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Diploma thesis

Charles Dickens and the Portrait of Victorian England

Diplomová práce

Charles Dickens v kontextu viktoriánské Anglie

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Abstract

The diploma thesis presents Charles Dickens not only as one of the most popular Victorian writers but it also concentrates on Dickens' description and characterization of a place and surroundings in the novels *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*. In the introductory part the thesis characterizes Victorian England and its social and cultural aspects. The core of the thesis is Dickens' portrayal of London in contrast with the country environment in the selected novels. The diploma thesis tries to express Dickens' literary evolution from the point of view of the description of the surroundings and landscape; alternatively it traces romantic features of his writings.

Anotace

Práce představí Charlese Dickense nejen jako jednoho z neznámějších viktoriánských autorů, ale soustředí se především na Dickensův popis a charakteristiku místa a prostředí v románech *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* a *Nadějně vyhlídka* (*Great Expectations*). V úvodu práce charakterizuje viktoriánskou Anglii a její sociální a kulturní aspekty. Jádrem práce bude Dickensův obraz Londýna v kontrastu s venkovským prostředím v uvedených románech. Práce se bude snažit postihnout Dickensův literární vývoj v líčení prostředí a krajiny, případně vysleduje romantické prvky jeho tvorby.

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Introduction

This diploma thesis is concerned with the life and works of English writer Charles Dickens in context of the Victorian period in England and mainly in the capital city of England – London. The thesis tries to retrace aspects of the real and oftentimes harsh life of Charles Dickens primarily in his children's years which enter into the connection with actualities depicted so excellently in Dickens' writings.

In the first theoretical part the diploma thesis endeavours to portray the atmosphere of Victorian England and Victorian London, to record the substance of the environment which was the fertile ground for Charles Dickens' novels. The thesis tries to describe the biggest paradox of that period – the noticeable difference between wealthy and poor inhabitants of Victorian England regarding the living conditions and surroundings - as much aptly as it is possible. The difference was naturally the most alarming and evident in London. The aim of this part of the diploma thesis is also to cover daily life routine of the Victorian society, their occupation, education and habits. Additionally this part of the thesis is also concerned with the historical and political background of the Victorian era and its most important events.

The second part of the thesis deals with the life of Charles Dickens. It tries to collect as much information about Dickens' childhood as possible because an absolute majority of the main characters in his writings are children. It should be noted that these children do not actually experience a happy and idyllic childhood. I am convinced Charles Dickens drew inspiration for the depiction of their desperate life situation from his own experience and gloomy memories.

The third part of this diploma thesis is practical. It engages in three novels by Charles Dickens carrying the most distinctive characteristics of the Victorian classified society – *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*. Boys in the children's age are the main heroes of these novels; therefore they would be easily comparable with the author himself. The thesis tries to find similar or equal features between the novels' characters and the real life of Charles Dickens. Also this part deals with various differences concerning the author's life and the lives of the heroes. This reality helps me in my research in the projection of Charles Dickens' life into his works.

The result of this diploma thesis is recognition of the life story of the English writer Charles Dickens as well as a comprehensive image of the main aspects of the Victorian era when Dickens lived his life. These pieces of knowledge in comparison with the analysis of the author's writings lead to the understanding of general issues of the literary term Charles Dickens.

1. Victorian England

1. 1 Essential data

On 20th June 1837 a young queen of eighteen ascended the British throne. She was the daughter of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn, the fourth son of the British King George III., and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. Her name was Victoria after her mother and she was the niece of her predecessor King William IV. Her name, Victoria, became a symbol, which on one hand marked the era of huge prosperity and unprecedented industrial, technical and scientific development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. On the other hand there were considerable differences between particular social classes. The reign of Queen Victoria lasted for an unbelievable period of 63 years and 7 months, what made Victoria the longest reigning ruler of the United Kingdom for a long time. Recently she was overthrown by the present-day British Queen Elizabeth II.¹

This long era of the reign of Queen Victoria was in general marked by an important historical event – the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution had already intervened into the end of 18th century; its origin was connected especially with the processing of cotton. The machines, water and later steam-powered, replaced a human factor in the cotton-processing factories. In these factories there were no longer needed to make efforts to do hard work which means that strong male workers were predominantly substituted for women and children whose labour was cheap and they could manage lighter work.²

At the beginning of 19th century several significant events happened. These events caused enormous changes that influenced the entire further development of the United Kingdom. In 1812 the first steamer set sail the river Clyde, in 1819 a steam-powered ship sailed across the Atlantic Ocean and in 1825 George Stephenson constructed the first locomotive. These inventions beside other things instigated the fact that 19th century is called “a century of steam” but the most important impact of such inventions was a new era of life and living conditions in Great Britain. The railway and nautical transport started to develop, new job vacancies in factories came to existence and the British marine was the biggest in the world. The United Kingdom was the first state in the world to transform from an agricultural society

¹ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*. 1st ed. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ISBN 978-0-370-00228-6

² MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

into the industrial one. This fact had made the United Kingdom the biggest world's economy for a major part of 19th century.³

The successes in an industrial sphere were abundantly supported by national consciousness which was also strengthened by quite a few essential occasions. In 1825 Duke of Wellington claimed a victory over Napoleon Bonaparte in the Battle of Waterloo. England managed to defeat one of the best commanders of the all time, so it naturally created the atmosphere of national pride. The next important event happened in 1832 – the parliament passed the Reform Bill, a law according to which the number of men able to vote doubled. The voters were no longer just wealthy men of higher social classes but there were also many representatives from the middle social class. This was the first step to the democratic political system and to the effort for ensuring a satisfactory standard of living for all the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

“In addition, for the first time, the word male was specifically added to the description of eligible voters. Women had not voted for hundreds of years, and even then only a few really important and rich women did so.”⁴

The approval of the Reform Bill is considered the real beginning of the Victorian era.⁵

Economically weaker social classes were supported beside the other things by decreasing in the price of postage and newspaper; it cost just 1 penny in comparison with the former price of 5 penny. Therefore the newspaper started to come out in a massive press run, mainly *Times* and *Morning Post* but also *Daily News*, newspaper founded by Charles Dickens himself in 1846.⁶ People were more concentrated on social problems; the first charities for the poorest inhabitants were formed; poor children were educated in voluntary organizations. Simultaneously a few laws helping to improve the living standard of the lowest social class were passed by parliament, for example the law prohibiting the employment of children under the age of nine and the slavery was cancelled in 1834.

³ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*. 1st ed. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ISBN 978-0-370-00228-6

⁴ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4 (p. 4)

⁵ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*.

⁶ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*.

The beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria was marked mainly by a chaos, especially a social chaos. The reason was above all the industrial revolution, the natural consequence of which was an enormous urbanization. England had changed its appearance completely during a couple of years. While at the turn of 18th and 19th century the majority of British inhabitants lived in the country, made their living mainly by farming, conveyed themselves by horses and cooked over a naked flame, thirty years later more than a half of the British population occupied cities where they came for work in factories. Number of factories rose with a proceeding industrial revolution, so more labour was required. The labour consisted mostly of young people, unnecessary on farms in the country, but also elderly persons, tortured and bored by endless farm work, left the country for a vision of something new and better. Only one quarter of city inhabitants was really born in the cities, all the others were immigrants from the country.⁷

However, the mighty urbanization logically caused overcrowding. The cities were not able to keep up with an unceasing flow of new inhabitants; they could not grow so fast to meet the demand for accommodation. There was not enough space for all the people. It gave rise to the origin of many slum areas.

“Hideous slums, some of them acres wide, some no more than crannies of obscure misery, make up a substantial part of the metropolis ... In big, once handsome houses, thirty or more people of all ages may inhabit a single room,”⁸

It was not unusual that houses inhabited by several tens of people at the same time were located just a few metres from the sumptuous dwellings of wealthy and powerful people. All the social classes lived literally next to each other in one place; nevertheless the difference between their living standards was inexpressible.

The slum areas were characterized by extreme poverty and the worst living conditions. Poor people who lived in the slums had almost no monetary resources, which means they could not procure even drinking water. In some slum areas the situation was so bad that the

⁷ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁸ CHESNEY, Kellow. *The Victorian Underworld*. 1st ed. London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd, 1970. ISBN 978-0-851-17002-2

inhabitants had to dig out a sewer at the verge of a street. The sewage water from the other parts of the slum flowed down into this sewer and people, in the interest of their own survival, were forced to drink this sewage water. A lifestyle like this inevitably left its marks on the health of poor people. The epidemics of infectious diseases such as cholera or tuberculosis spread out in the cities, many of these diseases were transferred by omnipresent rats.⁹ The bacterium causing the diseases was discovered at the end of the 19th century; however it took another forty years to discover the cures for them.¹⁰ The members of the lowest social class died of hunger on a mass scale, except for fighting the infectious diseases.¹¹

These terrible living conditions of course had to most impact on the weakest members of the society – the elderly people and children. An average length of life in the 19th century was much shorter than nowadays but even at time it was a great importance of the surroundings of a person's life. Villagers usually lived longer than inhabitants of towns, as well as members of higher social classes were healthier and their life lasted for longer time than the life of poor people from indigent conditions.¹²

Children, as well as the elderly people, were more susceptible to diseases, moreover many poor children suffered from malnutrition. These children lived in unbelievably harsh conditions of the slum areas together with their families, however there also were homeless children who had to struggle through life and looking for food on their own. The number of the homeless children was not small; they were mainly orphans or children left by parents who let them at the mercy of the world. The reason of such action was understandable in that hard time – the parents very often did not have a bite of food for themselves, much less for their children. They believed their children would do much better looking after themselves on their own. According to Pamela Horn's book *The Victorian Town Child* in year 1848 more than thirty thousands of naked, filthy, roaming and deserted homeless children lived in London. The homeless children rarely made their living by righteous work. Much more broadened form of livelihood was a crime for them – mainly thefts – and these

⁹ DANIELS, Barbara. *Poverty and Families in the Victorian Era. Hidden Lives Revealed* [online]. 2003 [cit. 2015-11-15]. Available on: <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>

¹⁰ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

¹¹ DANIELS, Barbara. *Poverty and Families in the Victorian Era*.

¹² MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily life in Victorian England*.

children naturally posed a threat to a higher class. So the members of higher classes were concerned with inventing strategies of the rectification of criminal children. One of the most positively accepted ideas was to ensure these children education, a few schools intended especially for the poorest children came to existence. However there were also opponents of this strategy. As we can read in Barbara Daniels' article *Poverty and Families in The Victorian Era*, Henry Mayhew, an English social researcher and journalist, claimed: "... since crime was not caused by illiteracy, it could not be cured by education ... the only certain effects being the emergence of a more skilful and sophisticated race of criminals."

A wealthy people's attitude to the poor people was not too sympathetic and helpful in general. An absolute majority of higher social classes' members was convinced that the poverty or the wealth is a gift from the God and people should become reconciled to their social status, whatever it is.¹³

*"The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high and lowly,
And order 'd their estate."*¹⁴

In the 19th century the population was one hundred per cent religious, therefore they believed in the existence of a life after death and they attached great importance to it. The wealthy people did not express their surprise about the life of poor people for they were convinced that their earthly life is not important. Additionally there was an opinion among the higher social classes that financial support to the poor would be in vain because a poor person would spend the donated money on alcohol or gambling. The poor people found comfort in the idea that their earthly life is just a God's test and they would be deservedly rewarded for all the earthly suffering after death in the God's kingdom. Step by step with the

¹³ DANIELS, Barbara. Poverty and Families in the Victorian Era. *Hidden Lives Revealed* [online]. 2003 [cit. 2015-11-15]. Available on: <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>

¹⁴ ALEXANDER, Cecil Frances Humphreys. *Hymns For Little Children*. Online on: DANIELS, Barbara. Poverty and Families in the Victorian Era. *Hidden Lives Revealed* [online]. 2003. Available on: <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>

century passing around the wealthy people were slowly changing their minds and the charities came to existence, including The Children's Society.¹⁵

1. 2 Queen Victoria, political and state issues

The daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent, Victoria was born on 24th May 1819 in the Kensington Palace during the reign of her grandfather George III. who died just a year after her birth. Victoria's father died in the same week as his father George III., therefore Victoria was raised only by her mother, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, who she was named after.¹⁶

Little Victoria was spending her childhood in the Kensington Palace. Victoria herself later described her child years as not very ideal. Victoria's mother, Duchess of Kent, was extremely caring and anxious. Little Victoria was forced to spend all the days only in her mother's society; she even spent the nights in the same room as her mother. Little Victoria was also forbidden to be in touch with the relatives of her father's family including the children because none of the descendants of Edward's brothers was legitimate and Duchess of Kent resolutely prohibited any kind of meeting the bastards.

As a result of these circumstances it was not a surprise that the man who met Victoria at her age of seventeen in 1836 and who later became her husband was a relative from the mother's family. Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha was a nephew of Leopold I. of Belgium, the Belgian king. Leopold I. of Belgium was Victoria's mother's brother, therefore Prince Albert was Victoria's cousin. The Belgian king hoped for a marriage of his nephew and niece. His intention came true but not immediately. Young Victoria fell in love with Prince Albert, however she felt too young for entering into marriage. The wedding took place in 1840; Victoria had been the British Queen for three years that time.

The British ruler in the time of Victoria's childhood and growing up was George IV. and from the year 1831 William IV., both of them were Victoria's uncles – brothers of her deceased father. Neither of them engendered a legitimate descendant, which meant that after death of William IV. his niece Victoria ascended the throne on 20th June 1837. The government was

¹⁵ DANIELS, Barbara. Poverty and Families in the Victorian Era. *Hidden Lives Revealed* [online]. 2003 [cit. 2015-11-15]. Available on: <http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/poverty.html>

¹⁶ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*. 1st ed. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ISBN 978-0-370-00228-6

lead by the Whigs' political party that time; the prime minister was William Lamb, 2nd viscount Melbourne, also called simply Lord Melbourne.

Victoria's ascension to the throne did not make do without problems. Both in the time of her childhood and for all the time of her reign there constantly were doubts about her legitimate claim to the British throne. There was speculation that Edward was not Victoria's biological father but her mother's secretary Sir John Conroy. These two people were often suspected of a love affair, beside other things because of Sir John Conroy's help with raising Victoria. To this day the truth has not been satisfactorily found.

There was a problem of the reign over the territory of the Kingdom of Hanover in North Germany too. This territory fell under the reign of Great Britain after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. According to the law asserted in the Kingdom of Hanover a woman could not be the successor to the throne, so Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale, Victoria's uncle, ruled over this territory instead of her. He became the King Ernest Augustus I. of Hanover on the same day as Victoria became the British Queen.

The coronation of Queen Victoria took place on 28th June 1838 in Westminster Abbey with huge attendance – it was enabled thanks to a newly built railroad. Because of this railroad a big crowd of people from all the parts of Great Britain was able to get comfortably into London and watch the coronation with their own eyes.¹⁷ Victoria was the first ruler of Great Britain who chose the Buckingham Palace as her seat, until then the rulers had their seat in the St. James Palace. However the St. James Palace was engulfed with fire in 1809 and the fire almost completely destroyed it. Thus the rulers had their residence in the Buckingham House from that year and it was progressively reconstructed into the Buckingham Palace. The damaged St. James Palace had the status of the official seat of the British ruler until the year 1837.¹⁸

The new young Queen was very popular yet inexperienced. The Prime Minister Lord Melbourne was her major advisor but he resigned in 1839. Victoria authorized the Tories' political party representative Robert Peel to form a new government, however there was the incident called "the bedchamber crisis". The most of Victoria's ladies of the bedchamber

¹⁷ HIBBERT, Christopher. *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 0-00-638843-4

¹⁸ WALFORD, Edward. St James's Palace: Old and New London: Volume 4. *British History Online* [online]., 100 - 122 [cit. 2015-11-23]. Available on: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol4/pp100-122>

were the wives of the Whigs, Robert Peel's intention was to replace them with the wives of the Tories. Queen Victoria resolutely refused this plan because she considered her ladies of the bedchamber her friends. Under these circumstances Robert Peel proclaimed he was not able to form the government and resigned from his office. He was replaced by Lord Melbourne who remained in the office until 1841. In that year he permanently resigned and Robert Peel returned again to the office.

Queen Victoria kept in touch with the former Prime Minister, however after the wedding with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha on 10th February 1840 in the royal chapel of the St. James Palace her husband became the Queen's major advisor and the influence of Lord Melbourne on the Queen moderated. The Prime Minister Robert Peel was replaced with John Russell. Although John Russell's government was assembled predominantly by the Whigs, Victoria did not have a good relationship with it. The reason was in particular Lord Henry Temple, the Minister of External Affairs. His behaviour was unacceptable for the Queen for he often acted on his own; he did not consult his actions with the rest of the government and not even with the Queen.¹⁹

*"But Palmerston, busy with his plans, his ambitions, and the management of a great department ... He lived by instinct—by a quick eye and a strong hand, a dexterous management of every crisis as it arose, a half-unconscious sense of the vital elements in a situation."*²⁰

In that time the incident called Great Potato Famine or Great Hunger erupted in Ireland. It was total potato crop failure. Potatoes were the base of food in Ireland and the lack of them manifested itself as starvation of Irish population. The disastrous famine erupted in 1845 and remained four years. The principal cause of the crop failure was a late blight of potato and other fungal moulds which infested potatoes mainly because of damp weather. Queen Victoria had a friendly relationship with Ireland; she even had one of the relaxing seats there. Therefore she did not hesitate and she donated two thousand pounds to the affected country. However she was shamed by the Turkish sultan who also decided to help Ireland and he intended to donate more money than Victoria – ten thousand pounds. The planned

¹⁹ Hibbert, Christopher. *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 0-00-638843-4

²⁰ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online]. 2006 [cit. 2015-11-23]. Available on: <https://ia902706.us.archive.org/24/items/queenvictoria01265gut/1265-h/1265-h.htm>

Turkish donation kindled the first Irish negative emotions towards Great Britain. Queen Victoria of course could not admit it, so she asked the Turkish sultan to donate the same amount as her – two thousand pounds. The sultan complied with her wishes and he donated even a smaller amount than Victoria – only one thousand pounds. However the donation of this amount of money was just a public action, in reality the sultan secretly sent three ships full of food to Ireland. Queen Victoria tried to stop the ships but her effort was unsuccessful. Due to this Victoria's effort the Irish antipathy towards her reached fever pitch. Although Ireland had been basically independent since the year 1782 when the Irish parliament gained independence, it still constituted a union with Great Britain. The knowledge of their Queen trying to persuade the Turkish sultan to donate less money and in addition her effort to blockade the help they desperately needed kindled a deep hatred in Irish people. Victoria's popularity in Ireland decreased rapidly.²¹

An attempt on Queen Victoria's life was the result of the Irish hatred. An unemployed Irishman William Hamilton attempted to shoot on the Queen on 19th June 1849 – the day of celebration of her birthday in Green Park.²² Later it proved his pistol was loaded just with powder and Hamilton claimed he only wanted to frighten the Queen.²³

On the contrary Victoria made efforts to rectify a long-term bad relationship with France. With her husband Prince Albert she even made the first British ruler's visit in the French Royal Court in 1843 after more than three hundred years. The French king Louis Philippe made a return visit to her the next year; it was the very first French ruler's visit at the British ruler.²⁴

In 1852 a conservative Edward Smith – Stanley, Lord Derby took over the government for a short time after John Russell, after him George Hamilton – Gordon, Lord Aberdeen of the political party of Peelites (the Tories following Robert Peel) became the Prime Minister. However Lord Aberdeen did not prove his ability during the Crimean War when the British Army stood by the French Army's and Ottoman Empire Army's side against the Russian

²¹ JOHNSON, Paul. *Dějiny anglického národa*. Praha: Leda, 2012. ISBN 978-80-7335-309-4

²² William Hamilton's Birthday Present. *Shooting Victoria* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2015-11-25]. Available on: <http://shootingvictoria.com/post/40777765277/william-hamiltons-birthday-present>

²³ Victoria - Královna spojeného království Velké Británie a Irska. *Atllanka* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2015-11-25]. Available on: <http://www.atllanka.net/index.php?text=293-victoria-kralovna-spojeneho-kralovstvi-velke-britanie-a-irska>

²⁴ ST. AUBYN, Giles. *Queen Victoria – A Portrait*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991. ISBN 1-85619-086-2

Empire. Therefore Queen Victoria was forced to establish Lord Henry Temple the new Prime Minister despite her not so positive relationship with him.²⁵

The year 1861 became a very sad period of time for the British Queen. First of all, in spring she lost her mother and then, at the end of the year, on 14th December Prince Albert died of the typhoid fever. Shattered Victoria withdrew herself completely from a public life, she did not appear on public ceremonies and she was leaving home very sporadically.²⁶

The seventies of the 19th century in Great Britain occurred in a climate of the voting system changes. In 1867 the Reform Act was passed; it enabled men of the working classes to vote. Thanks to the Reform Act the number of British voters doubled. Benjamin Disraeli became the Prime Minister in 1868, the Queen immediately started to feel fondness for him. However in the same year the elections took place and the Liberal Party was the winner, so Benjamin Disraeli was replaced by the biggest rival of him – William Gladstone. Gladstone and Disraeli took turns in the office of the Prime Minister until the nineties of the 19th century. The main difference between them was the approach to the leading of the kingdom. William Gladstone was more focused on the population of Great Britain, he listened to the wishes of people and he was willing to enforce the reforms required by them. Virtue, dignity and seriousness were his principal characteristics. On the other side there stood relaxed, seemingly flippant Benjamin Disraeli who was convinced of the need for the preservation of the character of the United Kingdom and he was not so willing to enforce any reforms.

Under the control of both of the Prime Ministers, the foreign policy had an utterly different character too. Gladstone behaved very moderately in relationships with the other countries, peace was his biggest wish and he expressed almost no imperialism. The opponent of Gladstone Disraeli had an opposite attitude to the external affairs. Ideologically he returned to Great Britain as an empire it was before losing American colonies, even though the main part of Disraeli's political party was not convinced of his idea and it would rather maintain Great Britain without any changes.²⁷ However Disraeli, supported by the Queen, drove a hard bargain. When he replaced his opponent Gladstone and became the Prime Minister

²⁵ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online]. 2006 [cit. 2015-11-23]. Available on: <https://ia902706.us.archive.org/24/items/queenvictoria01265gut/1265-h/1265-h.htm>

²⁶ ST. AUBYN, Giles. *Queen Victoria – A Portrait*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991. ISBN 1-85619-086-2

²⁷ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*. 1st ed. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ISBN 978-0-370-00228-6

again in 1874, he started to plot a great plan. It realized on 1st May 1876 – Queen Victoria gained the title of the Empress of India. It happened nineteen years after the disintegration of the British East India Company in 1857 and all the territories under the control of the East India Company became formal parts of Great Britain. On 1st January 1877 an official declaration of the title to Queen Victoria took place in Delhi – the capital city of India.²⁸

Bahadur Shah II. was the last person using the title of the Emperor of India. He was the Indian ruler who tirelessly fought against the British and their influence in his country. He died in 1862 after losing the war led against the British. Bahadur Shah II. is considered a national hero of India until the present day.²⁹

“And exactly the same qualities which made him such a remarkable ruler for the period before the uprising and such a cultural catalyst were the very qualities that made him a quite spectacularly unsuitable leader during a time of military revolt.”³⁰

Except for the declaration of the title of the Empress of India to Queen Victoria Disraeli greatly engaged in other cases supporting his imperialistic policy. For example in 1875 he secretly bought over 150 thousand shares of the Suez Canal from an Egyptian viceroy because the Suez Canal’s location was very suitable for Great Britain – it represented the shortest way to India and China. The intervention into the Russo – Turkish War, taking place from 1877 to 1878, was Disraeli’s next action. For Great Britain it was important to maintain a direct contact with India and the entry to India on the shore was able only through Turkey. Therefore Disraeli wanted to join this war on the Turkish side.³¹ However the Russo – Turkish War soon moved on a Bulgarian battlefield where the Turks manifested themselves very aggressively and they committed dreadful acts to the Bulgarian inhabitants.³² Nevertheless Disraeli was still ready to enter the war but Gladstone did not agree with it. Gladstone started to make powerful public speeches to the British people and especially religious inhabitants were influenced by the speeches. Although Disraeli considered Gladstone’s

²⁸ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online]. 2006 [cit. 2015-11-23]. Available on: <https://ia902706.us.archive.org/24/items/queenvictoria01265gut/1265-h/1265-h.htm>

²⁹ William Dalrymple on Bahadur Shah II of India: transcript of audio. *British Library: Online Gallery - Sacred Texts* [online]. 2007 [cit. 2015-01-27]. Available on:

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/podwilliamdalrymple.html>

³⁰ William Dalrymple on Bahadur Shah II of India: transcript of audio.

³¹ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*.

³² AMORT, Čestmír. *Dějiny Bulharska*. 1st ed. Praha: Svoboda, 1980.

effort ridiculous, finally he was forced to abandon his intention of joining the Russo – Turkish War.

This reality led to the victory of the Russian Empire in the war. The Treaty of San Stefano, a peace treaty terminating the Russo – Turkish War, enabled the Russian Empire to get a free access to the Mediterranean Sea through Bulgaria. Disraeli understood the access as an endangering of the way to India and he started to fight against the Treaty of San Stefano immediately. He succeeded, in 1878 the Berlin congress performed a revision of the Treaty – it divided Bulgaria on two halves and England gained Cyprus. It was not a surprise that the Russian relationship with Great Britain simmered down even more after his incident, there were even several armed conflicts on the Russian border with India.

Simultaneously with these events another war conflict took place – the Second Anglo – Afghan War. One year later Great Britain got into another war, this time it was Anglo – Zulu War taking place in South Africa. Nevertheless both of the wars ended with the British victory, the public opinion in Great Britain started to change. While many people considered Gladstone’s policy of external affairs inglorious, Disraeli’s policy seemed really dangerous to them. This opinion was supported by Gladstone who tirelessly continued with the public speeches and he pointed to the problems like the belligerent Russian Empire or the bloodshed in South Africa. The speeches were proved right. In 1880 Benjamin Disraeli lost the elections and he died one year later. William Gladstone stayed in the office of Prime Minister until 1894 with short intermissions.³³

The end of the 19th century represented Queen Victoria’s declining years. The last two decades of the Queen’s life were filled with happy and also lamentable events. Among the happy events there were of course the births of great-grandchildren, however the sorrowful happening predominated. In 1881 Benjamin Disraeli, Victoria’s favourite, died which was very grievous for the Queen and it resulted in the antipathy towards William Gladstone. Three years later two very close comrades of the Queen died – her friend and companion Mr. Brown and Victoria’s youngest son Leopold. In that time Queen Victoria sustained a severe injury caused by a fall down the stairs. Victoria had never fully recovered from the injury.

³³ MAUROIS, André. *A History of England*. 1st ed. London: The Bodley Head, 1956. ISBN 978-0-370-00228-6

The year 1887 occurred in the climate of a golden anniversary of Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne. The celebrative church service took place in the Westminster Abbey. Ten years later even a diamond anniversary took place – sixty years of Queen Victoria's reign. Victoria overcame her grandfather George III. and she became the longest reigning ruler in the British history. In this period of time Queen Victoria was highly affected with the age. She felt lonely; her husband Albert was deceased for a very long time and she did not have even her friend Mr. Brown anymore. However she was surrounded by a big and growing family of hers.³⁴

*"It was in her family that Victoria's ascendancy reached its highest point. All her offspring were married; the number of her descendants rapidly increased; there were many marriages in the third generation; and no fewer than thirty-seven of her great-grandchildren were living at the time of her death."*³⁵

At the end of the 19th century Great Britain was participating in a war conflict taking place again in South Africa – the Second Boer War. The Boers were descendants of the Dutch inhabitants in Africa who had their colonies there. Therefore Great Britain was not very popular in the rest of Europe because of this war.³⁶ Instead of a planned visit of France, Queen Victoria rather visited Ireland. There she made an appeal to the Irishmen to join the Second Boer War. However the Queen did not succeed in the negotiation; a nationalistic opposition to her rose during Victoria's three-week visit in Dublin. The opposition was led by Arthur Griffith who later stood at the inception of a political movement Sinn Féin.³⁷

Queen Victoria felt very weak after the return from Ireland. Her state of health deteriorated; failing eyesight accompanied rheumatism in lower limbs. Not even her psyche was alright, the Queen felt confused, drowsy and dizzy.³⁸

Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901 when she was 81 years old. The funeral took place on 2nd February 1901 in St George Chapel of the Windsor Castle. Victoria was dressed in her white dress and her wedding veil. Her son Edward VII. became the successor to the throne.

³⁴ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online]. 2006 [cit. 2015-11-23]. Available on: <https://ia902706.us.archive.org/24/items/queenvictoria01265gut/1265-h/1265-h.htm>

³⁵ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online].

³⁶ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online].

³⁷ MOODY, Theodor William. *Dějiny Irska*. 3rd ed. Praha: NLN, 2012. ISBN 978-80-7422-179-8

³⁸ STRACHEY, Lytton. *Queen Victoria* [online].

With the total number of 63 years of the reign, Queen Victoria was the longest reigning British ruler until the year 2015 when she was overcome by the contemporary British Queen Elizabeth II.³⁹

1. 3 Social life in Victorian England

1. 3. 1 Social class

Everyday life of the people in Great Britain in the 19th century was most importantly influenced by a division of property and a social division of the whole society on social classes. In the United Kingdom this phenomenon was evident even in the previous time, however during the Victorian era it reached its biggest clearness because the differences between the particular social classes were truly striking in that time. By the end of the 19th century the social situation got slightly better and the enormous social variation started to be equalized. Nevertheless even nowadays the United Kingdom does not succeed in the elimination of the tendency of the British inhabitants to assess their fellow citizens according to their membership of the concrete social class. In a higher rate this phenomenon occurs only in India which is not a surprise considering the history of India, closely connected with Great Britain.⁴⁰

The classification of people into the social classes depended on many factors. Among the most important criteria there were of course the origin and the family connections, the other important factor was the employment and also the property. Surprisingly the amount of money that people owned did not classify them into the social class. If a highborn person with good origin got poor and lost a great part of his property, it did not remove him of his social class. In the same way, if a poor worker was so lucky to win a lottery jackpot, the money did not shift him on a higher position on a social scale.

According to the legal division of a society there existed only two social classes in the Victorian England – the aristocrats, people of noble birth, and the commoners, all the other people of low birth. However, an absolute majority of the inhabitants divided themselves and their fellow citizens into three social classes: the working class, the middle class and the aristocracy and landed gentry. Each of these social classes was characterized by its own way

³⁹ HIBBERT, Christopher. *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 0-00-638843-4

⁴⁰ ABERCROMBIE, Nicholas, WARDE, Alan. *Contemporary British Society*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. ISBN 978-0-745-62297-2

of life, speech and education as well as by their own habits and clothes. Members of different social classes lived in different parts of a city. Particular behaviour, typical for their social position, was expected from members of a specific social class. It was unacceptable to behave or to dress like a member of a different social class.⁴¹

1. 3. 1. 1 The working class

The working class was the lowest social class in the Victorian England. Workers, people who did physical work for the subsistence, were members of it. This social class was the largest – three of every four inhabitants of England worked manually.⁴² Until nowadays the lowest social class paradoxically attracts the most of attention not only of the historians, but also of the artists – writers or movie makers.⁴³

*„Oddly enough, it is the working class, at the bottom of the social pile, who have been most closely examined as a class. More ink has been spilled about them than any other group in British society. They have been portrayed in novels, plays, films and TV documentaries. Endless sociological surveys on working-class life and numerous government reports have been produced. Unfortunately, most of these studies have been conducted by members of the middle class.“*⁴⁴

Agricultural production, service and work in a factory were the most frequent jobs of the members of the working class. Naturally, in such a big number of people not everybody was at the same level as the others. Even the concrete working class was divided into several subclasses. Primarily the employment was a categorization factor. The jobs were split into so called unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled working positions.

Approximately eighty-five percent of the members of the working class did the unskilled or the semi-skilled work. There was no special or just easily achievable qualification needed for doing these types of work and these jobs were very physically hard. The wage was derived from this reality. Young twenty-year old people earned the biggest amount of money, because they were physically strong which is connected with their ability to manage even

⁴¹ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁴² MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*.

⁴³ STORRY, Mike a Peter CHILDS (eds.). *British Cultural Identities*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-42460-8

⁴⁴ STORRY, Mike a Peter CHILDS (eds.). *British Cultural Identities*. (p. 186)

the hardest work. However, the physical competence weakens with the increasing age and it led to the decrease in the wages. So a typical family of poor surroundings had the highest income when a young couple had not had children yet and therefore they were able to work the most of a day. Because of childbirth a family budget fell by over one half. A mother, of course, was not able to work as much as a childless woman; she took care of the children and she could earn some money only by home working. Such a state usually lasted until the children's fitness for work. Children of a specific age were capable of contributing to the family budget via the children's work, which was very usual in the Victorian England. Nevertheless, a Victorian family experienced a real financial crisis with the children's leaving home. The ageing parents of lower fitness were able to earn only very little money. An absolute majority of old people spent the rest of their lives in a workhouse; just a small part of them were so lucky to be taken care of by their children who were in a good financial situation.

The people doing the skilled jobs represented approximately fifteen percent of the working class members. The employments like typography, shoemaking, dressmaking, carpentry, bakery or farming were typical examples of the Victorian skilled jobs which mean that the most of the skilled jobs were crafts. The craftsmen were in an incomparably better situation than the factory workers. Only the reality that these people had become the craftsmen gave evidence of their better social status because the craft was passed through the apprenticeship. The family which could afford to let a child being an apprentice at a craftsman naturally did not have such a low budget as the family whose children had to do the children's work due to the family's survival. So the difference between the craftsmen and the workers was quite big even though both of them were members of the working class. The difference was apparent not only in a financial situation but also in habits, interests or education. Successful craftsmen could start their own business, open their own shops and hire the employees. These few people oscillated between the working class and the middle class.

1. 3. 1. 2 The middle class

All the inhabitants who did not work manually but they were not of noble birth were members of the middle social class.⁴⁵ Therefore many people belonged to this social class, naturally the living conditions were not the same for all of them. The middle class was greatly fragmented, the inner division of the members depended especially on their employment. Nowadays the current middle class in Great Britain is divided into four basic groups: higher professionals (doctors, lawyers, architects, business executives), salaried professionals (lectors, teachers, social workers), white-collar workers (secretaries, clerks) and the self-employed (small businessmen, shopkeepers).⁴⁶ In the Victorian era the division was easier, the middle class was divided into upper and lower subclass.

Members of the upper middle class were also called professionals; their employments were quite prestigious and respected. Church leaders, doctors, military officers, professors or lawyers belonged among the typical jobs of the upper middle class members. With an increasing influence of the Industrial Revolution, bankers and businessmen joined them. They got more prestigious status thanks to the Industrial Revolution. During the 19th century many new jobs came into existence, for example journalists, accountants or insurance agents. These employments also ranked among the upper middle class jobs.

The lower middle class was represented by less prestigious jobs, for example smaller businessmen, shop assistants or clerks belonged among these employments. Literacy was needed for doing these jobs, but almost no other abilities were required. This reality made a difference between the lower and the upper middle class members.

In general, the middle class as a whole was characterized by its urban nature. An absolute majority of the middle class members had a job in a city. It was connected with one of the main consequences of the Industrial Revolution – urbanization. Farmers – the owners of a farm - were an exception; they hired workers of the working class for manual work.

The cohesiveness and the solidarity as for the habits and the way of life were another typical features of the middle class. Despite the fact that it was divided into the upper and the lower

⁴⁵ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁴⁶ STORRY, Mike a Peter CHILDS (eds.). *British Cultural Identities*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-42460-8.

subclass, the members of both of them shared almost the same way of life, the same habits and their children attended relatively comparable schools. This was the main difference between the middle class and the working class. The working class was not further divided although the inner distinction was miles bigger.⁴⁷

1. 3. 1. 3 The aristocracy and landed gentry

In the beginning of the 19th century life of the highest social class was literally fairytale. The inhabitants of United Kingdom who were of noble birth were not bound by labour duties. The entire income of theirs came from their pieces of real estate they owned – the aristocrats primarily rented the land to the farmers and these were long-term rentals. The highest social class family ordinarily lived in a huge sumptuous residence with an adequate number of servants.⁴⁸

*„Hence, the upper class may be small in size but its members occupy positions of leadership in the major businesses in Britain. The upper class uses its wealth to confer social advantages and to retain a privileged position for its future generations. The closeness of the upper class ensures over-representation by this group in all the key positions in society.“*⁴⁹

Also the aristocratic social class had its own hierarchy. Surprisingly it was not divided according to the employment as both of the previous social classes. In the highest social class the division depended on the titles. There existed, and until the present day there exist, five degrees of aristocracy. The title of duke reaches the highest social status, then there are titles of marquis, earl, viscount and baron – it is the title of the lowest aristocratic status. The aristocratic title as well as the owned land passed to the oldest son after the father's death. Younger sons did not inherit the title from their father. The only thing they could inherit was a part of their father's property. However, this part of property usually was not big enough to make provision for the son for a longer time, which means that the younger descendants were prepared for doing a profession – ordinarily they became clergymen, military officers or colonial administrators. Women gained the titles (duchess, marchioness, countess, viscountess, baroness) only through a marriage with an aristocrat. The

⁴⁷ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁴⁸ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*.

⁴⁹ STORRY, Mike a Peter CHILDS (eds.). *British Cultural Identities*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-42460-8. (p. 184)

breakthrough came in the end of the Victorian era when Angela Burdett-Coutts gained the title of baroness as the first woman through a different way than a marriage. This philanthropist and banker received the title for her service to the nation.

The landed gentry also belonged to the highest social class of the Victorian society; however, it was different from the aristocracy. An utter majority of the landowners were not people of noble birth, there were only few exceptions concerning barons or knights. Unlike the aristocrats, who were spending the most of time in London because of the parliamentary sessions, the landowners lived their life mostly in the English country where they administrated the land. They usually lived in a manor house near a home farm administered by a bailiff. On their estate there were ordinarily several other smaller farms which were rented to the tenants, and one or two small villages where the farm workers lived. The landowner's family was highly respected. To represent the regent and the judge of his land and to support local charities were obligations of the landowner. His wife and also daughters very often helped the poor people personally. Sons of the landowner attended the great public schools; daughters were educated at home by a governess.

In the course of the 19th century the life of the aristocracy was slowly changing. One of the great changes which affected the aristocracy concerned the employment. It of course was not an employment in the true sense of the word but a contribution to the society and the state was expected from the aristocrats. To sit in Parliament, to take part in local affairs or to cooperate with a charity was considered as a useful activity, though none of these activities was salaried. With the century passing the differences between the highest social class members of noble birth and of low birth started to fade away. Schools carried a big share on this change. In the great public schools and the prestigious boarding schools sons of aristocrats were meeting with sons of landowners. Surprisingly, the differences between particular social classes stopped being so sharply distinctive too. In the second half of the 19th century also the descendants of wealthier industrialist and merchants – members of the middle class began attending these types of school.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

1. 3. 2 Working life

In general, the work in Victorian England was very hard and strenuous. Working people were spending the major part of a day at work. The inhabitants of both genders and of all age brackets belonged among the working people. Not only men but also women and children worked even in extremely hard working positions. In addition the work was rarely regulated by a labour code, an employment contract or a pension did not exist.

In the beginning of the 19th century an absolute majority of the inhabitants worked in agriculture mainly as farm workers or farm servants, also as construction workers. Milkmaids, sewers and lady innkeepers were typical women's employments. With the proceeding Industrial Revolution and the urbanization connected with it the structure of employment in Victorian England was changing – jobs in factories became a domain in the labour market. Men, women and also children worked in factories. Manual work with machines was physically demanding and the shifts usually lasted for twelve hours. The workers ordinarily lived near the factory, the majority of the factories were equipped with a bell which started to sound in the beginning of the shift and it was chasing the workers into the factory.

The most widespread employment by far was home serving in the Victorian England because entire fifteen percent of working people had a job as servants. With the century passing this number was even increasing. It was caused by a rise of the new middle class employments like for example clerks, teachers or accountants.⁵¹ The Victorian England registered the biggest increase of these jobs in the middle of the 19th century and the majority of these jobs were done by men. Progressively more women were getting into such employments.⁵² People who succeeded in getting these jobs usually left the working social class and they got into the middle class. Newly some of them could afford to employ home servants; however the major part of the white-collar jobs was still salaried very insufficiently.⁵³ The servants' job was highly demanding particularly with respect to the time; the servants had to be available for their masters in day and night. They commonly had free time only in one

⁵¹ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*.

⁵² HOPPEN, K. Theodor. *The Mid Victorian Generation 1846-1886*. 1st ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. ISBN 978-0-198-22834-9

⁵³ CARR-SAUNDERS, Alexander Morris, WILSON, Paul A. *The Professions*. 1st ed. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1964. ISBN 978-0-714-61576-9

evening in a week or in one whole day in a month.⁵⁴ From the other points of view the working conditions of the servants were much better than factory workers' working conditions. Although the servants' salary was similar to workers' wage, the servants had accommodation and diet guaranteed by their masters, which meant that they could use the whole salary for their own needs.⁵⁵

1. 3. 3 Child labour

*"Children in pre-industrial societies had always worked. Most took some part in their parents' labour, whether in agriculture or in producing goods at home. Their work was entirely unregulated—English law was extremely reluctant to intervene in family affairs, even to protect children against parental abuse—but it tended not to be seen by outsiders. What the Victorians did "invent" was concern for working children, and ultimately the legal means to protect them. Victorian reformers made child labour visible and thereby did a great deal toward bringing it to an end."*⁵⁶

In the Victorian England children started to work in very early age – mainly in agriculture working children at the age of five or six were not an exception. Course of the Industrial Revolution did not restrict the child labour on any count; on the contrary the Industrial Revolution even intensified it.⁵⁷ Demand for the child labour rose with the expanding factories – specific factory working positions actually were tailor-made for children, for example work on places with small space, openings easily penetrable with a children arm and so on. However children were employed on adult jobs in factory too. Thanks to the machines the work was not so demanding anymore and children were able to manage it without bigger problems. The major part of children employed in factories worked in textile mills. There was no need to manipulate with heavy objects; therefore children were perfectly suitable for such work. The working hours of children were not different from the adults' working hours – it usually lasted for twelve hours.

⁵⁴ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁵⁵ PERKIN, Harold. *The Origins of Modern English Society*. 2nd ed. Taylor and Francis e-library, 2005. ISBN 0-203-41270-2

⁵⁶ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. (p. 41)

⁵⁷ KANE, Penny. *Victorian Families in Fact And Fiction*. 1st ed. London: Macmillan, 1995. ISBN 978-0-312-12517-

Except for the work in factories children were used in other types of work too. Chimney sweeping was very common type of children work. Children usually worked there under the supervision of an adult worker who took advantage of their small stature for cleaning the chimneys. Children fitted into chimneys with their whole body which meant that they saved up the exhausting physical work from the adult worker. Work in coal mines was another typical children job. In this work children were favoured for their small stature too.

Until the end of the 19th century the child labour in Great Britain was not regulated by any laws. In the beginning of the Victorian era, in year 1802 the first law concerning child labour was released – the Factory Act, but it focused predominantly on working children – orphans. Many factories made deals with orphanages; they took children from these institutions as soon as they reached the age of seven. According to the Factory Act of 1802 these children could work maximum of twelve hours a day and the factory owner was under an obligation to provide them with basic education. The laws did not concentrate on other working children until the year 1833 when the employment of children younger than nine years old in textile mills was prohibited and the working hours of children workers at the age between nine and twelve years were generally restricted to forty-eight hours a week. Nine years later especially the children work in coal mines was adjusted – it was prohibited to all girls, women and boys younger than ten years old.

Working condition of the children workers were getting better with the 19th century proceeding. In the end of the Victorian era it was banned to employ a child younger than twelve years old in a factory or a workshop. Children could continue doing lighter jobs with shorter working hours – therefore they were usually employed in agriculture or as home servants, also they very often worked at home where they did various types of manual work together with their mothers, for example sewing, knitting or toy-making. Some children worked out of their homes too – outside on the streets. Boys could make some extra money there by sweeping up the streets, holding horses or delivering messages; girls were also sweeping up the streets or they were selling flowers and matches.⁵⁸

Many children who proved their ability in work were gaining experience, bigger wage and permanent employment with progressive maturing; therefore gaining of independence was

⁵⁸ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

not a problem for them. The child labour enabled children to become totally independent of parents around the age of fifteen. So such age was the most frequent age of children in Victorian England leaving their parents and founding their own homes.⁵⁹

Child labour in Victorian era was possible mainly because of total absence of nationwide system of education. As late as in the middle of the 19th century nearly a half of all English inhabitants were illiterate. The foundations of compulsory education were not laid until the year 1870 when the Education Act was released. The act divided the whole state into well arranged school districts, however it did not introduced the compulsory education for everyone. It happened ten years later in year 1880. The majority of children started attending school in that time but still not all of them because many poor families could not afford to pay school fee. School attendance was chargeable until the year 1891.⁶⁰

1. 3. 4 Family life

Family life in England of the 19th century depended on several basic factors – the social class, property, religion and the laws at that time.⁶¹ The most conspicuous gauge for division of families, as well as of the individuals, in the Victorian era was classification into the social class. Families of different social classes observed different family rituals, they had different division of family roles and they of course spent the collective time in a different way.

Starting from top of the social hierarchy, aristocratic families attached great importance to the representation of the family on the outside than to keeping intimate family relationships. Father, the head of a family, was usually fully occupied with his duties, for example with parliamentary sessions or with administration of his land. Also the wives of aristocrats or landowners had social and political duties. Children from families of a high social status were usually raised and educated by nurses and governesses; boys at higher age ordinarily attended the great public schools or the boarding schools. A large number of servants, who did all types of housework, were a traditional part of noble households. The relationships between parents and children were rather on a formal level than on the

⁵⁹ KANE, Penny. *Victorian Families in Fact And Fiction*. 1st ed. London: Macmillan, 1995. ISBN 978-0-312-12517-2

⁶⁰ THOMPSON, Francis Michael Longstreth. *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. ISBN 978-0-674-77285-4

⁶¹ KANE, Penny. *Victorian Families in Fact And Fiction*.

intimate one.⁶² The tradition of formal behaviour in high society families started changing itself by the time when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were raising their nine children. Queen Victoria personally attached great importance to the family life and to hearty family relationships. Therefore the royal family of hers became a model for the majority of families in Great Britain.⁶³

A typical example of a Victorian family was usually a family of the middle social class. Every member of a family had his own position there. To attend to the economical needs of a family was a duty of a father, so he took care of a financial situation. A mother ordinarily administered the money earned by father what she used for buying things needed in a household. To take care of children and their education was the main role of a mother. A woman in household did not earn money but she stayed at home and created domestic environment. Middle-class children were raised at home by nurses and educated by governesses; wealthier families could afford to educate their sons in the great public schools. After that many sons followed their fathers' model and under their supervision the young men completed their apprenticeship as the same employment as the fathers. Following the family tradition was not expected from daughters; they stayed at home until they got married.

Members of the working class started their families the most frequently of all the social classes.⁶⁴ A family from the workers' surroundings was usually the biggest of all the Victorian families; a typical worker ordinarily had up to twice as many children as a typical member of the middle class. In these poor families a mother could not afford not to earn money which means that she worked too until the time she gave birth to a baby. However, even then it was needed to contribute to the family budget, so mothers from the working-class families very often did home working. Children at an early age helped them with the work, older children usually worked out of home.⁶⁵

⁶² MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁶³ KANE, Penny. *Victorian Families in Fact And Fiction*. 1st ed. London: Macmillan, 1995. ISBN 978-0-312-12517-2

⁶⁴ HOPPEN, K. Theodor. *The Mid Victorian Generation 1846-1886*. 1st ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. ISBN 978-0-198-22834-9

⁶⁵ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

1. 3. 5 Health, diseases and medicine

1. 3. 5. 1 General health

“By 1837, it seemed evident that urban people were sickly. Popular images contrasted the tall, sturdy countryman to the stooped and feeble city dweller. Diseases of all sorts swept out of crowded slum neighbourhoods into the dwellings of the well-to do.”⁶⁶

State of health of the inhabitants of Victorian England frequently was not very good. Among the people, there existed many diseases spreading out in a viral or bacterial way. Although in many cases it was about banal illnesses, in the 19th century people were not able to determine an origin of a disease, much less to cure it effectively. The bacteria causing diseases was identified at the very end of the Victorian era. However the cures for these illnesses were not discovered until nearly the half of the 20th century.

Without effective medicine the treatment of diseases usually depended mainly on elderly people’s experience, natural products, herbs and last but not least on various drugs. However in many cases it was not possible to prevent the patient from death. Therefore the life expectancy of the inhabitants of Victorian England was markedly shorter than nowadays. People from the working class were of course more susceptible to diseases because their bodies were debilitated by hard work, lack of nourishment and unsuitable living conditions. That implies these people had the biggest experience with sundry types of medication. If a person from a higher social class got ill, the help and advice were searched at people from a lower social class – the most often at the home servants.

Although nowadays women are generally stronger and more tenacious than men, in the Victorian era it was the other way around. In those days women were much more susceptible to illnesses than men because of several reasons. Women were those who took care of ill members of their family which means they were more often in touch with diseases. Women were spending the most of time at home while they took care of a household, in contrast with men who were spending the most of time outside on the fresh air. Women also more often suffered from malnutrition than men because a classic habit was to give the best food to men. Ladies’ fashion was the last but not least cause of some diseases. This case concerned mainly the women of higher social classes who wore tightly

⁶⁶ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. (p. 212)

tied up corsets every day. These caused the women could not breathe properly and gradually they deformed their bodies.

Also the babies were naturally highly susceptible to diseases; the infant mortality was very high – ten times bigger than nowadays in industrialized countries. Babies of poor parents ordinarily died of malnutrition. Mothers from the working class were forced to work during the entire pregnancy nearly until the birth of a child because of the income. They themselves were very often malnourished, they gave birth to their babies prematurely and the babies had quite low birth weight. Children of mothers from higher social classes ordinarily did not suffer from such problems; however they still were, as the poor children, susceptible to many cureless transmissible diseases.

1. 3. 5. 2 Diseases

The tuberculosis undoubtedly caused the most serious problems in Victorian England; it was responsible for nearly a half of all the deceases as a result of illness.⁶⁷ The main manifest of this disease was especially persistent cough, also absence of appetite, fatigue and overall weakness. Tuberculosis is an airborne disease which means that everyone, who was in touch with the ill one, was seriously endangered.⁶⁸ Therefore hospitals usually refused to accept patients diseased with tuberculosis.

The diseases coming in epidemics appeared too. Once in a while the epidemics of typhoid fever were coming, specifically of the spotted fever.⁶⁹ The spotted fever is, as tuberculosis, a bacterial disease, it was transmitted through lice. The typhoid fever was spreading out mainly in crowded places, for example on markets. The characteristic symptoms were fever, whole body ache and above all a persistent skin eruption in the area of chest and limbs. The epidemics of cholera appeared as well. Cholera was a bacterial disease manifesting itself especially as severe diarrhoea and vomiting. It transmitted through contaminated water or food. Cholera could cause death very quickly (a few hours) because there were huge losses of water and a collapse of homeostasis of a body owing to the watery diarrhoea and rushes

⁶⁷ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

⁶⁸ DOBSON, Mary. *Disease: The Extraordinary Stories Behind History's Deadliest Killers*. 1st ed. London: Quercus Publishing, 2008. ISBN 978-1-847-24399-7

⁶⁹ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*.

of sickness.⁷⁰ Cholera arrived to Victorian England in the thirties of the 19th century greatly unexpectedly from India; half of all the infected people died.

There were also epidemics of viral diseases like influenza or smallpox. Influenza, currently quite a banal illness, was in fact very dangerous without the cure in Victorian England. On the contrary, people succeeded in prevention of smallpox thanks to the vaccination already in the half of the 19th century. However, several more epidemics were necessary for the majority of the British inhabitants to be willing to get vaccinated.

1. 3. 5. 3 Medicine

As mentioned above, if a person from a high social class got ill, the concern and care of this person usually passed over the home servants as members of the working class, which was the most experienced regarding diseases. Nevertheless there were the professionals too whose job was to treat illnesses. Physicians were the most respected of them all; they were the only ones of the healers who had a university degree. Therefore they enjoyed big prestige; they often had their own consulting room in their houses. The physicians who were less regarded usually worked in London hospitals. Apothecaries were numbered among the professionals too. Even though they were not endowed with a university degree, they had to pass five-year training at a current apothecary for being certified for the job of apothecary. An obligatory service in a hospital lasting for at least six months was a part of the training. Job description of an apothecary was, except for selling the medicine, to provide medical advice.

Midwives and nurses were unprofessional providers of medical care. The midwives were, and they still are, women who helped children to be born and for several days after childbirth they took care of a mother and a baby. The training of these women was realised via an informal apprenticeship. In contrast to this, the nurses ordinarily did not pass through any kind of training. In the most of cases they were poor women from the working class who were hired to take care of patients and to be incessantly available. That implies that the nurses acquired the medical knowledge only during the work.⁷¹

⁷⁰ DOBSON, Mary. *Disease: The Extraordinary Stories Behind History's Deadliest Killers*. 1st ed. London: Quercus Publishing, 2008. ISBN 978-1-847-24399-7

⁷¹ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

2. The Life of Charles Dickens

2. 1 Birth and family

The boy called Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on the 7th of February 1812 in Portsmouth to his parents John and Elizabeth Dickens as the second of eight children in total.⁷² He was born into much disunited period dissimilar from the point of view of a social standpoint, into the rich, prospering country holding a head position in Europe on one hand, but on the other hand he was also born into the rough, unsatisfactory country where every day of a poor inhabitant could be the last day and every fight for a bite of food could be the fight for a bare life.⁷³

John and Elizabeth Dickens had a blessing in disguise in such unmerciful era. They were successful in leading the life on a relatively decent economical level as members of the middle social class – John Dickens worked as a clerk in the Navy’s pay office yet at the cost of dishonesty, withholding the truth and falsehood. Neither Charles’ mother nor his father told the full truth about their origin. Elizabeth Dickens did not reveal the fact that her father Charles Barrow, who worked as a chief cashier in the Navy’s pay office long time ago, did not manage the great financial responsibility related to this job, he had falsified the bookkeeping for nine years and he misappropriated the sum of a few thousand pounds in total to anybody, not even to her own son. As the icing on the cake of his unacceptable behaviour he fled the country lest he be captured. He made his escape to the Isle of Man which was out of reach of the British law. He died there two years before the birth of little Charles.

The secret of John Dickens was an employment of his parents, Charles Dickens’ grandmother and grandfather. The thing was that John’s mother worked as a servant and John’s father was a butler, albeit they were both employed at a socially much respected family. Elizabeth and John Dickens were very lucky not to have their social status seriously affected by their relatives’ destiny, because, beside other things, John Dickens gained the job of a clerk thanks to Elizabeth’s father. Therefore for them it was deemed necessary not to vent it anymore. The truth about his grandparents had never been told to Charles Dickens, instead of the

⁷² WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁷³ MITCHELL, Sally. *Daily Life in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. Westport – Greenwood Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-35034-4

truth Charles was listening to his parents' fictions about a grandmother living far away in the country or about a grandfather who had moved beyond the sea.

In the course of time Charles was naturally growing up and he started thinking about things. It is a likelihood that his perceptiveness and intuition worked hard and that he was slowly discovering the truth or at least he sensed it, especially the truth about his grandfather beyond the sea from whom he inherited the first name. Escape beyond the sea was in fact very popular act among various criminals, bankrupts and people suspected of committing a criminal act. The escape very often appeared in Victorian literature and it seems probable that little Charles Dickens, a passionate reader, noticed this similarity.

Despite the fact the Charles' parents permanently emphasized the good origin of the family and they withheld all the disruptive circumstances, Charles as a perceptive child undoubtedly intuited anxious family atmosphere marked by the constant fear of exposure and, as a result of that, by the fear of falling into much more oppressive economical situation. The financial condition of the Dickens family actually was not very satisfying, despite their effort to convince everybody of the opposite. John's imprudent manipulation with money was most likely to blame. Little Charles Dickens spent two years in Portsmouth. He was born into a fancy house, however in seven months the whole family moved to a cheaper house on the grounds of financial troubles. In 1814 the Dickens family left Portsmouth forever because John succeeded in gaining a job in London. Nevertheless after another two years he lost this job and the whole family had to move again. That time they moved to Chatham in Kent where John Dickens gained a job in a marine dock.

2. 2 Childhood in Chatham

At the beginning in Chatham the Dickens family was living in a noble neighbourhood in a nice city house again. However after five years of a contented life John's squandering money affected the family once more and moving into a worse neighbourhood and a worse house followed. Despite all these circumstances denying the feeling of peaceful family life and settling down, Charles Dickens considered the childhood in Chatham as the happiest period of his life. Chatham became the place where Charles was spending his blithe children's time together with his parents; he also started the school attendance there after the previous time when his mother taught him the basis of English and Latin.

A new person adopted very important role in Charles Dickens' life – it was a nurse. Mary Weller started to work for the Dickens family during their first years in Chatham. She became an indispensable part of home for little Charles, she provoked his passion for reading, she broadened Charles' horizons in many aspects of life or education and she became Charles' lifelong inspiration and model for the literary characters created by him. An interesting aspect of the person of Mary Weller was her influence on little Charles and also the relationship between them. It is oftentimes impossible to determine satisfactorily whether their mutual relationship was positive or not.⁷⁴ In some works by Charles Dickens, where the character of a nurse performs, this character is not depicted in very affable way, for example in the Christmas short story called *The Holly-Tree* the nurse is described as a woman with yellowish face, fish eyes and aquiline nose and she is much delighted by seeing her little ward shuddering as a result of scary stories of hers.⁷⁵

*"If we all knew our minds (in a more enlarged sense than the popular acceptance of that phrase), I suspect we should find our nurses responsible for most of the dark corners we are forced to go back to, against our wills."*⁷⁶

However, in other Dickens' works the character of a nurse is depicted oppositely – in a positive way that borders even with adoration. Such an opposite is the most obvious especially in the novel *David Copperfield* where the character of Peggotty the nurse is the only support for the little hero and it could be said that she directly compensates the lack of maternal love for him. In this novel another activity introduced to Charles by Mary Weller occurs – attending Sunday church services. As the boy David Copperfield in the story, little Charles Dickens also hated those services, he suffered during the preaching and he formed permanent resistance to them in the childhood.⁷⁷

During the childhood in Chatham Charles emotionally clung rather to the father than the mother. Even though Charles' mother had successfully taught him at home for a very long

⁷⁴ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁷⁵ *The Holly-Tree*. DICKENS, Charles. *The Project Gutenberg eBook* [online] 2005 [cit. 2016-1-18]. Available on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1394/1394-h/1394-h.htm>

⁷⁶ *Nurse's Stories*. DICKENS, Charles. *The Uncommercial Traveller* [online] 2014 [cit. 2016-1-18]. Available on: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dickens/charles/d54ut/chapter15.html>

⁷⁷ *David Copperfield*. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf>

time, for Charles the character of the father was connected with spending the casual free time. John and Charles Dickens very often went for long walks within them little Charles was thoroughly examining the English countryside. The countryside lodged in Charles' mind for a limitless time as a symbol of English happiness, gaiety and good manners. John and Charles usually walked around the river Medway and around local docks where John Dickens worked. Right there Charles Dickens encountered the convicts' work in docks and their galley for the first time.⁷⁸ Later he used this theme abundantly in his writing career, the story of little Pip from the novel *Great Expectations* is based directly on the character of a fugitive convict.⁷⁹

Charles Dickens' father was transferred in the terms of work back to London in 1822. Thus the Dickens family followed the father, however for that time without little Charles who had stayed in Chatham for his own request for several more months. During that time he lived right in the school building which he attended. He departed for his family by stagecoach at Christmas in year 1822. Charles Dickens was leaving Chatham – the city he later labelled as the place where he spent the best time of his life. He also left there a close person, his nurse Marry Weller, who did not travelled away with the Dickens family because she got married in Chatham.⁸⁰

2. 3 Childhood in London

The arrival into the capital city brought huge disenchantment and disappointment to little Charles Dickens. The first change for the Dickens family was moving into the London neighbourhood of Camden Town.⁸¹ This neighbourhood was inhabited mainly by craftsmen, so by the people who had a lower social status than the Dickens family had, or they at least tried to pretend they had. The financial situation of the family started to change alarmingly too; unfortunately it was the change for the worse. John and Elizabeth Dickens had to sustain not just their numerous offspring but also a lodger lived in their house. It was James Lamert, the stepson of Elizabeth Dickens' sister. There was one more person in the Dickens

⁷⁸ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁷⁹ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Reprint 1st ed. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1955.

⁸⁰ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*.

⁸¹ CALLOW, Simon. *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*. Reprint 1st ed. London: Vintage, 2012. ISBN 978-0-345-80323-8

household who moved to London from Chatham together with the Dickens family. It was a young orphaned girl from Chatham's poorhouse who worked in the family as a servant. Therefore John and Elizabeth Dickens provided her not only a sum of money as a reward for her work but also accommodation and food. To have an orphan from the poorhouse, the person of the lowest social status, as a servant also did not really lift up the social position of the Dickens family.

2. 3. 1 Child labour

The indebtedness and a poor financial situation of the family complicated the course of Charles' childhood and also his chances for good education. The education was enabled only to Charles' older sister Frances who got a place in the Royal Music Academy where she studied singing. The school fee naturally meant another expenses, therefore there was not enough money for Charles' education. That implies the boy did not attend school in London, the main content of his time was to run errands for his parents. Charles suffered from that, he longed for education and he missed Chatham, where he attended school, more and more.

Probably the most serious change affected the Dickens family in year 1824 when the father John was imprisoned in the Marshalsea Debtors' Prison because of his unpaid debts. His wife Elizabeth together with their younger children joined him and lived with him right in the prison. Little Charles Dickens did not live with the rest of his family; he lived in a lodging with family friend Elizabeth Roylance.⁸² In fact, Charles' mother Elizabeth gained a job for her son at Warren's Blacking Factory thanks to nepotism of the former lodger James Lamert who was working in the factory as a supervisor. Charles' job description was to stick labels on the bottles.⁸³

"The blacking warehouse was the last house on the left-hand side of the way, at old Hungerford Stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly

⁸² POPE-HENNESSY, Una. *Charles Dickens 1812-1870*. 1st ed. London: Chatto & Windus, 1945.

⁸³ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

*before me, as if I were there again. The counting-house was on the first floor, looking over the coal-barges and the river. There was a recess in it, in which I was to sit and work.”*⁸⁴

The same type of work as Charles did was done there by several more boys. One of them who came to give Charles initial training in the work was called Bob Fagin. Later Dickens used his name in the novel *Oliver Twist*.⁸⁵

This way little Charles Dickens found himself in the same surroundings as was the one of his children's heroes from his later works. From the boy of relatively decent social status Charles became the boy who is forced to work in a factory on the grounds of maintaining his family just like the children from the poorest social class. Right in this period of Charles Dickens' life his weakness for poor children probably took root. The poor children were models for the future heroes in the majority of his writings. The thing is that the writer really experienced a similar way of life like them. He worked with men and boys of humble origins; he became one of them – a poor, shabby child. After working hours Charles usually roamed alone on dirty London streets and in the lodging at Elizabeth Roylance he lived together with other three boys in a similar situation. He naturally felt very lonely, abandoned by the family and without the feeling of home. Sunday was he only day he could spend with his family. On those days the oldest daughter of the Dickens family Frances was also arriving and the whole family spent their time together in the Marshalsea Debtor's Prison.

The suffering of little Charles Dickens luckily ended after only a few months. John Dickens' mother, concealed and disrespected because of her origin, died and she bequeathed all the possessions to her son. John Dickens was finally able to repay all the debts and he was released from the prison. The family returned to their old house in Camden Town neighbourhood. However, most surprisingly Charles Dickens' parents let him continue working in the factory. The only change in Charles' life was that after working hours he came back to his family, not to the lodging at Mrs. Roylance. Though soon John Dickens noticed his son's suffering and he send a complaint about a humiliating position of Charles in the factory to James Lamert. Lamert, thanks to whom Charles gained the job in Warren's Blacking Factory, was of course quite irritated with the complaint. Instead of shunting Charles on a

⁸⁴ FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online]. 1st ed. London: Chapman & Hall, 1904 [cit. 2016-01-18]. Available on: <https://archive.org/details/lifeofcharlesdic01fo> (p. 25)

⁸⁵ FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online].

more respected working position he dismissed him. Charles was happy but his mother was very disconcerted by the dismissal. Elizabeth Dickens was very particular about maintaining good relationships with people of higher social classes, therefore she asked Lamert to take Charles back. Lamert satisfied her but John Dickens, insulted by Lamert's former manners, rejected his son's return to the factory resolutely. So Charles finally freed himself of his huge burden in form of strenuous work and in addition he strengthened the relationship with father. On the contrary his relationship with mother became even cooler because Charles could not forgive her that she required his return to the hated factory.⁸⁶

2. 3. 2 Studies at Wellington House Academy

The life of young Charles Dickens was slowly getting better. In 1825 he was enrolled at school again – at the Wellington House Academy. Although this school did not provide quality education, Charles was immensely happy at it after the previous experience.⁸⁷

*"... the general features of the place are reproduced with wonderful accuracy, and more especially in those points for which the school appears to have been much more notable than for anything connected with the scholarship of its pupils. In the reprinted piece Dickens describes it as remarkable for white mice. He says that red-polls, linnets, and even canaries, were kept by the boys desks, drawers, hat-boxes, and other strange refuges for birds; but that white mice were the favourite stock, and that the boys trained the mice much better than the master trained the boys."*⁸⁸

Despite his great delight for the school attendance, new friends and hobbies, especially in the form of various small animals, also numerous imperfections of the Wellington House Academy stuck in Charles' mind. The tuition at the school was shallow and inferior; the most of teachers were not able to impose discipline among the boys, the classes were constantly interrupted by brutal seizures of a choleric headmaster. Particularly this negative picture of the Wellington House Academy became a model of the school institution of Mr. Creakle in

⁸⁶ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁸⁷ FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online]. 1st ed. London: Chapman & Hall, 1904 [cit. 2016-01-18]. Available on: <https://archive.org/details/lifeofcharlesdic01fo>

⁸⁸ FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online]. 1st ed. London: Chapman & Hall, 1904 [cit. 2016-01-18]. Available on: <https://archive.org/details/lifeofcharlesdic01fo> (p. 42)

the novel *David Copperfield*. The character of the headmaster in this work is a personification of the real headmaster of the Wellington House Academy.⁸⁹

2. 4 Youth and the first working experience

Charles Dickens' studies at the Wellington House Academy took two years. In year 1827 fifteen-year old Charles Dickens ended the school attendance and he started working life. He launched his career as a junior clerk at the company Ellis and Blackmore, the law office.⁹⁰ It should be noted that Charles gained this job thanks to his mother again equally as the job in Warren's Blacking Factory. The thing was that Elizabeth Dickens was acquainted very well with Edward Blackmore, Charles' new employer. However young Charles was not overly contented in this job. His working description lay in small clerical works and in delivering messages without a big prospect of career progression.

Therefore in his free time Charles started to learn shorthand and after one year and a half at Ellis and Blackmore he grasped the opportunity, he left his current job and he became an independent reporter at the court of justice at Doctors' Common. Nevertheless his expectation did not meet the reality at all. Instead of the expected writing about immensely interesting legal disputes, the job was quite boring because the court at Doctors' Common usually solved only small tedious cases.⁹¹

2. 5 Adulthood

2. 5. 1 The first writing feats

In year 1831 nineteen-year old Charles Dickens gained a new job again. He became a political journalist in the Chamber of Deputies.⁹² Charles liked this job more because he became a witness of miscellaneous parliamentary disputes full of party propaganda.⁹³ Charles' uncle William Barrow, brother of Charles' mother, offered him a job in the periodical *Mirror of Parliament* furthermore. Later Charles Dickens gained the job of a

⁸⁹ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁹⁰ CALLOW, Simon. *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*. Reprint 1st ed. London: Vintage, 2012. ISBN 978-0-345-80323-8

⁹¹ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁹² FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online]. 1st ed. London: Chapman & Hall, 1904 [cit. 2016-01-18]. Available on: <https://archive.org/details/lifeofcharlesdic01fo>

⁹³ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*.

reporter in the Morning Chronicle thanks to that experience.⁹⁴ In that time he started to cultivate his talent for writing, he drew up the first stories and during the writing he was fully using his experience from the Chamber of Deputies. At the start anonymously and later under a pen name he published literary sketches and he gained a reputation.

In the beginning of the year 1834 the first book by twenty-four-year old Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, was published.⁹⁵ It noticed great success and it brought a contract with the publishing house Chapman and Hall to Charles. This company published the second book by Charles Dickens called *The Pickwick Papers* a few months later in the end of the year 1836. *The Pickwick Papers* made the name of Charles Dickens truly popular.⁹⁶ After that phenomenal success Charles, overloaded with numerous publishing offers, decided to quit the job of a reporter definitely and to dedicate his time fully to the writing career.⁹⁷

2. 5. 2 Personal life

Charles Dickens met the first love when he was seventeen. Her name was Maria Beadnell and she was a daughter of a bank director. Mister and madam Beadnell were trying to find appropriate marriage matches for their two daughters; therefore they held various parties and celebrations in their house. Primarily young men attended those parties. However in that time Charles Dickens worked as a mere court reporter at Doctors' Common, therefore he did not seem to be a suitable candidate for marriage with Maria. Maria's parents sent her to Paris for studies in order to remove her out of Charles' range.

After that unhappy experience it took other three years until Charles met a new girl. Catherine Hogarth was a daughter of Charles' superior, the editor in chief of the Evening Chronicle, the evening paper. The wedding took place in 1836 in Chelsea. A happy marriage at first was unfortunately soon marked by an immense family tragedy. The younger sister of Catherine Hogarth, Mary, who lived in the same household as the young couple, all of a sudden and unexpectedly died at home right in Charles Dickens' arms. The whole family collapsed, not excepting Charles who found not just a great friend in Mary Hogarth but he

⁹⁴ FORSTER, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens* [online].

⁹⁵ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*.

⁹⁶ CALLOW, Simon. *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*. Reprint 1st ed. London: Vintage, 2012. ISBN 978-0-345-80323-8

⁹⁷ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*.

also consider her an ideal woman.⁹⁸ Because of that tragedy Charles Dickens even did not meet the deadline of handing in his new novel *Oliver Twist*.⁹⁹ Mary used to be a vital gregarious person in contrast to her sister Catherine who had rather passive personality. Charles was strongly disillusioned by Catherine's quick recovering from her sister's death too. Therefore he started to pull ahead of his wife more and more. He resuscitated the memory of Mary in his writings; many female characters there were abundant with the same personality traits as Mary had.

Despite the incompatibility of their personalities the marriage of Charles and Catherine Dickens lasted the long twenty-two years and they begot eleven children in total. Nevertheless Charles' reservation about his wife was on the increase as the time passed. Catherine was not able to fully acclimatize to the career life of Charles; however it was not the only thing Charles suffered from. When the children were born he started to claim that Catherine Dickens handled neither her maternity duties nor keeping house. Nevertheless it must be said that the married couple very often undertook various business trips because of the Charles' writing career. So it is at least understandable that keeping house in such an environment was definitely not easy for Catherine.

Their relationship reached a critical point in the fifties of the 19th century. In that time the first huge intervention into the marriage was Charles' reunion with an old flame – Maria Beadnell. Although in the course of time Maria changed for the worse a lot and Charles Dickens was quite dissatisfied and disappointed by the reunion, the mere longing for the sight of his long-ago love confirmed Charles in confidence that the love disappeared from his marriage. The second, much more serious intervention into the marriage of Charles and Catherine was meeting a young actress. Her name was Ellen Ternan and that young woman absolutely enchanted Charles Dickens. Although Ellen probably did not have an intimate relationship with the writer in that time, she undoubtedly became his mistress several years later.

The married couple Charles and Catherine Dickens broke up definitively in year 1858. After the breakup Charles left the rushed London and he moved to the beloved calm country.

⁹⁸ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

⁹⁹ SMILEY, Jane. *Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. New York: Penguin, 2002. ISBN 0-670-03077-5

2. 6 Late years

Charles Dickens spent the last years of his life occupationally too. He started to pay more attention to public reading of his writings. Despite the failing state of health he even organized a tour of public reading in the United States of America in year 1867. The tour was a great success, nonetheless Charles Dickens returned to England with even more ruined health. It was supported by the separation from his partner Ellen Ternan who did not accompany Charles on the tour.

Despite the serious health problems Charles Dickens continued with public reading until the end of his life yet naturally he could not hold them as many as before. He coped with surplus of free time his way – he started to work on a new novel called *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. As Charles' state of health constantly worsened (he suffered from dizziness and fits of paralyses), the writer oftentimes thought about his death. He exacted a permission of holding the last public reading tour from doctors.

He still continued working on the last novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. On 8th of June 1870 exhausted Charles Dickens suddenly collapsed after a day full of work on that novel and he never regained consciousness fully again. On the second day, 9th of June 1870, he died in his house in Gad's Hill Place, in the beloved country, surrounded by his work. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* remained the last, unfinished novel by Charles Dickens.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

3. The work of Charles Dickens in the context of the Victorian period

3. 1 General characteristics of Charles Dickens' work

From a general point of view it is possible to characterize the creation of Charles Dickens as critical realism. This literary course started to develop in English society approximately in the thirties and the forties of the 19th century and it was a natural consequence of a working-class movement called Chartism. That movement, or the followers of the People's Charter of 1838, expressed resistance to the constantly increasing economical difference between the capitalists, permanently growing richer, and the proletariat, permanently growing poorer. Among requirements of the People's Charter there were especially secret voting rule for all the men and elimination of parliamentary corruption. The charter did not have only the proletariat's support but also craftsmen and farmers sympathized with it. Despite it the People's Charter was denied by the parliament three times which led to many conflicts and revolts in the whole state.

In the peak period of the Chartism the prose and poetry of the Chartism reached its biggest broadening, English workers even assembled in literary groups. The theme of the literature of the Charter was naturally the revolution with often repeated calls for a class war. However Chartism had not maintained its peak period for a long time and its revolutionary character was becoming blunt primarily owing to inner discrepancy in the movement.¹⁰¹

The writers who were not active followers of the Chartism movement did not occupy themselves with the revolutionary thoughts in their work but they were rather concerned with true and realistic depiction of a man and a society, which was only captured in its possible revolutionary motion. The authors supported the contrast between the capitalists and the proletariat in their works via a critical approach, so the artistic criticism of a society was coming into existence. In their works the working population was realistically depicted as an oppressed, but inside strong and unrestrained, class of a society.

The literary course characterized above is entitled critical realism and it had taken a leading position of the methods of the creation of English literature for a long time. The most typical genre of critical realism was a social novel which complexly portrayed issues of the Victorian

¹⁰¹ CHASE, Malcolm. *Chartism – A New History*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-7190-6086-1

society. Working-class heroes of the social novels held their subjective perspective of the world and of the living conditions they lived in, nonetheless the authors depicted them objectively within the whole society. One of the typical traits of a social-novel hero was certain instability of his character and his inner progress influenced particularly by pressure of a social situation and new laws of an industrial market. Among the main representatives, to the English critical realism belonged William Makepeace Thackeray, the sisters Anne, Charlotte and Emily Brontë and of course chiefly Charles Dickens.¹⁰²

Although Charles Dickens' work is classified as the literary course of critical realism, Dickens can be rightfully considered the father or even the king of English critical realism of the Victorian period. Dickens was actually not inspired just by the tense atmosphere of English society but he drew the inspiration mainly from his own colourful life. Thanks to this his production is so vivid, readable and believable.

The fact is that Charles Dickens in the course of his life went through almost all the states and classes of English society; firstly as a little child he was a member of the middle class, however a few years later he had first-hand experience of the life of the lowest social class – the working class as he was forced to work manually in Warren's Blacking Factory because of his father's imprisonment in a debtor's prison. During maturing and during his first employments Dickens came back to the middle class again; and when he became one of the most regarded writers of that time in adulthood he had a taste of a pleasant life of higher social classes too. On that account it is no wonder he fully took advantage of all the pieces of knowledge of all the social positions for depicting absolutely real surroundings in his writings.

Except for the brilliant integration of the social situation into his work, Charles Dickens is also considered the father of a detective novel in England. It is possible to mention a novel called *Bleak House* as one of his most important detective stories and also an unfinished piece of work with an exciting detective storyline – *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.¹⁰³ Humour is other aspect of Dickens' work; thanks to it he gained enormous popularity not just among the readers from Great Britain but from the whole world. Above all the writings of Dickens' early

¹⁰² JAMES, Louis. *The Victorian Novel*. 1st ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. ISBN 0-631-22628-4.

¹⁰³ SUTHERLAND, John. *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2009. ISBN 978-1-4082-0390-3

production are characterized by the purest and unspoilt humour, in later novels his humour was slowly changing rather into satire probably due to unfairness of the capitalistic system and hypocrisy of the whole Victorian society.

*"I am constrained to consider Dickens here among the fighters; though I ought (on the pure principles of Art) to be considering him in the chapter which I have allotted to the story-tellers. But we should get the whole Victorian perspective wrong, in my opinion at least, if we did not see that Dickens was primarily the most successful of all the onslaughts on the solid scientific school; because he did not attack from the standpoint of extraordinary faith, like Newman; or the standpoint of extraordinary inspiration, like Carlyle; or the standpoint of extraordinary detachment or serenity, like Arnold; but from the standpoint of quite ordinary and quite hearty dislike."*¹⁰⁴

Utilization of sentimentality, especially in contrast with raw and realistic pictures of the Victorian society, is one of the aspects of Charles Dickens' work which he is often reproached for. Therefore a final reader's experience is interwoven with altogether opposite feelings; there is a shock and paralysis caused mainly by the cognition of cruel reality of the lowest social classes' surroundings on one hand, on the other hand there is an emotion caused by a novelistic character itself, its personality and its personality traits which are in a contrast with the previous shock and they force a reader to have perhaps irrational compassion for the character.¹⁰⁵

Although Charles Dickens created his writings in the spirit of critical realism, it is possible to find romantic or even fairytale features in some of his works, especially in the early ones. For example the novels *Oliver Twist* or *David Copperfield* are characterized by them. It is possible to regard invincible positiveness of the main characters, constancy of their character despite all the negative influential experiences which on the contrary only strengthen their character, and above all happy endings of these novels, often quite improbable, as the fairytale features.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ The Victorian Age in Literature. CHESTERTON, Gilbert Keith. *The Project Gutenberg eBook* [online] 2006 [cit. 2016-3-29]. Available on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/18639/18639-h/18639-h.htm> (p. 87)

¹⁰⁵ The Victorian Age in Literature. CHESTERTON, Gilbert Keith.

¹⁰⁶ VON FRANZ, Marie Louise. *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Revised ed. Boston: Shambala, 1996. ISBN 978-0-87773-526-7

Particularly the novel *Oliver Twist* is distinguished by the romantic features, especially the part of the novel taking place in London. In the novel negative characters of criminals live in a mysterious gloomy place surrounded by the worst company; they are outcasts. Nevertheless it is still possible to notice certain satisfaction and irrational life contentment in the stories of their lives. Additionally even in these inclement dismal surroundings there appears love: the character of Nancy, the prostitute, is seriously in love with a criminal Bill Sikes, however in the end she dies because of her love.¹⁰⁷

Romantic features can be found in the novel *David Copperfield* too, even though there is smaller number of them in comparison with *Oliver Twist*. Life of Mr. Daniel Peggotty and his adopted children in a house made of an old ship is the typical romantic attribute of this novel. The dwelling itself and the reality that it is located right on the beach by the sea make the dwellers outcasts; they do not fit into the society. The surroundings of the old lonesome ship on the background of heavy seas create an impressive romantic picture.¹⁰⁸

The novel *Great Expectations* is the most realistic and the least fairytale novel of the three examined writings, nevertheless even there it is possible to find romantic features. The description of the countryside, Pip's birthplace, is vastly romantic. A small village surrounded by swamps and marshland not far from the sea, which is in addition threatened by a near anchoring galley full of dangerous convicted criminals two of whom escaped and they wander around, creates really imposing romantic image similar even to horror. Also the cemetery, which is often visited by Pip and where Pip meets Magwitch, the criminal, for the very first time, is likewise romantic environment. It is necessary to mention also the dwelling of Miss Havisham and the dweller herself. A strange old lady clad in an age-old wedding dress inhabits a decaying house with board up windows and she never comes out of it into daylight – this is a distinctive example of a romantic character on the edge of society.¹⁰⁹ The specific fairytale features typical for the novels *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* are suppressed in *Great Expectations*: the novelistic character of Pip changes over time, also Pip's character and behaviour change, namely for the worse. For the rectification of Pip's

¹⁰⁷ BAYLEY, John. "Oliver Twist: 'Things as They Really Are.'" In John Gross, Gabriel Pearson, eds., Dickens and the Twentieth Century. London: Routledge, 1962. ISBN 978-0-710-01470-2

¹⁰⁸ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2

manners, a certain shock and a turning point (the discovery of his benefactor) must interfere, and then Pip realizes the impropriety of his behaviour.¹¹⁰ Though, absolutely unexpectedly a fairytale feature appears in this novel too. It is the end of the story itself. Pip basically improbably meets Estella, who has also highly implausibly changed her approach to men in total, and there is indicated the hope of the happy ending and a new beginning.¹¹¹

3. 2 Oliver Twist

3. 2. 1 A brief plot summary of the novel *Oliver Twist*

The boy called Oliver Twist grew up as a communal orphan in a workhouse. He was born to an unknown, poor and tattered woman who died immediately after the childbirth. Oliver spent several years in the workhouse together with other children – orphans in a similar situation. When he was nine years old, a municipal deputy Mr. Bumble, the beadle, reached an agreement with a head of the workhouse that it was a high time Oliver started working. So he was placed at Mr. Sowerberry's, the gravedigger, to be apprenticed. Oliver found a friend in Mr. Sowerberry personally, however the other members of the household bullied him and they caused harm to him, therefore one day early in the morning Oliver escaped with an intention to get into London which meant a symbol of hope and a new beginning to him.

During the journey Oliver met a boy of about the same age. His name was Jack Dawkins, however more often he was called with a nickname – the “Artful Dodger”. Oliver followed Jack Dawkins up to London to the place where he lived together with a few other boys at an old Jewish man's called Fagin. At the dwelling of Mr. Fagin Oliver in the course of time met other friends and co-workers of his, for example an adult man called Bill Sikes or two young girls Nancy and Betsy. Oliver had not recognized that those people actually formed a thieving gang until he went on an expedition with them and he was arrested for the theft of Mr. Brownlow's handkerchief, which in reality he did not commit. Fortunately the truth transpired, Mr. Brownlow even took charge of frightened and wretched Oliver and he looked after him in his house.

¹¹⁰ DAVID, Anthony. Lyotard on the Kantian sublime. *Paideia: Contemporary Philosophy* [online]. 1998 [cit. 2016-04-04]. Available on: <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContDavi.htm>

¹¹¹ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2

However when Oliver was running an errand for Mr. Brownlow, he was kidnapped by Nancy and he got to Fagin again. He was used for a burglary planned by Bill Sikes. Sikes, Oliver and two other men tried to burgle a gorgeous sumptuous house in the country; they needed Oliver because of his tiny figure thanks to which he could get into the house through a window and unlock the door from the inside. Nevertheless occupants of the house woke up and they shot Oliver, the others managed to escape. Oliver got a place in the house which should have been burgled. He narrated the truth to the occupants of the house – an elderly Mrs. Maylie and her adopted daughter Rose; then they safeguarded him from the police and took charge of him.

In the meantime, a few new characters appeared in the story. Monks was one of them. He was also a criminal; he knew the Fagin's gang and he searched for Oliver. Another new character is a dying old nurse in the workhouse where Oliver was born. On her deathbed she confessed to a theft to Mrs. Corney, the administrator of the workhouse. The nurse robbed Oliver's mother of a medallion belonging to Oliver. Monks redeemed the medallion from Mrs. Corney and he immediately threw it away into the river. Thereafter Nancy accidentally listened to the conversation between Monks and Fagin and from it she realized that Oliver was actually Monks' half-brother and Monks wanted to devastate him because of their father's inheritance. Nancy had twinges of conscience and she encountered Rose whom she told about Monks' plan. However that right action recoiled on Nancy: Bill Sikes murdered her after he realized she divulged the plan. On the run from the police Sikes died by hanging by mischance.

Meanwhile Rose told everything she heard from Nancy to Mr. Brownlow and others. Mr. Brownlow succeeded in capturing Monks and tangled family relationships slowly started to disentangle. It came to light that Mr. Brownlow was supposed to marry a girl who regrettably died very young. Mr. Brownlow knew also her brother Mr. Leeford who did not get married for love but for coercion. A baby was born to the unhappy family – Monks. Mr. Leeford later split up with his unloved wife and he had another child with another woman – Oliver's mother. A certain rich relative of Mr. Leeford bequeathed large property to him which should pass to his sons – Monks and Oliver – after Mr. Leeford's death. The last surprising family relationship was revealed by Rose who was actually a younger sister of Oliver's mother, so she was Oliver's aunt.

The story has the happy ending. Fagin was arrested and hanged, Monks was also arrested and he died of an illness in prison. Mr. Brownlow adopted Oliver and Rose got married to Mrs. Maylie's son. They all became a big happy family.¹¹²

3. 2. 2 Aspects of the Victorian era in *Oliver Twist*

As for the characteristic features of Victorian England and Victorian London the novel *Oliver Twist* is extremely remarkable from that point of view because a significant part of the story takes place right in London. A sizeable part of the story is set in the country which can serve as an excellent source of attributes for comparison between a Victorian way of life in a city and in the country. What is also significant is the presence of the characters of almost all the social classes, for example occupants of the workhouses are members of the working class, smaller craftsmen as Mr. Sowerberry oscillates between the working class and the middle class, there are also typical representatives of the lower middle class – for example Mr. Bumble, the beadle, or the administrator of a workhouse, as well as the representatives of the upper middle class - for example Mr. Losberne, the doctor, Mr. Brownlow or Mrs. Maylie. It is immensely interesting to monitor their behaviour, manners and mutual relationships in the progress of the story; it facilitates the creation of a compact impression and opinion about the society in Victorian England.

The main character of the novel, Oliver Twist, spent the beginning of his life in a workhouse in the country, or more precisely in a small town. Since in the era of the Industrial Revolution there took place huge urbanization, people in the country were convinced of the absolute differentness between city life and life in the country.

“The stone by which he was seated, bore, in large characters, an intimation that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London. The name awakened a new train of ideas in the boy’s mind. London! – that great place! – nobody – not even Mr. Bumble – could ever find him there! He had often heard the old men in the workhouse, too, say that no lad of spirit need want in London; and that there were ways of living in that vast city, which those who had been bred up in country parts had no idea of. It was the very place for a homeless boy, who must die in the streets unless someone helped him.”¹¹³

¹¹² DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7

¹¹³ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7 (p. 43)

Country people, exhausted by strenuous agricultural work or, in case of the unemployed, by cruel and undignified treatment in workhouses, had a fixed idea that in a city everyone can live a better life. That idea was of course completely fallacious, a poor person's life in a city was oftentimes much more desperate than the life full of poverty in the country.

However not even the small town where Oliver worked for Mr. Sowerberry avoided to the typical city problem of the poorest inhabitants in the Victorian era – slum areas. During one of the errands with Mr. Sowerberry the narrator describes a slum near a town centre as a tangle of dirty impoverished streets full of dilapidated and decaying houses, in many of them windows and doors were replaced with mere planks. People of unkempt and decrepit appearance trudged on those streets with a bent trunk and on the side of streets there were street gutters full of a stagnant sewage and putrid ooze. This highly realistic description of a slum in a small town must necessarily shock a reader and at the same time reader's imagination creates the idea of the probable slums' appearance in a big city.

During Oliver's journey to London, a remarkable description of the Victorian countryside's character appears in the novel *Oliver Twist*. In the course of his pilgrimage Oliver goes through several villages where a reader can recognize various characters of the country inhabitants. The little traveller encountered kind and good people, for example a toll collector who gave something to eat to Oliver for free or an old woman who gave Oliver more than she could because she was touched by the wretched orphan. Unfortunately the absolute majority of the encounters were with vicious, miserly and evil people. Many village people, whom Oliver asked for some food, drove him out of their homes or shops and they threatened him with the police or a ferocious dog. This fact somewhat disproves the assumption that inhabitants of the Victorian country perhaps were more polite or more merciful than burghers.

With the arrival into the capital city London Oliver meets many typical features of the Victorian era, urbanization and life of different classes of the inhabitants of the city. At the earliest the main character of course encounters everyday reality of the lowest social class in the city.

*“A dirtier or more wretched place he had never seen. The street was very narrow and muddy; and the air was impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many small shops; but the only stock in trade appeared to be heaps of children, who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out at the doors, or screaming from the inside. The sole places that seemed to prosper, amid the general blight of the place, were the public-houses, where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth; and from several of the doorways, great ill-looking fellows were cautiously emerging: bound, to all appearance, on no very well-disposed or harmless errands.”*¹¹⁴

From the quoted extract it is possible to deduce what type of inhabitants was typical for the lowest social class. Except for dutifully manually working labourers, especially in bigger cities there appeared a great percentage of people making their living in an undutiful way – thieves, burglars and even murderers. In the country or in a small town Oliver did not meet such kind of people. The reason seems to be simple: in a big city there is certain anonymity guaranteed thanks to a large number of inhabitants, subversive elements can easier hide among the other, upright people.

The character of the Jew Fagin is a personification of such a subversive element in Victorian London. He is not just a thief himself but he also uses children’s services for stealing. Children are glad to commit the hideous crimes for him as in the opposite case they would end up homeless on the streets and they would probably die of hunger. It is hard to say if Fagin’s behaviour is absolutely wrong or not. On one hand it is undeniably incorrect to use children for committing the crimes, however on the other hand the old Jew actually saves the children from an almost certain death. As for the children themselves the stealing can be considered necessity, not perversity. The character of the Jew is not characterized by the necessity for stealing; in that case rather the perversity predominates.¹¹⁵ If a reader seeks through and through bad criminal in this novel, the characters of Bill Sikes or Monks can be regarded likewise. However also in the character of Bill Sikes a bright side of his personality can be found, for example during Mrs. Maylie’s house robbery he intends to get Oliver into a safe place and after the murder of Nancy he regrets his act, although probably just because of the insanity caused by the dreadful act and visions of the dead girl.

¹¹⁴ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7 (p.47)

¹¹⁵ LÉVINAS, Emmanuel. *Etika a nekonečno*. 2nd ed. Praha: Oikoymenh, 2009. ISBN 978-80-7298-394-0

After a certain time spent in the capital city the story of *Oliver Twist* shifts into the country again. These country surroundings are, however, different from those in the beginning of the novel. The out-of-town environment that has appeared in the story so far has not been characterized by calm and peace – the qualities so typical for countryside. On the contrary, their atmosphere has been ruined by incessant uproar and penury caused by the main character's stay in a workhouse. The surroundings of the country where Oliver took refuge together with Mrs. Maylie and Rose must work as a balm to his suffering soul.

“Who can describe the pleasure and delight: the peace of mind and soft tranquillity: the sick boy felt in the balmy air, and among the green hills and rich woods, of an inland village! Who can tell how scenes of peace and quietude sink into the minds of pain-worn dwellers in close and noisy places, and carry their own freshness, deep into their jaded hearts!

(...)

Oliver, whose days had been spent among squalid crowds, and in the midst of noise and brawling, seemed to enter on a new existence there.”¹¹⁶

There in that country paradise Oliver got into the company of people absolutely dissimilar to the ones he was accustomed to. From the despicable, criminal and impoverished environment where he was used to horrible treatment now he found himself in the company of kind polite people belonging to the middle social class. The behaviour and the manners of these people were incomparable with Oliver's experience up to that time, they were sympathetic, responsive and always ready to help or oblige. This fact naturally can be influenced by the reality that middle-class people predominantly never suffer from hunger or cold in their lives and they probably did not struggle for survival. Such circumstances must inevitably leave imprints in a human psyche; therefore it is not a big surprise that the behaviour of the members of the lowest social class in this novel is as it is.¹¹⁷

3. 2. 3 Features of Charles Dickens's life in *Oliver Twist*

Except for the typical aspects of the Victorian era it is possible to trace up also features of the author's life in the story of this novel. *Oliver Twist* is a piece of work Charles Dickens was

¹¹⁶ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7 (p. 198)

¹¹⁷ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7

finishing when his family was affected by a tragic incident – death of his sister-in-law Mary Hogarth. The pain the author went through therefore necessarily had to appear in the novel. One of the ways of demonstration of his suffering is Rosa's sudden serious illness. Her disease breaks out absolutely unexpectedly and it must be said that also improbably because no mention of a disease or its symptoms has appeared in the novel until then. However, because when Dickens was creating the character of Rose – a beautiful, intelligent, fascinating woman, he was inspired by nobody else than Mary Hogarth, therefore her character had to go through cruel moments too.¹¹⁸

In the novel *Oliver Twist* there appears also the theme of children's work. Although the main character Oliver has not worked manually for a long time because he has worked only as Mr. Sowerberry's assistant, it is possible to find the typical features of employers of the children's workers. One of such employers is Mr. Gamfield, the chimney sweeper, whose attitude to little employees is highly inappropriate, however utterly characteristic of the Victorian era.

"It's a nasty trade," said Mr. Limbkins, when Gamfield had again stated his wish.

'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 again,' said Gamfield; 'that's all the smoke, and no blaze; veras smoke ain't o' no use at all in makin' a bay 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 vith 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.'"¹¹⁹

In the novel Charles Dickens describes Mr. Gamfield's behaviour with an irony typical in absolute majority of his works, thanks to which a reader feels like laughing. Nevertheless his laugh is hardened by the knowledge that attitude to the children like this was a cruel reality in Victorian England.

¹¹⁸ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

¹¹⁹ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. 1st ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002. ISBN 0-486-42453-7 (p. 14)

The whole novel *Oliver Twist* can be characterized as Dickens' harsh criticism of the Victorian society. His criticism was evidently oriented primarily on the state treatment to the poorest and the most miserable people, which was cruel even according to the law at that time. Together with the concrete people who were in charge of the unfortunates, the cruelty of the state system is even intensified by indifference, dishonesty, mercilessness and above all avarice of those people. As the most apposite examples in this novel it is possible to mention Mr. Bumble, the beadle, or Mrs. Corney, the administrator of a workhouse.¹²⁰

3. 3 David Copperfield

3. 3. 1 A brief plot summary of the novel *David Copperfield*

The boy called David Copperfield was born in the village Blunderstone in the county Suffolk into the house called Rookery as a posthumous child. His mother Clara lost her husband, the man twice as old as her, six months before David's birth. Sister of the deceased Mr. Copperfield, Miss Betsey Trotwood, was present at the childbirth. She longed for a birth of a girl, however when she discovered she had a nephew instead of a niece, she left without a word and she never returned to Rookery.

Little David grew up in Rookery together with his mother Clara and a servant and nurse Clara Peggotty called just Peggotty who David had very hearty relationship with. After several years a new man started to appear in Clara's life – Mr. Edward Murdstone paid court to her. Meanwhile David together with the nurse Peggotty went to Yarmouth to visit her brother Mr. Daniel Peggotty who lived in a strange house made from an old ship together with his adopted children Ham and Emily who David started a loving friendship with.

After the homecoming little David realized his mother got married to Mr. Murdstone in the meantime and soon also his sister, Miss Jane Murdstone, moved to their house. Hard times came for David, Mr. Murdstone and his sister often, usually physically, punished him, in addition Mr. Murdstone ordered Clara not to display her love and affection to David. Therefore David had only one hearty relationship in that time: with his nurse Peggotty. During one of the physical punishments David rose in revolt and he bit Mr. Murdstone into his hand. As a result of that David is sent off from home to a boarding school called Salem

¹²⁰ DINIEJKO, Andrzej. Charles Dickens as Social Commentator and Critic. *The Victorian Web* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2016-04-01]. Available on: <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/diniejko.html>

House School headed by the despotic Mr. Creakle, the headmaster. Despite Mr. Creakle's tyrannical behaviour David found friends in the school, particularly the good-natured Traddles and Steerforth, the older with more experience. During the holidays David returned home and he realized he had a younger half-brother.

In the course of the second term at school cruel news hit David's life – both his mother and a little half-brother died of a serious disease. David definitely terminated the studies at Salem House School and he came back to Rookery. After the funeral many changes were set in the household: Peggotty got a month's notice and ten-year old David was sent to work into his stepfather's company Murdstone and Grindby in London. His job description was to sort bottles, clean them and stick labels on them. In London David lived as a lodger at Micawber family, who he started a friendship with. However Mr. Micawber had financial problems, he fell into debts and he was eventually imprisoned in the King's Bench debtor's prison in Borough. The whole family moved into the prison too. For some time David continued working at Murdstone and Grindby and he visited the Micawber family in the prison, yet then a plan originated in his mind. David put the plan into practice – he ran away to his aunt Miss Trotwood to Dover. Miss Trotwood took David in and she even arranged education for him in Canterbury.

During the studies David lived at Mr. Wickfield, Miss Trotwood's lawyer, and at his daughter Agnes. In that household David met a young man called Uriah Heep, Mr. Wickfield's business partner. Heep pretended to be Mr. Wickfield's friend but in reality he wanted to deceive him. Unfortunately Heep step by step took control over the ageing Mr. Wickfield and he planned to marry Agnes. His wicked behaviour was luckily revealed by Mr. Micawber who appeared in the story again as Heep's secretary. Heep's true nature was uncovered and Mr. Wickfield terminated the relationship with him. At the end of the story Heep ended up in a prison because of an attempted bank robbery.

The life at Wickfields appealed to David very much, he started especially vigorous relationship with Agnes who he loved as his own sister and he even confided his first loves to her. Agnes suffered from that because she was in love with David. David did not forget even the old friends; he met his former schoolmate Steerforth and together they went to see the Peggotty family to Yarmouth. There they realized that Emily was engaged to Ham.

Regrettably Steerforth seduced Emily and they ran away together. Emily's adoptive father Daniel Peggotty searched for his daughter, he found her unhappy, cheated and alone. Steerforth died in a shipwreck, Ham, who did not know about his love affair with Emily, tried to save him and unfortunately he died too. Mr. Peggotty and Emily left for a distant Australia, where nobody knew them, with an intention to start a new life. The Micawbers left with them, Mr. Micawber became a successful businessman in Australia.

In the meantime David grew mature and he married Dora Spenlow, his employer's daughter. The beautiful, yet rather childish wife unfortunately soon died of frail health in consequence of a miscarriage. David found comfort in his loyal supporter Agnes' friendship. He realized that Agnes was the true love for him, he married her and he even became a successful writer.¹²¹

3. 3. 2 Aspects of the Victorian era in *David Copperfield*

The two part novel *David Copperfield*, similarly to the novel *Oliver Twist*, narrates the story of a little boy called David who grows mature in the second part of the novel. As for the aspects of Victorian England and Victorian London, the first part of the novel, where David is a child and a teenager, is richer from this point of view. With respect to the Victorian society the novel *David Copperfield* is restricted mainly for the perspective of the middle class in contrast with *Oliver Twist* whose point of view is focused predominantly on the working class.

David's living conditions at the birth and in early childhood are indisputably better than the Oliver's. David is born to the middle-class family where his mother Clara can afford to employ a servant despite her widowhood.

"And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom-windows standing open to let in the sweet-smelling air, and the ragged old rooks'-nests still dangling in the elm-trees at the bottom of the front garden. Now I am in the garden at the back, beyond the yard where the empty pigeon-house and dog-kennel are - a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it, with a high fence, and a gate and padlock; where the fruit clusters on the trees, riper and richer than fruit has ever been since, in any other garden, and where my mother

¹²¹ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf>

gathers some in a basket, while I stand by, bolting furtive gooseberries, and trying to look unmoved.”¹²²

From the description of the house and surroundings it is obvious that in the period of his early childhood David certainly does not languish and he is not affected by the problems that afflicted members of the lowest social class in Victorian England.

The native house of little David is located in the country. It is possible to notice a certain correspondence between the description and the presentation of the surroundings with the countryside in the second half of the novel *Oliver Twist*. In this point it is also possible to spot the contrast between the fates of the characters of David and Oliver. While Oliver had to pass through the worst and most unpleasant ways of life before he was allowed to settle down on a calm rural place, David's story is actually the opposite. Little Copperfield is born right into such a peaceful idyllic place, however he soon loses it.

From the description of the surroundings where Peggotty's brother Daniel lives together with his adopted children is instantly recognizable that the Peggotty family does not belong to the middle social class. The character of the nurse Peggotty herself works as a servant therefore she is a typical example of a member of the working class, although she evidently does not belong to the lowest stratum of this class as a reader encounters in the novel *Oliver Twist*. As it was written in the first part of this diploma thesis, the servants had incomparably better living conditions than the other members of the working class. Mr. Daniel Peggotty works as a fisherman and his family lives in a wreckage of a ship right on the beach. It is not necessary to emphasize that Daniel's living conditions are obviously harder than his sister's ones.

“Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy!”

I looked in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could I make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind of superannuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing else in the way of a habitation that was visible to me.

¹²² David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf> (p. 28)

'That's not it?' said I. 'That ship-looking thing?'

'That's it, Mas'r Davy,' returned Ham.

*If it had been Aladdin's palace, roc's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it."*¹²³

Little David Copperfield is enchanted by Mr. Peggotty's dwelling yet which little child would not be bewitched by a house made from a ship. An adult reader inevitably feels primarily poverty and destitution which such housing had to entail from that description.

In the novel *David Copperfield* a reader encounters the delineation of a Victorian education system too. Little David Copperfield is sent into a boarding school Salem House School near London. David's first impression of the school, where he arrives alone in the middle of holidays, presents Salem House School as a gloomy and bleak building surrounded with a high wall, the harshness of which is even more highlighted by emptiness and the presence of the one-legged cruel Tungay, the caretaker. The endless lonely days are lightened only with the presence of Mr. Mell, the teacher, who behaves very politely and amiably to David. The situation gets better with arrival of other students from holidays despite the fact that the character of Mr. Creakle, the merciless and brutal headmaster, appears. There it is possible to notice interesting traits of particular personalities of the characters. Mr. Creakle and Tungay are members of different social classes nevertheless a certain similarity is obvious in their behaviour. They both are cruel, evil and they hate the students. Tungay works as a caretaker; therefore he is a member of the working class - its higher stratum. The cruelty in his case is probably based on his physical handicap; he tries to spoil the lives of all the boys. On the contrary Mr. Creakle as a headmaster is a member of the upper middle class and his cruelty does not have any evident causation, he is simply delighted to cause the boys vexation. Similarly to the novel *Oliver Twist* also in this piece of work a reader meets the pretence and unconcern of highly positioned people who are in charge of the subordinates.

Probably the most valuable aspect of the Victorian era in the novel *David Copperfield* is the description of children's work. After the death of his mother David starts working manually at the company Murdstone and Grindby dealing in wine. His job description is to sort and

¹²³ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf> (p. 48, 49)

clean bottles, to stick labels on them and to pack the bottles into boxes. A reader realizes the little boy's suffering caused not just by the strenuous work but also by the surroundings where David has to do the work.

*"It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own, abutting on the water when the tide was in, and on the mud when the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, I dare say; its decaying floors and staircase; the squeaking and scuffling of the old grey rats down in the cellars; and the dirt and rottenness of the place; are things, not of many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant."*¹²⁴

In this part of the novel David ranks among the labourers – members of the working class. Because a transfer between the particular social classes in Victorian England was not possible due to impoverishment, David still remains a member of the middle class, he realizes it and he is even treated like that out of the workplace, however at work he is not different from the other miserable working children. The environment of his workplace is a typical picture of Victorian poverty and penury.

Equally as *Oliver Twist* also *David Copperfield* finds himself in the capital city London during his pilgrimage. An identical aspect of both of the novels is the boys' expectation about London. David as well as Oliver considers the capital city the place full of opportunities where a wonderful life is waiting for them.

*"What an amazing place London was to me when I saw it in the distance, and how I believed all the adventures of all my favourite heroes to be constantly enacting and re-enacting there, and how I vaguely made it out in my own mind to be fuller of wonders and wickedness than all the cities of the earth, I need not stop here to relate."*¹²⁵

It should be noted that *David Copperfield's* living conditions during his stay in London are much more propitious than the *Oliver's* ones leaving aside his involuntary employment. First

¹²⁴ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf> (p. 232, 233)

¹²⁵ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf> (p. 109, 110)

of all David is not forced to dwell in the shabbiest and the most indigent areas of the capital city surrounded by the most malicious rabble and he does not become a part of their criminal practice. Instead of it he lives at the Micawber family in a run-down but decent house and during midday breaks he does not walk in slums but in more proper districts of London. Therefore Dickens' description of the capital city has slightly changed from the novel *Oliver Twist*, the author is not focused on the effort to shock readers so much anymore but he shows London in another light: as a place where the lead role belongs to the nature of its inhabitants, not to the bleak and hideous surroundings.

3. 3. 3 Features of Charles Dickens' life in *David Copperfield*

The novel *David Copperfield* is inspired by the author's real life to such an extent that it is frequently considered Charles Dickens' autobiography. A reader meets the first similar feature of the Dickens' real and *Copperfield's* fictional life immediately at the beginning of the story: it is the character of the nurse Peggotty. David has a hearty and loving relationship with Peggotty; it was not any different in the case of Charles Dickens who loved his nurse Mary Weller. Equally as *David Copperfield*, also little Charles attended church services with his nurse which he hated in a similar way to David's. The character of Peggotty has another identical feature with the real nurse Mary Weller – the wedding. However after it there is a difference between the real world and the fiction: David stays in touch with the wedded Peggotty, Mary Weller stayed in Chatham after the wedding while little Charles left for London and he broke contact with her. Also the depiction of countryside from David's childhood, full of happiness and satisfaction, is inspired by Dickens' truly happy childhood in Chatham.

The boarding school Salem House School is based on Dickens' real education too. Wellington House Academy, which Charles attended in his teens, was the model for the school in the novel *David Copperfield*. The cruel school regime and the despotic headmaster are also based on the real function of Wellington House Academy.

Equally as the school, also the children's work in the novel is inspired by the author's life; only the order of these activities is switched with regard to a chronological course of events in Charles Dickens' life. David's work, moreover arranged by a relative just as the Charles' one, more or less exactly corresponds with the job description of the author's real work.

Although David works in a warehouse of the wine company and Charles worked in a blacking factory, the job description of both of them was to work with bottles.

It is impossible to omit the Micawber family. Mr. and Mrs. Micawber are based on Charles' closest people – his own parents. The Micawbers try to look solidly and equably on the outside, they hide the financial problems from the public. Charles Dickens experienced the same way of life at his parents.

“Arrived at this house in Windsor Terrace (which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could), he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour (the first floor was altogether unfurnished, and the blinds were kept down to delude the neighbours), with a baby at her breast.”¹²⁶

Especially the character of Mr. Micawber is a personification of John Dickens: the man who tries to make provision for his family, but he unfortunately sinks into greater and greater debts and he is eventually imprisoned in a debtor's prison where the whole family moves.

Also in the second part of the novel *David Copperfield* it is possible to find connecting lines with the author's life. The character of David's wife Dora can be considered such a connecting line. Her childishness and naivety was inspired by Maria Beadnell, Dickens' first love, who in her children's simple-mindedness took her parents' advice, left for Paris in order to study and she did not fight for Charles' love. The reality that David became a writer in adulthood is another connecting line with Charles Dickens' life.¹²⁷

In the novel *David Copperfield*, Dickens' sharp satire and the criticism of the society slightly recede, there is not such an amount of harsh irony as in *Oliver Twist*. It is possible to notice rather bigger focus on the personalities of the characters and their behaviour. The author drew inspiration from an inexhaustible number of his own experiences and memories.

¹²⁶ David Copperfield. DICKENS, Charles. *Planet eBook* [online] 2012 [cit. 2016-4-1]. Available on: <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/David-Copperfield.pdf> (p. 237)

¹²⁷ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

3. 4 Great Expectations

3. 4. 1 A brief plot summary of the novel *Great Expectations*

Phillip Pirrip, a little boy called simply Pip, was an orphan. His older sister Mrs. Gargery took care of him from his early childhood together with her husband Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, in a small village surrounded by swamps and marshland near seashore. Mrs. Gargery's upbringing was very strict and stern, Pip was oftentimes blamed for ingratitude and disobedience, although he usually behaved very docilely. Pip had the only hearty relationship with his uncle Joe.

At Christmas Pip went to a nearby cemetery to visit his parents' graves. There he met Abel Magwitch, the fugitive convict, who forced him to bring him some food and also a file for cutting the shackles. Pip obliged him out of fear and he found out that another fugitive convict from a near galley is roaming around the marshland. Both of the fugitives are eventually caught by police.

Joe Gargery's uncle, Mr. Pumblechook, was charged by a wealthy old lady from a close town to bring her a little boy who would play in her house. So Mr. Pumblechook brought her Pip. Miss Havisham's house was very strange and musty, and all the windows were boarded up. Also the owner of the house herself was highly curious, Miss Havisham never came out of the house, she was clothed in old yellowed wedding dress and next to her room there was a decade old wedding feast still set on the table covered with a tablecloth. Nevertheless Pip was absolutely charmed by her adopted daughter Estella who was vastly pretty but distant. Gradually Pip found out that Miss Havisham had been betrayed and abandoned by her fiancée on the wedding day. That event had affected her mentally to such an extent that she behaved and dressed so oddly. However at the same time Pip had no idea that Miss Havisham had adopted Estella only in order to take revenge on all the men and she taught her to be cold-hearted and uncaring. Despite Estella's rejecting behaviour Pip fell in love with her.

Meanwhile Pip's sister, Mrs. Gargery, was affected by an accident. She was hit into the head by a criminal, as a result of what she was confined to bed, she was not able to speak or move properly. Therefore a girl called Biddy, who took care about the household, came into the Gargery's home. She became Pip's friend and she even fell in love with him. Pip did not

attach great importance to it as he is in love with Estella. However Estella still behaved coldly to him and Pip started to become conscious of his ordinariness and poverty which he considered the reason why Estella did not want him. Therefore Pip set his mind on becoming a true gentleman in order to get Estella.

Pip started an apprenticeship at Joe's blacksmith's. One day Mr. Jaggers, a lawyer, appeared in the blacksmith's with the news that Pip had obtained a large sum of money from an unknown benefactor. At the same time he advised Pip to move to London and he recommended him the private teacher Matthew Pocket there. Pip was convinced Miss Havisham was the unknown benefactor for she wanted him to become Estella's husband.

In London Pip met many new people. He lived in an apartment with a young man called Herbert Pocket, son of Pip's teacher and a distant relative of Miss Havisham, who Pip started a loyal friendship with; he even helped him to get a dream job thanks to his newly acquired fortune. Pip encountered Mr. Wemmick, a clerk in Mr. Jaggers' office, too. Mr. Wemmick was very strange, even schizophrenic man because at work he behaved strictly and solid but at his house, a small replica of a castle, he contrarily changed into a kind and caring person. Also Mr. Wemmick became Pip's friend and he took care of him in the capital city. In London all the money went to Pip's head. He turned into a conceited person and he was ashamed of his humble origin and family. He severed his ties with Joe, his sister Mrs. Gargery died of the effects of her injury in the meantime. Pip still kept the idea of being a gentleman in mind.

However, after some time a cruel disillusionment came. Estella got married to Bentley Drummle, a silly, rude and rough-mannered Pip's schoolmate from the school of Mr. Pocket's. The Pip's benefactor appeared on the scene too. Despite Pip's expectation it was not Miss Havisham but Abel Magwitch, the fugitive convict, who Pip had once helped. After his detention Magwitch had been expelled from England and he had settled in Australia where he has succeeded in starting a prosperous farm. From that time he had supplied Pip with earned money as an unknown benefactor. In this part of the novel Magwitch returned to England under a changed name Provis in order to find Pip personally. Pip also found out that Jagger's cranky servant, who the lawyer had saved from hanging, was actually Estella's biological mother and Magwitch was Estella's father.

Pip's dreamed-of world was on the point of collapse. Miss Havisham was not his patron; therefore Estella was not intended for him. Additionally all his money was impure for it came from a criminal. Pip went at Miss Havisham's house to talk to her about his situation. She apologized to him for the cruel behaviour however her wedding dress burst into flames by mischance and Miss Havisham died of the effects of burn. At first Pip felt hatred for Magwitch, nevertheless in the course of time they became closer and Pip started to realize what had Magwitch had to undergo for him. Together with Herbert they embarked on an escape plan for Magwitch because Magwitch had been expelled from England forever so nobody could see him. Provisionally they hid him the house of Clara, Herbert's fiancée. When the time for escape finally came, Pip who had not an attachment to England anymore after Estella's wedding decided to escape with Magwitch. However during the getaway they were revealed and captured through the fault of Magwitch's arch-enemy, also a convict, who wanted to take revenge on him. Magwitch killed him during a fight but he was arrested and imprisoned. In the prison he soon died of the effects of the fight. All the money Magwitch bequeathed to Pip was forfeited to the state.

Herbert and Clara left for Cairo in terms of work; Pip stayed alone in the apartment and he became seriously ill. When he awoke from delirium after all he saw Joe in the apartment. Joe took care of him until Pip felt well again. Pip reassessed his previous behaviour; he was ashamed of it, so he wanted to return to the country and make a proposal to Biddy. Therefore he left for his birthplace; nevertheless there he found Joe and Biddy on their wedding day. Disillusioned by that Pip apologized to everybody, Joe and Biddy forgave him. Pip eventually left for Cairo too and he became Herbert's business partner.

Pip, reconciled to the bachelor life, returned to England eleven years later. He visited Joe and Biddy who had gave birth to a son in the meantime. They had named him Pip and the main hero had a good rapport with the little namesake of him. Nostalgically Pip went to see Miss Havisham's house. To his big surprise he met Estella in front of the house. They talked; Pip found out Estella was not married anymore for Bentley Drummle had had a fatal injury during a horse ride. A new beginning rose for Pip and Estella.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2

3. 4. 2 Aspects of the Victorian era in *Great Expectations*

In contradistinction to the previous novels whose point of view was unequivocally focused on a particular social class (*Oliver Twist* on the working class, *David Copperfield* on the middle class) it is much complicated to determine the focus of the novel *Great Expectations*. The main character Pip came from a blacksmith's family. The job of a blacksmith oscillated between the working class and the middle class in the Victorian society for on one hand it was a craft and the successful craftsmen belonged to the lower middle class, on the other hand a blacksmith usually worked manually. Additionally the Gargery family has not employed any servants until Mrs. Gargery's injury and the middle class families commonly had a domestic helper.

In contrast to that there is the reality that the Gargerys' relatives are at quite satisfactory social positions and the family is not poor, Joe is even able to redeem Pip's debts in the second half of the novel. Miss Havisham finds Pip a victim dignified enough of her cruel game. It follows from these circumstances that although Pip's origin oscillated between two social classes, he belonged more to the middle class after all. This opinion is even emphasized by the way of Pip's behaviour and life after gaining the sum of money.

Equally as both of the previous writings also the story of the novel *Great Expectations* begins in the country. The description of the rural surroundings and living conditions of little Pip reminds a reader rather of *Oliver Twist* than of *David Copperfield* in this case. The thing is that Pip connects the country with his sister's unfair upbringing and the necessity of work even in his early years.

*"When I was old enough, I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and until I could assume that dignity I was not to be what Mrs. Joe called "Pompeyed," or (as I render it) pampered. Therefore, I was not only odd-boy about the forge, but if any neighbour happened to want an extra boy to frighten birds, or pick up stones, or do any such job, I was favoured with the employment. In order, however, that our superior position might not be compromised thereby, a money-box was kept on the kitchen mantelshelf, into which it was publicly made known that all my earnings were dropped."*¹²⁹

¹²⁹ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2 (p. 37)

Therefore even in this novel there appears the children's work, even though in a different shape than in the previous novel David Copperfield. Pip does not work due to the necessity of sustaining the family as the real children in Victorian England did, but out of his sister's impulse in order not to be spoiled. David works shifts in a warehouse; Pip does irregularly different types of work for their neighbours. Nowadays it could be said Pip's work is kind of a part-time job while David's work is a full-time employment.

The village and the surroundings of the Gargerys' home are described rather pessimistically. The swamps and marshland look forlornly; cold, wet and harsh weather is often depicted and also Miss Havisham's house in the near town elicits unpleasant feelings. Pip describes it as a gloomy old house with windows boarded up or barred with rusty poles.

The character of the fugitive convict joins all the bleakness; in connection with the wild landscape and Pip's fear it creates impressive romantic atmosphere. Abel Magwitch is the typical member of the lowest stratum of the working class; typologically it is possible to compare him to the character of Fagin in the novel *Oliver Twist*. There is the aspect both of the characters have in common: certain impossibility to decide whether these characters are completely negative or not. The Fagin's case was closely described in the part of the diploma thesis concerning the novel *Oliver Twist*. In Magwitch's case there exists a contradiction between the reality that he is a fugitive convict therefore he had to have committed a serious crime and additionally he is guilty of the escape and the fact that he has never forgotten the unimportant little boy who once helped him, he decides to support him financially and he eventually desired meeting him again. Such personality traits are not a testament to a vicious criminal nature indeed.

Identically as in the cases of Oliver and David also Pip's life story brings him to the capital city. However Pip is the first from all of these main characters who do not consider London an astonishing promised city.

"We Britons had at that time particularly settled that it was treasonable to doubt our having and our being the best of everything: otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of

*London, I think I might have had some faint doubts whether it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow and dirty.”*¹³⁰

Similarly realistic and unembellished description of the capital city follows in the moment when Pip comes into his new residence for the first time. The Barbard’s Inn, where Pip and Herbert’s flat is located, is depicted as an inn full of the dirtier dilapidated hovels with a gloomy little square in the centre full of rot and decay, dirty from soot and smoke. Also a ubiquitous putrid smell is described together with the footprints of rats and cockroaches. The fact that Pip is accommodated in such an environment in London only confirms the Victorian rule of the impossibility to shift a person to different social class just because gaining or loosing property. Although Pip owns of a large sum of money in this part of the novel, from the point of view of the social hierarchy he still remains on the border between the working class and the middle class and according to this reality he is accommodated.

Mr. Wemmick, who accompanies Pip on his first arrival to the new apartment, takes the biscuit of the previous description.

*“So imperfect was this realisation of the first of my great expectations, that I looked in dismay at Mr. Wemmick. “Ah!” said he, mistaking me; “the retirement reminds you of the country. So it does me.”*¹³¹

The reality that Mr. Wemmick considers Pip’s desperate look the nostalgia for home just confirms total misinformation of the Victorian society about the life in the country and the life in a city. Due to the effect of the urbanization the burghers were convinced the life in a city is the finest and that for them it would be impossible to find better living conditions in the country. Also the countrymen had absolutely erroneous ideas about the life in a city as it was possible to see in the novels *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* too. Main characters’ expectations of a city life, influenced by the measure of the urbanization again, usually dissolved with their first arrival to a city.

¹³⁰ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2 (p. 145)

¹³¹ DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. (p. 154)

3. 4. 3. Features of Charles Dickens' life in *Great Expectations*

Charles Dickens wrote the last examined novel in a deep adulthood. A change in his attitude to the main characters is noticeable; Dickens is much harder on Pip than on Oliver or David. Such sobering up from an effort to grant the main characters the best personality traits and the happiest endings (often highly improbable in the view of the general course of their life) is undoubtedly based on the author's personal life too.

The novel *Great Expectations* was coming into existence after a turbulent period of Dickens' life. At first it was published in instalments in magazine *All the Year Round*, it was published as a compact book three years after the divorce with his wife Catherine for the first time. Therefore it is no wonder the author was affected by the displeasing and grievous events in his personal life, undoubtedly he had already lost rose-coloured glasses and all the illusions as for love and even a common life. On that account the novel *Great Expectations* is one of the most realistic writings by Charles Dickens. Pip's life story is affected by his personality fluctuations, his longing for a high social position is partially implemented thanks to the donated money however very realistically every fortune comes with a prize, therefore Pip's benefactor is an absolutely undesirable person.

Pip's feelings for Estella are based on the real feelings of Charles Dickens too. According to some critics the character of Estella is inspired by a real woman who Charles felt in love with – Ellen Ternan. At the beginning of their relationship she also acted very coldly and she did not express her feelings.

*“Though she called me “boy” so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen.”*¹³²

Charles Dickens personified his amorousness and desperation of being refused by a beloved person in Pip's despairing plans of attracting the cold-hearted Estella.

Similarly as in both of the previous novels, also in this novel Dickens' opinion on the city and country environment is obvious. Despite the fact that Pip's birthplace is depicted as a forlorn

¹³² DICKENS, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1st ed. London: HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 978-0-00-735087-2 (p. 49)

inhospitable area, after the arrival to London the main character realizes his hometown is a pleasant hospitable place in comparison with the city surroundings. Dickens' memories of his childhood in Chatham appear again in this novel, he loved the town even though the financial situation of his family got worse in that place. Also the author's memories of London, which was connected with his children's work and the father's imprisonment in Charles' mind, become visible in this piece of work.¹³³

¹³³ WILSON, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. 1st ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. ISBN 978-0-140-03488-2

Conclusion

This diploma thesis is concerned with the English writer Charles Dickens and the depiction and characterization of the Victorian environment in the selected novels. During the process of writing the thesis I learned about many fascinating aspects concerning the Victorian era typical not only for the capital city but also for the country areas of England.

The first part of the diploma thesis creates a meaningful insight into the issues of the Victorian society. The historical background of the Victorian era clarifies the living conditions of English inhabitants; the diploma thesis unsurprisingly informs about the Industrial Revolution as the main trigger of various, oftentimes hardly imaginable living standards primarily of the poorest stratum of the inhabitants. The depiction of everyday life of the all social classes then creates the base for the reader's penetration the background of Dickens' novels where in the majority of cases representatives of almost the all social classes appear. Not only is the way of classification of the inhabitants into the social classes presented but also different types of education and employment; special attention is dedicated to children's work which was very common in the Victorian era. Last but not least this part of the diploma thesis is concerned with the most frequent types of diseases occurring in the Victorian period and various manners of the treatment.

The second part of my diploma thesis deals with Charles Dickens' life. It chronologically presents the life story of one of the most important writers of the English literature in the 19th century. Particularly the events from Dickens' childhood are fascinating. In that time the author's life oscillated between two social classes and little Charles went through both more pleasant facets of the Victorian life and the most compassionate experience of the lowest class of the Victorian society. Charles Dickens in his childhood worked hard manually and this reality provides the basis for many of his stories with a children's hero. Also the personal life of Charles Dickens is described in this part of the diploma thesis as well as the most important women in his life who became the models for novel's characters too.

In my opinion the third practical part of the diploma thesis is the most interesting one. Three selected writings by Charles Dickens are analysed and compared with each other – *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*. These novels have many similar aspects as well as various different features. All the three novels are concerned with the life of

children's heroes and harsh situation they are involved in. The differentness between the novels lies in the measure of inspiration by the author's real life. I find the reality that the novel *David Copperfield* is actually Charles Dickens' biography very interesting; the amount of identical aspects of David's and Charles' life is truly indisputable. The observation of the changes in the method of processing the particular pieces of work was also remarkable; as Charles Dickens was getting older the naivety was fading away from his writings, on the contrary the cynicism and reality were increasing. Thanks to this fact I find the last novel *Great Expectation* the most interesting of the three analysed pieces of work because the realistic story with the main character's changing nature is not so easily predictable and the character of Pip is comparable with real people. This actuality is also related to seeking the romantic features in the three analysed novels. Although the last analysed novel, *Great Expectations*, is the most realistic story, many romantic aspects appear in it especially in the description of the country surroundings. However the main character of this novel is not a typical romantic outcast, it is a supporting character. In the novel *Oliver Twist* this is the other way around – the main character himself is abandoned, lonely and on the periphery of society almost all the time of the story.

One of the main tasks of the diploma thesis is observation of an evolution in the city and country environment's description. In contradistinction to the changing atmosphere of the particular novels the description of the environment remains equally inspired by author's real life despite Dickens' rising age. The depiction of city surroundings seems depressive in comparison with the pleasant depiction of the country. Generally the description of the city environment in Charles Dickens' writing can be presented as highly critical, aimed to the worst aspects of city life and it takes advantage especially of the catastrophic condition of the slums. In such descriptions the author tries to give a real, unembellished image of poor people's living conditions despite the fact that many readers are probably shocked by the portrayal. On the contrary the depiction of the country surroundings results vastly positively in all the three novels; it should be noted that the country is presented as an idyllic, happy place for life. This description undoubtedly also produces effects on a reader, however in this case the effect is very congenial. It is possible to state that when the main character occurs in the country, the danger of getting into an unsafe situation it is quite improbable.

However in the parts of the novels where the main characters occur in the city surroundings, there is a danger of coming into conflict.

In this diploma thesis the literary term Charles Dickens was presented as the connection of excellent ability to delineate the life situation of the main hero and the impressive description of the surroundings. Both of these aspects of Charles Dickens' work create an effective reader's experience which is the source of valuable literary knowledge.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce pojednává o spisovateli Charlesi Dickensovi jako o jednom z nejvýznamnějších autorů 19. století a především o jeho způsobu popisu venkovského a městského prostředí ve třech vybraných dílech – *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* a *Nadějné vyhlídky*. Diplomová práce je rozdělena do tří částí. V první, teoretické části se zabývám historickým a politickým pozadím viktoriánské Anglie společně s životními podmínkami jednotlivých společenských vrstev. Historické pozadí viktoriánské éry vnáší světlo do pochopení životních podmínek anglických obyvatel, práce nepřekvapivě informuje o průmyslové revoluci jako o hlavním spouštěči nejrůznějších, mnohdy dokonce těžko představitelných životních standardů zejména nejhudší vrstvy obyvatel. Vykreslení každodenního života všech společenských vrstev potom vytváří základ pro čtenářovo proniknutí do pozadí Dickensových románů, v nichž ve většině případů vystupují zástupci téměř všech společenských pozic. Představen je nejen způsob rozřazení obyvatel do jednotlivých společenských tříd, ale také různé typy vzdělání a zaměstnání, zvláštní pozornost je věnována dětské práci, která byla ve viktoriánském období velmi běžná.

Druhá, spojující část diplomové práce se zabývá životem spisovatele Charlese Dickense. Chronologicky představuje životní příběh jednoho z nejvýznamnějších autorů anglické literatury 19. století. Velice zajímavé jsou zejména události Dickensova dětství, kdy jeho život osciloval na pomezí dvou společenských tříd a malý Charles zakusil jak příjemnější stránky viktoriánského života, tak i ty nejužší zkušenosti spodiny viktoriánské společnosti. Charles Dickens ve svých dětských letech tvrdě manuálně pracoval, což poskytlo základ pro mnoho jeho příběhů s dětskými hrdiny. Stručně je popsán i osobní život spisovatele a nejdůležitější ženy v jeho životě, které se rovněž staly předlohami pro Dickensovy románové postavy.

Ve třetí, praktické části se věnuji rozboru tří vybraných románů Charlese Dickense a jejich vzájemným porovnáním z hlediska způsobu popisu městského a venkovského prostředí a výskytu romantických prvků v románech. Tato část diplomové práce je podle mého názoru částí nejzajímavější. Jsou zde rozebírána a porovnávána tři vybraná díla Charlese Dickense – *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* a *Nadějné vyhlídky*, která mají mnoho společných aspektů,

stejně jako rozdílných vlastností. Všechny tyto romány se zabývají životem dětského hrdiny a krušnými situacemi, do kterých se dostává. Rozdílnost je v míře inspirace příběhu vlastním autorovým životem. Shledávám velice zajímavým, že román *David Copperfield* je ve své podstatě životopisem Charlese Dickense, množství shodných znaků mezi Davidovým a Charlesovým životem je skutečně nezpochybnitelné. Zajímavé bylo také sledovat proměny ve způsobu zpracování jednotlivých románů, z nichž se s přibývajícím věkem autora vytrácela naivita, a naopak přibývalo cyničnosti a realističnosti. Poslední román *Nadějné vyhlídky* shledávám díky tomu nejzajímavějším ze tří zkoumaných děl, neboť realistický příběh s proměňující se povahou hlavního hrdiny není tak snadno předvídatelný a postava Pipa je porovnatelná se skutečnými lidmi. Tato skutečnost souvisí také s vyhledáváním romantických rysů ve třech zkoumaných románech. Přesto, že jsou *Nadějné vyhlídky*, poslední zkoumaný román, příběhem nejrealističtějším, objevuje se v nich mnoho romantických rysů zejména v popisu venkovského prostředí. Romantickým vyvrhelem však v tomto románu není hlavní postava, nýbrž postava vedlejší. Naopak tomu je například v románu *Oliver Twist*, kde je sama hlavní postava opuštěná, osamocená a na okraji společnosti téměř po celý děj příběhu.

Jedním z hlavních úkolů této diplomové práce bylo také sledovat vývoj v popisu městského i venkovského prostředí viktoriánského období. Na rozdíl od skutečnosti, že atmosféra v jednotlivých románech se postupně proměňovala, popis prostředí zůstával i přes přibývajících autorův věk stále podobným způsobem inspirován skutečným Dickensovým životem. Popis městského prostředí zůstával stále mnohem depresivnějším v porovnání s příjemným popisem venkovského prostředí. Obecně se popis městského prostředí v díle Charlese Dickense dá popsat jako velice kritický, zaměřený na ty nejhorší aspekty městského života a využívá zejména katastrofálního stavu chudinských čtvrtí. V takových popisech se autor snaží čtenáři podat skutečný nepřikrášlený obraz životních podmínek chudých lidí, a to i přesto, že mnohé čtenáře mohou tyto popisy nepochybně šokovat. Naopak popis venkovského prostředí ve všech třech zkoumaných dílech vyznívá velmi pozitivně, dá se říci, že venkov je představován jako idylické prostředí a šťastné místo k životu. Tyto popisy opět mají nepochybný účinek na čtenáře, ovšem v tomto případě velice příjemný. Je možné konstatovat, že pokud se hlavní postava ocitne na venkově, jen výjimečně jí hrozí nějaké

nebezpečí. Naopak v těch částech románů, kdy hlavní postavy pobývají v městském prostředí, je velmi pravděpodobné, že se ocitnou v nebezpečné či nepříjemné situaci.

Zpracovávání této diplomové práce pro mne bylo velmi hodnotnou zkušeností, neboť jsem poznala mnoho nesmírně zajímavých rysů viktoriánské Anglie a viktoriánského Londýna, z nichž většina na mne hluboce zapůsobila. Současně jsem se dozvěděla také nemalé množství zajímavostí ze života samotného autora – Charlese Dickense. Jeho životní příběh je velice pestrý a zkušenosti, které nabyl zejména v době svého mládí, byly nepochybně bezdnou studnicí námětů pro jeho literární tvorbu. Literární pojem Charles Dickens byl v této diplomové práci představen jako propojení výtečné schopnosti vykreslení životní situace hlavního hrdiny společně s působivým popisem okolního prostředí. Oba tyto aspekty práce Charlese Dickense vytvářejí efektní čtenářský zážitek, ze kterého si každý musí odnést hodnotnou literární zkušenost.

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