

Though Anna was a very courageous young lady, Anna had her own frustration inside herself. She had her own pain and resentment which she has expressed in her writing on the pages of diary. She had her loneliness where she was suffering alone. And Anna winterbourne was a woman who was broken after her husband's death but at last gathered herself and started to walk again. Anne was also a strong women who has fought with the family and had her own pain and feelings but strong enough to gather herself and fight to live in cruel world. Throughout the books one observes that the main characters end up by discovering themselves. What is done in the books is actually an enactment of the principle that states that memory is life. This act of narration, takes the narrator and the readers as well, into a journey of discovery, by the end of the book where they come to discover themselves. In addition, they feel each other with the senses and feelings of their heart and familiarity of life experience. And most importantly these women could read themselves so intensely that they discovered themselves and probably also other women in society.

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Charles Dickens, the Second Construction of British Realism

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Abstract: Charles Dickens rose from the ruins of ashes to tell everlasting stories of human miseries and exploitation based on the observations and the pragmatic illustrations of what he endured as a child, what he encountered as an adult and what he realized as a writer. A broken child, a wailing adult and a mature commentator of the human insouciance towards the street savvy. This research paper attempts a revaluation of Dickens in the context of Marxist doctrinal adhesion and the dogma of the capitalist holocaust.

Keywords: Proletariat, Predicament, Lampoon, Capitalism, exploitation, dignity and rights.

Dickens is one of those writers who are well worth stealing. Even the burial of his body in Westminster Abbey was a species of theft, if you come to think of it. - **George Orwell.**

Charles Dickens was one of the few masters of prose with enchanting style and poetic elegance, words, passages, paragraphs, expressions, idioms and a sense of direction remain the features of a writer who celebrated the writing of prose along with Joyce and Hemingway. Dickens wrote what ailed humanity, what ailed him personally and what ailed the world of his time and beyond yet there is the perfectly serene and lucidly crafted common sense in his writings be it the toxic chimney smoke or the dingy, congested, breathe-choking bottle factory, a soggy London street or the Victorian razzmatazz or the nobility of the Christian soul, all he did was to stir up the slumberous conscience of the Victorians who lived on the falsity of a feigned ethical scale. He was scathing yet entertaining, ruthless yet inspiring, savage yet redeeming. He blended his experiences with utter disdain towards the opulent to be one of them at a later stage but without the arrogance opulence entails. Dickens is the Captain Ahab of *Moby Dick*, so full of verve yet a sense of remorse permeates him but he is never in league with the advocates of irrationalism. Condemned to a scary childhood, to a firmed solitary road of life, trudged the dreams of a dream merchant with swords of realism, witty candour and a heavy fisted slam on the doors of destiny to end up as the song of the subaltern, as the succour of the deprived and as the hope of the abandoned future. He is tour de force and the *vox populi* of the reading mass, entrenched into a commoner's concept of paradise which never dwindles to the theatre of the Absurd. Reading him is recovering the faith in the justice of Nature, the good moral fable, the hijacked political hierarchy and the crumbled social order where the street savvy can dwell in his own wretched self to unearth the wretched of the earth which Dickens believes is a handful of

wickedly ambitious imperial lords holding humanity hostage to play gambling games in Casino at the expense of Proletariat's blood. Dickens in his great works, works that led him to the drawing rooms of his nemesis and rivals who gave him the stuff to write, who in fact provided him the ammunitions to burn their expensive drawing rooms through the fires of his writings acknowledged the failures of the British society to own its discarded children. They thought Australia and New Zealand have been created as their dumping houses but little did the political masters realize that even one Dickens was enough to rip through the glory of the glorious Britain. *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities* confirm the fictional prowess of an almost discarded child of England who ran from pillar to post with a cracked bowl and a pair of hands to put them to work but it was the splendid indifference of the political hierarchy to shoo him away and stop him from playing spoil sport in their merry making acts of life. Dickens had expressed an apprehension whether "He shall be the Hero of his own life" given the roads he was to travel and given the bumpy rides he was to negotiate at a later date. Was it the thrill of writing alone that catapulted him to the summit of his imagination or was it the burning fires of stomach that pushed him into the ambit of an activity that raised him to the degree of a legislator in his fiction, a political analyst in his novels, a caricaturist in his sketches and a Marxist in his political views that wanted a classless society.

The Victorian ethos, the dogmas that basically characterized its temper and the tendency to flaunt its superficial sophistication to the barred segments perhaps irked Dickens not appreciated by his own contemporary William Makepeace Thackeray who considered him more as an advertiser of the self rather than the conditions he grew in. Even G. B. Shaw did not agree with his tirade against the British society though his daughter had given enough evidence to Shaw about what Dickens was. Here my objective is to trace the elements of human sympathy in his writings and judge whether he was more tormented by the personal conditions than the indifferent responses of the times he lived in or the social tension riddled with class consciousness. Middleclass was not a term of approbation and definitely not a term of dignity in a high falutin society where the floor space was reserved for the street savvy. His conditions of early existence is a universal knowledge so talking about them may sound repetitive or even a waste of words but the power in his writings decisively accrued from the stigma of isolation to which there can be no two opinions. John Foster and Michael Slater, his two biographers may not have told the entire truth about his life or may have skipped the bitter part of the story of the struggling and staggering child but they do confirm the bias of the social class and the settling of soot on the furious imagination unleashing blitzkrieg on the political structure of the time. Dickens was the first and the last of the Victorians who ended up

as separate entities, the poor, the popular and the rich. His writings early on were the bread for the hungry class, the staple food for the left out and for the injured greats of his time. A tiny, temperate and timid Dickens eventually converted himself into a rare fictional talent given the turbulence within and the zeal to strike back that left him into the throes of a crippling crisis. David Daiches finds the strain of bitterness in him and this bitterness was induced by those who had left him injured. The Victorian period represents a radical rupture from novel gate to social realism to which Dickens was wedded and imposed a sense of order in a society that continued to persist with a bundle of affectations. The cigars of the aristocrats, the gowns of the industrialists, the language of the politicians spoke enough about the disdain towards a child like Dickens who held the rough end of the stick for a long time. Nineteenth century is a century of transition as the likes of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding had moved away from representing the portraits of the society as it was though Moll Flanders had raised the early alarm of the lust for wealth and the temptations of power of a young girl adopted by a noble Christian whose sons unleashed sexual assaults on the adopted daughter which in fact again pressed the message home that a poor girl must be the prey to the aristocrat's lascivious tendency. She escaped but not unhurt, she rose but not without falling, she grew in stature but not without compromises, a whore, wife five times and one time a wife of her own brother anticipated the direction of the British society.

Dickens too cried at the late hours of night to usher into this world but his cries had an extended spell studded with umpteen hassles. Here we will refer to two novels Bleak House and Hard Times as the emblem of his proletariat concerns and the general human sympathy with allusions to *Hard Times*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations* to suggest that his concerns were profoundly extenuated through pathos that touched him and through arrogance that alienated him from the mainstream of the British powerhouse. Even Dostoevsky went through the trials and Mesrsault and Daru of Albert Camus, Gregor Samsa and Josef. K of Kafka have had their barren spells of life where the question of absurdity crept up but Dickens's characters are the very people who live a wretched life, who rise from the pavement to dwell in a hamlet, the utter chaos and the helpless cries only confirm the irrational distribution of the national wealth which was the focal point of his concern as a writer of fiction and as reporter of events. The paradigm shift in the structure of British novel found its culmination in the intense social realism where fiction ceased to be fiction and veritably represented the classes and masses perception. Dickens's affiliation to his own class is a fidelity to experience and conformity to tradition but in the very act of conformity there is a rebel temper to overhaul a society diced up in the ruins of the class and to wrestle with the problem of belief in social justice. We can selectively refer to some paragraphs from his novels to highlight further

the extent to which his concerns were stretched and the scale of discriminatory practises the political system was guilty of. Dickens suffered mostly not for being poor because poverty is curse heaped by nature on individuals but for the fact that he found an inherent bias and disdain towards the class that had the best of talents except the richness to pursue it. Dickens was the product of circumstances which makes Cecil David call his fiction as "one of the most realistic dialogues in fiction". Critics like Cecil David, Arnold Kettle and F.R. Leavis though he had isolated Dickens from *Great Tradition* in the first edition of the book also recognized the power that Dickens unleashed in transforming a society whose infirmities were dangerously committed to disintegrating the social and ethical code. The rise of a new consciousness can only be attributed to him and with it grew a class that progressively became aware of its social and political rights.

Let's examine a paragraph from *HardTimes*

How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, oh, Father, What have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here? Said Louisa as she touched her heart. - *HardTimes*.

And again

It was a Sunday evening in London, gloomy, close, and stale. Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, sharp and flat, cracked and clear, fast and slow, made the brick-and-mortar Echoes hideous. Melancholy streets, in a penitential garb of soot, steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency. In every thoroughfare, up almost every alley, and down almost every turning, some doleful bell was throbbing, jerking, tolling, as if the Plague were in the city and the dead-carts were going round. Everything was bolted and barred that could by possibility furnish relief to an overworked people. No pictures, no unfamiliar animals, no rare plants or flowers, no natural or artificial wonders of the ancient world--all TABOO with that enlightened strictness, that the ugly South Sea gods in the British Museum might have supposed themselves at home again. Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to change the brooding mind, or raise it up. Nothing for the spent toiler to do, but to compare the monotony of his seventh day with the monotony of his six days, think what a weary life he led, and make the best of it--or the worst, according to the probabilities.

- *Little Dorrit*.

And I am bored to death with it. Bored to death with this place, bored to death with my life, bored to, death.

- *Bleak House*

These passages represent the beauty and the brilliance of a prose master who knew what he was trying to do by referring to the *maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, Melancholy streets, in a penitential garb of soot,*

steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency is just a classic example of how Dickens turned himself into a writer of the very chaos, turbulence within and outside the soul of a city where the crowd swells only to end up in a sense of lost direction. These are all statements of what brewed inside Dickens, also as anguish took control of an imagination not willing to disengage itself from the daily dreary acts of living a rather sterile life. Some echoes of T.S. Eliot can also be looked into to suggest Dickens anticipated the generation next disgust and dilemma the way London was shaping up as a metaphor.

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decisively anti industrialization, anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeoisie expressions loaded with satirical drawings of what and how England would be consuming the toxic, poisonous impact of the capitalist chase to find London littered with streets where breath crumbles as everyday has the same monotony that obstructs and clogs the air passage inside the bone riddled chests of those going into factory with stale and barren eyes. Dickens had a heart for the blue collared as he himself rose to the white collared but without the traits that typified it. “Bored to death” in *Bleak House* is a statement of desperation of a child already abused and assaulted by the power building machines of England and the mad scrambling for the illusion of prosperity. Dickens cracks the whip on the political masters of his time as the apparatus of exploitation becomes the gateway to usurping powers to deny a good chunk of his own class whatever accrued to it as its legitimate share in the national wealth. There can still be a disagreement as some critics call Dickens the noise machine of sleeping London or the rabble rousing imagination that cried more for the sins of his inheritance rather than developing a soft corner for those genuinely oppressed. But these critics only ignore the realistic dialogues and the bitterness in his art to camouflage the dogmatic Victorian ethos where a woman novelist had to switch over to a male name to be read seriously by the readers, which itself is an index to judge the complete mismanagement in the 19th c where flowers bloomed for those who did not even know who brought the seeds for it.

Dickens was also a Marxist ideologically as his novels like *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* solidly anchor class consciousness that was rooted into the psychology of a novelist who knew the perils of the oppressed denied space in a zipped society where it was difficult to be a downtrodden. Peter Lamarque writes

"works in the canonical literary tradition ... are thought to be especially valuable for holding up a mirror to life" (117). Literary characters act against cultural and social backdrops which influence their behavior and choices. To Marx and Friedrich Engels, the fact that the novel could represent an actual social milieu was a huge advantage. The realism disguised under literary devices could accomplish dual purposes, both as a means of provoking a new kind of "social consciousness" among the bourgeoisie and as a means of raising the proletariat's class consciousness. The upper class needed to know firsthand the sufferings of the poor. As Engels discovered in Manchester, the upper and middle classes commuted from country home to place of business or shopping without a glimpse of the byproducts of capitalism: the disfigured bodies, the rotting homes, the filth and hopelessness. Enclosed trains zipped the bourgeoisie to and from the centre of town, keeping them ignorant of the smells of disease and stagnant water that represented the innards of the working-class world. Behind the small shops lining the main corridors lurked the "man behind the curtain": the displaced person, the child laborer, the hungry factory worker, who all kept the wheels of capitalism turning. Engels might have viewed this as the illusion of capitalism, for as long as those who control the means of production do not have to confront its realities, injustice will continue." -Volume 13 Issue 4 (December 2011) Article 10 Ami E. Stearns and Thomas J. Burns, "About the Human Condition in the Works of Dickens and Marx.

Dickens too attacked industrial capitalism in most of his writings bearing a stress of dissent against the exploitation of the factory workers, the smoke that consumed the heart of a proletariat and the trains that stuffed the humans like commodities. Peter Lamargue's observations are indeed a revelation of the social tension that stemmed from a gradual awareness of class isolation. Child labour of which Dickens himself was a victim pushed into the quagmire of struggle early on could sense the dangers of capitalism.

In *Bleak House*, the simpleton Mr. Skimpole presents a picture of capitalism by discussing bees and why they should not be models of hard work: "then, after all, it was a ridiculous position to be smoked out of your fortune with brimstone as soon as you had made it" (108). Mr. Skimpole has presented the plight of the proletariat using the symbolism of the beehive. As a class, the proletariat are encouraged to work mindlessly, instinctively, and endlessly for a product which they will never see or own. They are "hands within the capitalist machinery, providing the grist for the mill of capital accumulation" - (Clark and Foster 382).

Later in *Bleak House*

"Well, well," says Mr. Bucket, 'you train him respectable, and he'll be a comfort to you, and look after you in your old age, you know.' 'I mean to try hard,' she answers, wiping her eyes. 'But I have been a-thinking ... of the many things that'll come in his way. My master will be against it, and he'll be beat, and see me beat, and made to fear his home, and perhaps to stray wild ... ain't it likely I should think of him as he lies in my lap now and wish he had died' (*Bleak House* 323-24)

The exploration of Marxist themes culminate into a realization that the orphans of England were condemned to destiny with the rise of industrial culture to which Dickens was indeed very sensitive and he lambasted and pooh poohed the growing unrest with a class of children whose future was like a flower plucked from a dry orchard incapable of stifling the creeping infertility into its roots. David Copperfield looks into this troubled aspect of the oppressed children's existence in a society that was progressively turning into a land of capitalist monster hell bent upon obviating a social structure that only created spaces for the rise of acrimony between the great divide, the rich and the abandoned. The duality what Dickens refers to as good and evil is the second Marxist trope found in Dickens's work is the very duality of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: "*our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms*" (*The Communist Manifesto* 34). It can still be presumed that Dickens association with the left outs was not circumstantial nor was it coincidental because when he turned into a writer he had the mass of experiences behind him supplied by the trials of his own spirit to raise an alarm against the economic order of the day wherein he only perceived the further isolation of the working class from the mainstream of national life. Observes Lamargue

"Dickens was, more than Marx himself, the embodiment of an intellectual vanguard born of the proletariat. His writing was embedded in a way of seeing the world that had a genuineness that, at least for some readers, eluded Marx. In any case, the works of Marx and Dickens serve as a complement to the other. They were writing at a similar time and place and looking at many of the same social problems in resonant ways. In whatever genre, a distinguishing characteristic of a master is the ability to combine scope of vision with detail and depth of vision."

Thus it may be said that Dickens the early was a child discarded and Dickens in the later stages becomes a voice of the proletariat's predicament by writing the history of class struggle and expressing ideological affinity with Marx, both of them were basically concerned about the rise of capitalist forces as the devil's advocate to leave the society blatantly lop sided. Literary discourses or the discussions on Charles Dickens as the writer prophet has its genesis in the class consciousness and the great divide on social lines which eventually scripted the doom for the working class. Dickens from *Hard Times* to *Great Expectations* and from *Oliver Twist* to *Bleak House* tends to highlight the discriminatory policies of the British Government and the Bourgeoisie's control on the power dynamics and the subsequent rise of the capitalist might. George Orwell defends Dickens on grounds that he attacked the British Victorian society not being hostile to what the country was doing by isolating the oppressed but on grounds of personal grudges universalized as the problem of the very human society across the globe. The interplay between his sufferings and the sufferings of his

class may have a direct bearing on his mind-set but he knew that the Victorians had disdain towards the ostracized sections and even politically there was not much to talk about as far as the oppressors were concerned. Dickens chronicles the despair of economics left in shreds while industrial boom was being celebrated as a financial success. George Orwell observes.

In *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, Dickens attacked English institutions with a ferocity that has never since been approached. Yet he managed to do it without making himself hated, and, more than this, the very people he attacked have swallowed him so completely that he has become a national institution himself.

Further George Orwell is not satisfied with the explanation of a misjudgement based on the readings of critics like Bechofer Roberts who in *This Side Idolatry* attacked Dickens for being too harsh on the certain sections of the society and institutional blasts Dickens indulged in. Bechofer argues that Dickens should have suggested solutions to the problems and possibly he knew nothing about amending the ways of the nation to which Orwell reacted as having said that it's not the business of a writer to find solutions of the problems referred to by a writer.

One crying evil of his time that Dickens says very little about is child labour. There are plenty of pictures of suffering children in his books, but usually they are suffering in schools rather than in factories. The one detailed account of child labour that he gives is the description in *David Copperfield* of little David washing bottles in Murdstone & Grinby's warehouse. This, of course, is autobiography. Dickens himself, at the age of ten, had worked in Warren's blacking factory in the Strand, very much as he describes it here. It was a terribly bitter memory to him, partly because he felt the whole incident to be discreditable to his parents, and he even concealed it from his wife till long after they were married.

Looking back on this period, he says in *David Copperfield*:

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 labouring hind in the service of Murdstone & Grinby.

And again, having described the rough boys among whom he worked:

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship... and felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my bosom.- *David Copperfield*.

The pain here is more than apparent as if it hurt the soul of Dickens and this scary period chased him throughout his life and perhaps he found himself blemished to the extent that he did not tell his wife anything about it. This is again a situation where the child labour would have been addressed much more effectively but Dickens ends up as a grudging insulted child and refused any mention of it in his personal life. Charles Dickens remains one of the most read novelists in the history of literature

because there is a bit of Dickens in every reader whether he/she likes it or not. Dickens has the brilliance of prose, the power to rise above the prejudicial bent of mind and blasted the forces with ruthless aggression that left him perched on the pedestals of humiliation. His novels in the words of Loius Cazamian “are the gospels of humanitarianism.” Time survives and so does Dickens but Dickens, the proletariat will continue to haunt and hammer the progenitors of capitalism. His characters are not only representations of what Dickens went through on a variety of levels but the emotional crisis and the financial bedlam the Britons had transferred to the suffering class find coruscating portraits in Steven Blackpool, Bounderby and Grandgrin who typify the divide between the art of economics and the ability to usurp the share of those who burn in chimney smoke to provide a cooling and healing touch to the expensive and expansive drawing rooms of the sophisticates who drew cigars and tucked them between the lips as an act of solidarity with the growing capitalist class. The rise of industrialization alienated further the likes of Dickens and his class to serve the arrogance of capitalism.

Most of Dickens' writings were motivated by the adversaries including time, background and the circumstances he was placed in to wriggle into the shoes of history as a purifying effect on the vices of the contemporary value system. In him there is a touch of cynical temper early on though diluted later on as he begins gripping realities, the odds of the human behaviour and the conditions of life which a young Dickens was unwilling to accept. Time moved on and with it moved the razor sharp swishing drags of his satirical sketches, *Oliver Twist* heralds the amateurish imagination of a would be novelist though journalistic in tone, he soon jumped to the English scene with observations aplenty to strike back at the very forces that had left him dangling in the depths of personal chaos. *Pickwick Papers* had still in him the bitter cartoonist and a sore journalist. But as he drew closer to the drama of life he scripted more realistic scenes of British brains and brawns, its mode of celebrating life in clinical isolation of what was looked down upon as middleclass to which Dickens was wedded perennially and idealized them as the backbones of a struggling nation that perhaps was more engaged in the opium of a delusion which the science of Economics had taught them. Not sure whether Dickens only battled the rough edges of his personal grouses or had a larger views of the British panoramic society. Dickens lampooned the very society he lived in, blasted the myths of happiness for the proletariats, punctured the tyres of complacent Bourgeoisie, drew back the street urchins into the mainstream of the society and ordered a restructuring of the classes that provided the bases for the alienation of the orphans of British storm, Dickens courageously refused to eat the poisoned bread and refused to be a part of the imperial hypocrisy by refusing to work in British Parliament, he thought to be a house of lies and a bunch of rash and reckless individuals who drew from