

AUSTEN'S AND DICKENS'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE REGENCY AND VICTORIAN SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Austen's and Dickens's representations of the Regency and Victorian societies in Pride and Prejudice and Emma and Hard Times and Great Expectations. A survey of the historical, social, political and economic backgrounds on the writings of these two British authors reveals that their fictional societies are not romanticised or idealised but they rather reflect on the socio-cultural realities of the Regency and Victorian eras. Also, the article shows that social discrimination, women's revolt and the alienation of individuals in the four above-mentioned texts are occasioned by three ideologies which include the patriarchal ideology, the utilitarian ideology and the aristocratic ideology and that the two authors plead for an alternative capitalistic and democratic society, of love, virtue and hard work, which promotes social mobility, an intermingling of different social classes and social cohesion.

The analysis of the texts under study is based on the perspectives of New historicism and psychoanalysis which are the critical tools we use in our analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the work under study. It is common knowledge that no writer writes in a vacuum. Every literary work is a reproduction or representation of the realities of the society from which the writer emanates. In other words, works of literature are their writers' interpretation of their societies, their own lives and consciousnesses which ever underlie the stories they are said to be writing imaginatively. It is from this perspective that we see the intersection between New Historicism and psychoanalysis.

Keywords: Regency society, Victorian society, Patriarchy, Utilitarianism, Aristocracy

RESUME

Cet article analyse la représentation de la société anglaise pendant la Régence et l'époque Victorienne dans Pride and Prejudice et Emma de Jane Austen, Hard Times et Great expectations de Charles Dickens. Une analyse des contextes historiques, sociaux, politiques et économiques des écrits de ces deux auteurs britanniques révèle que leurs sociétés romanesques ne sont pas idéalisées mais elles reflètent plutôt les réalités socioculturelles de la Régence et de l'époque Victorienne. Aussi, l'article montre que la discrimination sociale, la révolte des femmes et l'aliénation des individus, dans les quatre romans du corpus, sont favorisées par des idéologies qui incluent le patriarcat, l'utilitarisme et l'aristocratie et que les deux auteurs plaident pour une société capitaliste et démocratique alternative caractérisée par l'amour, la vertu et le travail qui sont des valeurs qui favorisent l'ascension sociale, l'entremêlement des différentes classes et la cohésion sociale.

L'analyse des romans du corpus est basée sur la nouvelle critique historique et la méthode psychanalytique qui sont les moyens critiques utilisés pour interpréter et évaluer cette étude. D'une manière générale, il est admis qu'un écrivain ne s'inspire pas du vide. Toute œuvre littéraire est une reproduction ou représentation des réalités de la société de l'écrivain. En d'autres termes, les œuvres littéraires sont les interprétations des sociétés des écrivains, de leurs propres vies et leurs consciences qui sous-tendent les histoires écrites d'une manière imaginaire. C'est de cette perspective que nous pouvons voir la relation qui existe entre la nouvelle critique historique et la psychanalyse.

Mots-clés: Société de la Régence, société Victorienne, patriarcat, utilitarisme, aristocratie.

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INTRODUCTION

An analysis of Austen's and Dickens's representations of the Regency and Victorian societies in Pride and Prejudice and Emma and Hard Times and Great Expectations reveals that both authors do not romanticize or idealise their respective societies in the above-mentioned texts but they rather reproduce them realistically. Also, it is noted that the depicted societies in the four texts operate on the basis of three ideologies which include the patriarchal ideology, the utilitarian ideology and the aristocratic ideology. Moreover, this article shows that both authors' social consciousnesses plead for an alternative society based on social justice and social cohesion.

The analysis of the texts under study is based on the perspective of New historicism and psychoanalysis. Works of literature are their writers' interpretation of their societies and their own lives and consciousnesses which ever underlie the stories they are said to be writing imaginatively. It is from this perspective that we see the intersection between New Historicism and psychoanalysis.

John Peck and Martin Coyle in Literary Terms and Criticism define New historicism as a term, which "refers to a revived interest initially [...] in looking at literary works in their historical and political contents" (198). To this effect literature cannot be separated from the history of the society the writer is writing from/about. Literature is not a faithful anthropological documentation of society; it however represents society from the writer's point of view, blending history and fiction. As such, this theory analysis is not only based on the texts but also on what exists outside the texts. That is, the authors of the works under study are to an extent

inspired or influenced by the socio-political, cultural and historical realities of nineteenth century British society.

1- Industrial Revolution and changes in the Regency and Victorian class structures.

Before the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the economy of Regency and Victorian societies was based on land or agriculture and landowners and aristocrats were the most important social groups which had wealth and power in society. The industrial Revolution occasioned the development of new commercial activities such as trade and industry. Families from poor social background engaged in trade and earned lots of money which enabled them to climb up the social ladder and better their social status. They identified themselves with the landed aristocracy by buying houses and estates in the countryside, which also differentiated them from the working class or the poor. These newly rich members of the middle class, called landed gentry, lacked hereditary titles but claimed that their wealth and possessions made them equal to the traditional titled aristocrats or landowners who were looking down upon them. There was social tension between the old landowners and the “nouveaux riches” or bourgeoisie members whose wealth originated from trade. Landowners neglected those who had earned their wealth from business. Political necessity forced the older aristocracy to associate with the “nouveaux riches”, which social fusion gave birth to the ‘the polite society’, which social group had the privilege of social mobility (Davidoff and Hall 13).

2- Women, Patriarchy, Property Rights and Education in the Regency and Victorian Societies.

The scientific, social and economic progress during the Regency and Victorian periods did not affect people's views about the different roles of men and women in society. People maintained their fixed idea that men were able to improve their social conditions through hard work and women's social standing was static and their roles restricted to domesticity. As a result, the cult of domesticity pervaded the different classes in the Regency and Victorian society where Patriarchy also marginalized women from property ownership through the law of primogeniture and entailment. By primogeniture, the first son inherited the estate or property as a whole, which property was not to be divided among all the children. By entailment, the property or estate must be inherited by the nearest .relative in default of a direct heir (Kelly 252).

Women's education was different from that of men as they were considered irrational and trained in a specific type of education known as "accomplishments". An accomplished woman was not a learned woman because analytical discourses, sciences, mathematics and controversial writings were excluded from female education. These subjects were considered proper for male education and limited only to men (Kelly 258).

Jean Jacques Rousseau's patriarchal discourse in Emile or on Education (1762) encourages accomplishment education, in the Regency and Victorian societies, by arguing that women's domestic role in society is the outcome of natural law. Rousseau also claims that women must be taught from their childhood how to please men and make them feel comfortable at home. John Gregory in A Father's Legacy to his Daughters (1774) and James Fordyce in Sermons to Young Women (1776) corroborate Rousseau's discourse. Gregory states that women should show gratitude to men who select them as wives. Further, Fordyce advises them to develop qualities such as tenderness and submissiveness and openly show their dependence on men. However, Wollstonecraft in The Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) and Hannah More in Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799) ridicule the poor training in accomplishments by arguing that such training is meaningless for women as it only teach them how to catch a husband or work as a governess (Todd 24). Mary Wollstonecraft's novels Mary and Maria and The Wrongs of Woman advocate a radical change or a woman's complete autonomy from men.

The ideal wife in the Regency and Victorian societies was seen as the "Angel in the House", a woman who has a sense of duty to her husband, family and home. Besides, she was also submissive or dependent on her husband and relied on him for her happiness or survival. Independence was not expected from women and such an attitude was disapproved of and was seen as nothing but a revolt against the social order or patriarchy.

3- Self-interest or utilitarianism in the Regency and Victorian societies

The sense of self interest or utilitarianism was deeply rooted in the psychology of individuals in the Regency and Victorian societies. Acquisition of wealth was such a haunting phenomenon that people had no other thoughts, but those of material acquisition. This desire to possess or acquire wealth alienated man from his community and even in extreme cases from himself. The materialistic orientation in the Regency and Victorian societies was solidified by the ideology of utilitarianism, which ideology was propounded by Jeremy Bentham and developed by other

thinkers like James Mills. Bentham argues in his major work, The Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789) that selfishness is needed in order to increase wealth, eradicate poverty and brings about peace and harmony in society. Utilitarianism acknowledges the importance of the individual and claims that the interest of the community was the sum of the selfish interests of all individuals who lived within it and an individual is only interested in his selfish interest therefore he or she should be left to pursue it so long as it contributed to the happiness of the majority. Bentham's ideology also led to the use of statistics and the application of statistical methods to human affairs. (Meacham et al 760).

4- ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4-1. Self- esteem and independence

In Pride and Prejudice and Emma and Hard Times and Great Expectations, Austen's and Dickens's texts show how some female characters articulate their self-esteem and spirit of independence in reaction against the oppressive forces of patriarchy.

In Pride and Prejudice, Austen, in the same vein like Wollstonecraft and Hannah More, stands against the accomplishment education through Elizabeth's self-esteem and spirit of independence. Elizabeth is contrasted to the Bingley sisters who comply with accomplishment education in order to increase their chance of marriage. Unlike the Bingley sisters who are passive, Elizabeth asserts herself boldly by showing an independent attitude with regard to the issue of the accomplished Lady.

The Bingley sisters dislike Elizabeth for not conforming to the accomplishment education as she came on foot to Netherfield to wait on Jane who was suffering from cold. She reached Netherfield "crossing field after field", which was a violation of decorum and the convention of accomplishment and class distinction (Austen 79). Caroline Bingley considered Elizabeth's attitude "an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum" (ibid). Mrs Hurst abused her as "an excellent walker" (Austen 81).

In Emma, Austen also expresses her feminine consciousness through Emma who shows little concern about women's social expectations as determined by patriarchy. Emma is depicted as being financially independent in contrast to other women such as the Bates or Mrs Weston whose life entirely depends on men. Emma's wealth and self-esteem make her an essentially independent person. Out of self-esteem, she can accept or turn down any marriage proposal. Emma's self-esteem is shown through her determination to be above all her acquaintances,

including men, which indicates that Austen used Emma to deconstruct the gender structure of the Regency in order to claim equality between the sexes.

In the Regency, It was expected that women were to marry and be entirely in the charge of men but Emma rejects this belief in the following terms “I am not only going to be married at present but have very little intention of ever marrying at all” (Austen 79). Emma considers that she is autonomous like men; as a result she doesn't need a man for protection or wealth. In terms of reply to Emma's feminist view Harriet says, “‘Dear me! - it is so odd to hear a woman talk so!’” (Austen 80). Harriet thought that all that Emma was saying did not conform to the gender expectations of women in the Regency.

Unlike Mary Wollstonecraft, Austen does not encourage divorce or a woman's complete autonomy in her texts. She thinks, like Rousseau, that the role of women is childbearing, children's upbringing and cooking while the role of men is economic support. These two roles are complementary and have beneficial consequences for the family. A radical change or autonomy of women can bring about widespread disruption in the family and society as a whole. Because of her wealth, Emma claims that she is not interested in marriage but Austen causes her to change her mind and eventually gets married to Mr. Knightley after realizing that a woman is incomplete without a man in her life and that even though a woman is financially independent she is supposed to have a family in order to live in conformity with the norms of her society.

In Hard Times, Dickens uses Mrs Stephen Blackpool to express the feminine consciousness which prevailed in Victorian society. Mrs Stephen shows a revolt against Rousseau's, Gregory's and Fordyce's patriarchal discourses about domesticity. She is not meek and submissive and does not show any sign of gratitude to Stephen for marrying her. Her self-esteem and spirit of independence cause her to challenge the Victorian patriarchal ideology which saw married women as 'Angels in the House'. Indeed, she does not provide her husband with happiness, comfort and delight at home as prescribed by the patriarchal ideology. As a drunkard she rather makes him feel uncomfortable by tormenting him like a demon in the house. She leaves him for years and comes back to ask him for money to drink. She tells him that she has a right to his bed but he does not drive her away, all that he does is to cover her with a sheet and sit up besides her the whole night. He feels very sad and he bows his head in his hands. He provides her with some money to leave him alone but she refuses and takes delight in distressing him. She even sells his possessions as he complains “I ha' gone home, many's the time and

found all vanished as I had in the world and her without a sense left to bless herself lying on bare ground” (Dickens 95).

In Great Expectations, Mrs. Joe Gargery, in the same vein like Mrs. Stephen Blackpool, illustrates feminine consciousness against patriarchy in Victorian society. She is not submissive, as required by Fordyce but rather aggressive towards her husband, Joe Gargery, since she thinks that motherhood or housewifery cannot contribute to her happiness. Mrs Joe also shows hostility when fulfilling her domestic duties. Pip mentions her violent attitude towards him and Joe Gargery in the following terms “ ‘knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I suppose that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand’ ” (Dickens 39). She consciously steps outside the prescribed role for mothers and wives. She lacks any womanly personality as her behaviour is comparable to that of a man and she performs the role of the head of the house, thus she has weakened her husband who is silent and gentle like a woman at home (‘Destructive Women Characters’. On line document).

Dickens does not appreciate Mrs. Joe Gargery’s revolt against patriarchy. He punishes her for her brutality towards men and her incompetence at household duty as she never became pregnant. Dickens uses her to draw attention to the possible result of women deviating from their traditional duties. In the same vein like Rousseau, Dickens upholds the traditional division of labour between men and women. He believes that the woman’s place is the home and her domestic responsibility is natural but not conventional. As a result, a woman’s first interest should be the running of her household or family. Dickens draws his ideal female characters on this principle. Michael Slater claims that he “naturally sees women as born nurses” (306), “a sort of natural priest, closer to God than man, and a source for him of spiritual strength and encouragement” (307). This means that for Dickens, the role of a woman as a homemaker is natural but not conventional. Biddy represents Dickens’s ideal woman. Her roles in her community are focused on domesticity. She is virtuous by taking care of Pip and Joe Gargery following the death of Mrs. Joe. She teaches both Pip and Joe to read and write which makes Pip to consider her a “blessing to the household” (Dickens 150).

4-2. Capitalistic ideology: Self interest or Utilitarianism.

Austen’s and Dickens’s representations of the Regency and Victorian societies do not only indict the patriarchal ideology but also the capitalistic ideology articulated through self interest or utilitarianism in Pride and Prejudice and Emma and Hard Times and Great Expectations.

Both Austen and Dickens, unlike Jeremy Bentham who upholds utilitarianism, show in the above mentioned texts, that utilitarianism is counter productive in love and marriage as it stifles emotion and alienates individuals.

In pride and Prejudice Austen uses Mr Collins's views of marriage and love to criticise utilitarianism. Mr. Collins considers marriage a utilitarian or business transaction. He is aware that in his society, all that a woman requires before getting married to a man is wealth and good connections but not love. With his self-assurance of his possessing a satisfactory situation in life and a good connection with Lady Catherine de Bourgh, he believes that he cannot be rejected by Elizabeth whose parents' financial situation is precarious. He introduces his marriage proposal to Elizabeth as if it were a business transaction by stressing material advantages rather than love. He explains to Elizabeth that he has come to Longbourn to find a wife and he will make amends for the entailment of the Longbourn estate so that the Bennet women can be living in it when their father dies. Mr. Collins adds that he cannot require a dowry from Elizabeth's father since he knows that he will be incapable of affording it (Austen 148). He exhibits his social assets and Elizabeth's father's critical financial situation before telling her that he loves her. As Elizabeth rejects him, he tells her that she should not expect such an advantageous marriage proposal any more "*it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you*" (*ibid*).

Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Collins's utilitarian marriage proposal is an expression of Austen's disgust for market relationships among people. She thinks that a woman must not accept a man's proposal only on the basis of utilitarianism or economic advantages but also with a view to love. That is why Elizabeth prefers to remain poor rather than rising socially through a utilitarian marriage with Mr. Collins whom she does not feel affection for.

In Hard Times, Dickens indicts the utilitarian marriage between Bounderby and Louisa. Mr. Gradgrind, Louisa's father, considers the prospect of Louisa's marriage with Bounderby an opportunity to take advantage of Bounderby's wealth. He influences Louisa to accept Bounderby's proposal so that he can advance his career as a parliamentarian. He uses a utilitarian argument based on statistics to persuade Louisa to accept Bounderby's proposal of marriage, "Louisa my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me" (Dickens 132). He goes on saying that according to statistics conducted in England and Wales, marriages of difference of age like the one between Louisa and Bounderby are suitable

ones (ibid). He reduces Louisa's emotion to statistics and does not see anything wrong with her marrying an older man than him without love.

Louisa agrees to get married to Bounderby so that her father can have all the costs he spent on her education paid back, "you abundantly repay my care. Kiss me, my dear girl" (Dickens 137). Gradgrind shows an interest in Louisa's repayment more than in her happiness as he considers her like merchandise on display. Louisa experiences a loveless marriage with Bounderby, which results in a divorce that makes Gradgrind realize that his vision of society and human relationships conceived in a purely utilitarian ideology is ineffective. He says, "the ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet [...] I must bear the responsibility of its failure." (Dickens 246). Dickens uses Gradgrind's exploitation of Louisa to denounce a society which submits non-economic values to economics. He thinks that it is erroneous to put a price on love and view money as the highest of values. It is expected that Gradgrind's moral awareness will emphasize humanistic values such as love, compassion and benevolence in order to humanize society.

4-3. Aristocratic ideology

In France, the 1789 Revolution broke out because of the rigidity of class stratification which prevented social mobility, an intermingling of the classes through marriages or social interactions among people from different social classes. To evolve, the French people were forced into overthrowing the aristocratic political power and social privileges by violence. The aristocrats were massacred and expelled from France, their land, money and titles were distributed to the new class which came to power. To avoid such a bloody revolution in England, Austen and Dickens deconstruct the aristocratic order in their texts by encouraging social mobility, either through marriage or through individual efforts, the social co-existence of the different classes and their social interactions.

In Pride and Prejudice, Austen's representation of the Regency's society indicts the aristocratic ideology as the main social forces which threaten social stability by emphasizing wealth, class, birth or blood and the aristocratic manners or way of life as the highest social values. Lady Catherine de Bourgh's social attitude towards Elizabeth Bennet is informed by the aristocratic ideology. She finds it unacceptable that her nephew, Darcy, lowers himself to plan to marry Elizabeth who is socially below their family. She pompously visits the Bennets with the sole purpose of intimidating Elizabeth into rejecting an imminent proposal from Darcy. Her behaviour confirms Wickham's poor opinion of her as "an arrogant and conceited woman"

(Austen 127). She tells Elizabeth that Darcy cannot marry “a woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world and wholly unallied to the family” (Austen 365). She adds that she and Darcy’s mother made an arrangement for Darcy and Miss de Bourgh to marry and that plan cannot fail because of Elizabeth who has no family, connections or fortune. She thinks that Pemberley, which is Darcy’s estate, will be defiled as worthless people like Lydia or Wickham, whose late father was a steward, will be going over there. Finally she advises Elizabeth to remain in her class for her own interest.

In other words, Lady Catherine’s discourse stands for the aristocratic order as she highlights her family’s wealth and noble status to show her social superiority to Elizabeth. She specifies the lineage between the Darcy and the de Bourgh’s family and their respective substantial wealth, which are powerful aristocratic features meant to impress Elizabeth and bring her into submission. Mrs. Catherine de Bourgh uses her aristocratic power to make sure that Elizabeth remains in the class in which she was brought up. She ignores the merit of individuals such as Elizabeth who lacks wealth, rank and connections; she cannot allow her nephew Darcy to marry Elizabeth, who is outside the aristocratic system but rather her daughter, Miss De Bourgh, who is from the aristocratic sphere (Romanticism@ UAB: Austen. On line document).

Austen causes the collapse of the aristocratic order or politics through the marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy, which marriage brings about Elizabeth’s social mobility. Darcy declines his aunt offer to marry her daughter, Miss de Bourgh, which indicates that Austen stands for social mobility and the intermingling of the classes through marriages. Elizabeth’s mother’s family background, which is rooted in trade, has not proved to be an obstacle to her social elevation and the society has not seen anything wrong with that marriage of unequal wealth and status.

In Emma, Austen also represents how the aristocratic ideology destabilized the Regency society through Emma’s arrogance and class consciousness. Like the Bingley sisters Emma assesses people’s worth with a view to wealth, class and aristocratic manners. She thinks herself more important than her fellow beings and feels contempt for the lower class.

Talking about Robert Martin who is a farmer, she expresses her hatred for that social class in the following term “*the yeomanry is precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do [...]*” (Austen 37). Emma’s hatred for Robert Martin leads her to tell Harriet Smith to turn down Robert Martin’s marriage proposal. In order to convince Harriet Smith, she contrasts Robert Martin to Mr. Knightley, Mr. Weston and Mr. Elton in the light of the

aristocratic ideology. She says that Robert Martin “has not such a fine air and way of walking” like Mr. Knightley and that Mr. Weston and Mr. Elton are socially superior to Robert Martin in “their manner of carrying themselves, of walking, of speaking, of being silent [...]” (Austen 40). Consequently, Emma asks Harriet Smith to turn down Robert Martin’s marriage proposal as he is merely a farmer with an “awkward look”, “abrupt manner, and the uncouthness of voice” (ibid). In the long run, Harriet Smith realizes that Emma’s aristocratic views are erroneous and she eventually gets married to Robert Martin, which marriage favours her social mobility since she was destined to become a governess. Sometimes Emma invites Robert Martin to Hartfield to socialise with him. In *Analyzing Emma’s previous aristocratic attitude towards Robert Martin*, Michael Giffin, in Jane Austen and Religion: Salvation and Society in Georgian England (2002), notes that the “social disruption that threatens to overtake Highbury is directly attributable to Emma’s behaviour, through [] her false nobility, her rudeness and snobbery (150).

Emma does not only stigmatize the lower class or farmers but also the rising mercantile class or bourgeoisie of which she is jealous. This is illustrated through her unkind attitude to the Coles who are very hard working people who have achieved success in trade and tries to socialize with the aristocratic families in Highbury. The Coles are depicted as “very good sort of people, friendly; liberal, and unpretending” (Austen 168). They regularly invite the landed aristocrats to their party, which is a good thing to reinforce harmonious relationships but Emma sees faults with it as she thinks that the Coles are members of the bourgeoisie and not the landed aristocracy so they are the wrong people to hold such a party which brings together the best and aristocratic families in Highbury (Austen 169). Emma lets the Coles understand that class distinction must be respected and not be subverted by them since their wealth proceeds from trade (ibid). However, when Emma notices that all her aristocratic acquaintances, which include Mr. Knightley, will attend the Coles’s Party she can’t but attend it too, which means that Austen stands against the social exclusion of the aristocratic ideology or politics by encouraging social mobility and social interactions among different classes. In other words, Austen uses the Coles to stand for the capitalistic and democratic order which emphasizes hard work, virtue and social mobility and she uses Emma to criticize the aristocratic order which emphasizes class and wealth and the exclusion of people from social mobility.

In Great Expectations, Dickens contrasts Joe Gargery with Drummle to criticize the meaninglessness of the materialistic way of life of the aristocracy. He shows that Joe Gargery,

the blacksmith of the village, who lacks aristocratic and refined manners and works very hard in the forge to earn a living, is worthier than Drummle who relies on his parents' wealth to live idly by wasting his time, by not doing any substantial activity to make a contribution to society. Drummle is a member of a club of gentlemen, "The Finches of the Grove" and the members of that club have expensive dinner every night and they "quarrel among themselves as much as possible after dinner, and to cause six waiters to get drunk on the stairs" (Dickens 292). Drummle is devoid of any sense of humanism and ethics. Pip explains that he is "a compound of pride, avarice, brutality and meanness" (Dickens 40).

When Pip was in London as a gentleman of fortune, he led an aristocratic way of life which consisted in wearing luxurious clothes, enjoying expensive eating and drinking like the gentlemen of "the Finches of the Grove". He associated with new friends from the aristocracy in London; he was ashamed of his origin when Joe came to visit him in unfashionable clothes and shoes with coarse manners. He lived above his means by contracting debts. When he was sick and proved to be incapable of refunding his debts, Joe came to his rescue, by nursing him and paying off his creditors.

Joe's goodness and tolerance developed in Pip a sense of guilt which made him scream "oh Joe, you break my heart! look angry at me, Joe. Strike me, Joe. Tell me of my ingratitude. Don't be so good to me" (Dickens 472). He asked God to bless Joe for his forgiveness and humility: "O God bless him! O God bless this gentle Christian man" (ibid). When Pip woke up from sleep, he discovered that Joe had gone away. He had left a note to inform Pip that he had settled his debts. Pip followed him back to the forge to ask for his forgiveness and that of Biddy. As loving people, Biddy and Joe forgave Pip, "'O dear old Pip, old chap', said Joe. 'God knows as I forgive you, if I have anything to forgive!' Amen! And God knows I do! echoed Biddy" (Ibid).

Pip understands that the aristocratic way of life which consists of living idly and wasting money on drinking and partying is economically unproductive so he embarks on business with the Clarriker Company by travelling abroad to earn a living. Pip's new activity as a businessman reveals Dickens's admiration for the capitalistic and democratic order. Also, Dickens uses Joe to cause Pip to understand that aristocracy should not be exclusively tied to class or wealth but love, virtue and hard work. The idea, upheld by the aristocrats that wealth, class and manners are all that matter in society is, according to Dickens, misleading and generates disappointment.

CONCLUSION

This article validates the assumption that the Regency and Victorian societies as depicted by Jane Austen and Charles Dickens in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* and *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations* function on the basis of three ideologies which include the patriarchy, utilitarianism and aristocracy. The article demonstrates that women's sense of self-esteem and spirit of independence cause them to revolt against the patriarchal forces for equality with men in the Regency and Victorian society. However, Austen and Dickens do not advocate women's radical autonomy but limited rights such as the choice of a partner. They think that a radical change or autonomy of women can bring about widespread disruption in society as a whole. In the same vein like Rousseau, James Fordyce and John Gregory they hold that the role of women is domesticity while the role of men is economic support. Their gender construction is based on this principle.

The article shows that in the selected texts, Austen and Dickens demonstrate that utilitarianism is counter productive in love and marriage. They reveal that marriage must result from love rather than wealth or economic advantages.

The article also discloses that Austen and Dickens undermine the aristocratic order for the capitalistic and democratic order. Both authors show that the aristocratic order, which emphasises wealth and class and social connections as the most important values in society, encourages the rigidity of class stratification and objects to social mobility, the intermingling of social classes through marriages and social interactions among people from different social classes. In contrast, Austen and Dickens show that the capitalistic or democratic order which stresses love, virtue and hard work results in social mobility, either through marriage or through individual efforts, the social co-existence of the different classes and their social interactions.

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