in workhouses starving to death or died while working in the factories or mines.

Charles Dickens reflects the results of the Industrial Revolution and especially focuses on the gap between the rich and the poor in England. He focuses on the sufferings of especially the weakest ones in society; the children. They were suppressed by the inadequate educational and working institutions. The educators of the period destroyed the lives of many children. They robbed them out of their childhood by teaching them only facts and banning imagination. The children of the age were also victims of the factory owners. They used child labour to increase their financial situations as the children worked for little wages.

This thesis consists of four chapters; each chapter aims at discussing the thesis-subject theme “poverty and child abuse.” Chapter one consists of two subtitles which deals with generally the life of Charles Dickens and his literary career. In this chapter, the life of Dickens and the influence of his life on his novels will be analyzed in details

in the first subtitle. In the second subtitle, the literary works of Dickens will also be pointed out one by one.

In chapter two, the historical background of the 1860s London and its impact on Dickens will be discussed. This chapter also consists of two subtitles, one of which deals with the industrialization and London in Dickens's era. In the first subtitle, the industrialization period and the situation of London as a result of this period are analyzed. In the second subtitle, the impact of industrialization will be taken into consideration from sociological perspective; poverty and child abuse.

In chapter three, the theories, under the light of which I will analyze the novels, will be stated. This chapter consists of two subtitles. The first one deals with Marxism and the second one deals with New Historicism.

Chapter four consists of four subtitles. Each subtitle focuses on the poverty and child abuse in the Victorian era in Dickens's novels, *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield* in a sequence.

In "Poverty and Child Abuse in *Oliver Twist*", Dickens reveals the hard conditions of the workhouses. These institutions are founded to help the poor, who cannot afford living conditions and cannot live peacefully together; however, they turn out to be a place where these people suffer more. Dickens takes attention to the miserable conditions of such institutions in *Oliver Twist*. Oliver Twist is an orphan child who has to live in the workhouse as there is nobody to look after him. By this character, Dickens criticizes the conditions of the workhouses and the exploiters of these institutions. He also criticizes the New Poor Law of 1834 in *Oliver Twist*. Dickens reveals how the needy are treated in the workhouses and how they are starved to death. The children are in a worse condition as they are treated in a cruel way by the managers of institutions. The exploiters of these institutions try to get rid of these children by apprenticing them. The people, whom the children are apprenticed to, treat them cruelly. Wherever they go, these children of the poor are in pain. In this chapter, these issues will be discussed in the light of Marxist criticism and New Historicist criticism, which is the main purpose of my thesis.

In “Fact vs. Fancy: Child Abuse in Education and Imagination in *Hard Times*”, the discipline which is practiced at schools and in domestic life will be analyzed together with the oppression of the laborers in factories. Dickens reflects the harsh attitude of the teachers toward their students in *Hard Times*. These children suffer from the cruelty of the administrators of their schools. As a result of this treatment, the children feel psychological pressure on them. Consequently, they do not grow up as independent individuals and they develop several problems later in their lives. They are not given the permission of imagination and they are forced to eliminate joy from their lives. From childhood, these children are educated to be submissive people who are oppressed in many ways in their lives, which is regarded as the characteristic of the Victorian age.

In “Shattering Childhood Dreams: Reflections of Charles Dickens’s Autobiography in *David Copperfield*”, the parallels between Dickens’s own biography and that of David Copperfield’s are revealed. In his youth, Dickens endured hard working conditions in the blacking house and he experienced some injustices in those times. Thus, he knows what a small child can encounter under these difficult conditions and he effectively states the miseries of the neglected children in his novel. Dickens describes the sufferings of David under the neglect of his step-father after the death of his mother. In this novel, he also criticizes some inadequate schools which have negative effects on the children. Dickens states the difficult conditions which David encounters in Salem House School and the factory.

In this thesis, Marxist and New Historicist viewpoints will be applied to Dickens’s narration of the poverty and child abuse in *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield*. Marx’s analysis of the society as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is correlated with these novels of Dickens. The oppression of the bourgeoisie in the form of societal institutions such as workhouses and schools will be examined later in this thesis. While Dickens criticizes these defaults of his age, he is not like a traditional historicist. He deals with history in which people who have never spoken before are given the same chance to speak as the bourgeoisie. Dickens’s concept of history is one in which all the people are given the chance of living together.

Finally, England had some dramatic changes as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The social and economic conditions in England changed significantly due to the innovations in almost every field. The living and working conditions of the working-class people were influenced adversely. The poverty and abuse became a widespread theme in England. Most of the poor suffered from several reasons and among these, the children were the worst. In this respect, two of the outcomes of this era, which are poverty and child abuse, are reflected in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield*. Therefore, in this thesis, the above mentioned issues will be analyzed in the light of Marxist and New Historicist criticism in the selected novels.

## CHAPTER I: CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS LITERARY CAREER

### 3.1. CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS EDUCATION

Charles John Huffam Dickens is the most popular novelist of the nineteenth century. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk then, and married Elizabeth Barrow who bore eight children, of whom two died in infancy. Charles was born at Landport, in Portsea, the seventh of February, 1812. He was a sickly boy and subject to attacks of violent spasms. He believed that this sickness inclined him to reading as he could not play with the other boys of his age. His earliest passion for reading was awakened by his mother who taught him regularly every day (Forster 3). Then, he went to the preparatory day-school with his sister Fanny. He took to writing himself and became famous in his childish circle for writing *Misnar, the Sultan of India*, founded on one of the *Tales of the Genii* (8).

At Chatham, Charles was sent to a school kept by the young Baptist minister, Mr. William Giles. When his father was recalled from Chatham to Somerset House, he was not much over nine years old, and he had to leave his good master. There he read the famous books which David Copperfield names later in the novel. He read them over and over at Chatham. They were his friends when he had no single friend. It was a place where his fancy was born (Forster 10-11).

In London, his father was in financial crisis and Charles later reflected his father's situation in his novel *David Copperfield* by using a character called Mr. Micawber. In the novel, Mr. Micawber was in economical crisis like Charles's father. Owing to the crisis of his father's affairs, Dickens family had to settle in a house in Bayham Street which was about the poorest parts of the London suburbs. Charles was sent to another school and he expressed his feelings about his miserable situation at that school on one occasion: "As I thought in the little back garret in Bayham Street, of all I had lost in losing Chatham, what would I have given, if I had had anything to give, to have been sent back to any other school, to have been taught something anywhere!" (qtd. in Forster 12). He got the first impression of the poverty which was in this London suburb and which enriched his writings.

As his father's resources were so low, the time was arrived for his mother to do something. She decided to set up a school for educating children at home. She announced "MRS. DICKENS'S ESTABLISHMENT" (Forster 16). Charles also thought that "perhaps even I might go to school myself" (qtd. in Forster 16). However, nobody came to school and they were in a miserable situation. Dickens stated their financial situation as follows: ". . . we got on very badly with the butcher and baker; that very often we had not too much for dinner; and that at last my father was arrested" (qtd. in Forster 16). The narrative below was written as a personal experience of fact two or three years before the fiction, *David Copperfield*, had entered into Dickens's thoughts. It will attract the readers of Mr. Micawber's history, who remember David's first visit to the Marshalsea prison in *David Copperfield*:

My father was waiting for me in the lodge, and went up to his room, and cried very much. And he told me, I remember, to take warning by the Marshalsea, and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched . . . Some other debtor shared the room with him, who came in by and by; as the dinner was a joint-stock repast, I was sent up to 'Captain Porter' in the room overhead, with Mr. Dickens's compliments, and I was his son, and could he, Captain P., lend me a knife and fork? . . . (qtd. in Forster 1. 16-17)

In this quotation, it is obvious that those experiences of Charles's childhood affected him so deeply that although many years passed, he reflected them in his fiction. Before his father was arrested for debt, Charles was sent to work at Warren's, a shoe-blackening factory, managed by James Lamert, a relative and also a close friend of the family. As a result of this, Charles's hopes to return to school were completely dashed. The blackening factory was not a good job for an educated boy as he was. His job was repetitive: pasting labels on the shoe-blackening bottles. He was employed at a salary of six shillings in this blackening warehouse. Later, he expressed how he suffered there:

That 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 a slight and contempt. (qtd. in Forster 25)

This quotation shows how he struggled and tried to survive in his pitiful situation. Dickens actually disguised himself under cover of his hero, David Copperfield. In the novel, Dickens's situation was reflected through the character of David. The difficulties Dickens had in his life and how he survived in those conditions are also reflected in the novel. The poor boy who worked at the age of ten in the service of "Murdstone and Grinby" and who could easily be thrown away at such an age was actually Dickens himself.

After his father was confined in the Marshalsea Prison, Mrs. Dickens and three younger children moved into the prison but Charles was handed over as a lodger to an old lady, long known to their family, called Mrs. Roylance (Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey and Son*). Dickens stated how difficult his life was when he was only a child:

. . . My own exclusive breakfast was, of a penny cottage loaf and a penny-worth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf and a quarter of a pound of cheese on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. They made a hole in the six or seven shillings I know well, and I was out at the blacking-warehouse all day and had to support myself upon that money all the week. I suppose my lodging was paid for by my father; I certainly did not pay it myself, and I certainly had no other assistance whatever – the making of my clothes, I think, excepted – from Monday morning until Saturday night. No advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no support, from anyone that I can call to mind, so help me God! (qtd. in Forster 20)

Dickens tried to survive in this miserable situation on his own. Next quotation explains how limited his finance was and how this affected his nutrition:



I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by anyone I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labeled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond. (qtd. in Forster 20-21)

After a back attic was found for him at the house of a court agent, he could go to the Marshalsea prison easily where his family was living then. His family could live in prison more comfortably than they had done out of it. There he had breakfast and supper together and at nine he got to his lodging (Forster 26-27). Thus, at the age of twelve, he was in an adult world of poverty and crime which had effects on his fiction later.

After his father was released from prison, Charles was kept on the blacking factory which made him think that he would never be educated again. He worked in this blacking factory under bad conditions. It was a dark place and it was full of rats. As he mentioned about the place, he recalled that “the dirt and the decay of the place rise up visibly before me as if I were there again” (Forster 18). He expressed how painful it was for him to work under such conditions in his autobiographical fragment:

It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age . . . No words can express the secret agony of my soul . . . The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless – of the shame I felt in my position – of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned and thought and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more – cannot be written . . . even now – famous and caressed and happy – I often forget in

my dreams that I have a dear wife and children - even that I am a man – and wander desolately back to that time of my life. (qtd. in Forster 17-19)

Even though Dickens grew older, he could not forget those days when he was neglected at such an early age by his parents. He suffered agony due to not only this neglect, but also passing away of the things he learned until that day. He was so deeply affected that even when he was an old man, he saw those days in his dreams and he also reflected his experience in his fiction, *David Copperfield*.

After his father's quarrel, quarrel by letter, with the relative who was the manager of the blacking factory, at last, one day, Dickens was dismissed from the blacking factory and he was relieved. Forster points out that Dickens could hardly have been more than twelve years old when he left the place (27). However, his mother brought home a request for him to return to work next morning. His father, on the contrary, said Charles should go back no more, and should go to school. He stated what he felt in this situation as follows: "I do not write resentfully or angrily, for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am; but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back" (qtd. in Forster 26). This expresses his feeling of resentment against his mother as she wanted to send him back to the factory.

After his father was able to provide for his family again, Dickens attended Wellington House Academy, but almost one year later, after his father lost his position, Dickens became an office boy for a law firm at the age of fifteen. Then, he became a reporter in Doctor's Commons, which he satirized in many of his novels. When he was eighteen, he got a reader's ticket for the British Museum where he made up for his lack of formal education by reading books for the next four years (Glancy 5).

In 1830, when he was seventeen, Dickens met Maria Beadnell and fell in love with her. However, Maria's parents did not consider Dickens a suitable connection, so they sent her to Paris for her education. He accepted that his love would never be returned. This love affair was portrayed in *David Copperfield's* love for Dora Spenlow. In 1855, Dickens wrote to Maria Beadnell:

you may have seen in one of my books a faithful reflection of the passion I had for you, and may have thought that it was something to have been loved so well, and may have seen in little bits of "Dora" touches of your old self sometimes, and a grace here and there that may be revived in your little girls, years hence, for the bewilderment of some other young lover – though he will never be as terribly in earnest as I and David Copperfield were. (qtd. in Glancy 75)

Dickens married Catherine Hogarth on 2 April, 1836 in Chelsea. They had ten children. However, he was unhappy in his marriage. He fell in love with actress Ellen Ternan while they were acting together in Wilkie Collins's *The Frozen Deep* in 1857. As a result of both the unsuitability between Dickens and Catherine and his love affair with Ellen, Dickens broke with Catherine. She moved out with their oldest son while the other children remained with Dickens. Dickens's relationship with Ellen Ternan continued in secret until his death. In his novel *David Copperfield*, the sense of David and Dora's unsuitability and the lack of substance in their marriage seem to derive from Dickens's sense that his marriage to Catherine was unsatisfactory to both of them. In the novel, David says:

I did feel sometimes, for a little while, that I could have wished my wife had been my counselor; had had more character and purpose, to sustain me and improve me by; had been endowed with power to fill up the void which somewhere seemed to be about me; but I felt as if this were an unearthly consummation of my happiness, that never had been meant to be, and never could have been. (529)

In the novel the marriage of David and Dora ends with the death of Dora; on the other hand, Dickens's marriage ended with their divorce. Dickens reflected his problems in his own marriage by disguising himself under the character of David in his novel. In the fiction, he could easily find a solution to David's problems by deciding on the death of Dora and he might have wished that he could also solve his own problems that easily in real life. However, it was not as easy as he desired.

### 3.2. CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS LITERARY CAREER

“first great novelist of the industrial city” (Ackroyd 11).

Dickens is regarded as the “first great novelist of the industrial city” of London as it is quoted above. He could have this reputation through his long literary career. In the beginning of his career, Dickens was hired as a parliamentary reporter first in the *Mirror of Parliament* and then the *True Son*. He began to write short sketches about London and in 1833, he submitted one for publication. In spite of not receiving any payment for the story, he was invited to write six more. In 1834, when he became a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, he published a series of sketches there. He named the stories “Boz”. He wrote fifty-six pieces about London people and places for several newspapers and magazines between 1833 and 1836 (Glancy 5-6). As they were so well received, they appeared in book form in two series entitled *Sketches by Boz* in 1836. His next commission was from a London firm, Chapman and Hall, which remained his publisher for most of his life. There he began to write a series of humorous pieces to accompany sporting scenes illustrations. *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* began to be published in March 1836. In the summer of 1836, he introduced *The Pickwick Papers* to Sam Weller and the book became a best-seller in weeks (Glancy 6). In *Pickwick*, Dickens described the debtors' prisons.

In 1837, he began *Oliver Twist* for the monthly magazine *Bentley's Miscellany* while working on *Pickwick*, which concluded in November 1837. While he was still working on *Oliver Twist*, he travelled to Yorkshire to visit abusive boarding schools which he would attack in twenty-part serial *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*. He was also working on *Barnaby Rudge*, which he promised to publish in the *Miscellany* when *Oliver Twist* was finished, in November 1838.

Dickens started to edit a new periodical, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, which began in April 1840. It was among a group of old storytellers who meet at Master Humphrey's house to talk about contemporary events and read stories. When Master Humphrey's short autobiography *The Old Curiosity Shop*, became popular, Dickens turned the tale into a novel. *Barnaby Rudge* followed it in 1841. Dickens began to write *Martin Chuzzlewit* monthly, the first number in January 1843. In this novel, he attacked on American culture and institutions by sending his hero to America. At that time, Dickens was concerned about the conditions of the working poor and child labour. When he was sent a copy of the Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission, he thought of publishing a pamphlet entitled "An appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man's Child". He drew attention to the poor London children by writing a long story for the Christmas market, entitled *A Christmas Carol*, in 1843. After he completed *Martin Chuzzlewit* in June 1844, he wrote the Christmas book for 1844, *The Chimes*.

Dickens was busy with writing *Dombey and Son* until April 1848. In 1848, he also wrote *The Haunted Man*. He began writing *David Copperfield* early in 1849 and continued monthly until the end of October 1850. In 1849 he wrote *The Life of Our Lord* for his children, but it was published in 1934. *Household Words* first appeared in March 1850. *Bleak House*, in which the subjects of the living conditions of the poor, the horrors of sanitation condemning the poor to a poisoned life and the system of justice entered, ran monthly from March 1852 until September 1853. It was the first novel where Dickens intervened with social comments on the conditions of the age. *Hard Times*, in which the industrial revolution is explained, followed *Bleak House*, published weekly from April to August 1854 in *Household Words*, and at the end of 1855 *Little Dorrit*, in which the increasing bureaucratization of government is expressed, began in monthly installments.

After he broke off his relationship with his publishers Bradbury and Evans, he closed *Household Words* and returned to Chapman and Hall. He began a new journal there, *All the Year Round*. He opened it with a new novel in weekly parts; *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which the revolution of an oppressed population is shown, from 30 April to 26 November 1859. In 1860, he wrote a series of seventeen personal essays entitled *The*

*Uncommercial Traveler*. In those essays, he told his childhood memories, places he had visited and people he had met. At the end of 1860, *Great Expectations* began to run from 1 December 1860 to 3 August 1861. He began to write *Our Mutual Friend* and published it monthly from April 1864 till November 1865. He began his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, in the autumn of 1869. However, he could not finish it as he died on 9 June 1870, the manuscript of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* open on his desk.

In his novels, Dickens did not offer a solution to the problem of industrial relations; however, he tried to bring to the middle classes some idea of the attitudes that prevailed in their laissez-faire, statistical age. In 1854, he acknowledged his purpose for writing fiction to one of his friends:

To interest and affect the general mind in behalf of anything that is clearly wrong – to stimulate and rouse the public soul to a compassionate or indignant feeling that it *must not be* – without obtruding any pet theory of cause or cure, and so throwing off allies as they spring up – I believe to be one of Fiction’s highest uses. And this is the use to which I try to turn it. (qtd. in Glancy 103)

Dickens’s revolt in his novels was the revolt of the weak against the strong. According to Chesterton, Dickens did not like oppression. He saw one fact under many forms: the tyranny of man over man. When he saw this fact, he attacked it (46). Hence, he defended socialism and those ideals can be depicted in most of his novels. In his 1850’s novels, there seems to be political messages with the voice of social reform. He became a public figure owing to his undertakings in both speeches and his writings in the journal *Household Words* that he founded in 1850.

Dickens was concerned with public issues since he was himself a public figure. For instance, *Oliver Twist* attacked on the New Poor Law of 1834 and “Boz” pointed out the darkest streets of lower-class London and prison yards. *Dombey and Son* attacked on Dombey’s selfishness and his reliance on the laws of business rather than domestic relations. *A Tale of Two Cities* deals with the problems of industrial workers, poverty and sexual violence. His social themes concerned London and people of

London. In other words, he never ceased to write about London in his novels except for *Hard Times*.

In his novels, Dickens embodies the disorder, the chaos of the great city of London. Ackroyd states that it is a world of change, of speed, of the discovery of electromagnetic forces, of the steam pump, of the engine (13). In this city “life and death went hand in hand; wealth and poverty stood side by side; repletion and starvation laid them down together” (*Nicholas Nickleby* 308) and there were “wealth and beggary, vice and virtue, guilt and innocence . . . all treading on each other and crowding together . . .” (*Master Humphrey’s Clock* 226). Despite the negative sides – poverty, crime, chaos, disorder – of London, he was still happy to live there. London was so important for Dickens that: “he never ceased to live in that old city . . . It was the city that made him. It was the city which almost destroyed him but which then raised him up. It was the city of his dreams and the city of his imagination. In Dickens’s work, it is the city that will live forever” (Ackroyd 21).

In the following chapter, I will mention 1860s London and its effect on its people and the novelist in details. I shall attempt to analyze the historical background of the era, because it reflects the novelist’s viewpoint and style in his novels.

## **CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: 1860S LONDON AND ITS IMPACT ON THE NOVELIST**

### **4.1. INDUSTRIALIZATION AND LONDON IN DICKENS'S ERA**

The Industrial Revolution began in Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century. Owing to the industry, Great Britain became the wealthiest country in the world by 1850. The revolution, then, spread to the European continent and the New World. There were several factors which produced the Industrial Revolution in Britain. One of them was the agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century. As a result of this revolution, there was a significant increase in food production. More British people could be fed at lower prices with less labor. At the same time, as a result of the growth of the population, a substantial pool of labor for the new factories emerged. At that time, Britain had enough capital for investment in the new industrial machines and the factories. It also had the important mineral resources, such as coal and iron ore, needed in the manufacturing process. Finally, a supply of markets gave an outlet for the manufactured goods to the British industrialists. Britain was able to transport goods to any place in the world due to its well-developed merchant marine (Spielvogel 422).

The invention of the steam engine which revolutionized the production of cotton goods and allowed the factory system to spread to other areas of production, secured the triumph of the Industrial Revolution. Another significant visible symbol of the Industrial Revolution was the factory. It became the means of organizing labor for the new machines. The factory demanded a new type of discipline. Workers had to work regular hours and in shifts – for producing maximum output. However, these workers were not accustomed to “timed” format as most of them had kept irregular working hours (Spielvogel 423, 425). As the conditions of work were also changing slowly in that way, the traditional craft-based way of manufacture was vanishing for ever as many of new subdivided jobs could be performed by young men or women with little training. Thus the worker lost skills and control over his/her task (Bradley 134).

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the bourgeoisie became the dominant class, the major holders of wealth in England. On the other hand, the new urban working class was forced to sell their only possession, their labor, to survive.



That time was the time of great change. Dickens's England was in the Victorian Period (1837-1901), in which the Industrial Revolution had a great impact on England and its people. Dickens often based his characters on real people and used real places, especially the streets of London, as setting scenes in his novels. It is important to know the historical context in which he lived to fully comprehend his life and his novels.

London was significant for Dickens as much as Dickens was significant for London. Peter Ackroyd states that London created Dickens, just as Dickens created London. He came to it as a small, nervous child but by the time of his death, in 1870, he had recreated it for the next generations. He found a city of brick, and left a city of people. It became the material for his fantasy and the arena for his polemic. In the end, it was truly Dickens' London (7).

London was Dickens's great subject. He was the first novelist clearly to see that a new form of life was being created, and for this reason he has been called "the first great novelist of the industrial city" (Ackroyd 11). Dickens loved the city of mist, the city of fog, the city of night, the city lit by scattered lights and one of the wonders of reading him is to be able to return to that world, to be able to stand with him on London Bridge. However, there was another city, too, a darker city, which he commemorated in his fiction although even he could not bring himself to tell the precise and whole truth. For this was a savage London. Dickens once said to a journalist that:

. . . the amount of crime, starvation and nakedness and misery of every sort in the metropolis surpasses all understanding . . . I have spent many days and nights in the most wretched districts of the metropolis, studying the history of the human heart. There we must go to find it. (qtd. in Ackroyd 17)

Dickens found the poverty and the desperation of the metropolis in these streets. He saw the skeletons outside the Whitechapel workhouse, wrapped in rags and dying of malnutrition. He saw the orphan children dying in the streets and the boy in the Ragged School with burning cheeks and great gaunt eager eyes who had nothing in the world except a bottle of physic and who was led away to die (Ackroyd 17). Those were the miserable people whom Dickens saw on his journeys in London. The reality of London

in those times can be comprehended more accurately when its victims are taken into consideration more closely.

In slum areas of London, every type of crime and sexual deviancy was found. As Ackroyd states here were incest and child prostitution on a large scale. It was reported, for example, that a man had had sexual intercourse with the child he had begotten of his own daughter. Ackroyd also draws attention to the good citizens of London who lived in fear of an urban population, seeming literally to be beyond human civilization and being often described as being no better than “savages” (19). As it is stated above, London was not a safe place to live in those times. In the city, both the wealthy and the poor were living together in difficult conditions.

In mid-Victorian London, Pearson notes, crime and disease were “in equal measure”. The consequences of unemployment and poverty were “half-starved” parents, “semi-naked, utterly neglected children”. There was such a horrible human degradation that the visitors to these spots either “fainted or vomited” (206-207). Ackroyd points out that there were even more insidious threats emanating from the dark quarters of the city, the chief among them springing from the fact that until the mid-1860s London itself was a sanitary – or, rather, insanitary – nightmare. Water used by half of the population was piped directly from the Thames. At that time, 200 open sewers flowed into this river and it was described as a “vast open cloaca”. There was, of course, very little water at all in the poorer quarters. There was not enough water to wash, or to clean whatever small rooms they possessed (19). As a result of this, people were in danger of getting sick owing to the contagious diseases which spread throughout the city. In 1847, one inspector noted that “the filth was lying scattered about the rooms, vaults, cellars, areas and yards, so thick, and so deep, that it was hardly possible to move through it” (qtd in Ackroyd 19). The housing conditions of the lower working-class were best summarized in this short official report on the death of one woman who lived with her husband and son in a small room, without bedstead or furniture, in Bermondsey:

She lay dead beside her son upon a heap of feathers which were scattered over her almost naked body, there being neither sheet nor coverlet. The feathers stuck so fast over the whole body that the physician could not examine the corpse until it was cleansed, and then found it starved and

scarred from the bites of vermin. Part of the floor of the room was torn up, and the hole used by the family as a privy. (qtd. in Ackroyd 19)

This was London in 1843, without drainage, when old houses were still being filled with poor families and turned into stinking rookeries. Ackroyd describes the inhuman situation and the hopeless case of 1856's poor people of London as follows: "Londoners were not safe from their dead: in 1856, in the poor houses of Clerkenwell, 'when a death occurs the living and the dead must be together in the same room, the living must eat, drink and sleep beside a decomposing corpse' " (19-20). The city burial grounds were so full that the corpses were piled on top of each other, breaking through the ground and emitting "noxious gases". There were regular outbreaks of some diseases such as cholera epidemic, typhus, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, smallpox, and diphtheria (Ackroyd 19-20).

This was Dickens's London with all its deformity, diseases, poverty, and every kind of abuse. This was the period of the Industrial Revolution with all the changes which it brought about. It did not only affect the country and the people of the country economically, but it had social impacts on the people as well. The social impacts were the long-lasting ones.

## **4.2. THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION FROM SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE**

Industrialization in Britain was a long and slow process. It had several impacts on the population. Mokyr states that in Britain, during the nineteenth century, more changed than just the way goods and services were produced. The nature of the work, the role of family and the household, the status of women and children, the way in which people supported their poor – all of these changed faster than ever before (6).

The social impact of the Industrial Revolution was felt in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, population growth became dramatic. There was a decline in death rates. One of the reasons of this decline was fewer premature deaths and the other was better nutrition. The number of deaths from famines, diseases, and war dropped. As there was a general increase in the food supply, the ordinary death rate also declined. More people could be fed better and they became more resistant to diseases. Although famine largely disappeared, there were dramatic exceptions in some areas where overpopulation brought out the problem of rural poverty. British government addressed the problem of poverty in the form of the Poor Law Act of 1834. They established workhouses where jobless poor people were forced to live. In the workhouses, family members were separated and forced to live in dormitories, fed dreadful food. From parish workhouses children were often recruited as cheap labor in factories (Spielvogel 432,437). The works of Dickens and other nineteenth century novelists gave the impression of these terrible conditions. It is also exemplified in Dickens's novels that although workhouses were expected to solve the problems of the poor, they actually caused other problems. As a result of the separations of family members, they had to endure poverty alone. They suffered from not only famine, but loneliness as well. Children of the poor were the ones who suffered most among these people. Most of them were considered as cheap labor and were employed in factories at very young ages for long hours.

In London, the average age of mortality was 27, while that was 22 for working classes. In 1839 almost half of the funerals were of children under the age of 10. Although Dickens was often criticized for the number child-deaths, he was reflecting the truth as the children were dying around him (Ackroyd 19-20). Dickens was feeling

responsible to do something against this terrible situation. He tried to make his people aware of the circumstances around them especially the upper-classes as they were unaware. As a consequence, he often used abused children in his novels. Here Christopher Hill argues that children, from the age of seven, had to work twelve to fifteen hours a day, six days a week in factories (264). As they worked so hard despite their young ages, the increasing number of child-deaths under 10 was inevitable.

In those days young Dickens also suffered from these working conditions as a child. As it was stated in Chapter I, when his father was arrested for debt and incarcerated in the Marshalsea Prison, Dickens was sent out to work in an old blacking-factory by Hungerford Stairs. Later, he expressed his sorrow while working in a desperate situation: “No words can express the secret agony of my soul . . .” (qtd in Ackroyd 7). That warehouse and his work there never left his memory – he always recalled the rats, the dirt, and the river which was now bearing away the hopes of his childhood. He was a child, eager, ambitious, with an equal thirst for learning and for applause, suddenly laid waste by the darkness of the city. This vision of London as a place of darkness and imprisonment never left him. In his fiction, he returns again and again to the same areas – the Strand, the Borough, Covent Garden, Waterloo Bridge, Camden Town, all of them being the sites of his youthful anguish and humiliation. The terrible, destructive and oppressive London of his childhood has lived on in the imagination of all people who have read his novels (Ackroyd 7-8). As a person who suffered from these difficult living and working conditions himself, he was able to understand these people who were in need. These sufferings affected him so deeply that he never forgot them although he was in good condition later. He wanted to take the attention of the people to the reality which was not expressed so well ever before, the reality of poverty and abuse. For this purpose, he reflected what he himself experienced and what he observed during his walks throughout the city of London in his novels.

In his novels, Dickens reflected the poverty of the people of London and criticized some of the precautions which the government took for remedy. One of these precautions was The Poor Law Amendment. During those years, not only the children, but the laborers of all ages suffered from the bad working and living conditions in London. Epstein points out that laborers with wages under subsistence level were

provided with “outdoor relief”, whether money, food, or firewood to stay outside the workhouse under The Poor Law, enacted in 1601. A laborer had to stay in his parish if he wanted relief. The Poor Law Amendment was a response to many factors such as migration to the city, unemployed children, and urbanization. Under this new law, a central governing board replaced the local parish in London (94). Johnson states that the farm laborer’s wages were fixed despite the rising cost of living by the “Speenhamland Act” of 1795. He received a weekly pittance from the parish for himself and the ones he had to feed. Meanwhile the landlords were trebling their rents and agricultural labor had been reduced to a state of indulgence. Industrial labor became hardly better off than farm labor owing to the tide of population into the towns. The wages were kept down and the laboring class was also pauperized. Therefore, shiftlessness was easier than industry under such a dole. The New Poor Law of 1834 was designed to remedy these things. It destroyed the encouragement to live in the lap of idleness and pauperism. The unemployed laborer was not allowed to live on the pittance from the parish anymore. Father, mother and children were separated and consigned to the workhouse. Within the three years, the cost of poor relief diminished by 36 per cent (274-275). Later, outdoor relief was abolished and anyone who could not support himself had to enter a workhouse for relief. Workhouses were for only the very old, the very sick or the very young. There were three choices: live in a workhouse, find work, or starve to death. The aim of The New Poor Law was to motivate independent working laborers and discourage idleness. However, these charitable institutions resembled to Nazi concentration camps with their starvation diets, enforced separation of families and harsh disciplinary regimes. The workhouse was a punishment for the poor in the society. Some people supported the workhouse because it sealed off the poor, caused a decrease in population growth as it separated husbands and wives (Epstein 95). In theory, this law distinguished between the helpless and the man or woman who could work but would not. However, in practice, it brought together the idler, tramp, drunken, prostitute and the ill, aged, infirm and the foundling children. It was the children who suffered most (Johnson 275). As an example for the starvation diets of these poor and needy people, here is a recipe supposedly copied from a Poor Law Commissioner’s memorandum book, which ran in the *Champion and Weekly Herald* of January 1837:

Take ten quarters of ditch-water, and stir it well with the body of a farthing rushlight, till it boils. Season it to your liking with old tea leaves, and it will be ready for use. The wick, which will not dissolve, is a delicious relish, and may be bottled whole, and, if you *should* want a dessert, suck your fingers. (qtd. in Epstein 94)

This quotation shows how terrible the situation of these needy people was. An institution which should have been a remedy for them turned out to be a place of torture. Both the enforced separation of the family members and the starvation diets of these poor people might have been the ways of decreasing the number of, or even, clearing away these people.

One of the most important effects of the Industrial Revolution was that cities and towns grew in the first half of the nineteenth century. As a result of the growth of cities, the living conditions of the many of the inhabitants became miserable. Wealthy, middle class inhabitants lived in suburbs or the outer ring of the city. In the inner ring of the city, there were small row houses of the artisans and lower middle class. In the center of most industrial towns, there were the row houses of the industrial workers. In one report, the living conditions of these people were clearly shown: “There were 63 families where there were at least five persons to one bed; and there were some in which even six were packed in one bed, lying at the top and bottom – children and adults” (Spielvogel 433). Ackroyd points out that in London there were too many people. At the beginning of the century, the population was 1 million, by its close, it grew to 4.5 million. People came from outlying areas to look for work. They came from Ireland and all counties of England. Some could find work but some were consigned to the workhouse. There were also vagrants and homeless people who slept beneath the new railway arches. As a result of the expanding population, there was an increase in crime. There were “no go” areas where the Metropolitan Police force never went (18). It is tragic that even the police force of the country could not protect its people. People were insecure economically, physically, and physiologically. They were not paid well enough to make their living and worked for very long hours for little wages. They could not eat sufficiently and even starved to death. In addition to these bad conditions, they were not safe in their own country. In brief, their country could not meet their basic needs.

Stevenson states that the results of the Industrial Revolution were the creation of a mass urban society, governed by the regime of the factory and an environment which was polluted and its inhabitants were dehumanized (229). Work hours ranged from twelve to sixteen hours a day, six days a week, with a half hour for lunch and dinner. The worst conditions were endured by workers in the cotton mills. They were very hot, dirty and unhealthy places. Conditions of the coal mines were also harsh. The steam power only meant that steam-powered engines lifted coal to the top. Men were still digging the coal out inside the mines while horses, women, and children hauled coal carts on rails. Women and children were often employed in the factories and mines of the early nineteenth century (Spielvogel 435). As women and children were more fragile than men, they suffered the most.

The Industrial Revolution also had impacts on gender relations. The breakup of the family unit was slow but its effects hit women from the higher classes more quickly. Such women became quite dependant on their fathers and husbands. Only women in poorer families would be expected to earn, but they faced an unhappy future because the range of jobs respectable enough for genteel women was limited (Bradley 139-140). Therefore, many women became paupers or dependant on charity. Bradley states that the family was patriarchal in that period. The legal position of married women was weak. They did not have any properties, even those that they had before marriage. They did not have any rights to divorce. A woman's status was determined by that of her husband. If he was a pauper, she had to accompany him to the workhouse (142). The Victorians developed the ideology of domesticity. According to this ideology, woman's place was in the home. They saw women as pure but easily led astray. They thought that women should devote themselves to domestic duties instead of working outside. However, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the poverty of working-class life ensured that most wives worked where jobs were available to them. Women who did not have jobs mostly fell into destitution. In Victorian England, many women were forced into prostitution, but most could find work in factories, in laundries, in workshops, on farms, and in domestic service (Bradley 141). As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the patriarchy was destroyed and the idea of domesticity disappeared. Women were in business world and the ones who had the chance to work



did not depend on their fathers or husbands anymore. They could live on their own easily.

Throughout his life, Dickens did so many things for London and its people. In most of his novels, he protested the abuse of children and the destructiveness of society's institutions. Due to Dickens's attack on society's institutions, he was often regarded as rebellious and revolutionary by critics who were often Marxists. On the other hand, Pearson argues that his attacks on society were based on moral beliefs and humanism rather than any social or political theories. He did not like *-isms*: "Oh Heaven for a world without an -ism. The wickedness of us moles to each other in our -isms is enough to have brought a comet on the head of this, a thousand years ago" (qtd. in Pearson 203). Pearson goes on to argue that:

. . . if Dickens had read Karl Marx he would have been a communist, is like saying that if a sceptic were to read the New Testament he would be a Christian, . . . Human beings are not influenced by anything to which they are not naturally disposed; and Dickens was a born individualist, hating everything the state-worshippers idolize, indicting 'the system' over and over again in his books, and pillorying the men who used it to screen their personal responsibility. . . He rebelled against everything that did not accord with his own sense of what was right. In short, he was a Dickensian. (204)

In this quotation, it is argued clearly that Dickens was not a Marxist, but a Dickensian. He was a rebellious against everything which was inhuman. It is also clear that he did not like *-isms* in his own quotation. Under these circumstances, he should not be regarded as Marxist; however, he seems to have some of the ideologies which Marxism supports. He was a spokesman for the poor and the needy. In his novels, he tried to make everybody aware of the difficult conditions of these people and prompted them to unite for the sake of the working-class people. He criticized some of the society's institutions and called the government to do something for the needy and especially for the children.

Dickens was more concerned with the conditions of poor working class people which increased then. Glancy states that he was inspired by government reports on child labor and the sanitary conditions in the slums. His friend Dr. Southwood Smith sent him a copy of the Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission. It left Dickens "so perfectly stricken down" that he thought of publishing a pamphlet entitled "An Appeal to the People of England, on Behalf of the Poor Man's Child". When he visited a school for poor London children, he decided to write *A Christmas Carol* to draw attention to their plight (9).

To avoid crime, Dickens defended the idea that the children of the working class should be educated because this would hinder future crimes and criminals. Hughes states that Dickens did not approve the state's plan of the spending so much money in erecting buildings for criminals whereas the poor were in hovels and thousands of girls and boys were transformed into criminals through neglect. For him, it was urgent to establish industrial schools for the girls and boys of the street so that they become intelligent, self-reliant, respectable citizens instead of criminals (311). Dickens emphasizes the importance of education to prevent crime. The idea to build schools and educate children is reflected in the novel *David Copperfield*:

Traddles and I repaired to the prison where Mr. Creakle was powerful. It was an immense and solid building, erected at a vast expense. I could not help thinking, as we approached the gate, what an uproar would have been made in the country if any deluded man had proposed to spend one half the money it had cost, on the erection of an industrial school for the young, or a house of refuge for the deserving old. (693)

It was not all that Dickens wrote about the needy and the poor to raise consciousness of the society. As Pearson points out, Dickens was "the confidential adviser" and "charity-distributor" of Angela Burdett Coutts, "a wealthy woman who thought the world of him and always did as he suggested when making donations or founding institutions" (206). Dickens gave her some advice about her charities. One of his advices was that "religious mysteries and difficult creeds were not the first consideration: the children should be washed" (Pearson 207). Then he developed a Home for Fallen Women. He arranged everything from the building to the furnishing.

He went to prisons, selected hopeful cases and brought them into the Home. He was of the opinion that money should be used to remove neglected children from the streets and to feed, clean and educate them (207). He did as much as he could to put these people out of their misery.

In the following chapter, I will analyze the critical approaches, Marxism and New Historicism. As Dickens's social ideas and criticism embody the ideals of Marxism and New Historicism, the plight of the working class people – women, children, and men as well – can well be analyzed by using these critical approaches.

### **CHAPTER III: MARXISM AND NEW HISTORICISM**

#### **5.1. MARXISM**

Unlike the other literary criticisms, Marxism did not begin as a theoretical approach to literary analysis. Marxism flourished in the nineteenth century as a pragmatic view of history which offered the working classes in society to change their world and lifestyles. Marxism offers a social, political, economic understanding of reality, society and the individual (Bressler 115). Karl Marx (1818-1883), a German philosopher, and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a German sociologist were the founders of Marxism. Marx, the son of a lawyer, spent most of his life in poverty as an exile from Germany living in Britain. Engels had left Germany in 1842 to work for his father's textile firm in Manchester. They met after Marx's reading an article of Engels in a journal to which they both contributed (Barry 156). As Jones states, Frederick Engels began his lifelong collaboration with Marx in Paris in 1844. They were both active among the Young Hegelians which was the radical grouping that grew up in Prussia during the preceding eight years (50).

These two German writers and philosophers wrote a text in 1848 which proclaimed basic doctrines of Marx: *The Communist Manifesto* (Bressler 115). Jones states that *The Communist Manifesto*, in substance, drew on the previous writing of Marx and Engels especially their jointly written "The German Ideology" (1845-1847); Marx's first critique of political economy (1844); his polemic against Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1846); Engel's "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" (1843-1844); and his *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), with a number

of shorter pieces written in 1846-1847. Marx either paraphrased or revised sentences from those writings (52).

Many of the central themes of *The Communist Manifesto* are the transition from 'feudal' to 'bourgeois' society, the growth of free trade and the world market, the industrial revolution, the end of 'patriarchal idyllic relations' and the formation of the proletariat. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels stated that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Jones 52). They state that society is splitting up into two great classes: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Bourgeoisie refers to upper-class whereas proletariat refers to exploited working class people. The feudal system of industry no longer sufficed for the needs of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. Meanwhile, the markets were growing consistently and the demand was rising. Manufacturing system was not sufficient so, Modern Industry took the place of manufacture. Industrial millionaires and the modern bourgeois took the place of the industrial middle class by exploiting the working class (Jones 220).

According to Marxism, society is constituted by a *base* - the material means of production, distribution, and exchange - and a *superstructure* - the cultural world of art, religion, law - and so on. Along with *base*, *superstructure* is a very important factor. The latter things are not 'innocent' but the nature of economic base determines them. This belief, which is a central part of Marxist thinking, is known as *economic determinism* (Barry 157-158).

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels state that the capitalists, or the bourgeoisie, enslave the working class, or the proletariat, through economic policies. They also say that the proletariat must revolt the bourgeoisie of their economic and political power to give all the property in the hands of the government for the fairly distribution of the wealth (Bressler 115-116). Tyson states that the real battle is between the "haves", and "have-nots". The proletariats are the ones who live in substandard conditions and perform the work such as the mining, the factory work, the railroad building etc. to fill the pockets of the rich. Marx believed that one day the proletariat would rise up in revolution against their oppressors and make their society a classless one (54).

Marxists try to develop a classless society in order to prevent the injustices between the classes. Barry points out that the aim of Marxism is a classless society which is based on the common ownership of the means of production. In modern industrial capitalism, it is seen that one social class exploits another. The result is *alienation*, which means that the worker is deskilled and made to perform repetitive tasks in a sequence of whose purpose he or she has no grasp. However, in the older system of manufacture, the worker did the whole production and was in contact with the ones who bought the product. These alienated workers are thought of as “hands”, and people, in brief, become things (156-157). They are not seen as human beings, but they are just regarded as the “hands” to fill the pockets of the rich. They are actually reduced from full humanity to their laboring parts. Jones points out that the associations of the word ‘proletariat’ were with object misery, pauperism and crime in Germany in the 1840s. In modern parlance, it was an ‘underclass’. As Marx defined the term for the first time in 1843, it was not “the *naturally arising* poor but the *artificially impoverished* . . . the masses resulting from the *drastic dissolution* of society” (qtd. in Jones 33). Between 1815 and 1848, population increase exceeded opportunities of employment despite enclaves of industrial development. This situation reached crisis dimensions by the 1840s. Therefore, the contemporary preoccupations with crime and low life which were captured in the novels of the period from Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* to Eugene Sue’s *Mysteries of Paris* were not irrational. Before 1848 crime was thought to be an expression of need and hatred of the rich, shared by ‘the proletariat’, not only paupers and laborers, but also factory workers (Jones 33-35).

As it is stated above, Charles Dickens was one of the novelists who criticized the bad living and working conditions of the poor people in his novels. He was against the rich people’s abuse of the working class people for their own profits. He also criticized the oppression of the bourgeoisie in the form of societal institutions. Dickens saw the difficult conditions of the working class people and tried to make everybody see their miserable situation.

Marx was concerned over the rise of the industrialism in the mid-nineteenth century and he was also concerned for the factory workers. As these people produced many products which did not even bear their names, they were disassociated from both the products and their labour. Marx pointed out the effects of what he called *alienated*

*labor* on the laborer and the society (Tyson 61). Jones states that Marx proceeded from “an *actual* economic fact: the worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces” (125). Marx claimed that this meant: “the worker is related to the *product of his labour* as to an *alien* object” (qtd. in Jones 125). Jones points out that the work of the proletariat lost all individual character due to the use of machinery and to division of labour. The little workshop of the patriarchal master was converted by modern industry into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Laborers were organized like soldiers in the factory. They were slaves not only of the bourgeois class, but of the machine, the overlooker, and the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself (227).

Marx wrote his own book *Das Kapital* in 1867. In this text, he offers that economic conditions determine history and our understanding of people and their actions. As an example, engaged in the production of goods, there will be a few employers but many employees. The employers (the bourgeoisie) are the ones who have the economic power and who will gain the control of the society socially and politically. This “upper class” will force their ideology consciously or unconsciously upon the working class. In this system, the poor become poorer, and the rich richer. Marx believes that to get rid of this situation and to protect people from the oppression, the government must control the economic production (Bressler 116).

Marx and Engels did not put forward a theory of literature. Marx accepted his peers’ methodology for interpreting a text because the literary approach to a text common during his time made similar assumptions as his own theories. Today known as the “traditional historical approach”, this critical position reveals that to criticize a work, one should put it in the historical setting of that work, paying attention to the life of the author, the time when the work was written. In addition to the traditional historical approach, Marx and Engels also put forward the economic means of production to these criteria. This criterion makes the critic look into the social relationships both within the text and outside the text together with the world of author. Marx believed this criterion links literature and society, and it also makes us know how society is reflected by literature. According to Marxism, the social elite, or the bourgeoisie, shapes the superstructure and the ideology of a society. As a result of this, they also control the literature as it is one of the elements in the superstructure and reflect their ideology in the literature (Bressler 117, 120).

Marxist approach to a text deals with more than matters of plot, style, and other literary devices; it should move beyond these elements and uncover the world and worldview of the author. After placing the text in the historical context and uncovering the worldview of the author, Marxist critic arrives at ideology. It is one of the chief concerns that should be taken into consideration. Most importantly, this analysis reveals the working classes how they are oppressed in their lives and how they can end this oppression through socialism (Bressler 121).

Marxist structuralist view of ideological analysis is that subjectivity and ideology are determined by material factors and economic structures (Runions 38). Louis Althusser links ideology to subjectivity through his theory of interpellation. He departed from the earlier Marxist notion that ideology is false consciousness. He regards ideology as an inevitable aspect of the societies to provide human subjects with identities. Ideologies, then, are discourses that affect each individual subject. Althusser understands this effect through the concept of interpellation. It describes the way ideology hails individual subjects within particular discourses (Hitchcock 47).

Interpellation is the process by which an individual is constituted as a subject within society. The most famous example of ideological interpellation of Louis Althusser is as follows:

*All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject . . . Ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals . . . or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects . . . by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: “Hey, you there!” Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere . . . conversion, he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was “really” addressed to him . . . (qtd. in Wolfreys 115)

Wolfreys states that in this quotation, the ways in which subjects are placed in false positions of knowledge regarding themselves by the discursive networks of ideology are denoted (115). Hitchcock argues that the “interpellation of the individual creates a subject who is, without necessarily knowing it, acceding to the ideology of state authority, its laws, and the systems that support and generate it. Ideology transforms us into subjects that think and behave in socially proscribed ways” (47). Althusser states that ideology preexists individuals:

ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects*. (Wolfreys 115)

According to the quotation above, interpellation makes us subject to, or subjected by laws, beliefs, and other systems of values.

*Manifesto* ends with an invitation for the unification of all the working class: “Working men of all countries, unite!” (258). This invitation of Marx is a standing out against the oppressors of all ages. He calls every working man to come together and unite against the capitalist system which is the outcome of the Industrial Revolution.



## 5.2. NEW HISTORICISM

New historicism dates back to 1979-1980. It came out with the essays such as “Improvisation and Power” and texts by the Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt, and various works by Louis Montrose and others. New historicism was named by Stephen Greenblatt in the introduction of a 1982 volume of the journal *Genre* (Bressler 130). Greenblatt’s book, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (1980), is regarded as the beginning of new historicism. Therefore, I shall define new historicist approach and its implication because I will try to apply it to the novels I have studied so far.

There are different definitions of new historicism, still they have common points. Barry defines new historicism as “a method based on the *parallel* reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” (172). Barry states that “new historicism is indeed a *historicist* rather than a *historical* movement. That is, it is interested in history as represented and recorded in written documents, in history-as-text” (175). Palmer also defines new historicism as:

New Historicism is a project that reexamines the extant master texts of history and the documents from which those master texts were composed, but also digs up and translates new documents, artifacts, social attitudes and situations, and, by studying them, adds to the master texts. As a result, the historicist purview is widened by examining new historical sources that were either not found, not considered (ignored as inconsequential), or intentionally never consulted (suppressed) in the composing of the original historical master text. More often than not, the newly unearthed sources are comprised of the documents, voices, and cultures, of the disenfranchised, marginalized, and unempowered members of society from the time and place of the master text’s composition. (7)

According to new historicism, history is subjective as it is “written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past” (Bressler 128). For this

reason, it may never tell the whole truth. Tyson also points out that new historicists believe the impossibility of objective analysis.

Some critics draw attention to the shortcomings of this approach because it is not easy to interpret past events and it may lack reliability. As historians live in particular time and place, they are influenced in many ways while they are interpreting both current and past events. Another difficulty in making reliable interpretations of history is its complexity. New historicists do not believe that history can be understood simply as a linear progression of events. They also think that the causes of events are usually multiple, complex, and difficult to analyze. Simple casual statements cannot be uttered by certain expressions. Any event is a product of its culture, and it also affects the culture in return. In other words, every event *is shaped by and shapes* its own culture. There is a kind of reciprocal relationship, which should be taken into consideration. In addition to this, our *subjectivity* is also shaped by and shapes our own culture. Our individual identity and its cultural milieu reflect and define each other (Tyson 283-284). Bressler states that new historicism declares that we should know “the societal concerns of the author, of the historical times evidenced in the work, and of other cultural elements exhibited in the text before we can devise a valid interpretation” (131).

The basis for the concerns of new historicism is also found in the writings of Michel Foucault, the twentieth-century French archeologist, historian and philosopher. Bressler defines Foucault’s concept of history as;

not linear, for it does not have a definite beginning, middle, and end, nor is it necessarily teleological, purposefully going forward toward some known end. Nor can it be explained as a series of causes and effects that are controlled by some mysterious destiny or all powerful deity. (131)

For Foucault, history does not consist of events which begin and go forward toward a definite end, nor does it consist of events which are causes or effects of some other events. Bressler states that history is interrelationship of various discourses. The interaction of these discourses is not random, but is dependent on a unifying principle; episteme: in history each period develops its own perceptions concerning the nature of reality through language and thought. It defines its own acceptable and unacceptable

standards, and its criteria for judging. New historicists believe that history should be put at the center and state that if the text's relationship to the various discourses that helped shape it is not considered, the interpretation of that text will not be complete. They investigate three areas to unlock a textual meaning: "(1) the life of the author; (2) the social rules and dictates found within a text; and (3) the reflection of a work's historical situation as evidenced in the text" (131, 134). According to new historicists;

We cannot understand a historical event, object, or person in isolation from the web of discourses in which it was represented because we cannot understand it in isolation from the meanings it carried at that time. The more we isolate it, the more we will tend to view it through the meanings of our own time and place and, perhaps, our own desire to believe that the human race is improving with passage of time. (Tyson 286)

In this quotation, Tyson points out that new historicism has some key concepts. One of them is that "the writing of history is a matter of interpretations, not facts" (290). They believe that these historical accounts are narratives and can be analyzed using the tools of literary critics. New Historicists also state that "history is not linear (it does not proceed neatly from cause A to effect B and from cause B to effect C) nor progressive (the human species is not steadily improving over the course of time)" (Tyson 290). They believe that "all historical analysis is unavoidably subjective. Historians must therefore reveal the ways in which they know they have been positioned by their own cultural experience, to interpret history" (Tyson 290). According to new historicism, "literary texts are cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written" (Tyson 291). For new historicism, both text - the literary work - and context - the historical conditions that produced it - are equally important as they create each other.

New historicists do not see the historical events as facts to be documented but as texts to be read to help us understand about how people have made sense of themselves at various times. What happened at any point in history cannot be known, but what the

people believed happened from their interpretations and we can interpret these interpretations (Tyson 294-295).

Palmer interprets Dickens's writing that his "relationship to past history and the present revolution gave him the sharper-edged, more complex, perhaps more cynical view of the Victorian 'social realist' who has no choice but to consider his art as product - in a quite Marxian sense - as well as process" (2). He also adds that Dickens was interested in "the process of writing histories," for it can be seen "how the past caused the present and how the future might unfold" (3) in his novels. Dickens is interested in history in which the people who never spoke before are now given the chance to speak. This is a history in which working people are given the same voice as the bourgeoisie. It is a history in which life, art, thought and work are described, not ignored and in which children, women, the destitute, the deformed, the sick co-exist with the rich, the great and the powerful. According to Palmer, if in some ways Dickens is a traditional historical novelist, he is also aware that history is much more than the events and personalities of its master texts. He is aware that history cannot be ignorant of the culture and subtexts that contribute to master text of history. When Dickens is sometimes a traditional historical novelist, he is almost all the time a New Historicist in his novels. History is not the center in his fiction. He does not see history - as a whole - as a line of facts and events, but he sees it as a pit in which there are "disenfranchised masses" who will disappear from history or will "fight their way out to make some contributory impression". Dickens listens to many voices of history to "form a benevolent philosophy of history that functions as a fulcrum between the past and the future" (4). Michel Foucault argues, and Dickens exemplifies, that "nineteenth-century man did not simply discover history: he needed to discover history, or, as it were, to remake history on his own terms" (qtd. in Palmer 9). Palmer argues that "by reexamining Dickens's handling of the anecdotal possibilities of the historical entities in his fiction - characters, settings, events, cultural objects, ideas, even occupations - new readings emerge that show Dickens to be a social historian who is constantly moving between master text, parallel text, and subtext in an attempt to arrive at illuminating truths that can provide a lighthouse for the future" (14).

Literature reflects the values, customs and norms of the dominant interests in its society and so is mobilized by the state as an ideological weapon which seeks to persuade and manipulate rather than coerce. New historicism privileges power relations as the most important context for all kinds of texts. As a critical practice, new historicism treats literary texts as a space where power relations are made visible. According to new historicism, there is no effective space of resistance. As no self or culture exists outside language or society and as every language and society are hegemonic systems, there is no possibility of resistance which emerges unchecked. There is resistance, or as it is termed in new historicist writing, subversion, but subversion is always produced in the interests of power. Power needs to have subversion to justify itself and to make itself visible (Brannigan 5-8). Nayar states that new historicists pay attention to subversive movements in every age. For this purpose, new historicism looks at themes in texts where the existing values, visions of society and power relations are constructed. New historicism also accepts Marxism's key assumptions that cultural forms and practices are linked to material conditions, and that the culture of a given period serves the interests of the dominant class although many forms of culture also try to subvert these interests, and culture is about power, where power works through ideology to make people adopt the interests and beliefs of the dominant classes (203). Dickens, as a Victorian, had a personal historical task due to the uneasiness of his age. His uneasiness was because of the defaults of Victorian life in that period. He felt a personal need to understand the truths of his age in the voices of the streets. He understood these voices of the poor and the powerless. He was the spokesman who announced their voices to everyone that read his novels.

#### **CHAPTER IV: POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN DICKENS'S NOVELS: *OLIVER TWIST, HARD TIMES AND DAVID COPPERFIELD***

Humanity neglected the poor, the weak and the defective so long in its highest development. Educators and philanthropists left them out of consideration. Until the nineteenth century, that they needed education and care more than any others was not seen clearly enough. Dickens, however, was “the great English apostle of the poor – especially of neglected childhood” (Hughes 304). In his novels, Dickens focuses on the voices of power and especially on those without power using the anecdotes of Victorian political social and economic history. In general, Dickens tells the social history of the disenfranchised in *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield*. The anecdotes that Dickens uses are from the events and the circumstances which he himself observed, experienced and encountered during his life.

Dickens wants to call the society's attention to the public institutions such as orphan asylums and poorhouses. He mostly attacks wrong training, unjust treatment and ill usage of children. He shows the importance of giving a child proper food and real sympathy. Hughes states that Dickens, in most of his books, focuses on kindly treatment for the child. He is the first to give the place of honor to the child in literature. He wants the child to have a better education at school and free childhood at home (5). Harris states in his preface to *Dickens as an Educator* that the principle “it is a crime against a child to rob it of its childhood” (v) was announced by Dickens and has come to be generally recognized and adopted. Hughes states the two habits which are wrought into the child's nature by coercion: “the habit of doing things because ordered to do them, which is slavery; and the habit of doing things he does not like or wish to do, which is the basis of hypocrisy” (78). Dickens, by writing these novels, arouses feelings of sympathy for the child and develops thought against every form of coercion, especially coercion by corporal punishment. He gives examples of punishment in his novels to show society how wrong and inhumane it is to punish people, particularly children. Hughes argues that Dickens pictures the wrong training of children to make men hate the wrong and make them conscious of the right. The descriptions of bad conditions can make deeper impressions than the descriptions of the right (218).

Dickens shows everyone the coercion and abuse which are practiced upon children. He reveals the cruelty and coercion in his fictive characters such as Creakle, Bumble, and the Murdstones. Especially in *Hard Times*, it can be seen how important a free childhood is and how valuable the imagination is for spiritual development. The children in his novels, in addition to coercion, abuse and bad training, also try hard to endure sufferings of poverty. Dickens is aware of the fact that these children of the poor are exposed to not only the material evils but also the spiritual evils in their lives. His aim is to improve their social conditions and to direct attention to the immediate need of education for them. Hughes points out that some of his stories resulted in “the splendid homes, and organizations for children, and the laws to protect them from cruelty by parents or teachers or employers, and the free public schools to educate them . . .” (310). Therefore, Dickens did the children a great favour by taking the attention of people of his age to their social conditions with his novels. Thanks to him, the poor and abused children were free from difficulties. This theme of poverty and child abuse will be analyzed in Charles Dickens’s novels: *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, and *David Copperfield* in sequence.

## 6.1. POVERTY AND CHILD ABUSE IN *OLIVER TWIST*

After Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist*, some critics objected to it on “high moral grounds.” (Palmer 15) Dickens answered to these critics in his preface to *Oliver Twist*:

It was, it seemed a coarse and shocking circumstance, that some of the characters in these pages are chosen from the most criminal and degraded in London’s population; that Sikes is a thief and Fagin a receiver of stolen goods; that the boys are pickpockets, and the girl is a prostitute . . . But I had never met (except in Hogarth) with the miserable reality. It appeared to me that to draw a knot of such associates in crime as really did exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the squalid misery of their lives; to show them as they really are . . . would be to attempt something which was needed, and which would be a service to society . . . In every book I know, where such characters are treated of, allurements and fascinations are thrown around them. Even in *The Beggar’s Opera*, the thieves are represented as leading a life which is rather to be envied than otherwise. (qtd. in Palmer 15)

In this quotation, Dickens criticizes the critics’ oppositions to his novel *Oliver Twist* as it shows the reality clearly. The characters in the novel really existed in those times in England and they reflect the living conditions of such kind of people during the Victorian period. Dickens reveals the deformity, wretchedness and the misery of these people’s lives as they really are to make a service to the society. He does not hide the reality under some allurements but on the contrary he points it to make everyone see it. Palmer states that Dickens’s new sociohistorical fiction rejects the Romantic “allurements and fascinations” of previous presentations for a more Realist approach that shows “the dispossessed” as they are. His philosophy of history listens to the many voices of the lower classes run over by an Industrial Revolution society. Dickens is able to hear the pain, the anger, and the despair of these voices (15). He is the spokesman of the lower class people. Dickens uses the things or the people he senses on the streets as events or characters in his fiction. However, Palmer states that Dickens’s sources are not only the people on the streets during his nightly walks. He also reads the sociohistorical texts of the age better than anyone else and transforms them into a



history of the times more accurately than any historian (16). He transforms the poor, the disenfranchised, and the needy into his characters to make everybody hear their voices. Dickens clearly sees the problems in his society and he is like a lighthouse to warn against them. He also finds solutions to these social problems in his fiction.

Ruth Glancy points out that “when Charles Dickens began the story of the orphan Oliver Twist in 1837, he was the first writer to consider a child a suitable hero for a novel” (1) and he was one of the few writers who could re-create “the point of view and emotional turmoil of the child, especially the frightened, abandoned, or mistreated child” (Glancy 1). Although the indictment of the Poor Law of 1834 and satire on the workhouse last for about fifty pages in *Oliver Twist*, Marcus states that they made a powerful impression on the Victorian audience (55). As Dickens moved to Doughty Street with his family and was three or four minutes’ walk away from Field Lane and Saffron Hill which was one of the worst districts in London, he was close to everything: his childhood, the children of the poor, the misery and disease in the streets. Therefore, he used these materials in setting the London scenes of *Oliver Twist* (Ackroyd 51).

*Oliver Twist* is the history of a child who is born in a workhouse and brought up by parish overseers. It is a tragi-comedy of lower life, from the dying mother through the scenes of crime. According to Forster, however, it is not without the reliefs and self-assertions of humanity. Although Oliver is jostled in the miserable crowd, he is preserved from the vice by a natural sentiment (90).

The novel opens in a workhouse, in 1830s London, where Oliver is born to Agnes who dies soon after his birth. The infant is sent to a branch workhouse in order to be looked after by Mrs. Mann and spends the first nine years of his life in this badly run place. When Oliver is nine years old, he is taken back to the workhouse to learn the business of picking oakum. Life in the workhouse is miserable for Oliver and the other boys. They are not treated well and they go to bed hungry most of the time in the workhouse. One day when Oliver asks for more food, he is beaten very badly. Following this event, Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle, offers five pounds to anyone who will take the boy away from the workhouse.

Oliver escapes being apprenticed to a chimney sweep, but he is eventually apprenticed to Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker. The wife of Mr. Sowerberry and the other apprentice Noah Claypole do not like Oliver and make his life miserable. One day when Noah insults Oliver's mother, Oliver attacks and hits him. After this event, he is beaten and confined to a dark room. Next morning, Oliver escapes toward London.

On his way to London, starved and exhausted, Oliver meets a young man, John Dawkins, who is also known as Artful Dodger. This young man gives him food and introduces him to the underworld by taking him to the house of Fagin, a criminal who trains orphan boys to pick pockets for him. When Oliver goes out with other two boys, Dodger and Bates, and watches them pocketing the purse of a gentleman, he suspects. Seeing the situation, Oliver is horrified and runs off. Unfortunately, the gentleman who sees Oliver running away suspects him of being the thief and Oliver is led to the office of the magistrate. He is almost charged for the theft, when the bookseller, a witness to the crime, declares him innocent. Then, Oliver faints; Mr. Brownlow, whose handkerchief is stolen, takes pity on him and carries him to his house.

In Mr. Brownlow's house, Oliver recovers from his illness and regains his strength. Mr. Brownlow is very surprised to see Oliver's resemblance to a portrait of a young woman in his house. Once Mr. Brownlow sends Oliver on an errand to the bookstall, he is captured by Nancy and Sikes who lead him towards Fagin's den.

Fagin and his associates try to tempt Oliver towards criminal activities. One evening, they send him to accompany Sikes to break into a house for burglary. Oliver alerts the residents of the house and a servant shoots at him. Sikes leaves him wounded but Oliver walks to the house and seeks help. Mrs. Maylie and Rose take and nurse him back to strength. They believe Oliver and provide him with security and love. With their help, he is reunited with Mr. Brownlow.

Fagin and a mysterious man, Monks, try to recapture Oliver. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Oliver's mother left behind a gold locket when she died. Monks obtains and destroys it. When the Maylies come to London, Nancy meets with Rose and informs her of Fagin's designs. However, a member of Fagin's gang overhears the

conversation and when Sikes hears about it, he murders Nancy and flees London. While he is being pursued by a mob, he hangs himself accidentally.

Mr. Brownlow confronts Monks and learns the truth about Oliver's parentage. It is revealed that Monks is Oliver's half brother. Their father was married to a wealthy woman and had an affair with Oliver's mother, Agnes Fleming. Monks has been trying to find Oliver in the hopes of ensuring that Oliver is deprived of his share of the family inheritance. Mr. Brownlow forces Monks to sign over Oliver's share to Oliver. In addition, it is discovered that Rose is Agnes's sister, hence Oliver's aunt. Fagin is hung for his crimes eventually. Finally, Mr. Brownlow adopts Oliver and they all settle in the countryside.

The novel is written from a child's perspective. It makes the reader empathize with Oliver easily. Oliver progresses from an orphan to the adopted son of Mr. Brownlow. His mother dies after she gives him birth so he becomes an orphan and as Epstein points out "Oliver registers absolute zero on the social, moral, and economic scales – the only ones that matter in utilitarian, industrialized, nineteenth-century London" (81). Oliver is an orphan and even his name is given by Mr. Bumble. Bumble tells Mrs. Mann "with great pride" (9; chapter II) how he invented the name Oliver Twist:

We name our fondlings in alphabetical order. The last name was a S, - Swubble, I named him. This was a T, - Twist, I named *him*. The next one as comes will be Unwin, and the next Vilkins. I have got names ready made to the end of the alphabet, and all the way through it again, when we come to Z. (9-10; chapter II)

In this quotation, it is obvious that Oliver is seen as an isolated and dehumanized object. He is just like a piece of property that can be sold or bought: ". . . five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of him" (27; chapter IV).

As it is stated above, Oliver does not have an identity. He does not even know that he is an orphan. When Oliver is in front of the board crying, they have this conversation:

‘Boy,’ said the gentleman in the high chair, ‘listen to me. You know you’re an orphan, I suppose?’ ‘What’s that sir?’ inquired poor Oliver. ‘The boy *is* a fool – I thought he was,’ said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. ‘Hush!’ said the gentleman who had spoken first. ‘You know you’ve got no father or mother, and that you were brought up by the parish, don’t you?’ ‘Yes, sir,’ replied Oliver, weeping bitterly. ‘What are you crying for?’ inquired the gentleman in the white waistcoat. And, to be sure, it was very extraordinary. What *could* the boy be crying for? (12; chapter II)

As it is stated in the quotation, actually, the people on the board make the children self-conscious by abuse and coercion and then call them “fool” or “stupid”.

Epstein argues that in *Oliver Twist*, the harshest image is the union workhouse, a product of the New Poor Law of 1834. A revolution was attempted in the way the needy, the elderly and the orphaned were treated (93). Dickens states that “*Oliver Twist* is my glance at the Poor Law” (qtd. in Epstein 93). Dickens focuses on the issues of the day in *Oliver Twist*. According to Ackroyd, the novel is a direct assault on the provisions of the New Poor Law especially on legislation’s attempt “to break up poor families in order to discourage them from claiming relief” (50).

In *Oliver Twist*, the injustice in government institutions is shown clearly. This injustice includes the abuse of the New Poor Law of 1834 and the criminal justice system. The New Poor Law of 1834 was designed to make the poor suffer. Bumble explains the new thinking about the outdoor assistance: “The great principle of out-of-door relief is, to give the paupers exactly what they don’t want; and then they get tired of coming” (206; chapter XXIII). It is clearly understood that an institution which should assist the poor is transformed into an institution of punishment.

During those times, the children were the ones who suffered most. *Oliver Twist* is an example of these children. He is born under the Poor Law. His infancy is in the

pauper baby farm “where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws rolled about on the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing” (5; chapter II). When Oliver returns to the workhouse at the age of nine, “the Poor Board had the reformed system in full swing” (Johnson 275). In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens analyzes the system in the quotation below:

The members of this board were very sage, deep, philosophical men; and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at once, what ordinary folks would never have discovered- the poor people liked it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes; a tavern where there was nothing to pay; a public breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper all the year round; a brick and mortar elysium, where it was all play and no work. "Oho!" said the board, looking very knowing; "we are the fellows to set this to rights; we'll stop it all, in no time." So, they established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they), of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. (13; chapter II)

Dickens criticizes the workhouse system in the quotation above. An institution which should be used for the benefit of the poor does not serve its purpose at all. It is a place where the needy that has nowhere to go or nothing to eat should be provided with shelter and nutrition. However, it turns out to be a house where these people are being starved, not quickly as the ones outside it, but in a gradual process.

Marcus states that Dickens, criticizing the new Poor Law of 1834, takes up “one of the most violently disputed issues of the time” (58) in *Oliver Twist*. He attacks “the Benthamite ideology, legislation, and administration, and the workhouse administration and attitude” (59). He criticizes the social injustice and brings “before a large and extremely partisan public one of the most sensitive problems of the time, the problem of the poor” (60). This quotation from *Oliver Twist* exemplifies the poor condition of Oliver:

The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities to the parish authorities. The parish authorities inquired with dignity of the workhouse authorities whether there was no female then domiciled 'in the house' who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need. The workhouse authorities replied with humility that there was not. Upon this the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved that Oliver should be 'farmed,' or, in other words, that he should be dispatched to a branch workhouse some three miles off . . . (4; chapter II)

This is the situation after Oliver is born and soon after becomes an orphan. He is in such a miserable state that he is not only an orphan alone in this world, but he is also sent to a branch workhouse to be cared for poorly.

The influence of diet in the development of physical and spiritual power cannot be ignored. Dickens takes everybody's attention to the problems of nutrition. According to Humphry House, Dickens's "three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sunday," (qtd. in Johnson 276) is an exaggeration, but not a gross one as he points out the daily ration for a person: "12 ounces of bread, 1½ pints of gruel, 5 ounces of cooked meat, ½ pound of potatoes, and 1½ pints of broth" (qtd. in Johnson 276). From these facts, the reasons why Oliver's eyes "glistened at the mention of meat" (35; chapter IV), which is given to the dog, can be understood. The situation of Oliver is worse than that of the dog. Oliver is very excited to eat the meat which even the dog is displeased with. Dickens cries out in *Oliver Twist*:

I wish some well-fed philosopher, whose meat and drink turn to gall within him; whose blood is ice, whose heart is iron; could have seen Oliver Twist clutching at the dainty viands that the dog had neglected. I wish he could have witnessed the horrible avidity with which Oliver tore the bits asunder with all the ferocity of famine. There is only one thing I should like better; and that would be to see the Philosopher making the same sort of meal himself, with the same relish. (35; chapter IV)

Dickens reveals the importance of free childhood, individuality, imagination, coercion and wrong methods of child training in his novels. In *Oliver Twist*, the cruel way in which children are treated by the managers of institutions is described. Dickens describes the birth of Oliver in these sentences: “If he could have known that he was an orphan, left to the tender mercies of churchwardens and overseers, perhaps he would have cried the louder”(4; chapter II). Throughout the novel *Oliver Twist* faces several difficulties apart from them. Another example is in Chapter Two, when Oliver is sent to pick oakum in the workhouse. After a while comes the famous scene in which Oliver is asking for more to eat with hunger and misery:

‘For *more!*’ said Mr. Limbkins. ‘Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?’ ‘He did, sir,’ replied Bumble. ‘That boy will be hung,’ said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. ‘I know that boy will be hung.’ Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman’s opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take *Oliver Twist* off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and *Oliver Twist* were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling. (15-16; chapter II)

Dickens makes everyone see how cruel the managers of these institutions are and how inhumanely they treat a little orphan child who only asks to eat more with hunger and misery.

Some evil characters abuse the public institutions. These people are exploiters as it is emphasized by Marxist critics. Reed argues about the criminal justice system that it is “criminal activity, principally the operations associated with Fagin, Sikes, Nancy, and Monks, but shading off into the minor peculations of Bumble, Mrs. Mann, and others. These are *violations*, as opposed to *abuses*, of the legal system, though the two categories have a strange affiliation” (77). The criminal activities of the first group seem to do less harm than the second group who abuses the real purposes of public institutions. Also the latter’s harm is more widespread than the first. They abuse the

system as they run it and are as criminal as Fagin and Bill Sikes. They exploit people in a Marxian sense. They make the poor poorer. The workhouse and baby farm are expected to provide the qualities of home; however, even Fagin's criminal world appears to be a happy family providing food, protection, society, and education (of a sort). It is, of course, corrupt as behind the appearance of a good family is Fagin's selfishness. He is willing to sacrifice anyone for his interests.

Following the event of Oliver's asking for more to eat, Oliver is repeatedly locked up in a dark room, and "for society . . . carried every other day into the hall where the boys dined, and there socially flogged as a public warning and example" (18; chapter III). He has a great difficulty when he is locked in this dark room:

he only cried bitterly all day; and, when the long, dismal night came on, spread his little hands before his eyes to shut out the darkness, . . . drawing himself closer and closer to the wall, as if to feel even its cold hard surface were a protection in the gleam and loneliness which surrounded him. (17; chapter III)

After Dickens shows how infants are starved in "farming" and in the workhouses, he next takes attention to the way apprentices are treated. When one morning the reward on the gate takes attention of a chimney-sweep, called Mr. Gamfield, he wants to take Oliver (with the £5) as an "a'prentis" (20; chapter III). As Mr. Gamfield is known "to labour under the slight imputation of having bruised three or four boys to death already" (21; chapter III), the members of the board do not approve it first. He defends his trade in these sentences:

'Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now,' said another gentleman. 'That's acause they damped the straw afore they lit it in the chimbley to make 'em come down agin,' said Gamfield; 'that's all smoke, and no blaze; vereas smoke ain't o' no use at all in making a boy come down, for it only sinds him to sleep, and that's wot he likes. Boys is wery obstinit, and wery lazy, gen'lmen, and there's nothink like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down with a run. It's humane too, gen'lmen,



acause, even if they've stuck in the chimbley, roasting their feet makes 'em struggle to hextricate theirselves'. (20; chapter III)

After bargaining down "the premium" (21; chapter III) which the members of the board has offered, Gamfield takes Oliver at last. The gentleman in the white waistcoat comments on the situation in a cruel way: "He'd be cheap with nothing at all, as a premium. Take him, you silly fellow! He's just the boy for you. He wants the stick, now and then: it'll do him good; and his board needn't come very expensive, for he hasn't been over-fed since he was born. Ha! ha! ha!" (22; chapter III). However, hopefully, Oliver escapes being an apprentice to Gamfield owing to an old magistrate. When he sees Oliver's face, he asks why he looks so "pale and alarmed" (26; chapter III). At that moment, "Oliver fell on his knees, . . . , prayed that they would order him back to the dark room – that they would starve him – beat him – kill him if they pleased – rather than send him away with that dreadful man" (26; chapter III). Oliver is relieved when the second old gentleman says "Take the boy back to the workhouse, and treat him kindly. He seems to want it" (27; chapter IV). However, it lasts for a short time as "the next morning, the public were once more informed that Oliver Twist was again To Let, and that five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of him" (27; chapter IV). This time a man called Sowerberry, an undertaker, decides to take Oliver from the workhouse "upon liking" which means "if he can get enough work out of a boy without putting too much food into him, he shall have him for a term of years to do what he likes with" (32; chapter IV). Oliver starts to work as an apprentice to him. Oliver is treated unsympathetically by Mrs. Sowerberry when he is put to bed the first night. Mrs. Sowerberry says: "Your bed's under the counter. You don't mind sleeping among the coffins, I suppose? But it doesn't much matter whether you do or don't, for you can't sleep anywhere else. Come, don't keep me here all night!" (35-36; chapter V). This is another indication of child abuse in the novel. It is very cruel to let a little child sleep among the coffins.

Oliver begins to work as an apprentice to Mr. Sowerberry from then on. The job is actually very unsuitable for a little boy. At his young age, he meets the cold face of death. Once, when Oliver and Mr. Sowerberry go to take the body of a dead woman, the

poverty of the family can be understood by not only looking around the house and the people but also listening to what the man says about the woman:

I say she was starved to death. I never knew how bad she was, till the fever came upon her; and then her bones were starting through the skin. There was neither fire nor candle; she died in the dark – in the dark! She couldn't even see her children's faces, though we heard her gasping out their names. I begged for her in the streets: and they sent me to prison. When I came back, she was dying; and all the blood in my heart has dried up, for they starved her to death. I swear it before the God that saw it! They starved her! (45-46; chapter V)

The quotation shows the desperate situation of a family, a member of which dies owing to the lack of food. It is so pitiful that she could not even see her children's faces as they did not have any candles. Although her husband tried everything for her to survive, she could not bear the hunger and the disease, and died under their eyes.

The poverty during those times can also be understood clearly in what Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, says to Mr. Bumble: “there is no denying that, since the new system of feeding has come in, the coffins are something narrower and more shallow than they used to be; but we must have some profit, Mr. Bumble” (29; chapter IV).

When one day Noah Claypole casts aspersions on Oliver's mother, Oliver reacts what he says. Following this event, they fight. They call Mr. Bumble to get Oliver under control. When Mr. Bumble comes to the scene, he sees this rebellion as a result of indulgence, not an injustice:

‘It's not Madness, ma'am,’ replied Mr. Bumble, after a few minutes of deep meditation. ‘It's Meat.’ ‘What?’ exclaimed Mrs. Sowerberry. ‘Meat, ma'am, meat,’ replied Bumble, with stern emphasis. ‘You've over-fed him, ma'am. You've raised an artificial soul and spirit in him, ma'am, unbecoming a person of his condition: as the board, Mrs. Sowerberry, who are practical philosophers, will tell you. What have paupers to do with soul or spirit? It's quite enough that we let 'em have live bodies. If

you had kept the boy on gruel, ma'am, this would never have happened.' 'Dear, dear!' ejaculated Mrs. Sowerberry, piously raising her eyes to the kitchen ceiling: 'this comes of being liberal!' (58; chapter VII)

Dickens shows how cruel and unreasonable these people are in the novel. In spite of learning the reason behind the rebellion, they accuse Oliver unmercifully. The unreasonable thing in this situation is that they attribute Oliver's rebellion to his eating meat. In the end, Oliver is found guilty and he is beaten and abused cruelly by Sowerberry and Bumble. Then, "when there were none to see or hear him, he fell upon his knees on the floor; and, hiding his face in his hands, wept such tears as, God send for the credit of our nature, few so young may ever have cause to pour out before him!" (60; chapter XII). According to Barry Westburg, "violence begins by imitating violence" (32). It is just in the case of Oliver Twist when he attacks on Noah Claypole. As a result of his rebellion, Oliver has to leave the country. Dickens criticizes the administration of the people like Mr. Bumble. According to Marcus, his satire deals with abuses in all directions (63).

After being imprisoned once again, Oliver escapes and heads for London. When he is running away from Sowerberry's, in the garden of the workhouse, where he once stayed, he sees a little fellow who comes to say goodbye to him. He has been one of Oliver's little friends when he is at the workhouse. They have a short conversation in front of the garden:

'Kiss me,' said the child, climbing up the low gate and flinging his little arms round Oliver's neck: 'Good-b'ye, dear! God bless you!' The blessing was from a young child's lips, but it was the first that Oliver had ever heard invoked upon his head; and through the struggles and sufferings and troubles and changes of his afterlife he never once forgot it. (62; chapter XII)

This poor little fellow gives Oliver what he actually needs during his escape; moral support. This blessing, which Oliver never forgets in his life, helps him overcome the difficulties of his life. After his escape to London, he meets Fagin along with the other underworld characters such as Nancy, Bill, the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates

there. Fagin is a wicked character and he is also one of the child abusers in the novel. He violates their purity and robs them of their childhood. Oliver's being unjustly seized upon accompanying the Artful Dodger and Charley on burglary changes his fortune. Oliver is taken home by Mr. Brownlow and taken care of. There, he is cared with affection by Mrs. Bedwin during his illness. In this house, the first thing he notices after awakening is his mother's face. The woman in the portrait "make his heart beat" (100; chapter XII). Oliver is the copy of the portrait: "Every feature was the same. The expression was, for the instant, so precisely alike, that the minutest line seemed copied with startling accuracy" (102; chapter XII). However, these moments of happiness last very short when he is kidnapped and imprisoned by Fagin once again. He does everything to have Oliver in his toils. First he isolates him:

And so Oliver remained all that day, and for the greater part of many subsequent days, seeing nobody between early morning and midnight, and left during the long hours to commune with his own thoughts . . . After the lapse of a week or so, the Jew left the room-door unlocked; and he was at liberty to wander about the house . . . Often, when it grew dark, and he was tired of wandering from room to room, he would crouch in the corner of the passage from the street-door, to be as near living people as he could; and would remain there, listening and counting the hours, until the Jew or the boys returned. (159-160; chapter XVIII)

Fagin is an evil character. By isolating him, Fagin knows that Oliver will not have any chance but want to talk to them as he will be bored alone. In the next step, Fagin knows that Oliver will not resist doing whatever Fagin wants him to do. Fagin reaches his goal at the end of this imprisonment as the boy needs someone to talk to, even if this is Fagin:

. . . the old man would tell them stories of robberies he had committed in his younger days: mixed up with so much that was droll and curious, that Oliver could not help laughing heartily, and showing that he was amused in spite of all his better feelings. (167; chapter XIX)

Fagin not only abuses Oliver but also destroys and blackens him with his so-called education. This time Fagin makes Oliver rob a house, actually Oliver's aunt's house. With this episode, the last piece of the puzzle is provided and Oliver finds his lost identity. He discovers that he is not an orphan but a respectable member of the society. Dickens states that "In *Oliver Twist*, I want to show Goodness triumphing over every form of adversity" (qtd. in Epstein 87). Epstein states "with *Oliver Twist*, the man who once worked in a warehouse celebrates his own triumph and his will to survive against all odds" (87). Grant also points out that "what Dickens wanted to show in Oliver is 'the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last', as he wrote in the Preface to the first complete edition." (96) He also points out that "the conflict is waged between goodness and evil, innocence and corruption, and provides the author with the form and rhythm of the book" (96).

Dickens depicts "the criminal slum world" in the novel without "romanticizing poverty into the picturesque" (Johnson 278). Johnson states that Dickens "would show the fatal ease with which a workhouse orphan like Oliver, running away from the harsh master to whom he was apprenticed, might fall into the clutches of a gang of lawbreakers and be subjected to their corrupting influence" (278). Dickens shows the reality to his readers whether they can bear to hear the truth or not. However, his aim is "not to turn the stomach, but to move the heart . . . The evil that was being done to the spirits of human beings was more important even than the hideousness and disease in which their bodies were steeped, dreadfully though the two were linked" (Johnson 280). Dickens wants to reveal the emotional breakdown of these human beings together with the difficult conditions under which they live. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens points out the miserable situation of especially the children as follows:

. . . when a child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that it sickened from want or cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases, the miserable little being was usually summoned into another world, and there gathered to the fathers it had never known in this. (5-6; chapter II)

As it is seen in the quotation above, these little human beings are the ones who suffer the most. Due to the consequences of several diseases which result from their being inadequately fed or neglect, these children die at very young ages. From this quotation, the limits of child abuse can be comprehended clearly.

In *Oliver Twist*, another child whom Fagin abuses except for Oliver is Nancy. Nancy is an abused girl who has worked at the streets from childhood, bound to Sikes. She hates her life which she now leads, but since Fagin first abused her as a child, she has known nothing else. When she encounters Rose Maylie, the aunt of Oliver, Nancy feels the kindness which she has not felt before: “Oh, dear Lady, why ar’n’t those who claim to be God’s own folks as gentle and as kind to us poor wretches as you . . . ?” (430; chapter XLVI). It is seen in the novel that Nancy is a fallen woman; however, if she could be freed from her environment, she might be saved. Without external help, she does not have any chance to improve. Even if she encounters these kind people for a short time, she is affected by them and helps Oliver escape although it causes her death. “Lady,” cries poor Nancy to Rose Maylie, sinking on her knees, “dear, sweet, angel lady, you *are* the first that ever blessed me with such words as these; and if I had heard them years ago, they might have turned me from a life of sin and sorrow; but it is too late, it is too late!” (375; chapter XI).

Almost every child character in the novel is abused in some ways. Because of poverty, parents cannot look after their children well. This causes isolation from society. There is also deterioration in society. In addition to the children who have parents but are not looked after, there are also children who do not have any parents. The condition of the orphans is worse than that of the children who have parents.

## 6.2. FACT VS. FANCY: CHILD ABUSE IN EDUCATION AND IMAGINATION IN *HARD TIMES*

My satire is against those who see figures and averages, and nothing else – the representatives of the wickedest and most enormous vice of this time – the men who, through long years to come, will do more to damage the real useful truths of political economy, than I could do (if I tried) in my whole life. (qtd. in Glancy 93)

Dickens explains his intention for writing *Hard Times* in the quotation above. He regards figures and averages as the representatives of the vice of that era. He criticizes the people who know nothing else but facts or figures during their life. In *Hard Times*, he reveals the damages of this kind of people in society to themselves, their families, and their society as a whole.

Forster states that every book Dickens wrote, especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by the ones who are interested in social questions (439). Dickens stands against the evils which occur as a consequence of civilization in his society like a socialist. He argues that the order of the bourgeoisie is actually a disorder in the society. He declares that these people are the ones that deform the order in the society. Dickens criticizes the social system of his country as a whole in his novel. These are clear in what George Bernard Shaw states in his introduction to an edition of *Hard Times*:

This [*Hard Times*] is Karl Marx, Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, Carpenter, rising up against civilization itself as against a disease, and declaring that it is not our disorder but our order that is horrible; that it is not our criminals but our magnates that are robbing and murdering us; and that it is not merely Tom All Alone's that must be demolished and abolished, pulled down, rooted up . . . but our entire social system. (qtd. in Lougy 23)

*Hard Times* brings to a culmination an orderly development of social analysis that exists in most of Dickens's works. That development has its roots in the social attitudes underlying *Oliver Twist* and the prison scenes of *Pickwick Papers*. Besides,

Dickens makes a social comment in *David Copperfield*. He demonstrates “the legal morasses of Doctors’ Commons” and “the exploitation of child labor in the bottling warehouse” (Johnson 801). In *Hard Times*, he points out child abuse from a different aspect; imagination. It is also clear that Dickens also stands against some evils such as “Utilitarianism” in education and economics, industrial capitalism, bad marriage.

*Hard Times* is dedicated to a purpose which Glancy explains as: “the exposure of the dangers of Utilitarian thinking, the championing of imaginative and vital human experience, and the depiction of the life of the factory worker at mid-century” (93). She also points out that, “utilitarianism, a system of philosophy first expounded by Jeremy Bentham at the end of the eighteenth century, was the object of Dickens’s contempt throughout his life” (93). Dickens describes Bentham’s theory of utility as a “terrible mistake”. Glancy defines this theory as follows:

It had two main components: First, Bentham believed that self-interest is the basis of all human creation, and that laws must provide strong sanctions to induce the individual to put the interests of the community first because he will not naturally do so. Second, Bentham believed that the rightness or wrongness of an action can be measured by how much pain or pleasure it causes, pain and pleasure being the “sovereign masters” governing our behavior . . . Thus the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the measure of how right or wrong an action is, and questions of morality become a matter of expediency rather than principle. (91)

This theory of utility extends into the arts, too. The followers of “Utilitarianism”, in the Department of Practical Art, does not approve flowers or other decorations on carpets. From the perspective of literature, the theory of utility brings about different ideas. For instance, Bentham thinks of poetry as “misrepresentation: Words were perverted when they were used for uttering anything but precise, logical truth, or facts” (qtd. in Glancy 92). It is clear from the quotation that Bentham defines anything which does not include facts or truths unnecessary. This view was very common in the nineteenth century, and it was also dangerous, according to Dickens, as “it failed to nurture imagination” (qtd. in Glancy 92). Dickens presents in *Hard Times* to describe



the meanness of utilitarianism and its terrible dangers. The theory of utility narrows down the limits of imagination of children. Dickens states that “the deprivation of the classroom and nursery in *Hard Times* dramatize the factual and didactic emphasis of much of the literature written for children” (qtd. in Glancy 92). Dickens never stops writing stories for children and believes the importance of imagination in their lives. He emphasizes the dangers of a life without imagination as it is stated above and warns people to be aware of them in *Hard Times*.

In *Hard Times*, “Utilitarianism” is propagated by Thomas Gradgrind, Member of Parliament for Coketown, and his friend Josiah Bounderby, a banker and manufacturer. The novel is set in the fictional “Coketown” and opens in a school run by Thomas Gradgrind, who bases his philosophy of education on “Utilitarianism.” Mr. Gradgrind is so sure he is right in his views about child training that he founds a school to teach the children of Coketown. *Hard Times* opens in one of the classes of this school where the children are taught the tenets of practicality. Mr. Gradgrind tells the schoolmaster:

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

The people around Gradgrind and Bounderby are adversely affected by this system. In *Hard Times*, most of the children of Coketown are abused in some ways. Their creativity is taken from their hands. They are products of the factory which is called “school”, where they are taught only facts by their teacher, Mr. McChoakumchild. Dickens criticizes the inadequate schools like Mr. Gradgrind’s establishment which is totally misguided. Grant states that Dickens makes satirical attacks on what he takes to be inhuman aspects of nineteenth-century English life. The child’s world of imagination is denied in schooling (95). He prevents the children from all kinds of enjoyment. At school, as Sissy Jupe, one of the students and also a circus performer, expresses her taste for a flowery-patterned carpet by saying “I am very fond of flowers . . . and I would fancy –” (5; chapter II), the government inspector

immediately objects to it: “Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn’t fancy. That’s it! You are never to fancy . . . Fact, fact, fact!” (6; chapter II). “Fact, fact, fact!” repeats Thomas Gradgrind (6; chapter II). Unlike most of the other students, Sissy Jupe cannot satisfy Mr. M’Choakumchild at school. She cannot remember facts and dates. Therefore, Mr. Gradgrind tells her she will have to leave school:

‘I cannot disguise from you, Jupe,’ said Mr. Gradgrind, knitting his brow, ‘that the result of your probation there has disappointed me – has greatly disappointed me. You have not acquired, under Mr. and Mrs. M’Choakumchild, anything like that amount of exact knowledge which I look for. You are extremely deficient in your facts. Your acquaintance with figures is very limited. You are altogether backward, and below the mark.’ (81; chapter XIV)

Sissy is not good with facts and consequently has to leave school. She is later taken in by Gradgrind charitably after her father disappears. After being taken in, Sissy stays at the house of Gradgrinds to care for the younger children.

The children of Mr. Gradgrind, Louisa and Thomas, are also affected by his education system. Mr. Gradgrind only matters facts in his life and he also raises his oldest children, Louisa and Thomas, according to this philosophy of fact. He never allows them to imagine anything in their lives. They are instructed never to wonder and are kept away from any kind of imaginative literature. However, in Chapter Three, “A Loophole”, Louisa and Thomas discover this forbidden knowledge, the world of imagination with the help of Sissy Jupe. When Mr. Gradgrind finds his daughter Louisa and his son Thomas peeping at the circus, he is amazed as he has raised them without any kind of amusement. In the novel, he reacts what he has seen as follows:

Dumb with amazement, Mr. Gradgrind crossed to the spot where his family was thus disgraced, laid his hand upon each erring child, and said: ‘Louisa! Thomas!’ Both rose, red and disconcerted. But Louisa looked at her father with more boldness than Thomas did. Indeed, Thomas did not look at him, but gave himself up to be taken home like a machine. ‘In the name of wonder, idleness, and folly!’ said Mr. Gradgrind, leading each

away by a hand; 'what do you do here?' 'Wanted to see what it was like,' returned Louisa shortly. 'What it was like?' 'Yes, father.' . . . 'I was tired, father. I have been tired a long time,' said Louisa. 'Tired? Of what?' asked the astonished father. 'I don't know of what – of everything, I think.' (10-11; chapter III)

As Louisa and Thomas grow up, they miss something important in their life; the power of imagination. Their lives are so full with facts that they are tired of the way they have lived so far. As they are not allowed to be involved in any kind of entertainment in their lives, on Louisa's face

there was a light with nothing to rest upon, a fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow, which brightened its expression. Not with the brightness natural to cheerful youth, but with uncertain, eager, doubtful flashes, which had something painful in them . . ." (11; chapter III)

The reason of the light on Louisa's face is the light of joy which has been banned by Mr. Gradgrind until the time they encounter in the circus. It is their first time to see this brightness in their lives. However, they have something painful in this joy as a result of their father. He is like a shadow which makes all the brightness go astray.

Mr. Gradgrind is amazed with what he has seen. He cannot see why his children prefer going to a circus instead of studying some facts. When they have gone home together, they have this conversation with their mother, Mrs. Gradgrind:

'Dear me,' whimpered Mrs. Gradgrind. 'How can you, Louisa and Thomas! I wonder at you . . . As if, with my head in its present throbbing state, you couldn't go and look at the shells and minerals and things provided for you, instead of circuses!' said Mrs. Gradgrind. 'You know as well as I do, no young people have circus masters, or keep circuses in cabinets, or attend lectures about circuses. What can you possibly want to know of circuses then? I am sure you have enough to do, if that's what you want. With my head in its present state, I couldn't remember the mere names of half the facts you have got to attend to.' 'That's the

reason!' pouted Louisa. 'Don't tell me that's the reason, because it can be nothing of the sort,' said Mrs. Gradgrind. 'Go and be something-ological directly.' (15; chapter IV)

There is no imagination, no fancy, no emotion in Gradgrind world, but only facts and the utilitarian thinking. Mrs. Gradgrind does not understand what her children have to do with circus when they are loaded with lots of facts as stated in the quotation above. However, she does not see that it is actually the reason. The miserable situation of Louisa and Thomas can be comprehended well in this quotation from the novel:

No little Gradgrind had ever seen a face in the moon; it was up in the moon before it could speak distinctly. No little Gradgrind had ever learnt the silly jingle, Twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are! No little Gradgrind had ever known wonder on the subject, each little Gradgrind having at five years old dissected the Great Bear like a Professor Owen, and driven Charles's Wain like a locomotive engine-driver. (8; chapter III)

These children are object to abuse in a different way. They are not abused physically, but more importantly spiritually. They have been forced not to use what they naturally have; imagination. They grow up with nothing but facts. Their family could not see what they actually need and lack of. One of the reasons why Gradgrind family is unhappy is their failure in communication. There are always barriers to communication between the parents and the children. Mr. Gradgrind's failure to understand his children, their imagination and emotions harms both Louisa and Tom. Tom becomes a selfish boy and Louisa suffers emptiness in her heart. When Mr. Gradgrind's friend Josiah Bounderby, a wealthy factory owner and banker, proposes Louisa, for her brother's sake, she accepts Mr. Bounderby's proposal of marriage and marries to a man whom she does not love. The scene in which Louisa's father asks her about the proposal is dramatic. After a silence between them, Louisa starts asking questions to her father: "Father, do you think that I love Mr. Bounderby?" "Father, do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?" "Father, does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?" (86-87; chapter XV). He finds her questions difficult to answer, but he makes her to reduce the question to one fact: "Does Mr Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining

question then is: Shall I marry him?" (88; chapter XV). Throughout the conversation between Louisa and his father, Louisa looks at him fixedly. As it can be comprehended from the quotation below, there are barriers between Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa:

Removing her eyes from him, she sat so long looking silently towards the town, that he said, at length: 'Are you consulting the chimneys of the Coketown works, Louisa?' 'There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father!' she answered, turning quickly. 'Of course I know that, Louisa. I do not see the application of the remark.' To do him justice he did not, at all. (88-89; chapter XV)

This scene is the most dramatic one in the novel where we see the Gradgrind's inability to communicate. There is a total misunderstanding throughout the conversation. Although Louisa expects her father to understand her, he cannot see the fire bursting out of her heart. With the same fire on her face as she has when she is found peeping at the circus, she warns Gradgrind of what will happen to her if she marries Bounderby. However, Gradgrind fails to recognize it as before. Without understanding Louisa's emotions and yearning for sympathy, Mr. Gradgrind reduces every question to a fact and empties the conversation of all meaning. This conversation culminates in her marriage to Mr. Bounderby.

Louisa and Thomas have been grown up in such a way that they are not even expected to have their own thoughts, decisions and emotions. After Louisa marries Mr. Bounderby, Thomas and Mr. Harthouse, a wealthy young man from London, discuss her one evening, and Thomas says that she thought a great deal when she was alone:

'Ay, ay? Has resources of her own,' said Harthouse . . . 'Not so much of that as you may suppose,' returned Tom; 'for our governor had her crammed with all sorts of dry bones and sawdust. It's his system.' 'Formed his daughter on his own model?' suggested Harthouse. 'His daughter? Ah! and everybody else. Why, he formed Me that way,' said Tom. 'Impossible!' 'He did though,' said Tom, shaking his head. 'I mean to say, Mr. Harthouse, that when I first left home and went to old

Bounderby's, I was as flat as a warming-pan, and knew no more about life than any oyster does.' (121-122; chapter III)

It is interesting that Thomas defines his father as their governor and explains that he has educated them in his own system. He also accepts that he knew almost nothing about life when he was first left home and was apprenticed at the bank of Bounderby. At that time, Tom Gradgrind leaves home with relief. Mr. Gradgrind has repressed his fancy and robbed him of the joys of childhood and youth. Thus, when he is about to live with Mr. Bounderby, he answers his sister Louisa's question if he is pleased with his prospect like this: "Well, it will be getting away from home." (47; chapter VIII). Mr. Gradgrind is actually a good man and wants to be kind and helpful to his children; however, he ignores the fact that his children also have their own opinions and tastes. He ruins his children unconsciously by educating them in his system which he has believed to be true.

Meanwhile, a working-class man, called Stephen Blackpool, struggles with his love for another factory worker, Rachael. As he is already married to a drunken woman who disappears for months and comes back, he is unable to marry Rachael. He wants to divorce from his wife, but he learns that only the wealthy can do it. One day, he meets an old woman, called Mrs. Pegler, outside Bounderby's home.

Louisa is unhappy with her marriage and James Harthouse, the young, attractive man, takes interest in Louisa. He makes love to Louisa and persuades her to run away with him. However, he actually tries to seduce her. He sets about trying to corrupt her with the unspoken help of Mrs. Sparsit, a former aristocrat who has hard times and now works for Bounderby. While Harthouse is declaring his love for Louisa, Mrs. Sparsit witnesses and later that night Louisa agrees to meet him in Coketown. However, Louisa, unable to resist the temptation in her own strength, flees to her father's house. Sissy meets Harthouse and tells him to leave Coketown forever. Mr. Gradgrind has failed to understand Louisa's emotions and thoughts until that time, but it is time for Mr. Gradgrind to see how terrible consequences his teachings have caused. Only when her disastrous marriage ends in flight back to her father, he realizes his blindness. Louisa confides to Gradgrind that she is unhappily married to a man whom she does not love. She accuses him of having deprived her of a normal childhood. She falls on the

ground and Mr. Gradgrind realizes his mistakes. She is in such a terrible situation that she says, "I curse the hour in which I was born to such a destiny" and goes on like this:

. . . 'Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here!' . . . 'I never knew you were unhappy, my child.' 'Father, I always knew it. In this strife . . . my dismal resource has been to think that life would soon go by, and that nothing in it could be worth the pain and trouble of a contest . . . I do not know that I am sorry, I do not know that I am ashamed, I do not know that I am degraded in my own esteem. All that I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means!' (193,196; chapter XII)

Mr. Gradgrind has meant to do right throughout his life while educating his children with facts, but actually it turns out to be that he could not. He has destroyed the lives of his children. He has been unaware of the fact that they are not happy with his system. However, in the end, he does right by realizing his faults and saves his child from this miserable situation which he himself has caused.

Actually, Louisa seduces herself to Bounderby and Harthouse for her brother, Thomas. Her father has always taught her that feelings should not enter into her choices. Thus, Louisa makes her choices as her father has taught her. Thomas uses Louisa's attractiveness and her devotion to him in both cases. He urges Louisa to marry Bounderby for his sake and contributes to her fall by bragging to Harthouse of his motives. By this way, he has abused his sister twice.

In the meantime, the factory workers are exhorted by union spokesman named Slackbridge and try to form a union. However, Stephen refuses to join as he thinks that a strike will only increase the tension between the workers and the employers. Other workers cast out him and he is fired by Bounderby when he refuses to spy on them. Impressed with this situation, Louisa visits him and gives him some money. Tom accompanies his sister and tells Stephen that if he waits outside the bank for several

days, he will help him. Although Stephen does so, no help arrives. Eventually, he leaves Coketown to find work in the country. After a little while, the bank is robbed and the suspect is Stephen who was seen outside the bank for several days before he left.

Upon hearing this, Bounderby tries to capture Stephen. When Stephen tries to return to clear himself, he falls into a mining pit. Although Louisa and Rachael discover him, he dies after a farewell to Rachael. Gradgrind and Louisa soon realize that Tom is responsible for robbing the bank.

Hughes propounds that the training system of Mr. Gradgrind and his teacher, Mr. M'Choakumchild is coercive. This system is carried out by a man who does not have true ideas about child training. He supplies them with anything they do not care and ban everything that they are naturally interested in (71). The results are terrible. Thomas becomes a selfish and criminal boy. Dickens describes him in the following statements:

It was very remarkable that a young gentleman who had been brought up under one continuous system of unnatural restraint should be a hypocrite; but it was certainly the case with Tom. It was very strange that a young gentleman who had never been left to his own guidance for five consecutive minutes should be incapable at last governing himself; but so it was with Tom. It was altogether unaccountable that a young gentleman whose imagination had been strangled in his cradle should be still inconvenienced by its ghost in the form of groveling sensualities; but such a monster, beyond all doubt, was Tom. (118; chapter III)

As a result of the system of Mr. Gradgrind, Tom is in trouble. He is not able to behave in a way expected from an adult. He is incapable of governing himself and so selfish that he can exploit his sister. Consequently, he puts the blame of robbing the bank on an innocent man, Stephen Blackpool.

His family arranges to sneak him out of the country with the circus performers; however, they are stopped by Bitzer, a young man who was taught the rationalism by Gradgrind in school. Sleary, the circus proprietor, rescues Tom from Bitzer and Tom escapes from England.



Later, it is revealed that Mrs. Pegler is Bounderby's loving mother whom he has forbidden to see him. Five years later, Bounderby dies alone in the streets. Gradgrind devotes himself to help the poor. Tom dies without seeing his family again. Sissy gets married and has children while Louisa never gets married. Nonetheless, Louisa is happy living with Sissy's family. Sissy cannot learn facts; however, she becomes the good angel of the Gradgrind. She helps Louisa; she gives the younger children the real childhood; and she helps to save Tom.

Later in the novel, Dickens describes the day when Louisa visits her father's house. The quotation below shows how little of the true home feeling is in her heart while she is going to the house which she should have had a happy childhood:

Neither, as she approached her old home now, did any of the best influences of old home descend upon her . . . Her remembrances of home and childhood were remembrances of the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out. The golden waters were not there. They were flowing for the fertilization of the land where grapes were gathered from thorns, and figs from thistles. (177; chapter IX)

Dickens is regarded as a radical who has seen the need for revolution and attacked the bourgeois society. *Hard Times* is found the most powerful example of Dickens's radical views in the critique of industrial relations and capitalism. Its focus on Coketown and the factory workers is significant. Dickens attacks on Bounderby and Gradgrind, the new ruling class whereas Stephen Blackpool is his strongest defense of the industrial worker. It is the new bourgeois society, which has replaced the old feudal ties between people with cash payment. In the novel, Gradgrind and Bounderby represent this new bourgeois view:

It was a fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy that everything was to be paid for. Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. And if we did not get to Heaven that way, it

was not a politico-economical place, and we had no business there. (258; chapter VIII)

The novel demonstrates how the nineteenth-century British industrial city appears. In this novel, Dickens emphasizes the conditions of life in factory towns. He points that the poor should share the same justice, the same freedom and healthy conditions as the rich. He also criticizes the mentality which finds facts and figures more important than imagination.

Dickens's purpose in *Hard Times* is to show that the English factory worker lives a life of poverty and deprivation, away from amusement because of the long working hours. Coketown has an important role in the novel. Glancy states that Coketown is "the key-note", as Dickens calls it, which unites the Gradgrind house, Bounderby's menage, the circus, and the factory. His description becomes the epitome of the new industrial towns that sprouts across the landscape of Victorian England in the middle of the nineteenth century. Coketown is a place where there is dullness; almost every house is the same and the life is monotonous (97,101). Coketown in winter is bad, but Coketown in summer is worse. The sun shines down the dusty streets of Coketown where men toil at fiery furnaces amid steam engines, emitting hot oil gusts like the breath of a simoon. The great pistons and hammers dominate all. Industrialism is as bad for the employers as it is for the employees. It makes them "people of fact undiluted by fancy" (Pope-Hennessy 358). This scene describes how terrible Coketown seems after the industrialization process:

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled . . . inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next. (19; chapter V)

The people of Coketown are known as “Hands”, whose lives consist of only going to work and returning home. Human energy is taken from the humans and converted into machinery in Coketown. They are reduced from full humanity to their laboring parts to deadness as it can be seen in the sentences above. The citizens spend so much energy for industrialization that they do not have enough energy at all to slow down their death rates.

“*Hard Times*”, as Pope-Hennessy states, “deals with conditions in an industrial town from the point of view both of employer and employee” (357). It can be seen in the characters of Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. Bounderby, their families, Stephen Blackpool and his friend Rachael. Stephen, “deserted by a drunken wife”, wants to get divorced to marry Rachael. However, Stephen finds divorce a luxury for himself which only rich people can afford. He has to invoke Doctors’ Commons, Common Law, House of Lords and the fees are more than £1500. Stephen goes to Bounderby for help, but he is reminded that he married his wife “for better for worse” (65; chapter XI), but Stephen says he has read “i’ th’ papers that great fok . . . are not bonded together for better for worst so fast, but that they can be set free fro’ *their* misfortnet marriages, an’ marry ower agen” (66; chapter XI). There are laws to punish Stephen if he does his wife any hurt or flees from her. However, there seem to be no laws to save him from his miserable situation. Stephen wants Mr. Bounderby to “show me the law to help me” (66; chapter XI). After his insistence, Bounderby explains him the law by saying “but it’s not for you at all. It costs money. It costs a mint of money” (67; chapter XI). It can be seen how difficult it is to get divorced for working-class individuals as it costs a lot. Mr. Bounderby tells the situation as follows:

‘. . . you’d have to go to Doctors’ Commons with a suit, and you’d have to go to a court of Common Law with a suit, and you’d have to go to the House of Lords with a suit, and you’d have to get an Act of Parliament to enable you to marry again, and it would cost you (if it was a case of very plain sailing), I suppose from a thousand to fifteen hundred pound,’ . . . ‘Perhaps twice the money.’ (67; chapter XI)

Bounderby acts upon a false reality when he comments on the living conditions of Stephen Blackpool. Bounderby thinks that the hands are never thankful and “they

lived upon the best, and bought fresh butter; and insisted on Mocha coffee” (21; chapter V). However, they are “eternally dissatisfied and unmanageable” (21; chapter V) and Bounderby is convinced that they want to “be set up in a coach and six, and to be fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon” (63; chapter XVI). He views mill work as “the pleasantest . . . lightest . . . best-paid work there is” (113; chapter II). However, he is mistaken as Stephen does not have the money even to divorce from his drunken wife and marry the woman he loves.

The fact that “Law is the prerogative of the well-to-do and of no assistance to the poor” (Pope-Hennessy 357) can also be observed in other incidents of the novel. The rich have all rights to do what they want as they have both law and money at their service. With the help of money, they can even control the lives of people who work under their command.

Money, if handled by men accustomed to think in percentages, could be applied to mould, squeeze, press the employee into any shape they liked, and could be used to control their manner of living, their manner of learning, their manner of dying. What was there of freedom in this programme? what of equality? what of fraternity? (Pope-Hennessy 358)

One example of the men described in the quotation above is Josiah Bounderby who is a banker and a manufacturer in Coketown. He is the greediest person in Coketown. Bounderby continuously boasts of himself; “he is a self-made man, the Victorian middle-class answer to good birth” (Glancy 96). Another example of these men is Mr. Gradgrind. Mr. Gradgrind is a man of facts and figures. He embodies utilitarian economic theory and endeavors to dry up life into statistical averages. Louisa, the daughter, is the predestined tragic victim going to her doom. His son Thomas is also a victim of his education system which focuses on facts.

Bounderby is both the victim and the perpetrator of the civilization. He actually has erected his life upon fiction. He finds in Mrs. Sparsit the mother whom he has disavowed. He creates a life around a pattern which is the rise of the hero from poverty by means of enterprise and sacrifice. However, he is actually ridiculous from the very beginning till the end. He has killed his childhood destroying all the links to the past and

has replaced it with a fiction which he creates. This fictionalization is a result of his attuning to the values of an industrialized society. What society expects from Bounderby to be and what he envisions himself to be are merged. As a result, he gains his so-called freedom at a high cost. Actually, he pays a greater cost than simply losing a reputation. Bounderby is assimilated into the industrial ethos that he has created before.

Coketown unites all these people in one place. Although they live in the same town, they do not share the same rights and privileges. The factory workers in this industrial town live a life of poverty despite their long working hours. Their lives are dull and monotonous. There, those uneducated working people have no chance in a world where the masters regard them as “hands”. Louisa, not knowing the conditions of the other people living in Coketown, is brought to a “better acquaintance” with her Coketown neighbors when she visits Stephen and Rachael. Louisa knew very little about these people: “she knew what results in work a given number of them would produce in a given space of time. She knew them in crowds passing to and from their nests, like ants or beetles. But she knew from her reading infinitely more of the ways of toiling insects than of these toiling men and women” (141; chapter VI). These workmen are recognized as “hands” which do the work; however, their hearts and feelings are ignored just like the children in Mr. M’Choakumchild’s classroom who become numbers.

There is another issue which Glancy states about the factory scenes in the depiction of Slackbridge, the union organizer who incites the men to ostracize Stephen when he does not join the union. Many union leaders, such as Slackbridge, do the workmen no benefit. Victimized by their masters, the workers are also victimized by their own leaders. Dickens in the novel argues for the value of the individual over any system that dehumanizes people and sees them as statistics (103).

Johnson states that the principles in Gradgrind’s school are the same principles which dominate Coketown and its industry. His philosophy is “only the aggressive formulation of the inhumane spirit of Victorian materialism” (809). Dickens’s withering laissez-faire capitalism “with a wonderful wit and insight” should not be lost sight of. *Hard Times* “burns with indignant sympathy for the injustice under which the workers

suffered and is violent in its repudiation of Bounderby's career and Gradgrind's philosophy" (809, 812). Stephen states the harm of laissez-faire and the division it creates in society by stating:

Let thousands upon thousands alone, aw leading the like lives and aw faw'en into the like muddle, and they will be as one, and yo will be as anoother, wi' a black unpassable world betwixt yo, just as long or short a time as sitch-like misery can last . . . Most o' aw, rating 'em as so much Power, and reg'latin 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines: wi'out loves and likens, wi'out memories and inclinations, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope — when aw goes quiet, draggin on wi' 'em as if they'd nowt o' th' kind, and when aw goes onquiet, reproachin 'em for their want o' sitch humanly feelins in their dealins wi' yo — this will never do 't, sir, till God's work is onmade. (135-136; chapter V)

From the death of Stephen, it is inferred that only death can end his problems. He consequently looks for reconciliation between his dreams and reality in the world beyond: "And so I will try t' look t' th' time, and so I will try t' trust t' th' time, when thou [Rachael] and me at last shall walk together far awa', beyond the deep gulf, in th' country where thy little sister is (79-80; chapter VIII)". In the nightmare of Coketown, suffering ends with death.

Dickens, in the end, warns "Utilitarian economists, skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact, genteel and usedup infidels, gabblers of many little dog's-eared creeds," that "the poor you will have always with you" (146; chapter VI). With *Hard Times*, Dickens reveals the abuse of children at home by their families and at schools by utilitarian administrators. He also exemplifies the effects of these situations on the individuals. He warns the people who cause the deformities in the society to stop their actions for a better generation.

### 6.3. SHATTERING CHILDHOOD DREAMS: REFLECTIONS OF CHARLES DICKENS'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN *DAVID COPPERFIELD*

Of all my books, I like this the best. It will easily be 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. (qtd. in Johnson 689-690)

*David Copperfield* is a Victorian novel with its powers and defects of its age. It is a bildungsroman and also an autobiographical one. The latter guides our understanding of the novel better. Grant states that the readers should not think of the book as a "thinly-disguised autobiography" because of the close parallels which Forster revealed between the lives of Dickens and David Copperfield. He argues that "if one does read *David Copperfield* as romanticised autobiography, one then misses the whole fictional and imaginative experience" (110). He also states that Dickens's own view is that he achieves in the writing an ingenious and "very complicated interweaving of truth and fiction" (110). Another critic, Edgar Johnson states that "into David Copperfield he has not merely precipitated the painful experiences of his childhood and youth; he has so surrounded them with life itself as to make them part of a larger world" (700). Pearson states that the novel "was to be largely autobiographical, but as Dickens did not wish this to be recognized he shifted the scene of his youth, changed many other circumstances, and dramatized the characters taken from life in such a way that he hoped they would be the last to recognize themselves" (169). These are partly true; but if one takes his autobiography into consideration, s/he will see the parallels between Dickens's life and David's life. In addition, it is easy to wholly understand those years if Dickens's life is looked into carefully. As some of these critics state, Dickens interweaves truth and fiction very well in *David Copperfield*. Thus, this novel is partly autobiographical and partly fictional.

George Bernard Shaw states the reason why *David Copperfield* is Dickens's favourite child as follows: "David was, for a time at least, Dickens's favorite child, perhaps because he had used him to express the bitterness of that episode in his own experience which had wounded his boyish self-respect most deeply" (v-vi).

Written in the first person, *David Copperfield* includes some of Dickens's childhood and youth memories, their disappointments and triumphs (Glancy 73). Most of the things in the novel have their roots in Dickens's personal experience. They indicate his wounds that were still unhealed until his death. The childhood affects the later life of all persons and Dickens is also affected by his own childhood memories. Allan Grant points out that "the child and the importance of childhood experience to later life are at the center of Dickens's concerns as an imaginative writer" (92). Grant insists that "Dickens articulates in his fiction a view of childhood - . . . - which he inherits from the English Romantic poets and that, like theirs, these views represent an essentially adult concern" (92). In the novel Dickens stresses that experience continues from childhood to adult life by making David Copperfield state:

I believe the power of observation in numbers of young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may with greater propriety be said not to have lost the faculty, than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentleness, and capacity of being pleased, which are also an inheritance they have preserved from their childhood. (22-23; chapter II)

Dickens's actual parents appear in *David Copperfield* disguised as Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. Dickens immortalizes his father, John Dickens, in the character of Mr. Micawber. Like Mr. Micawber, John Dickens was ambitious to "rise in society" and "wanted to live beyond his means" (Glancy 2). Unfortunately, he had a financial crisis. On one occasion, Dickens gave Forster a sketch of the character of his father:

I know my father to be as kindhearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. Everything that I can remember of his conduct to his wife, or children, or friends, in sickness or affliction, is beyond all praise . . . But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the



little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living. (Forster 13)

As it is clear in the quotation, there are some memories from Dickens's past which can be found in *David Copperfield*. One of them is the relation between Mr. Micawber and Dickens's father mentioned above. In this novel, apart from the people who are disguised under some characters, Dickens also disguises himself under his hero, David. David, at the age of ten, starts to work in the service of "Murdstone and Grinby" in the novel. It is, in fact, Dickens himself. Glancy points out that "he was sent to work at Warren's, a shoe-blackening factory managed by James Lamert, a relative by marriage of Dickens's aunt, and a close friend of family" (Forster 17). His days in Warren's factory can be seen in his description of David's employment at Murdstone and Grinby's wine bottle-washing factory in the novel. Dickens narrates his days when he started to work at the age of ten in these sentences:

. . . Its chief manager, James Lamert, the relative who had lived with us in Bayham Street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first and seven afterwards. At any rate the offer was accepted very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking warehouse to begin my business life. (qtd. in Forster 17)

In this quotation, Dickens states that as a result of his family's bad financial situation, he had to work at a very little age under hard conditions. His hard times are reflected years later in his novel under the character of David. In *David Copperfield*, it is evident that David, telling his feelings, actually tells Dickens's sufferings in those days:

The two things clearest in my mind were, that a remoteness had come upon the old Blunderstone life – which seemed to lie in the haze of an immeasurable distance; and that a curtain had for ever fallen on my life at Murdstone and Grinby's. No one has ever raised that curtain since. I have lifted it for a moment, even in this narrative, with a reluctant hand, and dropped it gladly. The remembrance of that life is fraught with so much pain to me, with so much mental suffering and want of hope, that I have never had the courage even to examine how long I was doomed to lead it. Whether it lasted for a year, or more, or less, I do not know. I only know that it was, and ceased to be; and that I have written, and there I leave it. (185; chapter XIV)

In the quotation, Dickens seems to remember his own days in the blacking warehouse. By narrating his days under cover of his hero, he raises the curtain of his past days in the factory reluctantly. He also seems to remember those days to write it in this novel and leave them in these pages.

In *David Copperfield*, David moves forward in each section. He moves from adored child to abused stepson to schoolboy, and to orphan and child laborer. The last ones are the most striking for him as he almost forgets who he is. He says: "I mingled my tears with the water in which I was washing the bottles; and sobbed as if there were a flaw in my own breast, and it were in danger of bursting" (137; chapter XI).

Now a grown man, David Copperfield tells the story of his youth in the novel. His father dies before he is born. At the time of his birth, Aunt Betsey Trotwood comes to help David's mother but leaves without a word when she learns that he is a boy not the girl that she has always assumed he would be. David lives happily with his mother and his nurse, Peggotty. David goes to Yarmouth for two weeks with Peggotty where he meets Mr Peggotty, Emily, Ham, and Mrs Gummidge. On his return home, he finds that his mother has married the violent Mr. Edward Murdstone, who brings his strict sister, Miss Murdstone, into the house. Mr. Murdstone is a hard, severe man with a dreadful sister, Jane Murdstone. Mr. Murdstone is David's fear. Both he and his sister have no place for being gentle with a child. David tells his firmness in these sentences:

Firmness, I may observe, was the grand quality on which both Mr. and Miss Murdstone took their stand . . . It was another name for tyranny; and for a certain gloomy, arrogant, devil's humour, that was in them both. The creed, as I should state it now, was this. Mr. Murdstone was firm; nobody else in his world was to be firm at all, for everybody was to be bent to his firmness. Miss Murdstone was an exception. She might be firm, but only by relationship, and in an inferior and tributary degree. My mother was another exception. She might be firm, and must be; but only in bearing their firmness, and firmly believing there was no other firmness on earth. (51; chapter IV)

Mr. Murdstone, with his destructive involvement with the family, causes the violent separation of David and his mother. He abuses not only David but also his child-like mother, Clara. His cruelty effects David's development as a child and his treatment of the defenseless child effects Clara's health and well-being. He makes her to lose control of her home, her child and finally her own will.

Upon learning that Mr. Murdstone has married his mother, David cries in his room and his mother normally feels sympathy for him. However, Mr. Murdstone orders her out of the room and gives David his first lesson in obedience:

'David,' he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, 'if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?' 'I don't know.' 'I beat him.' I had answered in a kind of breathless whisper, but I felt, in my silence, that my breath was shorter now. 'I make him wince, and smart. I say to myself, 'I'll conquer that fellow;' and if it were to cost him all the blood he had, I should do it.' (48-49; chapter IV)

Although David does not criticize her as an older narrator, Mrs. Copperfield's weakness is revealed in his childhood sufferings. She is incapable of understanding David's unhappiness when he finds her remarried and scolds him and Peggotty for making her unhappy. David soon understands Mr. Murdstone's influence on her: "I knew as well that he could mould her pliant nature into any form he chose, as I know, now, that he did it" (48; chapter IV). From then on, he tries to help her mother by

staying out of the Murdstones' way: "I had perception enough to know that my mother was the victim always; that she was afraid to speak to me, or be kind to me, . . . that she was not only ceaselessly afraid of her own offending, but of my offending, and uneasily watched their looks if I only moved" (106; chapter VIII).

One of the most important scenes of child abuse occurs when one day David does some mistakes during his lesson. In the meantime, Mr. Murdstone interrupts: "Why, Jane, we can hardly expect Clara to bear, with perfect firmness, the worry and torment that David has occasioned her to-day. That would be stoical. Clara is greatly strengthened and improved, but we can hardly expect so much from her. David, you and I will go upstairs, boy" (58; chapter IV). Then they go upstairs and David, although he cries to Mr. Murdstone not to beat him, is beaten unmercifully. When David bites his hand during this pounding, Mr. Murdstone beats him as if he would have killed him but for the inference of the women: "Then he was gone, and the door locked outside; and I was lying, fevered and hot, and torn, and sore, and raging in my puny way, upon the floor" (58; chapter IV). Actually, David's biting Murdstone's hand is a response to his evil action. According to Barry Westburg, "violence begins by imitating violence" (32). As a result of his rebellion, David's home is no longer a shelter for him, but becomes a prison. After this event, David is sent to Salem House School, with a ruthless headmaster, Mr. Creakle and in his first day of meeting other students, he is obliged to wear a placard on his back saying: "Be careful of him, he bites" as a punishment:

What I suffered from that placard, nobody can imagine. Whether it was possible for people to see me or not, I always fancied that somebody was reading it. It was no relief to turn around and find nobody; for wherever my back was, there I imagined somebody always to be . . . I knew that the servant read it, and the butcher read it, and the baker read it; that everybody, in a word, who came backwards and forwards to the house, of a morning when I was ordered to walk there, read that I was to be taken care of, for I bit. (75; chapter V)

After this event, young David fastens onto the friendship with Steerforth, one of the boys at Salem House because he appears in his life at the moment when he needs someone to lean on. David sees Steerforth as his "protector" (300; chapter XXIV). He

tells that Steerforth “was a person of great power in my eyes” (82; chapter VI). David believes that Steerforth will save him from Murdstone cruelty with this power. He also befriends Tommy Traddles, both of whom he meets again later on.

David somehow survives from the brutality and loneliness in his childhood by reading. The heroes of the novels keep him company in his isolation. While reading, he also enjoys a freedom which is denied to him in real life by the Murdstones. In this way, he is able to preserve himself. The protective power of reading protects David at Salem House School, too. He wins a distinction in the school thanks to his skill as a story-teller. As reading gives him an immune from the abused childhood he has experienced before with the Murdstones, his story-telling wins him immunity from Creakle’s regime this time. Thus at important parts of his childhood life, David protects himself from psychological oppression with the help of his fancy.

David’s mother is not just as lucky as him. She is not so strong as to bear the tyranny and the brutality of the Murdstones. David returns home for the holidays to find out that his mother has had a baby boy. She cannot endure David’s being sent to the boarding school by Mr. Murdstone as a punishment. Soon after David goes back to Salem House, his mother and her baby die and David has to return home immediately. How terrible Mr. Murdstone has treated David’s mother is shown in Miss. Betsey’s - David’s aunt - description of her days when she is alive:

Do you think I don’t know what a woeful day it was for the soft little creature when *you* first came in her way – smirking and making great eyes at her, I’ll be bound, as if you couldn’t say boh! to a goose! . . . And when you had made sure of the little fool – God forgive me that I should call her so, and she gone where *you* won’t go in a hurry – because you had not done wrong enough to her and hers, you must begin to treat her, must you? begin to break her, like a poor caged bird, and wear her deluded life away, in teaching her to sing *your* notes? . . . Mr. Murdstone, you were a tyrant to the simple baby, and you broke her heart. She was a loving baby – I know that; I knew it years before *you* ever saw her – and through the best part of her weakness you gave her the wounds she died of. (183; chapter XIV)

At school, when David hears the news about her mother's death, he has another grief. When he sees the other boys staring at him out of the windows, he says: "I felt distinguished and looked more melancholy, and walked slower. When school was over, and they came and spoke to me, I felt it rather good in myself not to be proud to any of them, and to take exactly the same notice of them all, as before" (111; chapter IX).

After his mother's death, Peggotty in some way can compensate for his loss and feeling of deprivation. She becomes his substitute mother who gives him money, food and affection. Mr. Peggotty's household provides him with the figure of an ideal father. When he is home again after the death of his mother, he sees nothing but neglect and abuse. It is seen how terrible David feels owing to the neglect of Mr. Murdstone and Jane Murdstone later:

And now I fell into a state of neglect, which I cannot look back upon without compassion. I felt at once into a solitary condition – apart from all friendly notice, apart from the society of all other boys of my own age, apart from all companionship but my own spiritless thoughts – which seems to cast its gloom upon this paper as I write . . . I was not actively ill-used. I was not beaten or starved; but the wrong that was done to me had no intervals of relenting, and was done in a systematic, passionless manner. Day after day, week after week, month after month, I was coldly neglected. (132; chapter IX)

When David is at home, the Murdstones neglect him and Mr. Murdstone sends him to work in a factory in London, of which Murdstone is a joint owner. In *David Copperfield*, his description of little David washing bottles in Murdstone & Grinby's warehouse is one of the detailed accounts of child labour. Both Mr. Murdstone and his sister banish David from his home, send him to work in a warehouse, in essence kill his mother and seize her money. In the novel, David narrates how he is neglected at his little age:

It is a matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age. A child of excellent abilities and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt bodily

or mentally, it seems wonderful to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. But none was made; and I became, at ten years old, a little laboring hind in the service of Murdstone & Grinby. (135; chapter XI)

His landlord, Mr. Wilkins Micawber, is sent to a debtor's prison - the King's Bench Prison - after going bankrupt, and is there for several months before being released and moving to Plymouth. He then realizes that he is at crossroads and after his stay with the Micawber family, when his situation becomes intolerable, David decides to take his chances with Aunt Betsey whom he has never seen in his life. David now has nobody left to care for him in London. He makes his choice to go to Dover to throw himself on the mercy of his aunt, Betsy Trotwood and stay with her. Deprived of food, shelter and clothing, he makes a long journey on foot to her house. Dickens shows how helpless David as a child is on his way in the episode where the waiter, in the inn at Yarmouth, consumes David's ale and his dinner. When he arrives at his aunt's house at last, he is in a miserable condition:

My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition. The soles had shed themselves bit by bit, . . . My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept-and torn besides-might have frightened the birds from my aunt's garden, as I stood at the gate . . . In this plight, and with a strong consciousness of it, I waited to introduce myself to, and make my first impression on, my formidable aunt. (164-165; chapter XIII)

Miss. Betsey takes him home and becomes a both nurturing and disciplining substitute mother for him. With the help of her, he gets a new name and is educated at a school for gentlemen. With the care of his aunt and her friends, David recovers his social position. Betsey Trotwood takes over Mr. Murdstone's role as a guardian by giving her surname to David and calling him Trotwood, soon shortened to "Trot". David lifts the sense of unworthiness that Murdstone has created in him. When David is in the care of his aunt, he starts to have an emotional balance and optimism. Hughes states that David's aunt tried to develop "the characteristics of excellence in him" (226; chapter XVIII). Miss Betsey says in the novel:

‘But what I want you to be, Trot,’ resumed my aunt – ‘I don’t mean physically but morally; you are very well physically – is a firm fellow. A fine firm fellow, with a will of your own. With resolution,’ said my aunt, shaking her cap at me, and clinching her hand. ‘With determination. With character, Trot – with strength of character that is not to be influenced, except on good reason, by anybody, or by anything. That’s what I want you to be. That’s what your father and your mother might both have been, Heaven knows, and been the better for it.’ (232; chapter XIX)

When the Murdstones come looking for David, they are sent packing by Betsey, being given no more respect than the donkeys that trespass on her lawn. David’s training is not coercive before the Murdstones. His mother and Peggotty are very affectionate towards him. Again, after the Murdstone cruelty, David is kindly treated and trained by his aunt. This conversation reveals her relationship toward him when David is to live at Mr. Wickfield’s house during the days at Doctor Strong’s school:

She told me that everything would be arranged for me by Mr. Wickfield, and that I should want for nothing, and gave me the kindest words and the best advice. ‘Trot,’ said my aunt in conclusion, ‘be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you!’ I was greatly overcome, and could only thank her again and again, and send my love to Mr. Dick. ‘Never,’ said my aunt, ‘be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel. Avoid these three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you.’ (191-192; chapter XV)

Betsy sends David to Dr. Strong's school in Canterbury where he lodges with Betsy's lawyer, Mr. Wickfield, and his daughter, Agnes. Agnes and David become best friends. In Mr. Wickfield’s home and in Doctor Strong’s school, he has an ideal development. He receives consideration, fatherly interest and hospitality from Mr. Wickfield. Agnes becomes a good friend of him during his youth and has a good influence in his life. He meets Uriah Heep who is a clerk there.

In Doctor Strong’s school, David has a good education. He is taught courtesy and politeness. When David goes to the school for the first time, one boy welcomes



him: “One Adams, who was the head-boy, then stepped out of his place and welcomed me. He looked like a young clergyman, in his white cravat, but he was very affable and good-humoured; and he showed me my place, and presented me to the masters in a gentlemanly way that would have put me at my ease if anything could.” (195; chapter XVI).

Dr. Strong is “the idol of the whole school” (203; chapter XVI). He is not coercive. He is kind, full of sympathy with the boys. “He appealed in everything to the honour and good faith of the boys, and avowed his intention to rely on the possession of these qualities unless they proved themselves unworthy” (202; chapter XVI). He trusts them and they are worthy of trust. As a result of this, the boys all “became warmly attached to the school – I am sure I did for one, and I never knew, in all my time, of any other boy being otherwise – and learnt with a good will, desiring to do it credit” (202; chapter XVI).

However, there is also bad training in some schools. Hughes says that the school, which Uriah Heep and his father before him have attended, is “an attack on the practice of instilling into the minds of poor children the consciousness of subserviency” (269; chapter XXII). After Uriah describes his training, David states: “I fully comprehended now for the first time what a base, unrelenting, and revengeful spirit must have been engendered by this early, and this long, suppression” (472; chapter XXXIX).

David graduates and goes to Yarmouth to visit Peggotty, who is now married to Mr. Barkis, the carrier. David reflects on what profession he should pursue.

On his way to Yarmouth, David encounters James Steerforth, and they take a detour to visit Steerforth’s mother. They arrive in Yarmouth and visit Peggotty and Mr. Peggotty who announces that Ham and Emily are to be married. There Steerforth and the Peggottys become fond of one another. When they return from Yarmouth, Miss Betsey persuades David to pursue a career as a proctor in Doctor’s Commons. David apprentices himself at the London firm of Spenlow and Jorkins and takes up lodgings with a woman named Mrs. Crupp. Agnes warns David against Steerforth and tells him that that Uriah Heep has weasled his way into a partnership with her father, capitalizing

on Mr. Wickfield's weaknesses. Mr. Spenlow invites David to his house for a weekend. There, David meets Spenlow's daughter, Dora, and quickly falls in love with her.

David learns that Mr. Barkis is terminally ill, so he journeys to Yarmouth to visit Peggotty. Little Emily and Ham, now engaged, are to be married upon Mr. Barkis's death. David, however, finds Little Emily upset over her impending marriage. When Mr. Barkis dies, Little Emily runs off with Steerforth, who she believes will make her a lady. The seduction of Little Emily, an orphan girl whom Mr. Peggotty looks after, is another example of child abuse in *David Copperfield*. Like David, Little Emily also expects something from Steerforth. She thinks that Steerforth will help her become a lady. For little Emily, gentility is not only a question of social ambition, but a life and death matter. Little Emily tells the young David years ago:

We would all be gentlefolks together, then. Me, and uncle, and Ham, and Mrs. Gummidge. We wouldn't mind then, when there come stormy weather – Not for our own sakes, I mean. We would for the poor fishermen's, to be sure, and we'd help 'em with money when they come to any hurt . . . I wake when it blows, and tremble to think of Uncle Dan and Ham, and believe I hear 'em crying out for help. That's why I should like so much to be a lady. (40-41; chapter III)

So when Emily encounters Steerforth, she thinks that Steerforth will save her from the difficulties of her life and make her a lady. However, it turns out that Steerforth has tried to arrange a marriage for her with his servant. She has been his mistress and has lost her good name. Both David and Emily have deceived themselves until they see the real face of Steerforth. After the seduction of Emily, David declares him dead. He says that Steerforth "fascinated me no longer" (375; chapter XXXII) and "the ties that bound me to him were broken" (375; chapter XXXII).

Mr. Peggotty is devastated but vows to find Little Emily and bring her home. Betsy Trotwood visits David in London and informs him that she has lost her fortune through bad business deals, she and Mr. Dick move in with David. David goes to work for Dr. Strong, learning shorthand to try to earn money while still apprenticed at Doctor's Commons. Like Dickens, David also starts writing stories, which gradually

attract public notice. While living in London, he once again meets Mr. Micawber, whose lodger is now Tommy Traddles, David's old school friend.

Dora and David marry, and Dora proves a terrible housewife, incompetent in her chores. David loves her anyway and is generally happy. Miss Dartle, Mrs. Steerforth's ward, summons David and informs him that Steerforth has left Little Emily. Miss Dartle adds that Steerforth's servant, Littimer, has proposed to her and that Little Emily has run away. David and Mr. Peggotty enlist the help of Little Emily's childhood friend Martha, who locates Little Emily and brings Mr. Peggotty to her. Little Emily and Mr. Peggotty decide to move to Australia, as do the Micawbers, who first save the day for Agnes and Miss Betsey by exposing Uriah Heep's fraud against Mr. Wickfield.

A powerful storm hits Yarmouth and kills Ham while he attempts to rescue a shipwrecked sailor. The sailor turns out to be Steerforth. Meanwhile, Dora falls ill and dies. David leaves the country to travel abroad. His love for Agnes grows. When David returns, he and Agnes, who has long harbored a secret love for him, get married and have several children. David writes his autobiography and pursues his writing career with increasing commercial success.

In 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1850, before finalizing *David Copperfield*, Dickens expresses his complicated emotions:

I am within three pages of the shore; and am strangely divided, as usual in such cases, between sorrow and joy. Oh, my dear Forster, if I were to say half of what *Copperfield* makes me feel to-night, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the Shadowy World. (qtd. in Forster 421)

This novel has affected him so much that he feels to "be turned inside out". It is an important novel for himself as it includes some of his memories when he was a young boy. *David Copperfield* has the characteristic of being an autobiographical novel full of Dickens's life experiences and at the same time, it is a novel in which truth and fiction are interweaved together. David is representative of every child in society. According to Marxist criticism, the capitalist system destroyed the working-class people and children as well. If David were not a lucky and a clever boy, he would be destroyed

and would die just like the other children in the society. However, he tried hard to escape from his miserable condition and he survived with the help of his aunt, Mrs. Betsey. *David Copperfield* plays an important role in emphasizing the thesis subject by giving striking examples of child abuse and poverty during Victorian era in England.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The Victorian age of England is considered as the time of great change. These changes occurred as a result of the Industrial Revolution which had influence on the people and the institutions of the era. As there were innovations and technological developments in most fields, there was a transition from the agrarian practice to the factory system in the production process. The craft-based way of manufacture vanished gradually in this period while new subdivided jobs come out of the mass production process. The people who had their own business turned into the laborers of the wealthy factory owners who employed them under inhumane conditions of employment. As a result of the increase in population, there was need to make mass production. Owing to the mass production, the factory owners needed more workers and machines to compete with the production. All of these factors caused workers to be mechanized. Thus, “the Revolution produced a new class of capitalist owners who became very rich. It also produced masses of wage-earners in factories . . . (Lines 108). There was an inequality between people as a result of this process. While the wealthy factory owners became richer, the poor laborers became poorer. Those working-class people were suppressed by these upper-class people.

The adults were not the only ones who suffered under these oppressions. The children also suffered in this period even more than the adults. Most of them starved to death in the workhouses owing to inadequate nutrition. When they grew up, they started to work whether as apprentices or laborers in factories. As they were regarded as cheap labour by the factory owners, they were employed for little wages despite working for long hours. In addition to these difficulties, they suffered from the agonies in the educational institutions. They were oppressed by the discipline at schools. They were educated by utilitarian adults who taught the unquestionable facts limiting the children’s mental development.

Charles Dickens revealed the powerlessness of these people and how they survived under this oppression in his works. As he himself encountered such difficulties in his life, he reflected realistic portrayals of the poverty and the child abuse in those times. He was able to observe what was happening in his society and reveal the defaults of the Victorian period in his works. He focused on the condition of children more than

the other issues as he had experienced similar difficulties when he was a child. Together with the rights of the working-class laborers, he defended these neglected and abused children.

Dickens emphasizes on the sufferings of these powerless people as a spokesman. These people could not express their needs and rights and they could not defend themselves. However, Dickens gives the chance of speech to these oppressed people who were not ever given the right to speak. These working-class people are controlled under some disciplinary rules and behave according to these rules. In this perspective, Dickens tries to make them aware of their rights and warns them not to do anything that they are asked if they do not want in a Marxian sense. He wants to create a classless society in which every people are independent individuals. He also warns people to stand up against the bourgeoisie.

Dickens sheds light on the issues of poverty and child abuse in *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield*. In *Oliver Twist*, he reveals the conditions of the orphans at the workhouses and the abuse of children in most places such as factories, workhouses, and outside world. He also reflects the poverty which was common in the Victorian period. He criticizes the government institutions and the abusers of these institutions. Therefore, we infer that Dickens defends Marxist ideals for the welfare of the society. The government institutions were run by administrators who abused their power in the Victorian period. Dickens is the voice of these powerless people who do not have the right to react the injustices in their lives.

In *Hard Times*, Dickens focuses on the inadequateness of the schools and criticizes the administrators of the schools as they abuse the system when they run it. By supplying them with facts and not letting them imagine, they prevent the children from improving their imagination, living freely as they want, and developing their creativities.

In *David Copperfield*, Dickens shows the parallels between his main character David and himself. Although this novel seems to be an autobiographical one, it interweaves the truth and fiction effectively. He criticizes the child abuse at schools and

in factories in this novel as well. Despite all the abuses which he encounters at home by Mr. Murdstone, at school by Mr. Creakle, and in the factory, David survives at last.

In the light of all the issues analyzed in this thesis, it can be clearly stated that Dickens and Marx come together with regards to the poverty and abuse – especially child abuse - which the proletariat experienced through their lives. It is very apparent that the proletariat felt the pressure of the bourgeoisie very deeply after the Industrial Revolution. It is also important to note that Dickens criticizes not only the economical system of the era but also social institutions of the Victorian society. He warns the people of his country to be aware of what is happening around them and calls them to do something for their welfare. He is also like a socialist defending the rights of his people in poverty. Dickens is interested in history in which these oppressed people have the same rights to speak as the people of bourgeois society. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that the characters described by Dickens in his *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield* certainly represent the real citizens of the writer's time and show the real life examples of the poverty and child abuse in that period. By taking attention of everyone to the hard conditions of the period, Dickens does not draw a pessimistic portrayal. In contrast, by creating the characters of Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Sissy Jupe who survive in difficult circumstances, Dickens seems to be still hopeful for the coming generations.

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