

Social Struggle in Works of Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte,

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Deep and complex processes in society, such as the social crisis, the transformation of the social structure, political and spiritual changes, social conflicts, etc. are always taking place throughout the world. There are problems that cannot cease to excite people. The most suitable and accessible way to describe the social struggle is literature. It is the easiest way to denounce people about problems existing in society in easy, full of epithets and metaphors language. It is much more pleasant and understandable to recognize social problems through stories and novels since they are written with language that is definitely understood by every intelligent person. Literary language is rich in epithets and metaphors, and does not contain scientific terms and definitions that are usually rather complicated and cannot be understood without special education.

Writer usually uses special signs – symbols – in order to make easier understanding of their viewpoint about one or another social problem. Dickens is a writer, by the works of which we can judge fairly and accurately about the social life in England in the mid-XIX century. What is important, owing to such literary creations, we can find out not only about the official life of England and its history, not only about the parliamentary struggle and the labor movement, but also about the small struggles that are not included in the “big story” (Jonson, 2013). These are small details such as the state of the railways and water transport, the nature of exchange operations in London, prisons, hospitals and theaters, markets and places of entertainment, not to mention all kinds of restaurants, taverns, hotels of old England. The works of Dickens, as well as literary efforts of all the great realists of his generation, are like an encyclopedia of his time. He describes the different classes, characters, ages, and life of the rich and the poor; figures of physicians, lawyers, actors, representatives of the aristocracy and the gentlemen at large, poor seamstresses and secular ladies,

manufacturers and workers – such is the world of Dickens's novels (Suchoff, 1994). Every character depicted by Dickens is the symbol of English social life of that time. Despite he is representative of realism in literature, Dickens also can be considered in the field of symbolism. One of the most frequent symbols of Dickens, especially in late works like *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Our Mutual Friend*, is the home-fire (Miller, 1958). It is the symbol of hope and happy ending. It is understandable, especially taking into account the early utopian motives in his works. The hope for a good future helps characters to struggle for a better life and invigorates them.

In the novels of Charlotte Bronte, the main struggle is embodied by women fighting with the reality (Solomon, 1963). Bronte is rather romantic and realistic writer, but she also widely uses symbols in her works. The brightest example of her creation is *Jane Eyre*, which is full of symbols. The internal and social struggle is shown using fire and water. Their eternal fight gives the image of the war between Jane's (main character) passion and spirit imprisoned into the ice of religiosity and social barriers (Solomon, 1963). From the beginning of the novel, Bronte describes little girl, whose passion always should be quenched by the cold water of self-control despite the abuse of her family.

Creativity of Herman Melville affects the reader with the depth and significance. It is imbued with the spirit of uncompromising rejection of morals and mores of bourgeois America. The writer has enriched the symbolism of the American Romanticism, adding to the black raven of Edgar Allan Poe (*The Raven*) his white whale (*Moby-Dick*). If black raven is the embodiment of boundless despair, which originally reflected the tragedy of existence, the white whale Moby-Dick is an ambitious and impressive symbol of social evil, a powerful enemy who has to be fought by mankind (Suchoff, 1994). The white whale is the strongest symbol of social struggles in the novel of Melville; but he also uses such symbols as mixed crowd, being a secret message of diverse American society (*The Confidence Man*). Israel

Porter from the self-titled novel is the symbol of working people of America, who won independence, but as a reward for their patriotism and heroism received only poverty. In *Mardi*, the islands of Mardi archipelago represent the whole Earth. Hence, events happening on the pages of the novel are symbols of modern feudal-capitalistic world.

Franz Kafka, in his turn, works with space being a symbol of human freedom and abilities. For example, stairs in his works appear as the only right way to choose, but it turns into the labyrinth of stairs in the process of making decisions (*The Process*). Windows and doors are other symbols of opening the way into the future (*The Process*, *The Metamorphosis*). In *The Metamorphosis*, the opened window symbolizes the volition of deliverance in order to escape from the dull space and to see the light. Overall, the space in Kafka's works incarnates dull, small, dirty rooms and attics, which are symbols of a person living in darkness and not willing to come to know what a beautiful world surrounds him (Suchoff, 1994). Although, the person gets punishment for such indifference by turning into insect, being also the symbol of spinelessness. Kafka's characters social struggle is to find a better future, to get out of the dirty small room (*The Castle*) or at least adapt for it.

Actually, the struggle of Kafka's characters to adapt for the world, to understand it or to close inside of the tiny room is similar with the author's thought about the surrounding world. He was absolutely sure that he does not suit the world he lives in. He was an ageless teenager, being afraid of taking any responsibility. From the early childhood, he was trying to adopt everything, as well as the characters of his novels. Franz was afraid of the world, especially getting famous for his creations (Brod, 2009). Thus, he did not finish his novels. He considered himself as the lonely person and broke the engagements twice because of this persuasion. When he got ill with tuberculosis, he considered a disease as punishment for being alone. As it can be seen, one viewpoint is contradictory to another. Being afraid of the

world and loneliness does not agree with the struggle to “fit” into the world. Obviously, Kafka’s life was full of absurd and he transferred this absurd into his works.

In conclusion, it should be said that every author wrote in different genres, but they all described the struggle with old self and society in separate, powerful and inimitable manner. Realism, romanticism, existentialism and adventure fiction are, on the first glance, totally different genres, but they all are joined together with the general idea of the works – to show a reader a real life through symbols, make him/her think over the surrounding reality and open his/her eyes to the things that may not be noticed. Indeed, the styles are different, but each is ideal in its way. The author writes in a genre that is the closest to his/her own emotions and worldview. That is why every novel of every considered writer is powerful in its own way.

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