

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Considering the characters taken in the novels of Dickens, I feel that Dickens take nature as the predominant factor in the development of personality. Only weaker characters who do not have natural/genetic inheritance from their parents succumb to the evil influences, like the character of Nancy in Fagin's academy. Nancy's commitment to the "evil" aspect of her life is a result of the comfort she has come to find in her questionable lifestyle more than a belief that she is living "correctly". Throughout the novel, Nancy repeats that she has been on the streets since she was a child. She seems to blame Fagin for corrupting her and leading her down a path that she will never be able to reverse. Despite the dysfunctionality of it all, Nancy appears to have created a makeshift family with Bill Sikes, Fagin, and the others, a family that she seems to desperately want to keep together. She stays because the "evil" life she has is all she has ever known and because the unknown is always the scariest alternative.

In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens writes the character of Oliver in a way that seems to cement his stance in nature's court. Oliver appears to be an innately good person. His experiences in the workhouse, the abuse he

has to endure from Mr. Bumble and other characters, and his exposure to a life of crime does not make Oliver turn from good to bad. However, to assume that Dickens supports the idea that only nature is responsible for determining a person's personality would be incorrect. In fact, other characters within the novel, assert that they are products of their environments. This means that characters such as Nancy, the Artful Dodger, and others have been molded by their experiences, which clearly supports nurture's side of the debate.

From a scientific point of view, most psychologists agree that neither nature nor nurture can be held completely responsible for the shaping of a person's personality. When faced with the nature versus nurture debate in real situation, it is typically assumed that personality can be attributed partly to nature and partly to nurture. At first glance many of Dickens' characters appear to favor either nature or nurture, but further investigation shows that each character embodies traits that can be attributed to both.

Childhood as an innocent, pure time of life separate to adulthood is an image that has been present since the late middle ages. Along with the Carefree existence of the child comes, the dependence upon adult to meet all their needs. Froebel's metaphor of Kindergarten, the "garden of children", positions children as seedlings, in a state of natural goodness, to be cared for and nurtured as they blossom into adults". Documents

concerning children, such as the 1989 United Nations convention on the rights of the child and codes of ethics regarding children tend to operate from this vantage point, stating that in all actions towards children, “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” Yet, the best interests are determined not by children, but by their adult counterparts.

The construct of childhood innocence comes at a price — it positions children as incompetent, vulnerable and dependent, a blank slate ready to be moulded by adults.

Perhaps because Charles Dickens himself had a difficult childhood, Dickens seems to often write of the importance of the preservation of goodness and innocence in children. Equally Dickens condemns the corruption of children, perhaps making Dickens one of the greatest champions of childhood.

Considering the characters taken in the novels of Dickens, I feel that Dickens take nature as the predominant factor in the development of personality. Only weaker characters who do not have natural (genetic) inheritance from their parents succumb to the evil influences like Bill and Sikes of Fagin’s academy. The question which thus arises is whether nurture aids nothing to the development of a child’s personality? I feel that nurture does aid the personality development. Those who are already good are liable to benefit more by the conducive environment.

The psychologists supporting Tabula Rasa are of the opinion that individuals are born without built in mental content and that their knowledge comes from experience and perception. Generally proponents of the tabula rasa thesis favour the “nurture” side of the “nature versus nurture” debate, when it comes to aspect of one’s personality, social and emotional behaviours, and intelligence. The term in Latin equates to the English “blank slate” (or more accurately, “erased slate”). This concept was developed by the Persian philosopher, Den Sina, who argued that the “human intellect at birth is rather like a tabula rasa, a pure potentiality that is actualized through education and comes to know” and that knowledge is attained through “empirical familiarity with objects in this world from which one abstracts universal concepts” which is developed through a syllogistic method of reasoning, “observations lead to propositional statements, which when compounded lead to further abstract concepts.”

Carl Jung’s beliefs were explicitly counter to tabula rasa, which claimed, that humans were born with a ‘clean slate’ in terms of their mental construction and personality, factors which were subsequently influenced by various external and internal factors during childhood. In Jung’s concept of the human mind, each individual is born with a fundamental structure in terms of how the mind operates, but the ways in which those structures co-relate and impact upon one another is

entirely influenced by environmental factors and learned behaviour rather than innate personality traits. Jung believed that it was impossible to claim that the personality was somehow set at birth, since this would be tantamount to claiming that personality was fundamentally genetic.

The present study I have undertaken is a proof that psychological theory can be applied in analyzing literary characters like that of Hamlet's madness, dealing with Lawrence theory of Oedipus complex.

My approach is the first of its kind to apply a whole lot of psychological theories in analyzing the child characters of Charles Dickens. This innovative work will pave the way for others to take up other lines of study like psychology and woman, psychology and social norms and so on. In this way literary analysis will become interdisciplinary.

Literary criticism was revolving around the prominent theories like Marxism, Feminism, Modernism, Colonialism, Post Modernism, Structuralism and so on. My work has tried to apply psychoanalysis in the critical evaluation of the child characters of Dickens. Criticism to be impartate and unbiased should not involve emotional and intuitive judgements. By applying psychoanalytical theories, it becomes easier to pull in the reins of emotion and permit reason to have an unhindered journey towards its goal.

Based on this study I feel that positive needs like happiness, parental support, acceptance, are necessary for the personality development of the child while fear, alienation, rejection, insecurity hampers the development of a child.

If such a conducive environment is given to children and if the parents, teachers and elders of the society are trained by social awareness program, we can construct a healthy and emotionally secure society.

Charles Dickens insists upon the role of education, especially classroom teaching society, family and church in the contribution of Personality Development. So if each institution keeps in mind the role they have to play in designing future of individual child, it would make a vast difference not only in the future of children, but also in that of society and nation because a healthy and well developed child will be more fruitful to both the society as well as the nation.

This study has been an analysis of characters created by Charles Dickens in six of his novels, using the theory of psychology. In this method it is possible to analyze any other work of literature be it fiction drama, prose or poetry. Psychoanalysis as a trend has been limited to pedagogues and literary critics. This should become a tool of everyday analysis for students of literature. Such evaluation of characters

promotes interdisciplinary studies and also prepares the students for life as well.

A s i l l u s t r a t e d i n f i r s t c h a p t e r , n o w t h e s t u d e n t s a n d t h e o r d i n a r y p e o p l e w i l l a l s o h a v e t o u s e t h e s e t o o l s . Psychoanalysis is a very useful method for appreciating authors. Apart from applying aesthetic principles psychoanalytic approach will contribute more for the practical purposes, because style is relevant for literature while plumbing the depth of the character is applicable to life.

Any literary art is evaluated on the following merits like plot, character, diction description, aesthetic principles, stylistic devices narrative technology and critical theories employed by the author. Thematic concern is another point which makes a work greater. The next important point of reference is its relevance to society in the suggestion of moral values on utilitarian principles. It is easy to evaluate literature under these principles. But psychoanalysis needs an in depth study in the psychological principles which is quiet vast and comprehensive. This needs a lot of effects on the part of the critic first to understand the principles of psychology and then to apply it in the creative writing of literary architects. Psychoanalysis is a double edged weapon which cuts

through two layers: one of the creator and the second of the created beings. So, psychoanalysis should be made more practical and relevant in the training of critics. Usually Freud, Jung, Allport, Rank, Maslow are studied for their contribution and much less is done to evaluate creative writing with their principles and hence, the humble suggestion is creative writing can well be judged with psychoanalytical evaluation, so as to judge why people behave in a particular manner at a given time. Such a study is not only appreciable but also very relevant for all practical purposes of solving the labyrinth of complexities which arise out of modern life.

As Dickens himself believed in education and classroom teaching, these things help in not only bringing up but also bring alterations (nurture) the extensive study of classroom situation shown by Dickens like Nicholas Nickleby, Fagin's academy, Thomas Gradgrind's school. So he believed that any living society has to invest a lot in the, psychological wealth of the children. The present, research has shown the immense responsibility of parents, teachers and leaders (Church and society) in shaping the future of the younger generation.

The main character of the book *Oliver Twist* is a small boy, Oliver Twist. Dickens' choice of Oliver's name is very revealing because the boy's story is full of 'Twists' and turns. Although Oliver appears at first sight as a disobedient and dull child, in reality he is very intelligent,

sensitive, compassionate, kind, loyal and gentle, and no matter how much he is abused and mistreated, he retains these qualities as well as his faith in the goodness of people. He is generally quiet and shy rather than aggressive. At times he seems rather naïve; for example, when he sees the members of Fagin's gang practicing picking Fagin's pockets or when he goes out with them to steal but without having any idea that they are thieves until they run off and he is apprehended for the deed. Most of the things that happen to him are out of his control. Twice he is rescued by the very rich and kind people. Fagin's gang is trying to rob, first Mr. Brownlow, and later Mrs. Maylie. Both times Oliver is ill and must be nursed back to health. He is not a creator of his refuge. He is only a passive participant.

Oliver lacks love and friendly face. Instead of endearment in workhouses, he is beaten and starved in and shut up many times. This fact is stressed in *Oliver Twist* during the conversation between Dick and Oliver. "After I am dead, but not before. I know the doctor must be right, Oliver, because I dream so much of Heaven, and Angels, and kind faces that I never see when I am awake." Or even better during Oliver's conversations with Mr. Limbkinse : "My boy! said old gentleman, leaning over the desk. Oliver started at the sound. He might be executed for doing so: for the words were kindly said, and strange sound frightened one." (*Oliver Twist* 62, 26)

Young gentlemen from Fagin's gang are counterparts of Oliver. They were probably innocent as well but criminal life taught them caginess and forced them to mature before time. They regard their job as important and beneficial for society. When Jack Dawkins is arrested his accomplices feel it as something like victory and fame. And Fagin strengthens their opinions. However, they are experienced criminals they sink into childish nativity and believe this fair late.

Dickens opined that not only the working conditions in the workhouses, but the kind of labour to which the children are exposed is inconvenient for them in light of their innocence, Childishness and inexperience. Children are not able to provide for themselves and lack love and somebody should give them advice. Dickens' David wails:

“From Monday morning until Saturday night, I had no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no assistance, no support of any kind, from any one ... I was so young and childish, and so little qualified how could I be otherwise? to undertake the whole charge of my own existence ...” (*David Copperfield* 140).

David resembles Oliver Twist in this way. Both characters feel lonely. Dickens says that much better for any child is the trouble free childhood and loving home that David experiences with his mother and Peggotty at Rookery before Mr. Murdstone disturbs this harmony and transforms paradise into hell.

Another means which could deprive any child of his naivety, give him valuable instructions and advice is education. Education can be provided by schools or parents at home. However, Dickens rejects too strict education under the compulsion as Mr. and Miss Murdstone do because this kind of teaching and upbringing will cause more harm than utility as David says: “God help me. I might have been improved for my whole life, I might have been made another creature perhaps, for life, by a kind word at that seasons. A word of encouragement and explanation might have made me respect instead of hate him ...” (*David Copperfield* 49). Dickens reemphasizes the same rejection of strict methods of Mr. Creakle in the Salem House who based his authority on shouting and physical punishments. The best school for Dickens it the school of Dr. Strong. Neither physical punishments nor shouting nor degradation are used by Dr. Strong. Instead he instills in his pupils the pride in the school they study in, in the education they are given and thereby in themselves.

Like *Oliver Twist*, Pip also complains about poor diet since Mr. Pumblechook and Pip’s own sister’s feed him barely. I considered Mr. Pumblechook wretched company. Besides being possessed of my sister’s idea that a mortifying and penitential character ought to be imparted to my diet besides giving me as much crumb as possible in combination with as little butter, and putting such a quantity of warm water into my

milk that it would have been more candid to have left milk out together, while he (eats) bacon and hot roll, in a gorging and gormandizing manner. (*Great Expectations* 52).

The fact that the children are the helpless part of society is present here again. Dickens reveals that the poor diet of the children is not only a problem of workhouses. Adult officers in workhouses are not the only person who derive benefit from their positions and power, even children's own families can think about their offsprings as the least important elements of the units which are not necessary to feed.

Childishness and innocence can be an advantage. Children can see the world without prejudices which adults experience and therefore they can see the world in a more realistic way. In the same way as Joe preaches Pip to be tolerant, Dickens also asks the reader to be indulgent to initial failures because all the improvements slowly lead to happy ending and progress.

Progress is omnipresent in all Dickens' works. He believes in the goodness of people and even if they commit wickedness they can recuperate themselves. But if they are not good at heart this recuperation is impossible and they have to be punished. This is true not only of his prisoners and criminals but also of all the other.

Through *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens emphasizes upon the importance of family for children and also suggests how children are terrified in the environment that is not suitable for them. And Oliver has to face many situations that are not convenient for child's psyche. The author's concentration on Oliver's feelings might be an attempt to show how children's feeling and thinking are different from adults. And if children think differently they should not be treated as adults.

Dickens shows how a child character reflects the world. This reflection shows that Pip is described as sensitive character that is well aware of his situation and feeling despite the fact that he is just a child.

My sister's bringing up made me sensitive. In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice. It may be only small injustice to which a child is exposed to but the child is small and its world is small and its rocking horse stand as many high, according to a scale, as a big-bond Irish hunter. (*Great Expectations* 53).

From this extract we can see that Dickensian Child in *Great Expectations* considers his own world as important as the world of adults is although they are not the same. From the quote above we might observe that Dickens portrays children as beings who are valuable for the world and who deserve fair treatment. Rawlins points out the

children in *Great Expectations* struggle with life and how Dickens appreciates their value :

In most literature, children are things for molding and shaping, in the opening chapters of *Great Expectations*, this child is a thing for defending a thing that must battle with guts and spite against the adult forces that constantly demand a renunciation of the self. (*Rawlins* 672).

Estella's major source of influence has been Miss Havisham, her education and the general environment of her home. The girl grows up isolated from the outer world in the gloomy and depressive atmosphere of Satis House where she lives without happiness or love surrounded only by the feelings of envy and desire for revenge transferred on her by her step mother. All these aspects of heroine's life make a deep impact on her child mind and therefore they are responsible for shaping her character and behaviour into the form that she demonstrates in the course of the novel rather than her own conscious choice.

Both Pip and Estella have been brought up in different social and family backgrounds acquiring diverse sets of values and attitudes but the results are similar in that the childhood of both of them are traumatic to a certain degree, which has a negative impact on their developments. The early experiences thus contribute to the formation of hero's narrow perceptions of life and the inability to come to terms with himself and the internal conflict between his ambitions and roots in the case of Pip

and to express any emotion or communicate with other people in the case of Estella.

Even though both of them undergo the biggest changes only after overcoming serious obstacles in the time they become adults, the experience from childhood will influence the way they face the life and solve the problems.

Is a child's development influenced primarily by genetics and biological predisposition? Or could, the majority of influence be found in the child's environment? This nature/nurture question is possibly one of the oldest theories debated in psychology (*Bee*, 2004). Today, it is commonly accepted that most aspects of child's development are a product of the interaction of both nature and nurture.

In the book *'The Bluest Eye'* authored by Tony Morrison, a character called Picola, who is a child and has been raped by her own father, gets pregnant. Morrison herself does not give any comment regarding the atrocity of the action. She leaves it to the judges to decide the judgement to be pronounced upon Picola and her father. Veiled behind the apparent story is the dark surface of the psychological torture endured by the Africans as slaves, as social inferiors, and branded as the agents of evil because of colour.

Going in for the psychoanalytic literary criticism of the above work, we get to know the crux of the novel. The novel explores how the sexual abuse by a father can completely destroy the psyche of a young girl who has not yet separated her desire for her father into the healthy emotions of a mature adult.

The true importance of the work lies in how the situations involving socio-economic-political framework are manifested in the characters' consciousness. The questions which are relevant for a better understanding of a novel are like why a good home is important? How does a person's living environment impact the manner in which they deal with the world? How does the problem of overworked parents affect the development of otherwise healthy children? Can behaviour be rationalized by emotions such as greed?

To earnestly evaluate the *Bluest Eye*, one needs to understand one's dependency on the world for identification, self value, feelings of worth, how to survive whole in a world where we are all of us, in some measure, are victims of something.

The societal structure that is surrounding these characters i.e. Pecola, Cholly, Sapehead, Church, Claudia ... and all the rest is deeply rooted in their every action. External forces directly impact the psyche to react to that environment, and in a world as illogical and irreconcilable as theirs, deviations will definitely occur. The fact that Cholly inverts an

abnormality of Oedipal stage at a point that his daughter has separated herself from him (and in this situation, it must not have been as difficult as most, with the sexual life of the parents in close proximity) shows explicitly how a dysfunctional family (caused by economic factors) can disrupt normal functionality in an individual.

The God of small things, a Booker Prize winning novel by Arundhati Roy, is a tragic story that renders rich psychological insights into the effects of India's political and social problems on an every day family in their everyday lives, and illustrates in powerful fashion the ways in which these problems can destroy both rich and poor people alike. This novel is an almost infinite goldmine and can with the help of psychoanalytic literary criticism be much better understood.

Thus, it can be undoubtedly ascertained that with the help of psychoanalytic literary criticism, not only the works of Charles Dickens child characters can be better understood and evaluated, but even the works of contemporary authors can be appreciated and understood in its true essence.

With this I would conclude that a quest into the role of nature Vs nurture in the personality development of child character of Charles Dickens is useful to the present day society. Dickens has probed the problems, magnified the melodies, suggested solutions and encouraged

enhancement in thinkers. His steps are not to be confined to the shelves of books but strictly followed in the welfare of the society.

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