

# ULUSLARARASI SOSYAL ARAŐTIRMALAR DERGİSİ THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

Cilt: 13 Sayı: 69 Mart 2020 & Volume: 13 Issue: 69 March 2020  
www.sosyalarastirmalar.com Issn: 1307-9581  
Doi Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2020.3942>

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN VICTORIAN NOVELS: AN ANALYSIS OF *HARD TIMES*, *DAVID COPPERFIELD* AND *NORTH AND SOUTH*

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### Abstract

This study seeks to analyze three significant Victorian novels in terms of their social and environmental consciousness. In order to reveal that Victorian Fiction was an effective means to fight against the social problems and environmental degradation, *Hard Times* and *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens and *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell were chosen. This study attempts to reveal the connection between the Industrial Revolution and social and environmental problems arising from it in the novels *Hard Times* and *North and South*. This study also attempts to analyze *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens to elucidate several social problems such as prostitution and poverty in Victorian Fiction. In order to reveal how both Dickens and Gaskell drew their characters in a way that reflects the typical Victorian society, major characters will be analyzed. As a result, this study elucidates the environmental and social problems in all three novels and the way the writers display them.

**Keywords:** Victorian Fiction, Industrial Revolution, Bildungsroman, Social Novel.

### INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution is an essential event in the history of Great Britain. The Industrial Revolution marks the rapid shift from handicraft to the use of industrial machines. Naturally, the advent of the revolution had both positive effects and adverse effects in the history of Great Britain but the overwhelming effect is seen as the oppressive force on the proletariat because the revolution brought about excessively hard work, small income and bad living conditions. The negative impacts of the revolution are a significant theme in Victorian novel. *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell and *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens are two important novels which convey the hardships the working-class citizens suffer from in England and, in this study, these two novels will

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be analyzed in terms of the negative effects of Industrial Revolution and the reflections of the revolution in the works.

Though the exact date of the beginning of the industrial revolution in England is uncertain, one can say that it took place between the 18th and the 19th century. It first took place in the United Kingdom where it influenced how agriculture, mining, and trade were done. It naturally brought about mechanization and machines started to do the work which was carried out by human labor. The Industrial Revolution spread to other European countries and, consequently to most countries in the world. Inevitably, it influenced the everyday lives of people dramatically. Machines gradually replaced human labor. The first effect of The Industrial Revolution was seen in the textile industry. People had small workbenches at home where they could sew, but big textile factories replaced this. Production of goods increased. The Industrial Revolution as a whole had great influence on everyday life both in positive and negative ways ("Industrial Revolution").

According to Deane, the Industrial Revolution is the first industrial revolution in the world, and the exact that when it started is a "matter of controversy" (1979, 2). Deane also states that "[The Industrial Revolution] occurred spontaneously, without the government assistance which has been characteristic of most succeeding industrial revolutions" (1979, 2). It can be concluded that the revolution was brought about by the necessities of the age; however, this does not change the fact that the revolution was harsh on the working class. According to Deane, "the national income of England and Wales at the end of the seventeenth century...(was) between 8 pounds or nine pounds per annum per head of the population, in the 1750's it was probably between twelve pounds or thirteen pounds" (1979, 8). At first glance, one can easily say that the per capita income rose thanks to the revolution. However, because of inflation, the value of money decreased, and people became poorer after the revolution (Deane, 1979, 8).

New machinery items such as the steam engine and power loom were introduced to the world of industry and, in the meantime, the population of Britain increased. There was a very rapid advance in industrialization. Cities, especially the cities in the middle of England, grew dramatically. When these cities grew more prominent and advanced in industrial terms, naturally many people moved to these cities in search of work and this caused a sudden growth in population (Nelson, 2002, 189). Industrial advancement and growth of population made big cities polluted and over-populated. The fictional setting of *Hard Times* which is called Coketown exemplifies the post-industrial gloomy town. Coketown has a bleak, gloomy and ugly atmosphere and it thoroughly reflects the post-industrial urban England.

The changes that took place during the Industrial Revolution were so rapid that they brought about "social and economic problems" (Nelson, 2002, 189). There was an economic depression between 1830 and 1840, and this necessitated the intervention of the government. The inequality of income between the rich and the poor was dramatic. According to Nelson, this "gave rise to the so-called 'condition of England' question" (2002, 189). The ills of the revolution were the central theme of some writers including Dickens and Gaskell (Nelson, 2002, 189). Changes of all kinds were experienced including the ways of living of people.

The novels which this study analyzes mention the harmful effects of the Industrial Revolution on common people. The novels reflect the oppressive effect of the revolution and the wealthy and influential people on the proletariat. The study also deals with the social structure of the era, which is directly or indirectly related to industrialization.

## 1. THE EFFECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN *HARD TIMES*

As to give a summary of *Hard Times*, we can say that it is the story of the newly industrialized imaginary setting of Coketown where the rich enjoy the beauties of life and the poor are suppressed under the rich. As Aşçı states, *Hard Times* demonstrates how "the ruling class controls the society's means of production" (2019, 36). Throughout the plot, the rich benefit from the advances in industrialization and the poor suffer from them. Thomas Gradgrind is a major character in the work and represents the cruel, wealthy capitalist. He is a pragmatist, opportunist, and a capitalist. For Gradgrind, material goods constitute the meaning of life because he attaches too much importance to commodity. This characterization of Dickens can be read as a criticism of capitalism and the personalities capitalism creates. Gradgrind is determined to bring up his oldest children like himself. For Gradgrind, fact is the most significant element in life. In the process of Gradgrind's bringing up his children, Gradgrind's philosophy is not thoroughly accepted by Louisa, which can be understood by the inner



contradictions Louisa experiences. Gradgrind is an example of the emerging wealthy capitalist class of the post-industrial era, and his character is shaped by capitalism, as well as his economic status. The importance he attaches to commodity, the fact that he sees fact as the only important entity in life are apparently a criticism of the post-industrial capitalism, pragmatism, and opportunism. As mentioned before, the Industrial Revolution brought about not only economic innovations but also it was influential in people's everyday lives and ways of living.

Gradgrind as a father and educator intervenes with people's lives excessively, and the reason why he can see in himself the right to do so is that he is wealthy and powerful. He establishes a school, which, at first glance, can be seen as a charitable act, but it turns out that he established his school to educate people according to his philosophy. He does not want his children to be emotive people; he urges them to be like himself. Gradgrind's favorite student Sissy, whom he educates on scholarship, is a talented young girl with a bright, imaginative mind. Gradgrind wants to shape her in his way. Gradgrind is successful in raising his son Tom as a selfish capitalist, but Louisa experiences an inner confusion whether to be like her father wants her to be or to listen to the voice of her emotions. Louisa marries Josiah Bounderby. Bounderby is a wealthy man who is much older than Louisa. Gradgrind foreruns this marriage.

There are numerous clues about how Charles Dickens as a writer with political consciousness criticizes the emerging post-industrial wealthy class for their oppression on the poor and the way in which they impose their capitalistic ideas. As D.J. Thorold puts it in "The Introduction to *Hard Times*,"

Thomas Gradgrind, hardware manufacturer, founder of a model school and later MP for Coketown, together with his factory-owner friend and associate Josiah Bounderby, represent this vice in *Hard Times*, and the story centers mainly on the Gradgrind family, whose lives come to mingle with that of Dickens's representative industrial worker Stephen Blackpool. Dicken's significant targets of attack are the Science of Political Economy as it was called, and the philosophy of Utilitarianism. (1995, 11)

That is to say, Gradgrind is the representative of the powerful and wealthy capitalist who is harsh on the weaker and the poorer. Thorold suggests that by creating Gradgrind character, Charles Dickens implicitly criticized Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) (1995, 11). This shows that Dickens as a politically conscious writer powerfully combines fictionality with reality. The ethical problem of utilitarianism is that it seeks individual happiness and in so doing, it is hoped that all the society will be happy if every single individual is happy. Although this might sound rational, the fact that seeking individual happiness can be harmful if it is seen as the most important aspect of life as people will inevitably harm each other for their pursuit of happiness. In theory, "the pursuit of individual self-interest brings benefit to all" (Thorold 11). However, in practice, as Coles argues:

Under the pressures of a capitalist economy, and particularly since the felicific calculus required a numerical index of pleasure, the concept of 'pleasure' (or happiness or good) became attenuated to financial gain, the form of self-interest which in political-economic theory was taken to be the motor of industrial progress. (Coles Qt. in Thorold, 11)

Therefore, the aim of utilitarianism might be positive, but practically, it is unattainable. The inequality in people's income, the enormous gap between social classes, are caused by this utilitarianist attitude, and it is apparently an outcome of the Industrial Revolution in this context.

Gradgrind's intervention with people's lives can be seen as symbolic. This interference is based upon a historical fact, and it is an implied criticism of that class. The power-holders intervened even with the workings of governments. They probably saw the right in themselves to do so as they were powerful and wealthy. As Coles also states, these people who had the power supported "governmental action over problems of destitution or health, (nevertheless) they opposed all controls of trade or commerce" (Coles Qt. in Thorold, 11). This shows the utilitarians' hypocrisy. Although they claimed that they wanted the best for everyone, they wanted the best for themselves.

In the very beginning of the book, Gradgrind teaches the school children the importance of facts. There is a striking detail that in the book the word fact is capitalized when Gradgrind speaks. This shows the extreme importance of facts for Gradgrind. He tells the school children that fact alone is sufficient in life (Dickens 3).

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! (Dickens 3)

These words of Gradgrind show how he adopts fact as the only important entity in life, and it is apparent that he did not found his school for charitable reasons, but he founded his school to impose his ideas. It is also another ethical problem of utilitarianism in the book. Gradgrind is represented as a thoroughly square character; his fingers and his forehead were square, which, one can easily say that, was done deliberately by Dickens to display the inflexibility of the character. Ironically, he is geometrical in shape. His speech was "inflexible, dry and dictatorial" (Dickens, 3). As Dames points out, Dickens "satirized the dictatorial ambitions of teachers" in *Hard Times* (2005, 95).

Gradgrind imposes his ideas on children by saying "You are to be in all things regulated and governed...by fact" (Dickens 7). While teaching his students facts, he forbids them to use the word fancy Gradgrind says "You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it," and in doing so, he aims at killing young people's imagination (Dickens 7). That is why the chapter is called "Murdering the Innocents." Gradgrind also interferes with people's tastes and feelings and claims that they must have mathematical figures in their everyday items instead of birds and flowers. He kills the imaginative power and aesthetic taste of the young people and figuratively 'murders the innocents.' Fact is everything for Gradgrind, in fact, he says "Fact forbid" instead of "God forbid" and fact is something to worship for Gradgrind.

On the other hand, as mentioned before, the Industrial Revolution did not only have adverse effects. In fact, it had a lot of positive effects on everyday life. For example, the quality of houses improved after the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Gradgrind's house which was aptly named Stone Lodge was "A calculated, cast up, balanced, and proved house" (Dickens, 9). The features of the house were of high quality, and it had every kind of comfort. It had "six windows on this side of the door, six on that side; a total of twelve in this wing, a total of twelve in the other wing; four-and-twenty carried over to the back wings" (Dickens, 9). After the revolution, the quality of houses improved and there was infrastructure in the houses. Gradgrind's house had the facilities of "gas and ventilation, drainage and water-service, all of the primest quality. Iron clamps and girders, fire-proof from top to bottom; mechanical lifts for the housemaids, with all their brushes and brooms; everything that heart could desire" (Dickens 9). However, the main problem was this was not true for everyone. Only the rich people had these facilities, but the poor people were cramped in small houses with no ventilation and light. This means that the revolution made the rich richer and the poor poorer.

The Industrial Revolution did not only affect the laboring class negatively, but also it gave harm to nature and polluted cities as an effect of mechanization. Coketown turns into an ugly and polluted city after industrialization. Coketown "was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it" (Dickens, 18). "It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever" and this fact shows how industrialization polluted the city and turned it into an ugly urban area (Dickens, 18). There ran a "black canal in the city, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye," the industrial waste polluted the nature as an effect of industrialization (Dickens, 18). Industrialization lead to uniformation. Coketown "contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another", people had the very same everyday rushes, they "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 to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next" (Dickens 18). That is to say, industrialization lead to a monotonous life.

## **2. THE EFFECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN NORTH AND SOUTH**

*North and South* declares the outrageous difference between the northern industrialized part of England and the South, which is rich and beautiful. The country is figuratively divided into two parts after the revolution, and there is an enormous gap between the two sides regarding living standards and conditions. The North is associated with the poor industrial workers who try to defend their rights in the oppressive capitalist system. Gaskell's novel is a social novel, and just like Dickens, Gaskell was also a socio-politically conscious writer. Throughout the story, it is apparent that the vast gap was created by the Industrial Revolution and the





revolution brought unhappiness to the poor workers instead of welfare. The story begins with a wedding scene, and soon afterward, it is declared that Mr. Hale had problems in the church. Mr. Hale tries to express, but he is hesitant and finds it difficult to reveal. Lost in thoughts, Mr. Hale tries to distract himself by playing cards but Margaret understands there was something wrong asks his father what happened. It is revealed that Mr. Hale is no longer the minister in the church and the whole family had to leave their home and move to Milton. Mr. Hale has to leave the church because of the decline of his faith in the accuracy of the church.

Moving to the industrial town of Milton causes great inner confusion in Margaret, and the industrial part of the country is reflected as an unpleasant atmosphere. It is revealed how unhappy Margaret was when she moved to Milton. It was a bleak atmosphere and made her rather unhappy. "There was no comfort to be given. They ... must endure smoke and fogs for a season; indeed, all other life seemed shut out from them by as thick a fog of circumstance" (Gaskell, 62). The obligatory arrival in Milton did not only affect the family negatively in psychological terms, but also it was an economic destruction for the family as they had to spend all their money. The economical decline of the family is expressed by the narrator by saying that "Only the day before, Mr. Hale had been reckoning up with dismay how much their removal and fortnight at Heston had cost, and he found it had absorbed nearly all his little stock of ready Money" (Gaskell 62). The industrial town of Milton seemed attractive to Mr. Hale as he had been busy with religious duties for long years. In fact, he found the mechanized way of living interesting.

After a quiet life in a country parsonage for more than twenty years, there was something dazzling to Mr. Hale in the energy which conquered immense difficulties with ease; the power of the machinery of Milton, the power of the men of Milton, impressed him with a sense of grandeur, which he yielded to without caring to inquire into the details of its exercise. (Gaskell, 65)

As for the part of Margaret, the situation was entirely different, and she saw the negativity of industrialization more accurately, "(she)went less abroad, among machinery and men; saw less of power in its public effect, and, as it happened, she was thrown with one or two of those who, in all measures affecting masses of people, must be acute sufferers for the good of many" (Gaskell, 65).

The difference between the northern part and the southern parts of England was not only a physical one; there was a vast cultural gap between the two parts, which, one may say, is an outcome of the Industrial Revolution.

The side of the town on which Crampton lay was especially a thoroughfare for the factory people. In the back streets around them, there were many mills, out of which poured streams of men and women two or three times a day. Until Margaret had learned the times of their ingress and egress, she was very unfortunate in constantly falling in with them. They came rushing along, with bold, fearless faces, and loud laughs and jests, particularly aimed at all those who appeared to be above them in rank or station. The tones of their unrestrained voices and their carelessness of all common rules of street politeness frightened Margaret a little at first. The girls, with their rough, but not unfriendly freedom, would comment on her dress. (Gaskell 66)

The southern part of England is represented as beautiful and luxurious, but the industrial part is associated with polluted weather, overcrowd, impolite manners, which probably stemmed from the rush to arrive at work on time, and lack of empathy. That is to say; the Industrial Revolution spoiled northern England by all means. Although the revolution was supposed to bring prosperity to the country, it turned out that it widened the gap between the rich and the poor. The huge gap between the northern and the southern parts of the town translates to what Nixon has called "the resource law of inverse proximity," which means that the people living in industrial areas cannot benefit from the development and, the further one lives from the industrial area, the more the opportunity grows to benefit from it (*Slow Violence*, 2011, 165). The ironical situation Nixon explains as inverse proximity is apparent in *North and South*, and the people living near the industrial are suffer from the ills of industrialization while those who live far from it enjoy the benefits of growth. This situation is ironical as well as an infringement of human rights.

Industrial work and industrialized life damage the health of people and this destructive effect is seen in several examples in the novel. At first, Margaret's mother has health problems due to the bad weather and environmental conditions in the urban area of Milton as she was unable to adapt to the dirt and pollution of the



town. Bessy, a young girl of 18, faces serious and fatal health problems due to working in factories. Bessy dies because of this illness towards the end of the novel.

Industrialization continues to develop in Milton. It becomes more industrialized and filthier. Towards the end of the novel, another description of Milton is given which represents it as ugly and filthy.

At Milton, the chimneys smoked, the ceaseless roar and mighty beat, and dizzying whirl of machinery struggled and strove perpetually. Senseless and purposeless were wood and iron and steam in their endless labors; but the persistence of their monotonous work was rivaled in tireless endurance by the strong crowds, who, with sense and with purpose, were busy and restless in seeking after--What? In the streets there were few loiterers, --none walking for mere pleasure; every man's face was set in lines of eagerness or anxiety; news was sought for with fierce avidity; and men jostled each other aside in the Mart and in the Exchange, as they did in life, in the deep selfishness of competition. (Gaskell 386)

### 3. *DAVID COPPERFIELD: A SOCIAL NOVEL OF THE VICTORIAN ERA*

David Copperfield is considered as a bildungsroman, which covers the life of the protagonist David Copperfield from birth to maturity. The novel is also considered semi-autobiographical as it has parallelism with the real life of Charles Dickens himself but the parallelism is not a total correspondence. There are sketches from his life but *David Copperfield* is not truly an autobiography of Dickens (Gavin, 2000, 8). The book is divided into chapters, which can be likened to steps in the life of David Copperfield. One can easily say that Charles Dickens aptly calls his protagonist Copperfield, as his reader witnesses the process of the ore being shaped by events throughout the novel. His talent in writing and his pursuits of prospect in the career of writing make him an ore which will be shaped throughout the novel. The hardships Copperfield faces make him stronger. The first chapter is called "I Am Born" (Dickens, 5). The narrator does not use the past simple I was born; instead, the first-person narrator combines his experiences of the present time with the feelings of the past. It can be assumed that he narrates his birth from his mature point of view. As Barr states, "The novel focuses on the development of David, which parallels his progress as a writer, and it emphasizes the centrality of memory in the evolution of its hero and the telling of his tale" (63). The book has a tone, especially in the growing process of David Copperfield, of an adult looking back at his earlier life. Although the narrator protagonist David Copperfield perfectly describes his childish joys, he analyzes events with a critical, realistic skepticism.

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously. (Dickens 5)

The tone of speaking of the narrator is full of wisdom. He filters events by critically evaluating them. In the example of his day of birth, he assumes that it was a Friday as people around him told him that way; he continues by saying "I believe" (5), which shows his sincerity and honesty to the reader. Throughout the novel, David Copperfield maintains his sincere way of addressing the reader. He avoids misinformation.

As to give a brief summary of the work, *David Copperfield* elucidates the life and maturation of David, the protagonist. David is a posthumous son. He lives with his mother and his nurse, Peggotty. After his mother's marriage with the cruel Mr. Murdstone and the advent of Miss Murdstone, who is the equally cruel sister of Mr. Murdstone, David becomes even more distressed. He continually faces ill-treatment; he gets beaten and humiliated. He is sent to study in a boarding school after a quarrel with Mr. Murdstone, in which he bites Mr. Murdstone's hand. David visits Peggotty's family in Yarmouth. David attends Salem House run by Mr. Creakle. He meets James Steerforth and makes friends with him. David loses his mother, returns to Mr. Murdstone's house and works at wine bottling business. When Mr. Micawber, David's homemate has to leave London because of financial problems, David decides to find his aunt Betsey. His aunt sends him to the school of Doctor Strong. David lives together with Mr. Wickfield and Mr. Wickfield's daughter Agnes. David and Agnes are very fond of each other and make very good friends. David meets Uriah Heep, who is described as an ugly and evil character. Later, David decides to pursue a career as a proctor and becomes an apprentice to Mr. Spewlow. David falls in love with Mr. Spewlow's daughter, Dora. However, they could not marry at first because Mr. Spewlow does not allow their marriage. Later on, Mr. Spewlow dies and Dora has to live with her aunts. Later



on, David and Dora get married but are not happy. Dora falls ill and dies. After the death of Dora, David travels abroad. When David returns to England, he marries his former friend Agnes. They have children and become very happy. Finally, David Copperfield pursues a career as a writer.

#### 4. CHARACTERIZATION IN DAVID COPPERFIELD

In *David Copperfield*, the good-hearted characters are represented as beautiful and the evil characters are represented as ugly, which shows that the author associates physical attributes with characteristic properties. For example, Mr. Creakle and Uriah Heep are ugly and wicked. According to Hughes, young David is naive and he defines events with such a perspective, while the adult David is sophisticated and sees events differently with a more critical eye and the complexity of the narrative arises from the fact that the narrator combines different perspectives such as the young David's naïve feelings, the adult David's mature way of thinking and the adult David's analyzing events combined with the childhood emotions of David and his present wisdom (89). He "has become the adult David who writes the book" (Hughes, 1974, 89). As Hughes also states, "in the book young David reports his experiences and gives us his reactions to them in great detail" and, as to interpretation, "the narrator does make his interpretation of experience available to the careful reader" (89). Hughes' argument is proven by the early childhood of Copperfield because the most apparent state in which the narrator gives his reader clues of interpretation is the childhood of David.

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighborhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples. (Dickens, 15)

Here, the narrator aims at making his reader sympathize with his mother and his nurse. He wants to direct his reader to think in a certain way. He expresses his love and longing for his mother and his love for his nurse. In *David Copperfield*, the beloved ones are always represented as beautiful and sweet- for example Peggotty is lovely with her red cheeks- and the ones David dislikes are expressed as ugly and physically corrupt, as well as emotionally, just like Uriah Heep. "This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy" (Dickens, 15). In this section, for example, Dickens switches from a child's perspective to a sophisticated adult's perspective. This is an example of what Hughes called narrative complexity. He is continually "looking back...into the blank of (his) infancy" to see what he can remember (Dickens 16).

Copperfield describes Mr. Murdstone as a handsome, yet cruel man and in doing this, he gives the reader the impression and clue that Mr. Murdstone and David Copperfield will not be able to get on well with each other.

Mr. Murdstone and I were soon off, and trotting along on the green turf by the side of the road. He held me quite easily with one arm, and I don't think I was restless usually; but I could not make up my mind to sit in front of him without turning my head sometimes, and looking up in his face. He had that kind of shallow black eye- I want a better word to express an eye that has no depth in it to be looked into- which, when it is abstracted, seems from some peculiarity of light to be disfigured, for a moment at a time, by a cast. Several times when I glanced at him, I observed that appearance with a sort of awe, and wondered what he was thinking about so closely. His hair and whiskers were blacker and thicker, looked at so near, than even I had given them credit for being. A squareness about the lower part of his face, and the dotted indication of the strong black beard he shaved close every day, reminded me of the wax-work that had travelled into our neighborhood some half-a-year before. This, his regular eyebrows, and the rich white, and black, and brown, of his complexion- confound his complexion, and his memory! - made me think him, in spite of my misgivings, a very handsome man. I have no doubt that my poor dear mother thought him so too. (Dickens, 21-22)

David cannot help analyzing Mr. Murdstone in depth. It can be inferred that the young David is trying to find out about the reasons why his mother is fond of him and his being handsome justifies his mother's



attitude while, on the other hand, he is represented as a strict and even soulless man as he has “blank eyes” and a black complexion (Dickens, 22).

Miss Murdstone is also represented as an equally strict character as Mr. Murdstone. That is to say, the Murdstone figure as a whole was a threat and a source of unhappiness for David Copperfield as a child. Miss Murdstones manner was rude and her physical attributes were similar to those of her brother.

It was Miss Murdstone who was arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was; dark, like her brother, whom she greatly resembled in face and voice; and with very heavy eyebrows, nearly meeting over her large nose, as if, being disabled by the wrongs of her sex from wearing whiskers, she had carried them to that account. (Dickens, 44)

Facial expressions of the siblings were expressed in such a way that gives the reader the feeling David is afraid of Mr. And Miss Murdstone. They have thick, long eyebrows and dark faces, which makes us think that they frown upon David as if they were threatening him. Therefore, as we mentioned above, the two siblings were a threat for the young David. It is also apparent that David holds Mr. Murdstone responsible from the death of his mother and sees him as an evil person who consumed the life of his mother.

## 5. CHILD LABOR

Exploited child labor, which is a fact in Victorian times, has its traces in *David Copperfield* too. David is sent to work at the wine bottling business of the Murdstone family, which directly shows that David experiences abuse as well as ill-treatment by the Murdstones. Not only do the Murdstone family make David unhappy, but they also exploit his labor. That is to say, they give him both psychological and physical harm. Beginning from the early 1820's, child labor was very common in England (Galbi, 1997). The reason why factory owners preferred child labor was for the low wage costs. Also, child laborers were normally more obedient and they were sent to work by their families. Galbi also states that some children who were under twelve years old were taken to factories as a worker and it was requested by their parents that they should be employed even if the factory owners were reluctant (Galbi, 1997, 358-363). Charles Dickens unfolds the facts of Victorian times and reveals the social reality after industrialization; thus, the work gains a realistic attribute in terms of revealing social reality.

## 6. OPPORTUNISM IN VICTORIAN SOCIETY

Charles Dickens reveals another social reality, which is opportunism, with the embodiment of the character Uriah Heep. Dickens portrays the Uriah Heep character as a serpent-like evil character. David Copperfield's encounter with Uriah Heep is expressed in a striking way:

When the pony-chaise stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the house, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor (in a little round tower that formed one side of the house), and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It was quite as cadaverous as it had looked in the window, though in the grain of it there was that tinge of red which is sometimes to be observed in the skins of red-haired people. It belonged to a red-haired person- a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older- whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows, and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown, so unsheltered and unshaded, that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neckcloth; buttoned up to the throat; and had a long, lank, skeleton hand, which particularly attracted my attention, as he stood at the pony's head, rubbing his chin with it, and looking up at us in the chaise. (Dickens, 190)

Uriah Heep's face's being cadaverous, his showing up and disappearing quickly in rapid movements, his looking much older than he was although he was only fifteen, the redness of his face and lack of eyebrows and eyelashes mad him look rather like a snake than a human being. Analyzing Uriah Heep's character, one can easily understand why Charles Dickens deliberately portrays his character in such a serpent- like way. First of all, he is an insincere character who hides behind humbleness. His modesty is a disguise for pride. Uriah Heep keeps calling Copperfield master, he tries to be modest; however, his attitude is pretentious. Heep says: “Umble as I am, I know it is true” (Dickens, 204). In fact, Uriah Heep “had a way of writhing when he wanted to express





enthusiasm, which was very ugly” and he also had “snaky twistings” (Dickens, 203). The reason why he is depicted as quite an unhuman character is to portray the ugliness of his personality which is mirrored by his physical appearance. He approaches David like a friend but he schemes to marry Agnes, he befriends Mr. Wickfield but in doing so, he aims at gaining control over his money. He is ambitious and ruthless. He does not have human attributes such as friendship and love, even his desire to marry Agnes stems from the fact that he wants to be superior to David Copperfield even in his pursuit of marriage, he is controlled by ambition, rather than love. He stings people whom he approaches, therefore he is portrayed as snake-like.

## 7. THE THEME OF PROSTITUTION IN DAVID COPPERFIELD

Another important issue in Dickens’ novel is prostitution. Rogers states that Dickens sympathized with the women who unwillingly committed prostitution and the act was caused by evil men (Rogers, 2003). For the case of Emily, it was Steerforth, the villain man, who seduced Emily. Ham loves Emily with Steerforth:

When he first came into my way- that the day had never dawned upon me, and he had met me being carried to my grave! - I had been brought up as virtuous as you or any lady, and was going to be the wife of as good a man as you or any lady in the world can ever marry. If you live in his home and know him, you know, perhaps, what his power with a weak, vain girl might be. I don't defend myself, but I know well, and he knows well, or he will know when he comes to die, and his mind is troubled with it, that he used all his power to deceive me, and that I believed him, trusted him, and loved him! (Dickens, 612)

In order not to justify the act of prostitution, as Rogers also states, Charles Dickens does not enable Emily to have a decent life and mentions that

(Emily's) guilt is apparent to the reader by her disappearance from the novel, a symbolic disappearance mirroring her status as a social outcast. After her return and the attack by Rosa Dartle, during which she attempts to explain her fall, she doesn't speak again. Her story is told by Mr. Peggotty and we see her last, 'beautiful and drooping. . . clinging to him,' as they sail away to Australia. (Rogers, 2003)

Emily is not given a second chance, which, one may say, is done deliberately by Dickens in order to show badness of the act of prostitution, not the badness of innocent Emily.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, as industrialization continued its progress, its effects were felt more intensely on people, and it gave harm to the environment and people at the same time. The Victorian Era was a time which was associated with the Industrial Revolution and its outcomes. The negative effects of the Industrial Revolution on people and the environment are evident in the novels studied in this study. In the first two novels, the impacts are more direct. The revolution obliged people to conform to hard working conditions, to work long hours in unhealthy conditions, and gave them a sense of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. People were forced to work too long hours, and production became the main issue. Contrary to the common belief that industrial development was favorable for England, it turned out that the revolution mostly brought about environmental damage and health issues. The Industrial Revolution as a historical fact is evident in the novels *Hard Times* and *North and South* and both novels demonstrate the negative side of the revolution on the working class. On the other hand, *David Copperfield* elucidates the social problems of the era. To conclude, all three novels studied in this study are socially and environmentally conscious novels and display the shortcomings of their time.

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