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Evil Features: Sterotypes in the Selected Novels of Charles Dickens

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce poukazuje na třech vybraných dílech Charlese Dickense na nápadné podobnosti v zobrazování zla u postav. Uvedené stereotypy se týkají nejen fyzického rázu negativních osob, ale rovněž jejich povah a prostředí, v nichž se vyskytují. Na základě popisu doby Viktoriánské Anglie a pod vlivem vlastních životních zkušeností autora analyzuje tato práce rozličné nástroje, jichž bylo k tomuto použito.

Klíčová slova

Charles Dickens, Realismus, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Zlé časy, charakter zla

Annotation

This bachelor paper uses three selected novels of Charles Dickens to show similarities in depicting of evil. Described stereotypes are related not only to a physical appearance of the negative characters but also to their nature and environments in which they appear. Based on the description of the Victorian England era and under the influence of author's own life experience this work analyzes different tools used to achieve this.

Keywords

Charles Dickens, Realism, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Hard Times, evil characteristics

Tímto bych chtěla poděkovat všem, kteří se, ať fyzickým přičiněním či psychickou podporou, podíleli na vzniku této bakalářské práce. Mé zvláštní díky patří vedoucímu této práce, panu prof. PhDr. Bohuslavovi Mánkovi, CSc., za jeho ochotu a trpělivost.

Content

1. Introduction	1
2. Victorian Age	3
2.1 Historical outline	3
2.2 The World of Literature	4
2.2.1 Critical Realism	4
2.2.1.1 Social Realism	5
2.2.2 The Authors	6
3. Charles Dickens	7
3.1 Life	8
3.2 Work	10
3.2.1 The Beginnings	10
3.2.2 The Novels	10
3.2.3 The Additional Work	12
4. Ethics	13
4.1 Ethics in Victorian era	13
4.1.1 Charles Dickens as an ethical example	14
4.2 Evil	15
4.2.1 Visible evil	16
4.2.2 Invisible evil	17
5. Analysis	18
5.1 The selected novels	18
5.1.1 Oliver Twist	18
5.1.2 David Copperfield	19
5.1.3 Hard Times	20
5.2 Detection of evil	21
5.2.1 Evil – main conflict or secondary	23
5.3 Tools	24
5.3.1 Envy	26
5.3.2 Greed	28
5.3.3 Hatred	29
5.3.4 Aggression	31
5.3.5 Lack of feelings	33
5.4 Physical appearance of evil characters	36
6. Conclusion	37
7. Resumé	40
8. Bibliography	45
Appendices	47

1. Introduction

Charles Dickens has a unique place in the history of world literature. His great talent of narration and depiction of the era of Victorian England was comparable to his desire to make his country a better place. He often criticised the social system, the negative influence of capitalism and many other problems of those days in the best way he could, in his books.

As a highly moral person and an excellent writer he put into his stories not only something from his own life experience but every piece of his work reflects also certain ethical values. To appeal to readers' minds and to make them understand what is right and wrong he used the contrast between good and *evil*.

Evil occupies an essential position in all his works when it is either represented by one person or the system as a whole but it is always there.

Therefore the aim of this work is to prove by analyzing three famous novels taken from different seasons of Dickens' career (namely *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Hard Times*) that there are certain similarities and tendencies "*stereotypes*" in depicting evil.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. In the first part of the thesis the Victorian era and Charles Dickens are briefly introduced. It describes the time period when the writer lived, and it demonstrates the atmosphere in which his novels are set especially since his works are known for the realistic reflection of the 19th century society.

Great Britain is seen in the historical context, summarizing important facts and events from the field of science, philosophy and society. Moreover this section covers also the literature of critical realism, focuses on its development, introduces basic features and mentions the most significant authors of this period as well.

Furthermore this part contains basic information about the author himself since many facts and events in his stories are related to his own life experience. There is also a general overview of Dickens' works with a brief summary of their major ideas.

The second part of the thesis is dedicated to the theoretical background of the features which are discussed in the following chapter of this paper. There is an explanation of terminology, it defines ethics and focuses particularly on the new philosophical movement, Utilitarianism, which had an influence on the perception of what is morally correct. Furthermore it follows the character of Charles Dickens as the other important indicator of ethical behaviour in the Victorian period. There is also mentioned a general definition of evil and the kinds of evil used in Dickens' stories.

The third part of the thesis is concerned with the analyzes of the novels themselves. At the beginning of this chapter a brief summary of all three novels is in order to make sure that the reader is familiar with the contexts of the books and also to make the links between characters and plots more understandable.

In addition, there are several subchapters devoted to answer the question what kind of evil appears in each novel, whether the conflict between good and wrong is the main or secondary issue of the story, which evil features appear most often in these three novels and finally similarities in the physical descriptions of the characters embodying morally bad behaviour.

The last chapter of this work is the conclusion which contains a summary of all matters discussed in this paper as well as the results of the analysis focusing on proving or disproving the original hypotheses.

2. The Victorian Age

2.1 Historical outline

This period of time relates to the life of *Queen Victoria* (1819 – 1901) and under her long reign of 64 years it is considered to be one of the most prosperous eras in the history of Great Britain.

The second half of the 19th century brought great changes to people's lives thanks to several important inventions, especially on the field of technology and natural sciences. The invention of dynamo, steam ships production and the fast progress of railway system cause an increase in the growth of factories and industrialization in general.¹

The life conditions during this period started to improve slightly as well. The new sewage system, heating and electrical network projects, the maintenance and cleaning of dirty streets should help make the lives of people better. Moreover, the innovation of medicine based on numerous experiments and studies, not to forget *Louis Pasteur* and his vaccination research the base of today's immunology as well as the modification of narcosis and other medical treatments, this all had a positive impact on people's health.

Furthermore, after the publication *Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species"* in 1859 in which he defined his theory of evolution it caused an enormous uproar as it had completely changed and challenged the image of the world as well as the perception of religions. Together with *Herbert Spencer* and his philosophical approach, in regards to the universe and the notion that life is still developing, people began to believe more in scientific evidence, facts and reason.

On the other hand, all these improvements influence in the increase in population growth and due to urbanization social problems appeared. There were not enough jobs for the growing population and those jobs that were available were not paid well. Due to this fact a lot of inhabitants were starving and living in deep poverty. The worst situation was in London where to survive many children had to work under unacceptable conditions, women often became often prostitutes and in general the level of criminality

¹ BALAJKA, Bohuš. *Přehledné dějiny literatury*. 4th edition. Praha: 1999. p. 208.

grew as it was the last chance for people to obtain money.

As a reaction to this situation, beginning in the 30's, philosophers and social activists such as *Thomas Carlyle* and *Benjamin Disraeli* supported the working classes in their struggle against capitalism. They publicly criticised the current issues and wanted to point out what changes needed to be made. They both, as well as many writers and poets, represented the **chartism** (which was a movement inspired by the document *People's Charter* which it demanded the improvement of political and social conditions). They were centred around various magazines and newspapers where their critiques and reactions were published.

The conditions for the working classes finally improved by the end of the century.²

This period of time was also important in the birth of new philosophical theories and approaches, as for example, a French philosopher **August Comte** who built the base to the new discipline called *sociology* which was a study of people's interactions within society or **Hyppolite Taine** who saw the crucial influence of inheritance, environment and race on the development of people.³

Moreover, the new philosophy of **Utilitarianism** was founded in Great Britain based on the idea of the philosophers and economists **Jeremy Bentham** and **John Stuart Mill** stating that an action is right if its intentions to promote happiness and wrong if it tends to produce the opposite of happiness.⁴

2.2 The World of Literature

2.2.1 Critical Realism

The start of capitalism had an influence on many aspects of everyday life though the most visible effect it had on society. The artists started to perceive this change and more importantly, they reacted to the current situation. Their works began to slightly show differences in the depiction of the stories as well as in the main characters and settings. From the era of Romanticism (1st half of the 19th century) and its mysterious places, the protagonist ("a noble saboteur") is usually depicted as a lonely, melancholic creature,

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era [cit 2010-02-28].

3 BALAJKA, Bohuš. *Přehledné dějiny literatury*. 4th edition. Praha: 1999. p. 208.

4 <http://www.utilitarianism.com/utilitarianism.html> [cit 2010-03-05].

feeling lost and riven from the inside by unrequited love or unreachable dreams, current authors focus more on the reality. Of course we can still find some of these aspects so typical of romantist writers in the works of the new authors, yet no more dreamy stories but facts based on the real life of people, their sorrows and description of the issues and problems of the time are important therefore becoming the topics. This literary tendency is called *critical realism* (2nd half of the 19th century).

Its main aim was to bring to light the problems of that period and criticise them and the effects they have on society. Based on this the authors had to depict the life as it was, often choosing themes that were considered to be inappropriate for literary work such as slam life, prostitution, the world of criminals, alcoholics and so on.

To make the access of these works easy to the majority of population and to help them understand the issues the language of the books was rather simple and pragmatic, often accompanied by slang or dialect to convince readers about its authenticity especially if the plot was taking place in the world of the lower social classes. In addition the structure of the story was well-arranged so that it presented a detailed picture of the society and the environment, as well as all characters and events so it would not confuse a reader.

To capture the complexity of all these aspects the novel format was the best solution and also the most frequently chosen alternative experiencing its notable growth during this time period.

2.2.1.1 Social Realism

Social realism meant an essential part of critical realism. It focuses on a criticism of social issues. Most 19th-century novels are devoted at least partly to this problematic. They depict poor or working-class characters as victims of brutal social forces which they can not control or victims of greedy and vicious employers who do not see them as human beings. It is typical for these novels to provide the reader with many details of working-class life, particularly the unsanitary lives in urban slums or dangerous working conditions in the factories. Often the author contrasts the working-class citizens with the idle and luxurious lives of factory owners, government leaders or

other authority figures.

However, despite their poverty and lack of education the working-class protagonists of these novels usually exemplified middle-class values such as cleanliness, respect, gratitude, hard work and domestic affection so that readers would identify and sympathize with the protagonist and their plight.

It is not an exception that in some novels that deal with social problems, especially written after the 1840s, the capitalists or landowners must change their opinions after learning the truth about the condition of the workers.⁵

The ending of such works usually have only two scenarios either ending it by rescuing the poverty-stricken protagonists into middle- or even upper-class prosperity and security or these characters' lives end tragically.⁶

The majority of the novels of this period include social realistic topics, however some of these novels only partially comment upon other issues as well.

2.2.2 The Authors

Besides Charles Dickens there were also other important authors representing critical realism in England who are worth mentioning for their contribution not only to the world of literature.

William Makepeace Thackeray living and writing in the same time as Dickens and choosing a similar critique of the society though focusing on the upper classes. Nevertheless, his specific skepticism and sarkastic humour distinguished him strongly from his famous colleague.

The next realist writer is *Thomas Hardy* whose books were published mainly in the late 19th century. His stories reflect the decay of villages describing the loss of traditions and the difficulties farmers had in get used to new systems.⁷

5 http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=R00792222&divLevel=0&queryId=../session/1267789650_13743&trailId=12693A8115B&area=ref&forward=critref_ft [cit. 2010-03-10].

6 http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=R00792222&divLevel=0&queryId=../session/1267789650_13743&trailId=12693A8115B&area=ref&forward=critref_ft [cit. 2010-03-10].

7 MORGAN, K.O. and col. *Dějiny Británie*. Praha: 1999. p. 421

Significant female authors who also belong to this time period are *Elizabeth C. Gaskell* with her social-oriented novels and *Mary Ann Evans* (known under her male pseudonym George Eliot). *The Sisters Brontë*, namely Emily and Charlotte, are considered to be on the imaginery crossing because their work contains aspects of Romanticism and critical realism at the same time.

Not only in prose the ideas of critical realism were defined. Many poets would compose their poems in a way in which they express their attitude towards a current situation. Therefore next to classic critical poetry of *Edward P. Mead*, chartist lyrical verses by *Gerald Massey*, political songs and short epigramms, there were also the hymns by *John H. Bramwich* or very popular marching songs. The appreciated celebrities in the field of class struggle was *Thomas Cooper*, *William J. Linton*, *Ernest Ch. Jones*, *Alfred Tennyson* and *Robert Browning*.⁸

Even though chartist poetry seems sometimes too hard and imperfect in its form, which was due to the fact that many of the authors were not professional poets, the message it tried to convey was support for the working class and were a source of energy for many working-class people in their difficult fight against the unfair system.

3. Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens belongs to one of the most significant authors of British literature. He was a representative of critical realism, the literary style of the second half of 19th century, and his work became a part of classical world literature for its specific depiction of the life of many social layers, humour, satire and the charm people found in his stories. Unlike Gustave Flaubert, the French critical realism writer, who believed that the author should not insert into his/her stories anything from his/her own life,⁹ Charles Dickens was of an opposite attitude and the majority of his books are influenced by his own experience which were not always easy, but despite all difficulties he had to face he stayed pro-human and sometimes his work is considered to

8 STRÍBRNÝ, Z. *Dějiny anglické literatury* 2.1st edition. Praha: 1987. p.437-439.

9 CHIARI, Joseph. *Realism and imagination*. New York: 1970. p 76, 142.

be even too sentimental for he managed to remain optimistic in his belief of morality and the goodness in people.

“So he gives us the evil Fagin, the brutal Bill Sikes, and a crowd of thieves and robbers, who lie and cheat and steal, and live in fear of prison or the hangman's rope around their necks. Dickens also had another purpose. He wanted to show that goodness can survive through every kind of hardship.”¹⁰

3.1 Life

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on the **7 February** of **1812** at Landport, in Portsmouth. His father, John Dickens, worked as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. When Charles was four they moved to Chatham where he attended a private William Giles' School, a private intitution, until he was ten years old. Then his family moved again, this time to London where life was not easy for the Dickens family. The quarter in which they lived in was poor and dangerous; moreover his father's debts reached such a level that he was sent to a prison for debtors in Marshalsea with his entire family. At twelve years old Charles had to take care of himself and was sent to work at Warren's Blacking manufactory where his job was pasting labels on jars of shoe polish. With his poor wage of six shillings a week he could not afford a satisfactory living. He had to stay in miserable lodgings and was halfstarve from a lack of food. Experiencing such poverty and meeting people from the lowest social classes of capitalistic England gave him a perfect insight which he used in many of his later works.

When the financial situation of Dickens' family improved, they left the prison and Charles went to Wellington House Academy. Unfortunately, school's reputation was not good and the years he spent studying at this institution were not happy either, which led to Charles' often bitterness and constant criticism of the British educational system.

After finishing school in May 1827 he started to work as a junior clerk in a law office, whereas his spare time was filled with studying of shorthand writing. In 1828 he started working as a Parliamentary reporter. For almost four years he was a silent witness at this job and this influenced his extreme dislike of lawyers, courts, parliament

¹⁰ DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. Ed. ROGERS, Richard. Oxford: 1994. first page.

and their plotting against the workin-class citizens, which he also fought against in his books as for instance in *David Copperfield* one of the characters describes the Doctors' Commons (i.e. a society of lawyers practising civil law in London) as:

“a little out-of-the-way place, where they administer what is called ecclesiastical law, and play all kinds of tricks with obsolete old monsters of acts of Parliament, which three-fourths of the world know nothing about, and the other fourth supposes to have been dug up, in a fossil state, in the days of the Edwards. It is an ancient monopoly in suits about people's wills and people's marriages, and disputes among ships and boats.”¹¹

On the 2nd of April 1836 Dickens married *Catherine Thomson Hogarth*, the daughter of George Hogarth, the editor of the *Evening Chronicle*, and together they raised seven sons and three daughters.

Charles loved travelling, therefore with his wife he made a trip to the United States of America, and Canada and they also lived shortly in Italy (1844) and Switzerland (1846).

In 1857 his play *The Frozen Deep* was about to be officially performed and during the preparation Charles fell in love with one of the actresses, *Ellen Ternan*. At first they hid their relationship but in 1858, after twenty two years of marriage, he got separated from his wife, a divorce was unthinkable not only due to time period in which he lived in but also due to his position as a national celebrity. However, he supported his wife financially for many years while she was taking care of their children.

On the 22 of April 1869 the famous writer collapsed at one of his public readings. He was diagnosed with a mild stroke. Despite his bad health he insisted on giving his last readings.

On the 8 of June 187, after spending the whole day working on his last book he suffered another stroke from which he never regained consciousness. Charles Dickens **died on the 9 of June 1890**. His wish to be buried in an ordinary grave at Rochester Cathedral was not fulfilled and one of Britain's most beloved authors was laid to rest in the *Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey*.

¹¹ DICKENS, Ch. *David Copperfield*. London: 1991. p. 343.

3.2 Work

3.2.1 The Beginnings

His literary career began in 1833 when he sent his first story, **A Dinner at Poplar Walk**, to a monthly magazine. After having his first story published, he continued with his political reports for the *Morning Chronicle* under the pseudonym Boz. In 1836 a collection of these realistic sketches and short stories was published under the title **Sketches by Boz** which became popular especially due to their true depiction of life in the low and lowest social classes while using humour and satire.

3.2.2 Novels

After the success of *The Sketches by Boz* he was asked by publishers to write texts to a series of pictures in a magazine which was the beginning of **The Pickwick Papers** (The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club). These stories which were later published as a novel became a big success not only for their humour but also for a criticism of human hypocrisy, pride, stupidity, snobbery and injustice of the capitalistic system.

All of Dickens' novels deal with serious criticism of the society however many of his books focus and emphasize also on other issues.

Among his works that deal with social criticism are **Oliver Twist** (The Adventures of Oliver Twist, 1837-39), **Dombey and Son** (Dealings with the Firm Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail and for Exportation; 1846-48) which shows the remarkable difference between a cold world of money, power and business and a world of ordinary people full of life and warm feelings. Furthermore the novels **The Old Curiosity Shop** (1841) and **Hard Times** (1854) reflected the class differences and criticize of utilitarianism; **Great Expectations** (1860-61) and **Martin Chuzzlewit** (The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit; 1843) based on this first trip to the United States whereas its value is mainly on the society and setting description focusing on

the influence of the American bourgeois on the public.¹²

His last completed novel **Our Mutual Friend** (1864-65) belongs to one of his most sophisticated works. The complex plot is accompanied by mysterious motives as well as criticism of the society and focuses especially on the condemnation of the pursuit of unhealthy money chasing and desire to belong to the corrupted high society.¹³

Another favourite area of criticism, for Charles, was the school system particularly its cruelty, inefficiency and poor the conditions pupils had to face in the school environment was the school system particularly its cruelty, inefficiency and poor conditions pupils had to face there such as in **Nicholas Nickleby** (The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, 1838-39). This book caused a wave of protests claiming that the author's statements were not true, however, further examination verificated the facts and the Parliament started to work on a school reform.¹⁴

The novels **Bleak House** (1852-53), a restrospective novel which describes with satire and irony the inefficiency of England's courts or justice, and **Little Dorrit** (1855-57), with its main emphasis on the critique of the state bureaucracy, are dedicated to criticizing the English law system, courts, bureaucracy and lawyers.

Charles Dickens tried to write historical novels as well. His first was **Barnaby Rudge** (Barnaby Rudge: a Tale of the Riots of Eighty, 1841) describing the riots against Catholicism in London of 1780 seen by a mentaly retarded boy accompanied by a raven. The second is called **A Tale of Two Cities** (1859) and it is settled on the background of the French Revolution which the author himself found as an appropriate revenge by the French people against the aristocracy.¹⁵

The novel **David Copperfield** (The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger, 1849-50) covers and often criticises basically all issues which were important to mention such as social differences, human cruelty and lack of feelings, an insufficient education and the legal system.

12 GILINSKY, J., KHVOSTENKO, L., WEISE, A. *Studies in English and American Literature and Style*. Leningrad, 1956. p. 201

13 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Mutual_Friend> [cit. 2010-2-23].

14 GILINSKY, J., KHVOSTENKO, L., WEISE, A. *Studies in English and American Literature and Style*. Leningrad, 1956. p. 200.

15 STRĚBRNÝ, Z. *Dějiny anglické literatury 2*. 1st edition. Praha: 1987. p. 457.

The last book of this famous writer is **The Mystery of Edwin Drood** (1870). It was supposed to be a detective story regarding the disappearance of the young gentleman Edwin. Unfortunately, this work remained unfinished, though many authors have been trying to finish it.

In addition, some of his less known novels are **The Chimes** (1844), **The Cricket on the Hearth** (1845), **Battle of Life** (1846) and **The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain** (1848).

3.2.3 Additional Work

The literary career of Charles Dickens contains much more than only his novels. He was an author of short stories, the best known is *A Christmas Carol* (1843) which for its specific magic atmosphere of Christmas became one of the most popular Christmas stories ever. Furthermore, there is the collection of short stories such as *The Mudfog Papers* (1837) and *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1860-69), also the travelogue *American Notes* (American Notes for General Circulation; 1842). As he was also fond of the theatre, the list of his works would include plays such as *The Village Coquettes* (1836) and *The Frozen Deep* (1857). We can find some attempts by Dickens in writing poetry, for example *The Fine Old English Gentleman* (1841).

During his whole life he was an active journalist, reporter and observer and he shared all his findings with the readers in his books, magazine articles or at public events. His specific style, humour and true picture of Victorian England made him a significant author of British literature.

4. Ethics

Charles Dickens managed to insert into his stories deep moral aspects. Therefore this chapter focuses on the theoretical background of ethics in general and the moral example which Charles Dickens represented.

4.1 Ethics in Victorian era

Ethics is also called “a moral philosophy and it involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour.”¹⁶ The general understanding of what is right or wrong is more or less known, however, there is no unified definition. Each culture in its history might have a different approach to ethics as being influenced by specific events such as historical development, war, crime, disasters, economic situation and so forth.

Many philosophers have been trying to find an universal moral codex but it is difficult considering the variety of aspects which need to be had in mind. Beginning on the second half of the 19th century the new direction in the field of ethics in England took the *Utilitarianism* approach.

As mentioned in the chapter 2.1 this philosophy was initiated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. It was believed that an action is right if the result of this action is happiness and wrong if it causes of misery. Furthermore, it was possible for a right thing to be done from a bad motive since the dominant idea of utilitarianism is the *intrinsic value* meaning that something is “held to be good in itself, apart from further consequences, and all other values are believed to derive their worth from their relation to this intrinsic good as a means to an end”.¹⁷

This theory caused many debates though, often criticism and objections questioning its ethical correctness.

16 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/> [cit. 2010-03-05].

17 <http://www.utilitarianism.com/utilitarianism.html> [cit 2010-03-05].

One of people who completely did not agree with the ideas of utilitarianism was also Charles Dickens. He had his own opinion on what is morally right and he expressed it within his books and above all in the way he lived.

4.1.1 Charles Dickens as an ethical example

Charles Dickens was appreciated not only for his writing but also for his philanthropy. During his time he was perceived as an exemplary man. He was described as being kind, helping and most of all showing and spreading the example of morally right behaviour.

It had started with his novels and newspaper articles where he criticizes all important issues (see chapter 3.2.2). By having his characters representing certain values and standing as models to create the intended atmosphere he evoked a powerful impact on people's minds. He undertook many public readings and discussions. In the summer of 1858 Dickens even went on a tour through English provinces, Scotland and Ireland where he performed his public readings.

Thanks to his anonymous reports in *The Examiner*, among others, he raised the public awareness on the issue of mishandled children.

Because of his writing and excellent presentation skills he was invited twice to the United States of America. Not only did he perform his popular public readings but he also met with influential people from politics and arts; he initiated several lectures and later on also wrote a publication regarding copyright law. However, there were more acts by his towards trying to change the narrow-minded attitude of Victorian society.¹⁸

One of them was a participation on a project of a house for “fallen“ women who were completely rejected by the people. Nevertheless, in this place they could peacefully live and learn how to read, write and work on their reintegration into society. Dickens supported and took an active part in it, as he would not only donate the run of this house but also he would actually go into prisons, and according to interviews he

18 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens> [cit. 2010-02-10].

selected potential adepts for the sanctuary. Later he used the life experiences of these women as inspiration for some of his characters in order to give this problem the attention it deserved.¹⁹

For his extraordinary rhetorical abilities he had been invited to many events where his speeches should provoke the audience into reaction. These performances differed according to the occasion, from political or social awareness to raising money. For instance he accepted attendance to the Great Ormond Street Hospital festival dinner which sole purpose was to raise enough money in order to buy a neighbouring building so that they could increase the number of beds for patients.

Moreover, his deep devotion to help people was proven in June 1869 when he and Ellen were on their way home from Paris. On their way home their train had an accident known as the *Staplehurst train crush*. Though many people died or were injured, they both survived unharmed. Nevertheless, before help arrived Charles had been promptly helping with the rescue of wounded people. Although this sad experience could not be published officially since Ellen was still considered at the time as being his mistress, the brave deed of Dickens' is remembered, partially in his short story dedicated to this terrible event.

Though his affair with Ellen was perceived as a black stain on Charles's reputation, he still remained an ethical example and was considered to be one of the most influential people setting moral standards.

4.2 Evil

Nevertheless, in his literature the struggle between good and evil has its crucial position. It is a common tool used by authors in order to appeal to their readers. Of course even though this writer's attempt to present the acts of his characters as ethically right these acts can be considered to be completely subjective, in most cases it follows the moral codes valid for the time period it is set in.

The meaning of the word evil is to be morally wrong, wicked. It causes harm,

¹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens> [cit. 2010-02-10].

destruction or misfortune as it seeks only its own benefit and does not care of the possible damage to others; having the nature of vice.²⁰

However, it is not always easy to claim that something is or is not evil. There does not exist any fixed scale defining what is considered a mistake and what is on the other hand serious. In many cases it is just an inner fight between instincts, which is according to Šimek “something urging us to follow certain direction, to behave in a certain way yet we can not really say what this 'something' is“.²¹

These urges might be sometimes contradictory making a person act unwisely because he/she can not simply keep them balanced therefore follows the stronger one. If it is considered wrong or right depends, however, more on the moral theory of that time period. These changes in perception and evaluation of expressing instincts have always been revolutionary as for many centuries the majority of cultures appreciated complete self-control the most.²²

Though religions have a very clear attitude towards this issue, in the literature the author takes the position of the judge and it depends on the reader whether he/she will interpret it exactly how the writer meant it.

There are two ways how an author can present evil to a reader, in a *visible* or in an *invisible* way.

4.2.1 Visible evil

The visible evil is represented by a person of bad nature and behaviour who intends to cause harm, damage and is too selfish to care about consequences of his/her deeds. The level of the badness however, basically depends on the author and the intended role he/she gives this character in the story. According to that the characters are perceived to be either *round* or *flat*.²³

20 <http://www.answers.com/topic/evil> [cit. 2010-03-10].

21 ŠIMEK, J. *Lidské pudy a emoce*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1995. p. 83.

22 ŠIMEK, J. *Lidské pudy a emoce*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1995. p. 82.

23 FORSTER, E.M. *Aspects of the novel*. 16th edition. New York: 1957, p. 103.

Forster's theory defines a flat character as a person that usually embodies one idea or quality for example silliness, naivety, hypocrisy, pure goodness or pure evil. Very often he/she is connected to one sentence typical for his/her role.²⁴

A typical example are fairy tales.

On the contrary round characters are more difficult to understand. They act in several dimensions and as Forster maintains “the test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is a flat pretending to be round.”²⁵ This is related to characters who act immorally as a result of an invisible force giving them no other option.

In the stories which have been selected for the analysis it is noticeable that the writer has a certain habit to insert flat characters. *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* contain a small amount of round characters indeed. It does not mean that Dickens was not able to create such personality. On contrary, he chose it on purpose for it can be easily guessed how the person is going to act therefore it is convenient for a reader to focus on the message the story is supposed to carry. However, Dickens' ability to form a round character is evident in *Hard Times*.

4.2.2 Invisible evil

Invisible evil relates to all aspects influencing decision, action and reaction of the characters in the book. It is not represented by a human being therefore its identification is more complicated and a reader needs a certain level of knowledge to recognise it.

The source of such evil can vary, for instance the source can be a result of: the environment, prudent society, dysfunctional family, political system, insufficient educational system, flaws in the law and others. Each author can define this differently; however it is also not unusual for writers of one time period or of the same literary movement to see the resource of the invisible evil in equal things.

For Charles Dickens as well for other authors of the Victorian period this meant

²⁴ FORSTER, E.M. *Aspects of the novel*. 16th edition. New York: 1957. p. 103-104.

²⁵ FORSTER, E.M. *Aspects of the novel*. 16th edition. New York: 1957. p. 118.

capitalism and its relation to industrialization together with urbanization which were causing most of the social ills.

Furthermore, it is important to realize whether the characters in the books are influenced by one entity or if there are several combining sources having an evil impact on people. Besides it may also be the case that the story has its negative character who acts immorally however only as the result of a general evil force. This was actually a very popular tool of critical realists because it gave them a wide spectrum of opportunities on how to indirectly criticise what they wanted.

5. Analysis

5.1 The selected novels

5.1.1 Oliver Twist

This book belongs to the beginnings of Charles Dickens' literary career. It was his second novel and though according to Stříbrný ²⁶ it does not belong to Dickens' master pieces Wilson classifies it as “one of the great popular works of art of all time”²⁷

The novel tells the story of an orphan Oliver spending his childhood in foster care and later in a terrible workhouse suffering from hunger, violence and lack of any kind of emotions. From this place he leaves to become an undertaker's apprentice. After a big fight caused by the wicked Noah Claypole and being unfairly punished Oliver escapes the small town and goes to London hoping for a better life. There he gets into the underworld meeting Fagin, a crafty old Jew, who has control over thieves such as John Dawkins (alias The Artful Dodger), Charley Bates, Nancy and Toby Crackit. Apart from these harmless pickpockets there is also a serious criminal by name Bill Sikes and Oliver's hateful half-brother Monks. Miraculously the little boy escapes all the endeavours that would make him a criminal and after many complications he finally

26 STŘÍBRNÝ, Z. *Dějiny anglické literatury* 2. 1st edition. Praha: 1987.p. 448.

27 WILSON, A. *The World of Charles Dickens*. Harmondsworth: 1972. p.124.

finds a home and a loving family.

Dickens wrote this novel in 1837 as a reaction to the popularity of thieves' stories which described life of criminals in better light than it was:

“I had read of thieves by scores; seductive fellows (amiable for the most part), faultless in dress, plump in pocket, choice in horse-flesh, bold in bearing, fortunate in gallantry, great at a song, a bottle, pack of cards or dice-box, and fit companions for the bravest.- - - It appeared to me that to draw a knot of such associates in crime as really did exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the squalid misery of their lives; to show them as they really were, - - - it appeared to me that to do this, would be to attempt a something which was needed, and which would be a service to society.”²⁸

Beside this he criticises also inefficiency and ignorancy of the social and legal system which considered poor people as an anonymous crowd.²⁹

5.1.2 David Copperfield

The novel written in 1850 is considered to be closest to Dickens' autobiography for many similarities to his life and maybe because of the fact he himself admits that “off all my books, I like this the best“.³⁰

The narrator of the book happens to be the main character and is talking about his life. The retrospective line starts with his birth and firstly how his idyllic childhood to changes after his mother got married for the second time to a heartless tyrann Mr. Murdstone. His experience with brutality at a boarding school, the unhappy lonely life he led after his mother's death, child labour in a factory, a fortunate reunion with his aunt, becoming a young gentleman and marrying a beautiful but too careless Dora, working on his career at Doctors' Commons are all depicted in the novel. All this is accompanied by meeting interesting people and helping friends and fighting against the evil intrigues of money and the power obsessed Uriah Heep. At the end of the story the narrator becomes a famous writer he gets married to his childhood soulmate Agnes and is happily married, and leads a peaceful life with his family and friends.

28 DICKENS, Ch. *Oliver Twist*. London: 1992. p. XLIII.

29 WILSON, A. *The World of Charles Dickens*. Harmondsworth: 1972. p. 129.

30 DICKENS, Ch. *David Copperfield*. London: 1991. p. XLII.

This story contains the writer's criticism to almost all areas of the Victorian era. It describes not only the poverty and miserable living conditions of the working class, issue of child labour, but it also underlines problems in educational institutions and inefficiency of the legal system, everything under the silent influence of capitalism.

Furthermore he depicts the prudency and prejudice of the upper social class through matters of love relations. He comments especially upon a havenless situation of seduced women who were perceived as despicable although it was a man who suffered from a lack of ethical standards. Moreover he depicts a relationship between a young girl from a lower class family and a gentleman from an upper class family as being unacceptable stating the irrelevancy of being a kind, loving, smart, sensitive young woman when the only thing that matters is her origin of birth.

5.1.3 Hard Times

Hard Times is Dickens' shortest novel which tells the story of an honoured citizen, wholesaler and later politician Mr Grandgrind who is obsessed with utilitarian philosophy therefore he tries to implement this ideology not only into the minds of the pupils but he also spreads its values and ideas among his own family. As a result of this, his daughter Louisa lives in an unhappy dysfunctional marriage with a local manufacturer Mr Bounderby who is a self-centred, arrogant ruffler, and his son Thomas becomes a criminal forced to leave the country in order not to go to prison for a theft and attempted murder. At the end Mr Grandgrind realizes that a life based only on facts and definitions with no emotions is actually unbearable and destructive which leads to his transformation into a better man.

In Hard Times the author focused on the critique of utilitarianism especially in its relation to ideas of Jeremy Bentham “which treated human beings as cyphers“³¹ In educational context it meant blindly memorizing facts causing a destruction of the imagination and oppression of feelings therefore losing the person's individuality.

31 WILSON, A. *The World of Charles Dickens*. Harmondsworth: 1972. p. 235.

Furthermore Dickens attacks in this work, as well as in the others, the fabled importance of the origin of one's birth. He shows that the carrier of moral correctness does not need to be a respectable town member with his standard family but ironically a girl and her drunken father, the circus artists, which are believed to belong to the bottom of society.

Another important critique was dedicated to capitalism and industrialization and the influence it had on working and living conditions of workers. He was inspired by organized strikes he witnessed in Preston therefore his description is quite detailed. Since Dickens had always supported the poor and hard working people his principles are embodied in the character of kind and wise Stephen Blackpool, though it is highly improbable that he could be considered as a model of an ordinary worker. However, less obvious yet important was the author's criticism of opportunism represented by the workers' leader Mr Slackbridge which makes the insight into this issue more realistic in comparison to perfect Stephen.³²

5.2 Detection of evil in the selected novels

Evil appears in all three novels analysed in this paper even though its forms differ. As mentioned in the chapter 4.2 there is a number of points that have to be taken into consideration when defining evil.

All three stories contain several sources of invisible evil, but more importantly they have one common factor, *capitalism*. As being stated already in previous chapters this meant for Charles Dickens the major mine of the most of the evil spread among people. It initiated a chain reaction of *poverty* leading to *greed*, causing *selfishness* and enormous *ignorance of feelings* towards other human beings, *hatred*, ending in the worst cases in careers of tyrans, criminals, thieves or even murderers which is the lead idea of *Oliver Twist*.

The consequences of capitalism appear also in the story of *David Copperfield*, however, there the writer focuses on a description of different social layers and the particular impact on them. The main source of evil is here represented by a person of wicked

32 STRÍBRNÝ, Z. Dějiny anglické literatury 2. 1st edition. Praha: 1987. p. 456.

nature.

Hard Times contains a partial critique of capitalism as well, but seen more from the point of its relation to the *industrialization* and its impact on poor working and living conditions of workers. However, in this book the main emphasis is put on invisible evil effect of *utilitarianism* particularly its influence within education and upbringing. It pictures how children growing up under such conditions reach their adulthood with low morality and no knowledge about being human whatsoever.

Furthermore, each novel does not describe the effects of invisible evil in general. To appeal to readers' reason and their moral awareness they had to feel connected with the plot. Therefore Dickens focused especially on a careful elaboration of the characters who were guides showing the readers either the right path or on the other hand the consequences of a bad decision fulfilling the author's intentions.

The novel *Oliver Twist* is full of characters that are antipoles to the main hero Oliver. These bad people are mostly represented by thieves and criminals such as Fagin, Bill Sikes or Noah Claypole. The others reflect the terrible impact of capitalism on people's minds and behaviour. Greedy and ruthless Mr Bumble, Mrs Mann, Mr Limbkins, Mrs Sowerberry, staff of the workhouse who do not care about anything else but their own profit capable of stealing, lying, committing frauds without even thinking of their deeds as being immoral.

The major evil character though is Oliver's halfbrother *Monks*. He possesses the same amount of cruelty, greed, selfishness as the others but in his case it is worst since he knows very well what he is doing and intentionally is trying to ruin Oliver's life.

In *David Copperfield* the lead position of evil has Mr *Uriah Heep*. He is a classical contrast to David who as a flat character represents entirely good nature. He is determined by his wicked nature to do whatever it takes to reach his aim. In addition, Uriah is not the only evil person of the story. Certain position have also David's stepfather and his cold sister who both were the cause of David's unhappy childhood, furthermore Mr Creacle, the cruel school master, or James Steerforth and his mother's companion Rosa who both pretend to be superior to others yet under specific circumstances their true nature reveals and exposes them cruel, heartless, selfish and ignorant.

Hard Times as such does not have a typical anti-hero. Most of the characters are of the round form therefore their intentions and deeds is rather complicated to evaluate. Mr Grandgrind who seems cold, strict, heartless suffers when he learns that he has ruined his children's lives and on the other hand pretty, calm, always reasonable Louisa left with feelings of jealousy, envy and hatred or her brother properly educated has to leave the country as a criminal.

5.2.1 Evil – main conflict or secondary

When evil in each novel has been identified, it remains to clarify which kind (visible or invisible) is dominant and whether it can be considered as main conflict of the story or the secondary which mean whether the fight between this particular good and evil is the major aspect of the novel.

The first book depicts the fight of its innocent hero Oliver Twist against the evil. It is either related to people who became vicious as a product of capitalistic influence (Mrs Mann, Mr Bumble and others) or to his halfbrother Monks whose wicked nature has brought little Oliver to many dangerous situations causing sorrows, in both cases this story is based on this struggle therefore it becomes the **main conflict** of this novel.

In David Copperfield the conflict between the protagonist David and the antagonist Uriah Heep is **secondary**. Though Uriah is the major evil character and his bad deeds have influenced a lot of people in David's surroundings (such as his aunt goes bankrupt or that Mr Wickfield's trust has been discredited), it still remains in the background of the story and Copperfield solves it by the end of the book.

The main line follows his life, the existential problems he has to face, difficulties other people are experincing. Some of them have been caused by Mr Heep yet, many others are just results of that time period.

As stated in the chapter 5.2 the novel Hard Times does not have an anti-hero since there is also not a typical hero. Though Stephen Blackpool possesses all good qualities, his character appears in the story from a different reason than is to play a lead part. He is just in the position of a victim of two equal evils pictured in Hard Times which represents **main** conflict of the book. All bad actions are basically products of

wrong upbringing directed by utilitarianistic ideology or the same value of evil has been caused by impacts of industrialization. The characters and their bad deeds only mirror the results of wicked influence.

From the previous chapters is evident that all three stories contain aspects of visible and invisible evil. It has been also explained what kind of conflict – main or secondary, it meant for each story. Therefore the following part is dedicated to the analysis of the most common features appearing by evil characters.

5.3 Tools

Every author uses special tools to evoke a certain feeling by a reader – sympathy with a good person suffering and disliking or even hatred to the characters who embody all bad sides of human's nature. These means are diverse and basically depends only on the author's taste and the purpose he/she has with the story. Nevertheless, dealing with a mental side of characters reveals complications in matter of defining which feeling takes a lead position and which are only further products. When the character is *round* (as explained in the chapter 4.2.1) then the distinction is almost impossible for a person can behave incorrectly though being considered as a positive character of the story.

On the other hand for a *flat* personality this resolution is rather easy since he/she should be guided only by one strong feeling.

This chapter is dedicated to elaborate the most common evil features appearing in the selected novels. The results are pictured in the tables assigned to each novel. The criteria of placing the characters into this scheme are set according to their contribution to the story therefore there is not every creature mentioned in the book. Furthermore the analysis is concerned about evil concept which means that the people who represent only morally good behaviour such as David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, Stephen Blackpool, Miss Rose Maylie, Mr Peggotty, or possess natures that would not be relevant to the research for example pick pockets Charley Bates and John Dawkins who surprisingly unless cheek and selfishness do not dispose any other bad quality have been also omitted.

In addition characters of “fallen“ women as well as victims of seduction do not appear in the tables ether since the question of their behaviour as being immoral is rather difficult. Dickens himself did not act in confirmity with an general opinion about this topic (as mentioned in the chapter 4.1.1) therefore the characters of Nancy, Betsy, Annie Strong, Emily Peggotty, Martha Endell are pictured not as evil creatures but more like loving women who followed their hearts rather than listened to reason and adhered social conventions.

Oliver Twist

Character	Feature				
	Envy	Greed	Hatred	Aggression	Lack of feelings
Mrs Mann					
Mr Bumble					
Mr Limbkins					
Mrs Sowerberry					
Noah Claypole					
Fagin					
Bill Sikes					
Monks					

David Copperfield

Character	Feature				
	Envy	Greed	Hatred	Aggression	Lack of feelings
Mr Edward Murdstone					
Miss Jane Murdstone					
Mr Creakle					
James Steerforth					
Rosa Dartle					
Uriah Heep					

Hard Times

Character	Feature				
	Envy	Greed	Hatred	Aggression	Lack of feelings
Mr Grandgrind					
Mr Bounderby					
Thomas Grandgrind jr.					
Louisa Grandgrind					
Mrs Sparsit					

5.3.1 Envy

It is one of the most often used tools of Dickens'. Particularly in David Copperfield it plays an important role whereas in Hard Times it is just a partial inner conflict. Envy can be a great motivation yet it depends on the nature of the character. For instance for Mr Bounderby the desire to have a decent life and home as anybody else make him a hard worker and he became the richest person in the town. On the other hand it can be also a source of aggression, idealization, greed (which will be discussed further in details), delusion and other mental problems. This analysis focuses on evil features therefore we would be interested in envy having a bad impact.

Envy belongs specifically to human nature since there is no similar example in the wildlife. It is a desire to possess something someone else has. For some people this feeling could be beyond their control, therefore the cause of own destruction. The intensity of this feeling depends on the character, though. A typical example would be *Uriah Heep*.

His unhealthy ambition to become a respectful person, to reach an honourable position in the society and to marry a girl who represented all this, was stronger than he could bear. Especially after meeting young Copperfield and realizing that this boy possesses everything he has ever wanted. This was Uriah's motivation to undertake all necessary actions to prevent David to 'steal' that from him. Unfortunately for Mr Heep, frauds and blackmailing, the easier way which he had chosen to reach his dream instead of hard work and honesty, meant his end.

On the other hand in the character of Louisa Grandgrind the envy is not obvious. Even herself does not know what she is experiencing since under the care of her father any feelings were considered as useless because they do not possess the intrinsic value as the utilitarians believed. Therefore, she was confused particularly after meeting with Sissy Jupe who seemed so happy despite the situation that she lacked all the facts Louisa was so proud of to know. In Louisa's case this envy caused a small portion of shame which she understood for she was a wise creature yet was not keen on accepting therefore she became rather distant towards Sissy.

(when Louisa accepted Mr Bounderby's proposal of marrying him) “--- Sissy had suddenly turned her head, and looked, in wonder, in pity, in sorrow, in doubt, in a multitude of emotions, towards Louisa. Louisa had known it, and seen it, without looking at her. From that moment she was impassive, proud, and cold – held Sissy at a distance – changed to her altogether.”³³

Another character from *Hard Times* whose behaviour is influenced by envy is Mrs Sparsit (Mr Bounderby's former housekeeper), though in her case all this negative feeling was addressed towards other person – Louisa. Mrs Sparsit can not bear the loss of the comfortable life and position she used to have in Mr Bounderby's house especially to a young smart woman therefore with intrigues and gossips she wants to get her former life back. However, the envy blinds her and for the evil she has done the author punished her with a lonely life of social banishment.

In the book of *David Copperfield* the person struck by envy besides Mr Heep would be Miss Murdstone. Only in the company of her cold brother, not pretty or rich enough to attract a man. This unsatisfactory way she has to live mirrors in her nature leaving her strict, ruthless so that she would not have to face the reality. Therefore she acts superior and even despotic to David's mother who possesses everything, intentionally not giving her a chance for free will or making her own decisions taking a complete control over her life.

33 DICKENS, Ch. *Hard Times*. London: Penguin Books, 1985. p. 138.

Some of the characters in *Oliver Twist* are also driven by envy such as Mr Claypole or Mr Bumble however in their case it is just a product of their personal greed.

5.3.2 Greed

Greed is a very strong wish to continuously get more of something, especially food or money and it became one of the leading motives of the novel *Oliver Twist*. Although here it is caused mostly by an invisible influence of capitalism, it is shown as an evil feature of the characters. The writer makes it evident from the very beginning and in the same direction it appears in the rest of the book.

Mrs Mann, a woman who should take care of poor orphans but instead of that she just accepts money and let the children live in horrible conditions halfstarving, dirty and ill. Or the case of Mr Bumble whose desire to become rich with a minimum effort makes him ignorant to feelings of other people so he would easily sell Oliver to notorious violent man. To reach his dream he decides to get married to an unpleasant but wealthy woman which actually becomes his own punishment.

Same attitude stands also Mr Limbkins who as a chairman of the workhouse board has witnessed and agreed to injustice all for the money and very similar case is Mr Creacle the school master in *David Copperfield*. This man does pay any attention to the unhealthy conditions the pupils have to live in as long as he can save money for himself and his comfortable living.

The London underworld is represented by Fagin whose greed reached such a level that he did not care whether he destroys life of an innocent boy as long as he gets paid.

“In short, the wily old Jew had the boy in his toils. Having prepared his mind, by solitude and gloom, to prefer any society to the companionship of his own sad thoughts in such a dreary place, he was now slowly instilling into his soul the poison which he hoped would blacken it, and change its hue for ever³⁴.”

Although all the characters of thieves should practically be a synonym of greed Dickens decided not to do so. They are certainly selfish and cheeky yet they can not be

34 DICKENS, Ch. *Oliver Twist*. London: 1992. p. 134.

considered as greedy. It concerns especially Charley Bates and John Dawkins though pickpockets the majority of their loot goes willingly to Fagin instead of them trying to trick the Jew and so keep the bigger part of the booty for themselves which would be understandable behaviour expected from such immoral creatures. On the other hand the rest of criminal companions such as Toby Crackit, Bill Sikes or Noah Claypole perfectly fit into a general picture of greedy thieves who are capable of everything to get what they want.

Partially different case represents Thomas Grandgrind jr. His greed brought him to gambling and under the weight of debts he does not see any other solution than a robbery. Even though he possesses a completely selfish personality a reader would not predict that this young gentleman from a good family is going to attempt to kill somebody to cover his own crime.

5.3.3 Hatred

Hatred is an extreme feeling of dislike and by Dickens' characters it is usually a result or gradation of many other factors.

The strongest hatred is experiencing Mr Monks whose jealousy towards love his father felt for Oliver's mother led to envy and escalated in pure hatred towards the little boy. This feeling takes a complete control over his actions making Monks a servant of his own revenge although with his intelligence he would have realized that everything what has happened to him is absolutely not Oliver's fault.

Uriah Heep hated David Copperfield with the same intensity, though as a product of his envy and similarly he would do anything to ruin his life. The only difference between Uriah and Monks that after being convicted Mr Heep deserts the town and tries to forget the whole incident whereas Mr Monks will never accept the right being on Oliver's side.

The case of Louisa Grandgrind is alike in the way of her hatred being a result of envy and shame. The remarkable difference between her and Monks with Mr Heep is that even though she knows the object of her hatred very well, she has never had the intention to harm Sissy and more importantly, in the end as the only character from this

list Louisa overcomes this evil within herself realizing that Sissy is her true friend and always wanted to be.

“ „Have I always hated so much?“ /Louisa/
„I hope not, for I have always loved you, and have always wished that you should know it. But you changed to me a little, shortly before you left home.“ ---
„Forgive me, pity me, help me! Have compassion on my great need, and let me lay this head upon a loving heart!“³⁵

In David Copperfield the other person experiencing this bad feeling is Rosa Dartle. Though she creates the impression of distinguished, smart, calm woman, when she finds out that Steerforth, whom she has secretly loved, escaped with beautiful Emily, she is furious with jealousy and envy. When she meets the poor girl being deserted by her lover, Rosa changes into cruel, sadistic, heartless evil creature filled with hatred.

“The resolute and unrelenting hatred of her tone, its cold stern sharpness, and its mastered rage, presented her before me, as if I had seen her standing in the light. I saw the flashing black eyes, and the passion-wasted figure; and I saw the scar, with its white track cutting through her lips, quivering and throbbing as she spoke. --- Rosa Dartle sat looking down upon her, as inflexible as a figure of brass. Her lips were tightly compressed, as if she knew that she must keep a strong constraint upon herself – I write what I sincerely believe – or she would be tempted to strike the beautiful form with her foot.“³⁶

The rest of the characters mentioned in the evaluation tables also belong to haters. However, for them it is just part of their nature. It is difficult to say whether they dislike people for the way they have been raised or as the consequences of the time. There is no further information which would enlighten the situation and support one presumption or the other.

Mrs Mann simply hates children. She does not like them and to her they just embody an unpleasent and really an unwanted bonus to money she receives from the town.

Mrs Sowerberry the wife of Oliver's first employer has the same attitude. She hates the way they live and everything about it. She hopes to have enough money to

35 DICKENS, Ch. *Hard Times*. London: 1985. p. 247-248.

36 DICKENS, Ch. *David Copperfield*. London: 1991. p. 718, 720.

leave the dirty town and live a comfortable with no restrictions whatsoever.

Also Noah Claypole fits into this group perfectly. Maybe his unhappy childhood in poverty has influenced him to hate everybody or he was born with the wicked nature already.

Mr Murdstone might seem as an exception. He is educated, has a lucrative job, handsome yet his cold heart not capable of love leaves him strict and manipulative. Everything that does not fit into his plans is a reason for him to hate. David's mere existence is the perfect example for Mr Murdstone would take any necessary action to first divide David from his mother and then get rid of the little boy for good in some far-away factory.

5.3.4 Aggression

Aggression can be spoken or physical behaviour which is threatening or involves harm to someone or something. Moreover, the person behaves in an angry and violent way towards other people. Unlike envy, greed or hatred, this strong feeling and by some people even the urge, is present in nature as well where it is used to “intimidate or injure another organism usually for the purposes of gaining a territory, a mate or food.”³⁷ By human beings it may arise “from innate drives and/or a response to frustration“³⁸.

Violence plays important part especially in the novels *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* and is specifically used to appeal to readers. Dickens saw the most intensive impact on public in reference to acts of brutality related to children.

A low intelligence as the source of aggression is well reflected in Mr Bumble. He does not actually have any reason to hit Oliver or any other child but for him it is the easiest way of solving any kind of problem without thinking. Furthermore it gives him the false feeling of power and superiority therefore he often strikes those in weaker position.

The same situation is pictured in the character of Mr Creacle. His beating pupils on regular basis is just a desire to feel powerful moreover it is an outcome of the

³⁷ <http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Aggressivity> [cit. 2010-03-20].

³⁸ <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Aggressivity> [cit. 2010-03-20].

frustration with his own life.

For Fagin, Sikes, Monks and Noah Claypole violence is an integral part of existence. They all use it as a mighty weapon against any kind of revolt as well as a tool to help them to reach what they want. The environment they live in, does not supply them with any other option than to act this way. A beautiful example that in such surroundings a person of gentle and honest behaviour would not survive, is when Oliver's is almost convicted of a crime he did not commit. In addition all of these men of wicked nature have actually a personal pleasure from every harm they cause which makes them true evil characters.

Mr Murdstone possesses also an aggressive nature, though in his case he acts violently only towards little David. As mentioned in chapter 5.4.3 he hates the little boy for he stands in his way. This suppressed feeling is released at the first convenient occasion and for an act of rather no importance David is disproportionately physically punished.

The case of Thomas Grandgrind jr. is slightly different as he does not really have a violent nature. His act of aggression meant for him only the last possible thing to do to hide his crime. That is why he pushed poor Stephen into the gorge. However, unlike all other characters appearing in this category, he suffered from a feeling of guilt, bad conscience and was really sorry for what he had done.

The table shows that most of the violence is caused by men yet, there is an exception of Mrs Mann, Mrs Sowerberry and Miss Dartle. Dickens meant to shock readers that even women who are naturally supposed to feel protective over children, can produce same level of cruelty and violence as any other man.

All of the ladies have one thing in common – they behave aggressively as a result of their inner frustrations. Mrs Mann simply hates children therefore by hitting them she releases the anger. Mrs Sowerberry's looks for an excuse to express the suppressed unhappiness, boredom and anger with her own life and when she sees it, she becomes aggressive and mean. Miss Dartle is not really a violent person but hatred towards Emily brings to light the worst feelings she has and this rage changes her personality completely.

5.3.5 Lack of feelings

As evident from the table there together 19 characters whereas 18 of them suffer from lack of feelings. Lack of feelings is however only a general term because for each person it means something different. Charles Dickens intentionally incorporated this feature as the most common and probably one of the most dangerous products of capitalism.

The *general ignorance* was one of the numerous products of that time and is evident especially in *Oliver Twist*. Poor people are taken as useless objects no matter how or whether they live. This is nicely seen within a dialogue of Mrs Mann and the parish beadle, Mr Bumble, who is supposed to go to London to escort two ill paupers:

„You're going by coach, sir? I thought it was always usual to send them paupers in carts.“
„That's when they're ill, Mrs. Mann,“ say the beadle. --- „The opposition coach contracts for these two; and takes them cheap,“ said Mr. Bumble. „They are both in a very low state, and we find it would come two pound cheaper to move 'em than to bury 'em – that is, if we can throw 'em upon another parish, which I think we shall be able to do, if they don't die upon the road to spite us. Ha!ha!ha!“³⁹

The similar idea follows whole story not only in *Oliver Twist* but also in *David Copperfield* and *Hard Times*. Whether at courts, police stations, factories or even at schools nobody cares unless the person is rich. In exactly this apathic superficial approach of the society the author sees the evil.

All of the characters, except for Louisa Grandgrind, are influenced by their own *selfishness* and *ignorance* towards other people's feelings.

This is typical for already mentioned Mr Bumble and Mrs Mann who used their position together with Mr Limbkins and Mr Creacle to oppress and take advantage of people and/or children who have no other option left than to give their lives into their hands.

In cases of Mr Murdstone, Mrs Murdstone, Steerforth and Mrs Sparsit reaches an exceeding level their selfishness.

39 DICKENS, Ch. *Oliver Twist*. London: 1992. p. 120.

Both siblings follow only their plans to reach profits. They do not mind separating child from his mother or even being a cause of David's mother's death. To send twelve years old boy to work in factory and let him lead the life in poverty do not mean anything to them.

Mr James Steerforth who occurs as a good friend shows his true nature of an selfish, arrogant, ruthless person when to satisfy his egoistic needs he seduces an innocent Emily, escapes with her and then deserves poor girl neither caring much of her destiny nor taking any responsibility for what he had done.

Very similar is the story of Mrs Sparsit and Tom Grandgrind jr. Sure she is self-centred, gossips a lot but until the moment she starts to worry of her position she becomes determined to ruin Louisa's reputation for no good but hers.

Young Thomas under the strange care of his father has learnt how to be interested only in himself using his sister and even innocent worker Stephen to his own benefit. He does not think what the consequences for them might be as long as he gets what he wants.

(Sample how Tom uses Louisa to manipulate Mr Bounderby) „I don't mind that. I shall very well know how to manage and smoothe old Bounderby!“
„What is your great mode of smoothing and managing, Tom? /Louisa/
„Oh!“ said Tom --- „It's you. You are his little pet, you are his favourite; he'll do anything for you. When he says to me what I don't like, I shall say to him: „My sister Loo will be hurt and disappointed, Mr Bounderby. She always used to tell me she was sure you would be easier with me than this.“ That'll bring him about, or nothing will.“⁴⁰

For Fagin, Bill Sikes, Monks, Uriah Heep and Noah Claypole is the situation alike. They do not care about anybody else but themselves. They lack any kind of sympathy with their wictims, ignore needs of other people and without even slight feeling of guilt they arrogantly follow their urges.

Mr Grandgrind and Mr Bounderby, both represent more ignorance to feelings than selfishness. Mr Grandgrind with his blind belief in utilitarianistic ideology particularly its omitting emotions, ruins lives of his children for he ignores any other approach. The irony of the story is that when he asks for a favour a young man whom he was proud of for being a perfect student and later on a product of utilitarianism,

40 DICKENS, Ch. *Hard Times*. London: 1985. p. 92-93.

Bitzer grew up in a selfish, greedy person with no compassion or any other kind of warm feelings.

„Bitzer,“ said Mr Grandgrind, broken down, and miserably submissive to him, „have you a heart?“

„The circulatio, sir,“ returned Bitzer, smiling at the oddity of the question, „couldn't be carried on without one. No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can no doubt that I have a heart.“

„Is it accessible,“ cried Mr Grandgrind, „to any compassionate influence?“

„It is accessible to Reason, sir,“ returned the excellent young man. „And to nothing else.“⁴¹

Mr Bounderby on the other hand represents the ignorance towards needs of workers in factories. With his arrogant attitude and no education he perceives them as anonymous crowd wanting more than it deserves. He does not make any effort to find the truth about their working and living and remains strict and deaf to their appeals.

The last character from the table is Miss Dartle. However, she can not be really considered as selfish person as she is normally a nice person. Nevertheless her weak point – the secret love to Steerforth, makes her cruel, mean, brutal and with no feeling *of compassion, sympathy and understanding* towards Emily at all.

41 DICKENS, Ch. *Hard Times*. London: 1985. p. 302-303.

5.4 Physical appearance of evil characters

This last subchapter is dedicated to the analysis of physical appearance of the characters. However, to make a profound analysis of physiognomy of each evil person in all three novels would be rather extensive, therefore the focus is put mainly on most striking aspects.

Dickens' tendencies in visualization of such characters can be divided into three different approaches:

4. it is **directly stated** already in the description of the character. The author uses word expressions that say that the person is bad. The example would be Fagin who is seen as "old shrivelled Jew, whose villanous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair."⁴²
5. readers are given **hints** when portraiting resemblance of evil creatures, according to which can be presumed that the character is going to be bad. This effect is reached thanks to words of negative meaning such as in the case of Uriah Heep.

Despite the fact that he acts as David's friend at the beginning, the way Dickens pictures him –

"a red haired person --- whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows, and no eyelashes, an eyes of red-brown, so unsheltered and unshaded, that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony;"⁴³

indicates that there is something dark about him. Particularly the reference to his eyes always watching never resting evoke the imagine of a devil who never sleeps waiting for his chance. Furthermore all notices in the text concerning his hands describe it as cruel-looking, long, lank, skeleton.

6. the male evil characters are **really good looking** yet behind that nice appearance there is no capability of love. It is namely James Steerforth, Mr Murdstone, and Mr Thomas Grandgrind jr.

42 DICKENS, Ch. *Oliver Twist*. London: 1992. p. 56.

43 DICKENS, Ch. *David Copperfield*. London: 1991. p.219.

6. Conclusion

To conclude this bachelor paper first the summary of the analysis results has to be presented

The work is concerned about Charles Dickens, a significant representant of British literary dirrection of the second half of the 19th century, the critical realism. His realistic depiction of this time period as well criticism of the society focusing on the influence of capitalism which started to develop and had an obvious impact on people's lives, meant a great benefit. The picture of Victorian era is important not only for its true historical observation which tells us about life of different social layers, but also the way the writer mirrors events and issues had built a public consciousness about what is morally wrong and right.

The aim of this paper was to find whether there are any features that appear repeatedly in the way Charles Dickens depicts evil in his stories. The research was done on three novels written at different time points of the Dickens' career; to be specific Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Hard Times. Although they do not have the same plots and also the main criticism differs, there are many ideas that occur in these novels since Dickens based his narrations on his own life experience to reflect the time period as it really was from a view of a real person.

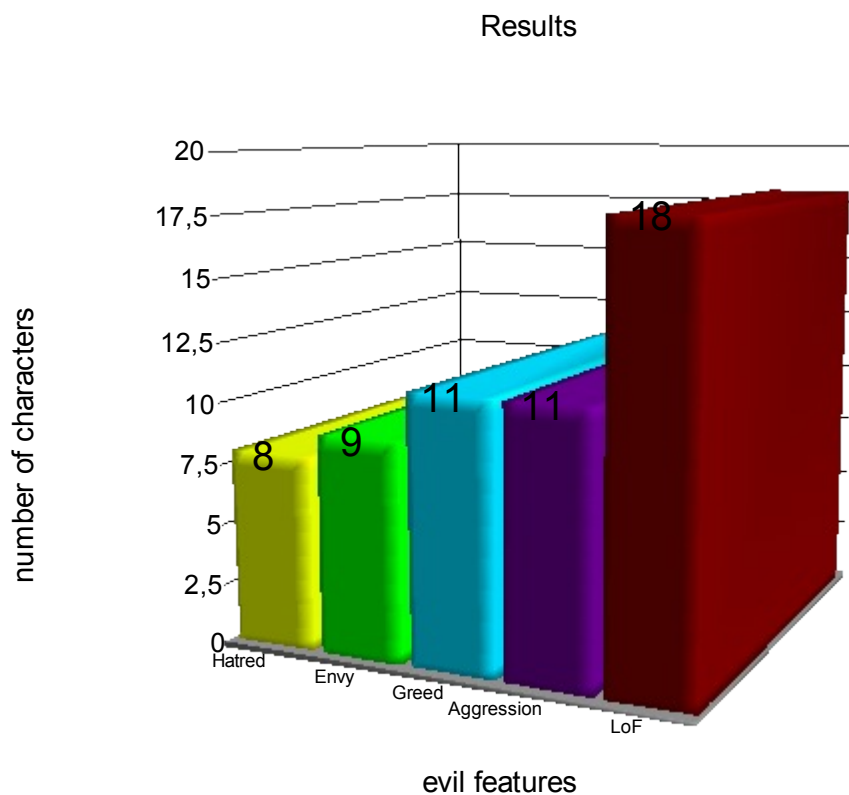
The analysis itself is concerned about detecting any similarities in the approach the writer had chosen to characterise evil. For the research only the relevant people were selected. Those whose presence and behaviour brought significant evil benefit to the story therefore there were not all creatures appearing in the books.

Another criterion of including certain person to the research was whether they could be easily defined as morally wrong. This question was related particularly to characters of "fallen" women and victims of seduction. Despite the fact that common attitude of Victorian society would picture them as evil, Dickens had a contrary opinion about their existence therefore their deeds were not perceived as acts of evil but results of personal weakness.

Similar case are characters of pickpockets. Though the writer meant to show them in the worst light to prevent the society to feel any sympathy with these criminals in the first

place, some of the characters did not show such moral rottenness as they should therefore for lack of true evil features they have been omitted from the analysis as well.

The analysis examined 19 characters who were placed into the tables according to the novel they are related to. The results show that the number of males who possess bad nature was higher (13) than the number of females (6). Furthermore, the most common evil feature occurring in these novels is a *lack of feelings* indentified at 18 people. The second position in the frequency of appearing takes *greed* and *aggression* – *both* identified at 11 characters, on the third place there is *envy* with 9 and the last is *hatred* found by 8 persons.



The novels show also other similarities related to the way Dickens describes physical appearance of evil characters. The analysis found three different approaches. The writer either *dirrectly states* that the person is bad or he uses specific negative words as *hints* for readers that a character represents evil and the last case are handsome creatures who are not really pictured as vicious, however, inside they are hiding a rotten nature.

To conclude, as evident from the results, obviously there are alike tendencies in depicting evil not only in nature of the characters but also in their resemblance. Furthermore, according to Dickens lack of feelings was the most dangerous product of capitalism and he regularly criticised its influence in his works. He saw people's ignorance towards feelings and needs of other human beings as a cause of several injustice leading to the vicious circle. Therefore he used his books and his public readings as well as exemplary way of life, as an efficient way how to change people's minds, make them look around themselves and think of the consequences of their actions, to open them to new ideas; all this for his country becoming a better place.

7. Resumé

Charles Dickens zastává významné místo v historii světové literatury. Jeho neobyčejný talent zobrazovat ve svých vyprávěních atmosféru Viktoriánské Anglie se rovnal snad jen jeho snaze o zlepšení poměrů v rodné zemi. Ve svých dílech často kritizoval negativní dopady kapitalismu na životy lidí, rovněž poukazoval na tehdejší nerovnosti v sociálním systému a neopomenul komentovat ani ostatní podstatné problémy té doby.

Jako silně morálně založený člověk věřil, že jeho knihy mohou pozitivně ovlivnit názory široké veřejnosti. U svých čtenářů se proto snažil apelovat nejen na jejich citovou stránku ale především na jejich rozum. Jeho úspěch zaručovaly mimo poutavé dějové linie rovněž postavy, které byly důkladně propracovány tak, aby kromě dokreslování příběhů, také sloužily jako nositelé morálního poselství vloženého autorem do jednotlivých vyprávěních. K tomu, aby výsledek byl co nejefektivnější, používal Dickens určité nástroje, k nimž patřil konflikt dobra a zla.

Zlo jako takové hraje v jeho knihách podstatnou roli, a tudíž se tato práce zabývá právě tímto aspektem. Analýzou třech románů z různých tvůrčích období Charlese Dickense se snaží potvrdit či vyvrátit hypotézu, že existují jisté tendence čili stereotypy v zobrazování zla v těchto dílech, a nadto se zaměří na tyto jednotlivé prvky, jimiž je tohoto dosaženo.

Tato práce je rozdělena do tří stěžejních částí.

Část první obsahuje stručnou charakteristiku Viktoriánské éry a postavu Charlese Dickense. Popisuje dobu, kdy autor žil, k nastínění atmosféry, do níž jsou jeho romány zasazeny, obzvláště proto, že jeho díla jsou známa pro své realistické zobrazení života a společnosti druhé poloviny 19. století.

První kapitola představuje Velkou Británii z historického hlediska, přičemž si všímá hlavních pokroků a vynálezů na poli vědy a techniky, které pak měly vliv na růst industrializace. Dále pak jsou zmíněny nejvýznamnější objevy vedoucí ke zlepšení životní úrovně obyvatelstva, základy nových teorií Utilitarismu, Darwinismu, chartismu a stav společnosti, jakož i založení nové nauky o ní. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována

novému směru v oblasti literatury nazývanému kritický realismus. Jelikož Charles Dickens patří mezi autory ovlivněné tímto novým stylem, jsou v obecné rovině popsány typické prvky a charakter realismu včetně dalších významných zástupců. Rovněž je uvedena a charakterizována jedna jeho větev – sociální realismus, jehož vliv je tak patrný právě u Dickense.

Je známo, že se tento spisovatel nechal ve svých dílech bohatě inspirovat svým vlastním životem. Mnoho děl obsahuje jeho zážitky a zkušenosti umně transformované do jednotlivých příběhů. Proto další kapitolu v první části tvoří stručná biografie tohoto autora zaměřená na situace z jeho života, které se staly pojítkem mezi ním a jeho knihami. Následuje rozbor jeho děl obzvláště románů, přičemž jsou vyzdvíženy pouze hlavní myšlenky každého z nich, aby demonstrovaly nejen spojení mezi Dickensem a kritickým realismem ale také osvětlení nejčastějších problémů doby, které byly podrobeny jeho kritice.

Druhá tématická část této práce se zabývá *etikou*. Uvádí základní definici a nahlíží na její nové pojetí v druhé polovině 19. století, kdy ji do značné míry ovlivnil nový filozofický směr *Utilitarismus*. Jsou zde představeny hlavní myšlenky této ideologie k bližšímu uvedení do problematiky, poněvadž Dickens tento nový přístup k morálním zásadám tvrdě odsuzoval ve svých dílech. Nechybí ani spisovatelova postava zachycená z hlediska etického chování, jelikož Dickens byl ve své době pokládán za jakýsi vzor v tomto ohledu.

Zlu je pak věnována samostatná kapitola. Kromě definice a základních informací se zde řeší především druhy zla, jak jsou znázorněny v Dickensnových dílech. Za použití termínů *viditelné* a *neviditelné zlo* se rozlišují jejich vlastnosti stejně jako použití.

Ve třetí části je pak zahrnuta samotná analýza. V první kapitole se romány *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Zlé časy* prochází obsahovou analýzou. Jejich dějové linie jsou ve zkratce popsány, aby uvedly spojení mezi analyzovanými postavami a jejich vlivem na hlavní hrdiny. Mimo obsah příběhů jsou uvedeny rovněž hlavní myšlenky všech tří románů, kterými byla kritika rozličných problémů jako sociální nerovnost, nedostatečný právní a vzdělávací systém, prudérní konvence a jiné.

Následuje kapitola věnovaná detekci zla ve vybraných dílech. Ta se zabývá aplikací teorie o viditelném a neviditelném zlu (uvedené v kapitole Evil) na praktických příkladech vybraných románových děl. Po objasnění, o který druh se v daném příběhu jedná, pak navazuje další rozbor stanovující, zda tento konflikt mezi hrdinou a jeho fyzickým protějškem se dá označit za hlavní nebo vedlejší.

Nejrozsáhlejší kapitolou je pak definice jednotlivých charakterů zla, kteréžto se ve vybraných Dickensových dílech podle výsledků výzkumu objevují nejčastěji.

Tato analýza byla provedena na 19 postavách, které splňovaly kritéria relevance, což znamená, že ve vyhodnocení nefigurují všechny osoby objevující se v knihách. Mezi takovými eliminovanými jsou jedinci, kteří neprokazují žádné nebo minimum negativních vlastností jako například Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Sissy Jupe a další. Rovněž postavy, byť nemorálního chování, jejichž existence však nebyla příliš přínosná pro samotný děj a figurují zde spíše pro dokreslení jako například agresivní tulák, kterého potká na své pouti za domovem David Copperfield.

Dále lidé, o kterýchžto mravní zkaženosti autor nebyl zcela přesvědčen či ji shledával nedostatečnou jako u “padlých“ žen, obětí svodu či drobných zlodějíčků.

Samotný výzkum pak probíhal čárkovací metodou, kdy do tabulek byly vedle osob zaznamenány jednotlivé druhy zla, u nich se vyskytujících, přičemž vyšlo pět nejčastějších. Je to *nedostatek citu* detekován u 18 osob, 11 postav projevovalo *agresi i chamtivost*, *závist* pohlcovala 9 lidí a na poslední pozici se umístila *nenávist*, kterou pocítovalo 8 jedinců.

Jelikož ne u všech zkoumaných se tyto aspekty zla projevovaly stejně, tak následují kapitoly věnované těmto dílčím vlastnostem. V nich se, mimo vysvětlení a základních definic, nachází taktéž příklady vybrané přímo z každého souvisejícího románu, aby lépe demonstrovaly relevanci postav začleněných do výzkumu.

Z analýzy pak mimo číselných výsledků, vzešlo i několik zajímavých poznatků.

Ve většině případů byly osoby zpodobněny jednoduše jako zlé, aniž by bylo přímo vysvětleno, proč tomu tak je. Tyto postavy se pak nevyznačovaly pouze jednou negativní vlastností, ale naopak se jich v nich skloubilo několik, což se pak u daného jedince projevilo naprosto morálně zkaženou povahou. U těchto lidí se velmi těžko dalo jednoznačně říci, zda a která vlastnost předcházela druhé. Příkladem je Uriah Heep z

Davida Copperfielda nebo Monks v knize Oliver Twist.

Na druhou stranu analýza ukázala, že některé postavy bylo komplikované zařadit do skupiny zlých. Týkalo se to obzvláště těch lidí, kteří spadají mezi povahově složitější. Takovéto osoby nejednají jednoznačně zle, dokonce se mohou tvářit přátelsky, přesto se v průběhu příběhu projeví jejich opravdové já a mnohdy způsobují větší škody než postavy, u nichž je čtenáři jejich nebezpečná povaha známa již od začátku. Příkladem je pan James Steerforth či mladý pán Thomas Grandgrind.

Je nutno podotknout, že totéž platilo i v opačném případě. Kdy se člověk zdál na první pohled jako negativní, ale s postupem děje se obrátil na správnou stranu, což se týká například pana Grandgrinda.

Ačkoli mezi všemi zlými vlastnostmi se nedostatek citu jevil jako nejméně zásadní, pro Dickense znamenal nejnebezpečnější důsledek kapitalismu, a proto jej vložil do povah svých postav nejčastěji. Nedostatečné citění vůči jiným lidským bytostem hraničící s obecnou ignorancí vnímal jako hlavního neviditelného nepřítele doby. Byť se všechny analyzované knihy liší svými ději, tato vlastnost se objevuje v každé z nich. Ovšemže má rozličnou podobu, což je vidět v kapitole věnované tomuto tématu, ale ať je to extrémní sobectví, nedostatek soucitu, povrchnost, pokrytectví či absence schopnosti vcítit se do druhých, pokaždé to má ničující dopad na lidský život.

Při zkoumání, zda existují nějaké důkazy o podobnostech v zobrazení zla u postav v uvedených románech, se odhalila i jistá souvislost mezi fyzickým rázem postav. Po detailnějším zkoumání bylo zjištěno, že ačkoli vzhled neeticky jednajících lidí se liší, Dickens vkládá do textu jistá vodítka pro čtenáře, díky nimž je jednodušší takovouto osobu poznat. Ve zkratce používá 3 různé přístupy – buď při popisu jednoznačně označí danou postavu za zlou, nebo za pomocí slovních prostředků naznačuje, že jedinec je zkažené povahy a poslední případ, kdy je osoba vykreslena jako fyzicky přitažlivá, ovšem uvnitř umně skrývá známky špatnosti.

Poslední kapitola této práce pak obsahuje shrnutí všech dílších částí a především výsledků analýzy, přičemž následuje seznam použité literatury a přílohy, v nichž jsou vybráni zástupci zla (Uriah Heep, Fagin, Bill Sikes, James Steerforth), kteří jsou typičtí pro každou ze tří skupin, definovaných v kapitole o fyzickém vzhledu.

Závěrem je, že původně stanovená hypotéza se analýzou ukázala jako správná a Charles Dickens jednoznačně použil ve vybraných románech opakující se tendence v povahovém i fyzickém popisu postav reprezentujících zlo. Jako největší zlo vnímal kapitalismus a jeho negativní vliv na morální stránku společnosti Viktoriánské Anglie, které se projevovalo především nezdravou touhou po penězích a po moci, vyvolávalo závist, klíčící v nenávist a všeobecný nedostatek citů. Ke zlepšení tíživé situace používal nejen svých knih a veřejných vystoupeních, kde komentoval a mnohdy kritizoval mnohá aktuální bezpráví, ale na nápravě se podílel i svým vlastním přičiněním. Zastával se sociálně slabších a svým životem a propracovanými příběhy se snažil ukázat cestu a otevřít oči prudérní společnosti.

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Appendices

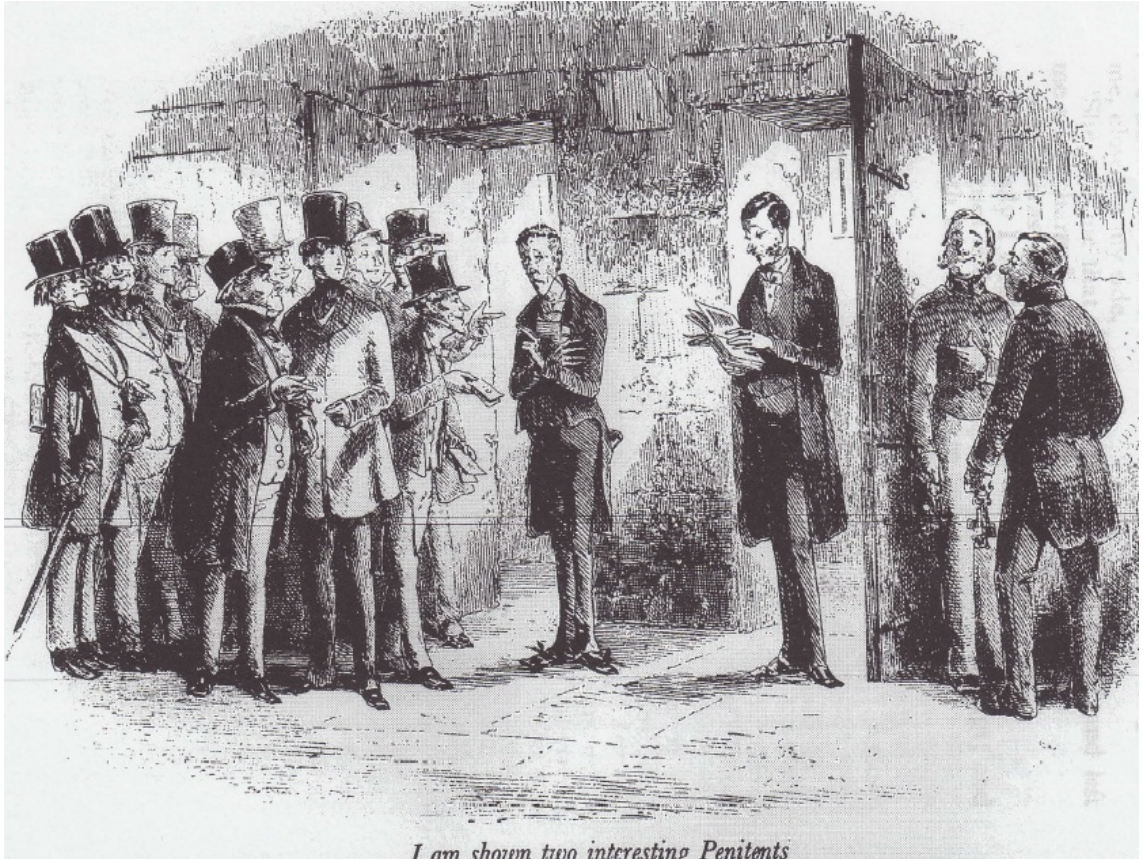
Appendix 1 – Mr James Steerfoth at haidresser



Appendix 2 – Fagin and Bill Sikes



Appendix 3 – Uriah Heep in prison



I am shown two interesting Penitents