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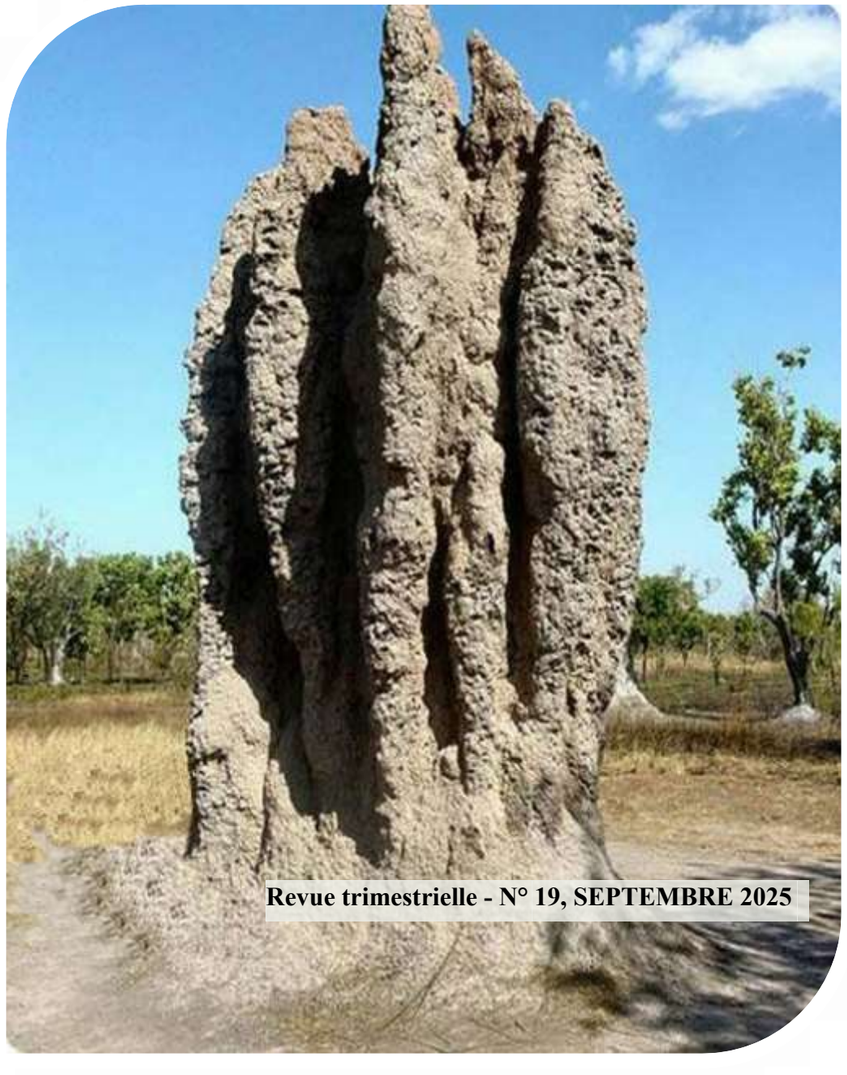

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"Dama Ninao" est une revue scientifique interdisciplinaire qui accepte et publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines. A cet effet, elle s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques. La Revue "Dama Ninao", entendu "L'Entente" en langue kabyè du Nord Togo, est créée dans l'intention de matérialiser la mondialisation ou la globalisation qui s'opère avec l'esprit d'équipe et d'échanges et la désuétude du monde autarcique. Le monde scientifique universitaire ne peut échapper à cet esprit d'équipe qui fonde un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité.

La Revue Dama Ninao nous renvoie à la Civilisation de l'Universel du poète sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor, qui prône la porosité des âmes avec l'acceptation de l'autre, de ce qu'il dispose d'utile pour mon avancement : sa civilisation, sa culture, sa langue … Elle se fonde notamment sur la philosophie de Paul Ricœur qui préconise la perception de Soi-même comme un autre. Considérer soi-même comme un autre aux yeux de l'autre, nous amènerait à faire taire nos distensions et ressentiments afin de redimensionner notre espace, reconstruire notre histoire et notre société.

La Revue Dama Ninao s'est inspirée de la nature. Des insectes en miniature nous produisent de bels chefs-d'œuvre architecturaux, conjuguent leur génie créateur et leur force dans la patience et dans la tolérance. Ils créent des œuvres monumentales qui dépassent l'entendement humain, les termitières. A cet effet, la nature semble nous parler, nous guider, nous instruire dans le silence. Seules ces créations nous interpellent sans autant faire de nous des disciples. Comme la termitière qui, pour la plupart du temps, est une composante de maillons surgissant de la même matière, la Revue Dama Ninao se veut une termitière scientifique dont les enseignants-chercheurs en sont les maillons.

Au confluent de diverses sciences, la Revue Dama Ninao se propose de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

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Dama Ninao est une revue scientifique internationale. Dans cette perspective, les textes que nous acceptons en français ou anglais sont sélectionnés par le comité scientifique et de lecture en raison de leur originalité, des intérêts qu'ils présentent aux plans africain et international et de leur rigueur scientifique. Les articles que notre revue publie doivent respecter les normes éditoriales suivantes :

La taille des articles

Volume : 10 à 15 pages ; interligne 1.5, police 12 pour le corps du texte et les courtes citations ; police 11 pour les longues citations, Times New Roman, les références des citations doivent être incorporées dans le texte. Exemple : Guy Rocher (1968, p. 29), pas de référence en foot-notes à l'exception de quelques commentaires.

Ordre logique du texte

- Un **TITRE** en caractère d'imprimerie et en gras. Le titre ne doit pas être trop long ;

- **Nom et prénom(s)** du contributeur ou des contributeurs, **nom de l'institution** d'appartenance, **adresse mail**

- Un **Résumé (Abstract)** de 8 lignes en français et anglais, en interligne simple, suivi de 6 **Mots clés** (**Key words**)

- Une **Introduction** : elle doit avoir une problématique, une méthode et une structure.

- Un **Développement** : les articulations du développement du texte doivent-être titrées comme suit :

1-Pour le **Titre** de la première section

1-1-Pour le **Titre** de la première sous-section

1-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième section

2-1-Pour le **Titre** de la première sous-section

2-2- Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième sous-section

3- Pour le **Titre** de la troisième section (si l'auteur de l'article le souhaite)

-Une **Conclusion :** elle doit être courte, précise et concise en mettant en relief l'authenticité des résultats de la recherche.

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En cas d'utilisation des tableaux, ceux-ci doivent être numérotés en chiffre romains selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Ils doivent comporter un titre précis et une source. Les schémas et illustrations doivent être numérotés en chiffres arabes selon l'ordre de leur apparition dans le texte.

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Objectifs et portée

La revue Dama Ninao, de par son nom qui signifie « entente », a pour objectifs :

- de matérialiser le monde universitaire qui est un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité ;
- de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

La revue Dama Ninao a une portée scientifique et sociale. A cet effet, elle publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines et s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques sur appel à contribution thématique (colloque) ou varia. Elle est un espace de rencontre, de construction et de reconstruction des réseaux relationnels et scientifiques.

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SOMMAIRE

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Revue Dama Ninao

THE RHETORIC OF DEHUMANISATION AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS IN CHARLES DICKENS' *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*

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Abstract: This article analyses the rhetoric of dehumanization in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, with a focus on how Dickens critiques societal structures through his use of language, character portrayal, and symbolism. The novel exposes the oppressive actions of the aristocracy as well as the violent aftermath of revolutionary movements, illustrating how both systems deprive individuals of their humanity. The study adopts a Marxist literary approach, grounded in the theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, to explore the dynamics of class, power, and economic systems. Findings based on this theoretical framework suggest that the violation of human rights by political and economic elites leads to social chaos and disharmony, while the upholding of the rule of law and the pursuit of social justice contribute to the maintenance of peace and societal stability.

Keywords: dehumanization, morality, capitalism, aristocracy, revolution, justice.

Résumé: Cet article analyse la rhétorique de la déshumanisation dans *Un conte de deux villes* de Charles Dickens, en mettant l'accent sur la manière dont Dickens critique les structures sociales à travers son utilisation du langage, la représentation des personnages et le symbolisme. Le roman dénonce les actions oppressives de l'aristocratie ainsi que les violentes conséquences des mouvements révolutionnaires, illustrant comment ces deux systèmes privent les individus de leur humanité. L'étude adopte une approche littéraire marxiste, fondée sur les théories de Karl Marx et Friedrich Engels, afin d'explorer la dynamique des classes, du pouvoir et des systèmes économiques. Les conclusions basées sur ce cadre théorique suggèrent que la violation des droits humains par les élites politiques et économiques conduit au chaos social et à la discorde, tandis que le respect de l'État de droit et la poursuite de la justice sociale contribuent au maintien de la paix et à la stabilité sociale.

Mots clés : déshumanisation, moralité, capitalisme, aristocratie, révolution, justice.

Introduction

Dehumanisation, the process by which individuals or groups are denied their humanity or regarded as less than human, has caused a lot of ink to flow. Erich Fromm (1973), defines dehumanisation as the process where individuals are alienated from their own humanity. He argues that dehumanisation is often a byproduct of societal conditions that prioritise economic and political power over human dignity. For him, "Dehumanization consists in the fact that man is no longer an end in himself but becomes a means for something else" (373). In the light of the foregoing statement, dehumanisation occurs when individuals are reduced to mere instruments for achieving external goals, be it economic gain, political control, or ideological conformity. This form of alienation strips people of their intrinsic value and dignity.

Equally, Antonio Gramsci (1971), discusses dehumanisation in terms of cultural hegemony, where the ruling class imposes its values and norms, marginalising or "dehumanising" subordinate groups by controlling their beliefs and ideas. He believes that: "The process of cultural hegemony is the process by which the ruling class convinces the dominated class to accept its own values, even to the point of dehumanizing itself in the process" (333). Gramsci's concept of dehumanisation is deeply connected to power structures. By enforcing its values, the ruling class not only exploits the lower class economically, but also undermines their humanity, limiting their ability to think and act outside of the dominant narrative.

It is a fact that, abiding by ethical values creates peace and harmony in a given society. But, the lack of respect of moral norms together with dehumanisation creates gaps between people in the society, gaps that are visible in the difficult coexistence of the poor and the rich. Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* is not only a historical narrative of the French Revolution but also a profound commentary on the dehumanising effects of power and oppression. Set against the backdrop of a society divided by class, privilege, and political turmoil, Dickens explores the systemic abuse of power by the aristocracy and the subsequent moral and physical degradation it brings to both the oppressed and the oppressors. The novel employs vivid imagery,

compelling characters, and a rich rhetorical structure to unveil the horrors of a society where human beings are stripped of their dignity and reduced to mere instruments of a brutal class system. It is important to note that in Dickens's time, rare have been those who examined the theme of poverty as a serious issue, despite its prevalence. In this line, Audrey Jaffe (1994: 264) reveals that "By the time of Dickens's story, poverty was a spectacle rather than a visible reality for many members of the middle and upper classes". Equally, John Hagan (1954: 177) delves in the same perspective when he believes that, "Dickens has been professional to focus on these dualities in the plot of all his novels opposing the world of 'respectability' and the world of ignominy; of oppressors and of oppressed; of the living and of the dead". So, these issues have been reported by Marx as a philosopher and Dickens as a novelist, where philosophy, sociology and literature zoomed on the deteriorated community.

Through the dehumanisation of characters like Dr. Manette, the harsh conditions of the French Revolution, and the rhetoric of figures like Madame Defarge and the revolutionaries, Dickens illustrates how power, when unchecked, leads to the destruction of not only societal values but the very humanity of its individuals. This article analyses the rhetoric of dehumanisation in *A Tale of Two Cities*, examining how Dickens uses language, characterisation, and symbolic actions to shed light on the destructive consequences of power and to explore the possibility of redemption amidst such chaos. By dissecting key moments and dialogues from the novel, we will explore how Dickens critiques both the aristocracy's tyranny and the revolutionaries' descent into violence, ultimately questioning the moral implications of power, revenge, and the human cost of political struggle.

To reach this purpose, the study implements the Marxist literary approach. Rooted in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Marxist approach is a critical framework that examines the dynamics of class, power, and economic systems. This approach focuses on how material conditions, particularly the mode of production, shape societal structures, relationships, and ideologies. Over the years, various scholars have expanded and interpreted Marxist theory in different ways,

emphasising its relevance to understanding social, political, and economic inequalities. Marx & Engels (1848: 33) defines the Marxist approach primarily through the lens of historical materialism, which asserts that "the material conditions of a society—its economic base—determine its political, legal, and ideological superstructure. And the structure of society is based on the relationships of production, specifically the division between the capitalist class and the proletariat working class". This quotation emphasises that the struggles between different social classes, driven by economic relations, form the core of historical development. In short, this conflict arises because the ruling class controls the means of production, exploiting the labour of the working class, which leads to inherent contradictions within the system. Importantly, Marx's approach focuses on how these class struggles can eventually lead to revolutionary change. As a result, the study has found that the abuse of human rights by the political and economic power holders creates chaos and disharmony in the society, whereas the rule of law, social justice and agape love contributes to preserving peaceful atmosphere in the society.

The work is structured in three main parts. The first part focuses on the nature of class system in the novel, the second part elaborates on the revolution as a reaction to class system, the third part finally examines the resolution of class conflict through reconciliation.

1. Nature of Class System in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens vividly depicts a society deeply divided into classes, where the stark contrast between the aristocracy and the impoverished masses reflects the growing tensions that ultimately culminate in the French Revolution. Set against the turbulent backdrop of late-eighteenth-century France and England, Dickens portrays the unequal distribution of power, wealth, and opportunity, highlighting the dehumanising effects of these disparities on both the privileged and the oppressed. The novel's exploration of class division is not just a social commentary on the past but a timeless critique of the consequences of inequality and exploitation, offering insights into the corrosive effects of unchecked

power and the desperation that drives oppressed classes to demand justice, even through violent revolution.

1.1. The Bullying Aristocratic Class

The novel opens with an exploration of the French aristocracy, epitomised by characters like the decadent and indifferent aristocrat, the Marquis St. Evrémonde. The aristocracy in *A Tale of Two Cities* is portrayed as a class that lives in excess, untouched by the suffering of the common people. The Marquis, whose character symbolises the cruelty and detachment of the nobility, is an epitome of the corrupt and oppressive system that has long subjugated the lower classes. His cold, callous treatment of the poor is highlighted when he is indifferent to the brutal consequences of his actions, such as the death of a peasant child at the hands of his carriage. The following statement from the novel vividly reinforces the point: "Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of the poor is the foundation of this great building" (Dickens, 117). This quote demonstrates the aristocracy's deep disdain for the common people, reinforcing the notion that power and privilege are inherently tied to the systemic exploitation of the lower classes. For the ruling elite, the suffering of the peasants is a mere byproduct of their social and economic structure, which ensures their continued dominance. Importantly, when the Aristocrats make mistakes, they never apologise and consider that the one who makes mistake is the lower class. For example, in the accident when Monseigneur's carriage hits a child, he just tosses a coin to the father of the child without saying sorry; even he scorns the father of the child. "But for the latter's inconvenience, the carriage probably would not have stopped; the carriage was often known to drive on, and leave their wounded behind" (Dickens, 109). For the aristocrats, French peasants are as good as nothing, non-human beings, leaving them dehumanised, in other words. Further, the Marquis' reference to the peasants as "dogs and rascals", is clear evidence of dehumanisation. **"**You dogs!' said the Marquis, but smoothly, and with an unchanged front, except as to the spots on his nose: I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth. If I knew which rascal threw at the carriage, and if that brigand

were sufficiently near it, he should be crushed under the wheels'' (Dickens, 116 -17). This example shows how the working people are treated by the aristocrats.

1.2. The Oppressed Working Class

In stark contrast, Dickens presents the suffering of the working class, which is portrayed as voiceless, marginalised, and oppressed by a system that values them only for their labour. Characters like the humble, hard-working Lucie Manette and her father, Dr. Manette, represent the dignity of the common people, yet even they too are affected by the brutal realities of class inequality. Lucie's father, a former prisoner of the Bastille, symbolises the long-lasting psychological and emotional effects of a society that systematically crushes the spirit of the oppressed. His years of imprisonment represent not just the physical confinement of an individual but also the crushing weight of a societal structure that holds the lower classes captive in a system of injustice. In her *Historical Retrospection and Ambivalence in A Tale of Two Cities,* Rania Soetirto (2022: 28-9) uncovers the rational justification behind the cruel behaviours of upper-class members:

> The reason why Dr. Manette's imprisonment is strictly described under the metaphor of a burial is that his imprisonment has no end. Unlike prisoners who have a fixed jailed period, Dr. Manette was left in the Bastille to disappear after witnessing the murder of a peasant girl and her brother by the Evrémonde brothers. Dr. Manette's imprisonment also has a psychological influence on the readers as it serves to portray the cruelty of the French upper-class. His warped memories, as a result of trauma, are made explicit by Dickens, influencing the readers to understand how long-term imprisonment had deteriorated both Dr. Manette's mind and physique.

This opinion further mimics the kind of suffering the peasants undergo at the hands of the aristocracy. Precisely, the author of the above quote reveals how Dr. Manette is confined in a jail for a very long period. Importantly, she holds that Manette's imprisonment has a psychological impact making the passage a portrayal of the French upper class' cruelty vis- a- vis the lower-class citizens. Interestingly, the effects of the atrocity the aristocracy perpetrates on the poor people are also visible when Dr. Manette sees his daughter Lucie for the first time after eighteen years of separation, he reacts in confusion, thinking that the young Lucie could be his wife,

"'No, no, no; you are too young, too blooming. It can't be. See what the prisoner is. These are not the hands she knew this is not the face she knew, this is not a voice she ever heard'" (Dickens, 47). More important, Dr. Manette also occasionally refers to himself in the third person, especially when conditions of his trauma resurface.

In his *The Cambridge Introduction to Charles Dickens*, John Jordan (2006) explores how Dickens uses his fiction to shed light on how the peasants' suffering under the wicked ruling class in Victorian England. The process is most vividly remarked through the description of the depraved Monseigneur and his brutal treatment of the lower classes who reside in the region under his rule. Besides the previous description of the peasants' miserable life with poverty, the following lines feed one better:

> The village had its one poor street, with its poor brewery, poor tannery, poor tavern, poor stable-yard for relays of post-horses, poor fountain, all usual poor appointments. It had its poor people too. All its people were poor, and many of them were sitting at their doors, shredding spare onions and the like for supper, while many were at the fountain, washing leaves and grasses, and any such small yielding of the earth that could be eaten. Expressive signs of what made them poor were not wanting; the Taxes for the state, the Taxes for the church, the Taxes for the lord, Taxes local and Taxes general, were to be paid here and to be paid there, according to solemn inscription in the little village, until the wonder was, that there was any village left unswallowed … Monsieur the Marquis cast his eyes over the submissive faces that drooped before him, as the like of himself had drooped before Monseigneur of the Court—only the difference was, that these faces drooped merely to suffer, and not to propitiate—when a grizzled mender of the roads joined the group. (Dickens, 160-61)

The passage explains the suffering of the lower class in that period, crumbling under vans of Taxes. Monseigneur, representing the ruling class of the described milieu, does everything within his power to make life precarious for the peasants. And to make this vivid for the readers, the narrator gives the opposite side of that, which is the life in the other city. The peasants, despite their miserable living conditions, are bound to keep on paying "the tax for the state, the tax for the church, the tax for the lord, tax local and tax general…" (Dickens, 61).

Interestingly, Dickens uses the theme of light and darkness in his characters as well. Dr. Manette is a victim of the Evrémonde's tyranny. He was secretly imprisoned in the Bastille for 18 years. And after he had been released from prison, he lived in the garret chamber of the wine shop. Later on, his life witnessed constant conflicts against the shadows of madness and misery that he got from the Bastille. He becomes a prisoner of his traumatic past, and he capitulates to darkness:

> The faintness of the voice was pitiable and dreadful. It was not the faintness of physical weakness, though confinement and hard fare no doubt had their part in it. Its deplorable peculiarity was, that it was the faintness of solitude and disuse. It was like the last feeble echo of a sound made long and long ago. So entirely had it lost the life and resonance of the human voice, that it affected the senses like a once beautiful colour, faded away into a poor weak stain. So sunken and suppressed it was, that it was like a voice underground. So expressive it was of a hopeless and lost creature, that a famished traveller, wearied out by lonely wandering in a wilderness, would have remembered home and friends in such a tone before lying down to die. (Dickens, 55- 6)

The quotation above presents Dr. Manette as lost to the darkness. He forgets all about his past life, including his medical profession. However, his daughter, Lucie, is the only one who can save him and bring him back to light:

> Only his daughter had the power of charming this black brooding from his mind. She was the golden thread that united him to a Past beyond his misery, and to a Present beyond his misery: and the sound of her voice, the light of her face, the touch of her hand, had a strong beneficial influence with him almost always. Not absolutely always, for she could recall some occasions on which her power had failed; but, they were few and slight and she believed them over (Dickens, 111).

Here, it is clear that Dr Manette is suffering from his dark past. In fact, he is going through a traumatic profile caused to him by the bloodthirsty ruling class. Regrettably enough, in his present state, the government, the one that has put him in such a pathetic situation, is not ready to help him out. He is left alone with his daughter who happens to be everything for him. The question that comes to one's mind in all this is that, how is it that, a medical doctor, who has served his country for many years, could be abandoned in such a situation? To that question, obviously, Dr Manette's government can be the replica of any government that is grounded on capitalistic system, that is "everything for us, and nothing for the others". Under such a

government, no matter how devotedly one has served them, the day one happens to challenge any of their politics, it is either you succeed in overthrowing them, or you become the victims in the process like Dr Manette.

In fact, the philosophy of capitalism promotes social injustice and the degradation of the underclass. Put differently, capitalism thrives on social injustice, misery, slavery, hunger, starvation, child labour, and disease. Marx (1936: 36) presents the plight of the proletariat in these words: "along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation". In the same perspective, Yasemin Asci's *Marxist Elements in Charles Dickens's Novel* (2019:2) admits:

> In 19th century different social classes and the gaps between these classes became the most significant social issue of Victorian age in England. Since this century witnessed the French Revolution, the results of this movement led to many changes in different sides of the social life. In other words, the revolution caused the industrial world to dominate the life of individuals. In the cruel hands of the rich, the workers who were the members of lower class were oppressed considerably. These workers continued to live like machines or robots in the factories. They were not equal in the society and they didn't have the right for living independently. Moreover, during this age even the kids were compulsory to work for surviving. Therefore, there was social and economic burden in the British society during that time.

First, Marx's assertion highlights the widening gap between the capitalist elite and the suffering proletariat, a reality Dickens masterfully explores in his fiction. As Marx notes, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few leads directly to the misery and dehumanisation of the working majority. Second, Asci's commentary reinforces this by situating Dickens's work in the context of 19th-century Victorian England, where the industrial revolution deepened class divisions. The ruling class, therefore, obsessed with profit, viewed the working class as mere tools of production. Dickens portrays this through *A Tale of Two Cities*, where the French aristocracy lives in excess while peasants starve and suffer. Pitifully, the systemic exploitation of even children, forced into labour for survival, unveils the loss of innocence and humanity. The novel echoes Marx's critique of capitalism, revealing how unchecked

power and economic greed crush the lives of the many, making the narrative not just historical but a socio-political warning: if injustice persists, violent upheaval becomes inevitable.

Further, Marxist elements and thoughts are plausible in the novel. There, the ruling class does not permit the lower-class people to feel and think. Undoubtedly, these rules lead the peasants to behave like robots. The rich people pay them less attention than the real value of their labour. These workers become alienated gradually. They sell their labour power and they do not own the means of production. Therefore, the employers exploit them. In their *Marxist View of Proletariat Representation in the Works of Charles Dickens,* Ilhem Mortad Serir and Lina Serir (2022: 172) come up with their evaluation of *A Tale of Two Cities* by saying that:

> The novel follows the consequences of the French Revolution which grows up to attack the social injustice of many French aristocrats like Darnay. But could cause the death of many persons who were very innocent. After years of tumult and injustices where people were exploited, the revolution started to render justice and end years of unfair profits. This is demonstrated via characters in the novel where the brothers of Evrémonde brutally behave with Madame Defarge's family, which causes the imprisonment of Dr Manette.

The above observation by Ilhem Mortad Serir and Lina Serir highlights the central issue of social injustice in *A Tale of Two Cities*, as seen through a Marxist lens. Dickens portrays the oppressive nature of the aristocracy, embodied by the Evrémonde brothers, whose cruelty toward Madame Defarge's family symbolises the broader exploitation of the proletariat by the ruling class. The imprisonment of Dr. Manette for attempting to expose their abuse further reveals the silencing of truth and justice under aristocratic power. However, Dickens does not idealise the revolution; he acknowledges that while it arises as a response to exploitation, it can also become a force of indiscriminate vengeance. The death of innocents like Darnay, despite his personal rejection of his family's oppressive legacy, suggests the moral ambiguity of revolutionary justice.

Equally, the drawbacks of Feudalism are another phenomenon that permeates *A Tale of Two Cities*. In his *Feudal Society*, Marc Bloch (1939) offers a comprehensive analysis of feudalism by examining its economic, social, and political aspects. He describes feudalism as "a complex system of hierarchical relationships based on land ownership and military service, with lords granting land to vassals in exchange for loyalty and military support" (23). It is important to precise that feudalism is in agricultural society what capitalism stands for in industrial society. In that regard, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, St Evrémonde gives lands to the French peasants who, in turn, have to farm and pay him taxes on their sale. Overburdened by taxes, the peasants are therefore controlled by St Evrémonde and have to work harder and harder to feed themselves. The novel zooms in: "Expressive signs of what made them poor, were not wanting; the tax for the state, the tax for the church, the tax for the lord, tax local and tax general, were to be paid here and to be aid there, according to solemn inscription in the little village" (Dickens, 119). From the Marxist perspective, the feudal system in the above passage entails the domination of the feudalists as compared to the capitalists in the capitalism. The proletarians are the inhabitants of the village in the valley near St Evrémonde's chateau. They represent the poor farmers who have to pay high taxes to the government represented by St Evrémonde. Every peasant works hard in the fields but it just gives them little money because they have to pay huge taxes.

Also, one of the most poignant representations of the working class's suffering is seen in the plight of the starving Parisian masses, whose desperation eventually gives rise to the revolutionary fervour. Dickens vividly describes the abysmal conditions that lead to the violence of the revolution. The Defarges, particularly Madame Defarge, epitomise the collective anger and growing awareness of the masses. Through the Defarges' revolutionary zeal, Dickens illustrates how the dehumanisation of the lower classes eventually leads to their desire for vengeance, even if it means embracing violence as a tool for social change, "the time will come, when the poor will have nothing to eat but the rich" (Dickens, 210). This statement

from Madame Defarge's reflects the raw anger and bitterness of the oppressed who have been pushed to the brink by years of injustice. Her knitting, which records the names of those marked for death, symbolises the methodical and systematic nature of the revolution's revenge.

2. The Revolution as a Response to Class Division

The French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities* serves as a direct response to the deepening class divisions and the intolerable oppression of the poor by the aristocracy. Dickens shows how the revolution, although initially sparked by the desire for justice and equality, becomes entangled in its own cycle of violence. In this context, the revolution, led by figures like the passionate and vengeful Madame Defarge, offers a powerful critique of both the aristocracy's abuse of power and the revolutionary fervour that leads to its own forms of dehumanisation: "In the two cities, the burning of the Chateau, the taking of the Bastille, the storming of the prison, and the spreading of fire and blood were all part of a world divided by its extremes" (Dickens, 276). Here, Dickens critiques how the revolution, while seeking to abolish the inequities of the old regime, falls into the same patterns of oppression. The once-oppressed peasants, now with power in their hands, become the oppressors, mirroring the violent retribution of the aristocracy. The class divisions that fuelled the revolution ultimately transform into an endless cycle of suffering, as the oppressed become the oppressors, and the vision of a just society is lost in the chaos.

3. Redemption and Reconciliation as Championed Morals in *A Tale of Two Cities*

Miroslav Volf (1996), explores redemption in the context of forgiveness and justice. In his work, he argues that redemption involves a moral and relational transformation, which is tied not only to personal salvation but to the reconciliation of conflicting parties. For Volf, true redemption requires both the forgiveness of wrongdoers and the acknowledgment of the wronged party's suffering. He believes that: "Redemption, when understood in the context of reconciliation, means that the wrongdoer and the victim are brought together in a new relationship that recognises the truth of their respective experiences" (95). Volf's interpretation of redemption

moves beyond individual salvation, linking it to social justice and reconciliation between conflicting parties. He emphasises the necessity of acknowledging past wrongs in the process of redemption, which requires a complex balance of forgiveness, justice, and relational healing. In other words, redemption, according to Volf, involves the reintegration of broken relationships into a new and just community.

Despite the novel's heavy focus on the destructive consequences of class divisions, Dickens also explores the potential for reconciliation and redemption. Characters like Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton represent the possibility of transcending the rigid class structures. Darnay, an aristocrat who renounces his heritage, is able to live among the common people, while Carton, a disillusioned lawyer, finds redemption in his self-sacrifice. These characters' journeys suggest that, while class divisions may be entrenched, personal transformation and social change are still possible. Through Carton's selfless act of sacrificing his life for Darnay, Dickens offers a hopeful vision of humanity that transcends the social hierarchies that divide people. Carton's final words, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done," (Dickens, 330) reflect a redemptive possibility that, despite the entrenched class divisions, individuals still have the capacity for personal growth and moral transformation, even in the face of systemic injustice.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyse the rhetoric of dehumanisation in *A Tale of Two Cities*, examining how Dickens uses language, characterisation, and symbolic actions to shed light on the destructive consequences of power and to explore the possibility of redemption amidst such a chaos. Consequently, the study has shown that *A Tale of Two Cities* serves as a powerful critique of the rigid class divisions that characterised late-eighteenth-century France and England. The study finds that through vivid depictions of the aristocracy's cruelty, the suffering of the working class, and the violent response of the revolution, Dickens portrays a society torn apart by inequality, power abuse, and dehumanisation. Nevertheless, the study has also

shown that, amid the chaos, the writer also explores the possibility of personal redemption and the potential for reconciliation beyond the oppressive structures that divide people. Ultimately, the study indicates that the novel serves as a timeless reminder of the dangers of unchecked power and the importance of addressing the underlying social inequalities that undermine social harmony and smooth development.

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