

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Known as the most prominent English author in the Victorian Era, Charles John Huffman Dickens has contributed to the world his thoughts on “social evils, injustice, and hypocrisy” (Liukkonen). A lot of people claim that he has written for the people and he is also considered to be a representative of the lower and middle class of England during the Industrial Revolution. With his clever wits and unforgettable characters, Charles Dickens has left us memorable moments of those who have lived in suffering and pain (“Charles Dickens”).

One of the many world famous Dickens’ books that I will analyse, Oliver Twist was written in 1838 to illustrate the life of the child labor during the Industrial Revolution. Child labor is a shamefully significant history in England. Dickens himself is also one of those who take part in that dark history. The life of child labor at that time is stated as follows:

The children of the poor were forced by economic conditions to work, as Dickens, with his family in debtor's prison, worked at age 12 in the Blacking Factory. In 1840 perhaps only twenty percent of the children of London had any schooling, a number which had risen by 1860, when perhaps half of the children between 5 and 15 were in some sort of school, if only a day school (of the sort in which Dickens's Pip finds himself in Great Expectations) or a Sunday school; the others were working. (Cody).

Linda Holeman, the author of the second book that I will analyse, is a contemporary Canadian author who has “a grim fascination for the dark times of the world's history, and most especially when it involves the exploitation of children and young people.” (Heller). She also has a deep respect to continue Charles Dickens’ footpath of describing the dark life of children and lower social class in England in the Victorian Era. Therefore, similar to Charles Dickens, she puts her dedication into writing fictions that take place in Victorian England, describing the dark life of the society at that time and the conflicts that unsurprisingly occur in their everyday life. One of her publications, Search of the Moon King’s Daughter (2002) is the book that I am going to study as my second novel.

Both of the novels have the same setting of time and place, which is England in the Industrial Revolution period. The significant difference between the two novels is that in Oliver Twist the conflicts deal more with male physical acts, whereas in Search of the Moon King’s Daughter, the conflicts are mostly issues around women at that time. The purpose of choosing these two novels is to compare and contrast the conflicts happened in the same period of time and place.

Besides, I also have a personal interest in society in England at that time. The social problems arising at that period, especially which involve child labor, really play a very big role in England's history. A huge number of children, especially from the orphanages and workhouses, "were bought by factory owners," thus the children "became known as pauper apprentices" ("Workhouse Children"). After reading these novels, I feel compassionate on innocent children like the protagonist of each novel. In addition, the novels I am going to discuss in my thesis illustrate stories related to this situation, hence I am more compelled to further investigate and comprehend these important parts of the history.

The literary element that I am going to analyse here is conflicts through sociological approach. A conflict is an open clash between two opposing groups (or individuals). There are three types of conflicts, which are man versus himself, man versus society, and man versus nature ("Conflict"). The most distinguished conflicts found in these novels are struggles between man and society, how one individual's life is determined by the society, and also conflicts between man and himself, how a new point of life has changed someone's perspectives and action.

I am going to use sociological approach in my thesis, because I strongly believe that the connection between the conflicts found in the novels and the situation of the society at that time is very tight. Oliver Twist and Search of the Moon King's Daughter are two novels with the same setting of time and place, which is Victorian England. By using sociological approach, I will study how the society at that time has influenced the minds and thoughts of the citizens, how they react to one another and how different social classes interact.

Statement of the Problem

The problems that I am going to analyse are:

1. What kind of conflicts happen in the novels?
2. What is the cause of each conflict?
3. Is the conflict resolved?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study in my major thesis are:

1. To show what kind of conflicts happen in the novels.
2. To show what the cause of each conflict is.
3. To show whether the conflict is resolved.

Method of Research

I apply the library research, in which I first read the primary texts, Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist and Linda Holeman's Search of the Moon King's Daughter. In addition, I get some data from the Internet. In analysing the novels, I use the extrinsic approach, which is sociological approach. The extrinsic approach is used to analyse the conflicts. Finally, I draw some conclusions from my analysis.

Organization of the Thesis

My thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, there will be the analysis of social and inner conflicts through sociological approach in Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist. Chapter Three deals with the analysis of social and inner conflicts through sociological approach in Linda Holeman's Search of the Moon King's Daughter. Chapter Four contains the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which include the synopsis of Oliver Twist and Search of the Moon King's Daughter, and the biography of Charles Dickens and Linda Holeman.

