

A Comparative Study of Class-consciousness between Khushhal Khan Khatak and Charles Dickens

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Abstract:

This research paper tends to seek the comparison and contrast of class-consciousness between the two great writers of world literature, Khushal Khan Khatak and Charles Dickens. The former belongs to the seventeenth-century feudal patriarchal sub-continent of South Asia and the latter comes from the industrialised capitalist Victorian England. They depicted the economic plight, misery and suffering of the toiling classes in their writings in the different historical ages to project different visions of human situation. Both the writers in spite of different historical ages, cultures, literary genres, socio-economic, political and class backgrounds possess one thing in common, which is the class-consciousness that leads them to criticise the exploiter and favours the exploited of their time. The comparison and contrast will be conducted in this research study in terms of Marxist class-analysis of the texts of the two authors belonging to the two different periods of history. Applying the Marxist hermeneutics to the textual analysis of the texts of the both authors, the present research study tries to introduce new a portrait and re-evaluation of the personages of the two greatest literary writers in an innovative perspective.

Key words: Feudalism, Capitalism, Class-consciousness, Social justice, Economic equality

INTRODUCTION

Khushal Khan Khattak was one of the greatest poets and prose writers of the world. He was the warrior, Islamic scholar, philosopher, thinker and poet of the seventeenth century. He was born in Srai Akora, in 1022 Hijra (1613) in a prominent Pashtoon family of the sub-continent of south Asia. He mentioned his date of birth in one of his couplets that, "It was 1022 of Hijra when I came to this world." (Rasa, M. S. R., 2001, p.16). Khushal Khan Khattak's grandfather Malik Akore Khan was the tribal chief of Akora tribe. When he died, his son, Malik Shahbaz Khan Khattak became the chief of the tribe of the Khattaks. Malik Shahbaz Khan Khattak was a valiant soldier in the Mughal army who fought many wars against the Yousafzai tribe and that brave warrior was the father of Khushhal Khan Khattak. He not only fought with the Yousafzais but also with the Mughal army. He was so famous for his swordsmanship in the wars that he got the title of swordsman. Khushhal Khan Khattak participated in the war against Yousafzai tribe when he was only thirteen years old. He was by birth a swordsman and swordsmanship one of the necessary skills for a chieftain at that time. Shah Jahan, the Mughal Emperor appointed Khushal Khan Khattak as a tribe chief of the Khattaks.

Khushal Khan Khattak received his early education at home, as it was the tradition of that time. His father was economically so prosperous that he was on an honourable position in the Mughal army. Moreover, the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan had granted one of the estates to his father. Therefore, he could easily afford the expenses of his son's education. However, he also hired the services of some great and famous scholars of that time to teach his son at home. We find two honourable names of them through his poetry. One was Maulana Abdul Hakeem and the other was Awais Multani. Khushhal Khan Khattak wrote some books in Persian language

because it was the court and official language in sub-continent at that time but he loved to read, write and speak in his mother tongue, Pashto. As he says in one of his couplets that, "My position in Persian poetry is that of one commissioned, (but) in Pashto that of a high priest" (Feroziuddin Begum, Dr. Miss Khadija, 2007, p. 353). Khushhal Khan Khattak was very fond of hunting and swordplay. In this regard, it seems that he was very interested in hunting and art of war than getting education. This interest was so intensive in his life that he ignored all other interests and activities. As he says in the following couplet that, "All the knowledge of the world would have been mine/ had I not indulged in the hobby of hunting (Rasa, M. S. R., 2001).

This does not mean that he did not get formal education. He did receive the knowledge of logic, astronomy, scholastic philosophy, Qur'anic information and the Islamic jurisprudence, he means to say in the above couplet that if he had not enthusiastically involved in hunting, he would have gained all other worldly knowledge as well. Kaushal's vast knowledge about life proves to be true that he was a thorough worldly and spiritual scholar as he wrote many books on various topics. As for his wonderful contribution to Pashto language and literature concerns, Khushal Khan Khattak have plausible claim that, "I have a great right over Pushto language, whether it is poetry, prose, or script. There was neither a book nor writing in it at first; it was I who authored a few books in it" (Rasa, M. S. R., 2001, p. 75).

Shah Jahan, the Mughal Empire had good terms with Khushal Khan Khattak. He was one of the great personalities in his good books. However, in 1659, when he became ill, his son Aurangzeb dethroned him, putting the crown on his own head. Aurangzeb, the new king also honoured Khushal Khan Khattak like his father and grandfather but some ill-wishers and jealous people produced misunderstanding between Khushal and the Mughal king. Then, Said Amir became the

chief of Kabul. He issued orders to Abdur Rahim, the Governor of Peshawar, to arrest Khushal Khan Khattak. Therefore, he arrested and sent him to Dehli. He was kept two and half years in the fort of Rathanpoor. When he was released, he was confined at home for about five years. In 1668, when Muhabat Khan became the governor of Kabul for the second time, he requested the Mughal Empire to set him free and receive his cooperation for handling with the rebel Pushtoons. However, Khushal Khan Khattak strictly denied doing so. He told the story of his innocence in the following verses:

“I am in Aurangzeb’s prison undeservedly.
Allah knows about the allegation and slander on
Me, By God, I do not find any sin in myself.
But other people speak in disfavour of me”

(Rasa, M. S. R., 2001, p. 83).

In the prison, his great love for his beloved homeland and the Pushtoons intensified his hatred for the Mughal Empire, its goods and products. In this regard, he expressed the qualities of his village and his aversion to Indian rivers and waters.

“Gentle breezes bear my greeting,
If pass Khairabad ye roam,
Past the silver stream of Landai
(River) To Srαι, Srαι my home.
Father Indus, hail him loudly,
as across his flood ye go, but to
Landai, gentle breezes, softer salutations
blow. Ganga, Jamna, how I hate you,
Sluggish Rivers of the plain
Hindustan has no cool
Waters; Would that I were at home
Again, Once again to drink of Landai
Hell must one day loose its chain”

(M.A, Biddulph, C.E., 1983, p. 60).

During this period, he wrote his “Dastar Nama”, a great book in Pushto prose, which reflected how he gave the Pushtoons a new

and independent life. Khushal Khan Khattak was a versatile and dynamic personality who was most popular among the Pashtoon masses. He says that, "In three things—generosities, learning and writing has my fame spread" (Feroziuddin Begum, Dr. Miss Khadija., 2007, p. 286).

The Mughal king appointed his son Bahram Khan as the chief of the Khattaks and gave him the task to kill the old lion, Khushal Khan Khattak because he was a great danger for the Mughals. Bahram Khan killed one of his brothers and arrested his eldest brother Ashraf Khan with the help of the Mughals. Khushal Khan Khattak knew that he wanted to slay him for the sake of throne as he did with his brothers. Therefore, he went to "Teerah", Afridies' territory and resided there until his death. Bahram Khan attacked the village in several times but each time he was badly defeated. When Khushal Khan Khattak turned very old and reached to the age of (75 or 88), he was died "on Friday 26th or 28th of Rabi II, A.H. 1100 (1688 A.D.). He wished to be buried in a place where Khushal Khan Khattak liked his grave to where the dust of Mughal's horse's hoofs could not reach" (Khan, A., 1982, p. 149 and Iqbal, M., 1996, p. 60). Finally, his friend fulfilled his desire and buried him in 'Issurro' a small village in the Khattak Hills, where the great Khan's tomb is still to be seen.

Charles Dickens was one of the greatest novelists of the world who was born on 7th February 1812 in England. He was the second child and the eldest son of John and Elizabeth Dickens. John Dickens was employed in the pay office of Chattam Royal Dockyard for which family also had to move sometimes to undesirable part of London. Financially, the family was totally depending on his job but still these were good days for Charles Dickens. Unfortunately, a sudden blow of sorrow came in his life when his father John Dickens was imprisoned (for his unpredictable habits and reckless behaviour) for debt in 1824. Even the other family members Elizabeth Dickens and his siblings were also moved in with

John Dickens except Charles Dickens. The good fortune for him of being sent to school was short lived because being an eldest son of his parents he was compelled to support his family so that he started working in a Warren's Shoe Blacking factory and this experience haunted him all his life. This secret he shared only with his wife and best comrade and his future biographer John Forster.

However, his harsh and bitter toiling experiences turned him more sensitive emotionally as he started thinking himself depraved member of working class. This was actually an age when the child labour was on its peak or it was a trend even. The worst thing, which added bitterness in his experiences, when Elizabeth Dickens (his mother) forced Charles Dickens to continue his work in factory after his father's release from prison. This bitter fact really displeased him but his father favoured him in attending the Wettington House Academy in London as a day pupil in order to save him from a bitter life of a factory worker. Therefore, unfortunately he was not able to pay the rent dues so he left school and got a job as a clerk.

Afterwards, Charles Dickens soon got courses of shorthand and became a reporter at Doctor Commons Court. He fell in love with Maria Beadnell but this love affair ended in 1833 because her parents did not consider him good match for his unsatisfactory career. In the same year, his first story "Dinner at Popular Walk" was published in a monthly magazine. This was the beginning of his writing career whereas he got place in journalism as well. He also started submitting sketches to various journals and newspapers under the pseudonym BOZ that inspired Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of a famous editor, that she married him. Afterwards, he came to know about many editors and publishers like Chapman and Haltill in this period. In the same year, Charles Dickens became the most popular author of Pickwick Papers. To say it would be very right that Pickwick got name and fame because

of Charles Dickens. This period made him the dynamic personality in the realm of other writers.

Moreover, Charles Dickens was seeking continuously and consistently to make his position as a writer and journalist very strong. In 1836, he was so prominent in the world of journalism that he got an honourable and prominent place of an editor of Bentley Miscellany, which he maintained successfully. As a novelist, he started writing in 1837. The first novel, which he wrote in Bentley Miscellany, was "Oliver Twist" which was published in 1838. "Pickwick papers" and "Oliver Twist" were so popular that they succeeded to get attention of Queen Victoria that she took keen interest in both of his novels.

It is a fact that the elements of writers' personal life must consist in their piece of writings so the same can be applied to Charles Dickens' novels as well that whatever changes upheavals he experienced in his real life, he depicted those events and incidents in his novels as "David Copperfield" was considered as the most autobiographical of all his novels. His second novel is "Oliver Twist" in which he has expressed the feelings and innocence of a child that how he faces the cruel behaviour of the social formation. In this novel he has not only depicted the real picture of society of Victorian England but also the changing conditions of the English toiling masses, the impact of French Revolution and Industrial Revolution on them.

Similarly, Charles Dickens has also written five books on Christmas. The thought of the most of his novels rooted in his mind during his visit to United States in 1842 in which he depicted the same social class that he saw prominently in his real life (class-distinction between upper class and poor class) and experienced miserable poverty as a worker which grew the seeds of socialist egalitarianism in his mind. He wrote against the class-system of capitalism, social slavery and supported socialist egalitarianism. The term "Egalitarianism" is derived from French word 'Egal' means equal. According to Webster

Dictionary, egalitarianism means “a belief in human equality especially with reference to social, political and economic affairs”. He actually wanted to highlight the social and moral abuses because he believed in human equality in the existing social formation...

LITERATURE REVIEW

Khushal Khan Khattak is one of the greatest poets of the world. Many books and research articles are available on his life and works. Major Roverty and certain other orientalist say that Khushal Khan Khattak was not only Afghan nationalist but like Goethe and Shakespeare, he was also a great humanist. Allama Muhammad Iqbal considers Khushal Khan Khattak as a great Afghan nationalist. Allama Muhammad Iqbal came to know about Khushal through the translations of his poetry done by some orientalist. He highly appraised his poetry and hailed him, calling him the thinker and physician of Afghan nation. Allama Mohammad Iqbal also expressed his desire that if he knew Pashto he would have translated Khushal Khattak's poetry into Urdu or Persian. This is really a great tribute to a great Man by another great Man. Khushal Khan Khattak was a practical man who manifested all those qualities in his living conduct, which he wanted to see in a man's character. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the great philosopher said about Khushal Khan Khattak in one of his couplets that, “That Afghan Shanas (Khushal Khan Khattak) said well, He expressed what he saw, without any hesitation. He was the Hakeem (Philosopher) of Afghan nation. He was the physician of Afghan cause. He stated the secrets of nation boldly. He was rendering and said the right very wisely” (Khattak, P., 1980, 150). At another place, Allama Mohammad Iqbal commends Khushal Khan Khattak in the following words:

“I am tribal and am lost in the unity of nation. To elevate the name of Afghans I love the young people who put the halter on stars this son of mountains is never less than the Mughals

O'colleague did! May I tell you the secrets of my heart? In 1927, Allama Mohammad Iqbal wrote an essay entitled "Khushal Khan Khattak, the Afghan Warrior Poet" which was published in Hyderabad Deccan in a journal "Islamic Culture", in which he suggested the education minister of Afghanistan to assign a research scholar on Khushal Khan's glorious works to conduct a research study on his teachings (Iqbal, M., 1996, Pp. 34, 35).

Charles Dickens is also one of the greatest dynamic authors of the world who realistically depicted the miseries and hardships of the life of the proletariat. Therefore, many researchers, scholars, critics and writers of the world have concentrated on Charles Dickens' novels, life and ideas as well. Moreover, various researches have been conducted on his novel writing and his thoughts from different theoretical and analytical lenses. Arnold Kettle, the most eminent British Marxist critic has discussed his novels in the first volume of his book "An Introduction to English novel" (London: 1960) from a Marxist perspective. E. M. Forster wrote a book entitled "Aspects of the Novel" (London: 2000) on novel studies in which he discussed Charles Dickens in detail. Edgar Johnson wrote a book entitled "Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph" (two volumes, New York: 1952) in which he studied his life, literary career and novels. Diane Dewhurst Belcher wrote a research paper entitled "Dickens's Mrs. Sparsit and the Politics of Service" in which she discussed Charles Dickens's political thoughts derived from his novels. Harold Bloom edited a book entitled "Modern Critical Interpretations: Charles Dickens' Hard Times" (New York: 1987) in which the contributors discussed the different facets of Charles Dickens' novels. B. Ford edited a book "The Pelican Guide to English Literature: From Dickens to Hardy" (London: 1970) in which the contributors shed light on various aspects of Charles Dickens's art of novel writing and ideas in detail.

Patrick Bran linger discussed Charles Dickens in “Dickens and the Factories” (1971) in the light of the socio-economic conditions of the bourgeois Industrial Revolution of 1848. R. D Butterworth discussed Charles Dickens as a journalist in his article “Dickens the Journalist: The Preston Strike and ‘on Strike’”. He also discussed Charles Dickens in another research paper “Dickens the Novelist: The Preston Strike and Hard Times.” (1992), tracing his critical response to the Preston Strike. Geoffrey Carnall wrote an article “Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike” in which he compared Charles Dickens with Mrs. Gaskell and studied them in the socio-economic background of the capitalisation and industrialization of Europe. Nicholas Coles wrote a book entitled “The Politics of Hard Times: Dickens the Novelist versus Dickens the Reformer” (1986) in which he discussed Charles Dickens in the socio-political background of the Victorian era.

Philip Collin discussed Charles Dickens in his essay “Dickens and Industrialism” (1980) in which he highlighted Charles Dickens’ critical responses to the industrialization of England. Stanley Cooperman wrote an article “Dickens and the Secular Blasphemy” (1960) in which he described Charles Dickens’ secular philosophy. K. J. Fielding in his “The Battle for Preston” (1954) described Charles Dickens’ attitude towards the Preston strike. Jennifer Fletcher wrote his article “Capital Fellows: Manhood, the Market, and Household Management in Dombey and Son and Hard Times” (2003). In this study, he discussed the economic and management problems of the capitalist Victorian England. Kate Flint wrote “Dickens and Social Change” (1986) in which he studied Charles Dickens in the light of socio-economic and political changes of his age.

These literary critical works which have been done by different writers, scholars and philosophers of different schools of thought are valuable in many respects, but they neither applied Marxist literary theory to the works of Khushhal Khan Khatak and Charles Dickens nor compared them with each

other on these grounds. As far as this research study on Khushhal Khan Khatak and Charles Dickens is concerned, this research paper intends to focus on the following research topic.

COMPARISON BETWEEN KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK AND CHARLES DICKENS

Khushal Khan Khattak was a tribal chief of the Khattaks, belonging to the feudal age, which was dominated by the class-antagonism between the landed and serf-owning feudal lords and the landless poor serfs. In spite of his feudal and tribal background, he was by nature humanitarian and egalitarian. His humanitarianism and egalitarianism aroused in him class-consciousness, which enabled him to depict the problems of common people and their problems in his works, describing symbolically the class-distinctions in the existing social formation. He associated himself with the working classes and presented their class-interests in his poetry. He denounced the upper classes bitterly and apprised the lower strata in his poetry. We find the poor people as angels, well-mannered and the rich as Satans and wolves in his following couplets that, "I pondered over the man, some of them are angels, some are Satans, some of them are well-mannered, some of them no doubt are wolves" (Rasa, M. S. R., 2001, p. 293).

Khushal Khan was class-conscious poet of his time and his class-conscious related him to the class-interests of the common masses of the Pushtoons. He also fought against the Mughals for the national rights, national self-determination and class rights of the poor Pushtoons. He depicted the hardship of the working classes of his time and gives an example of the toiling masses' hardworking in the following words that, "Wood, when cut and hewed, becomes an arrow. Even a horn becomes a good hilt with a skill and hard work. Knowledge comes after going through the process of learning one, who becomes desperate about death, becomes the chief"

(Rasa, M. S. R., 2001, p. 278). Khushal Khan believed in the dignity of work because it made the man great and dignified. According to Khushal Khan, strenuous effort, hard work and working skill are very important in human life. Khushal Khan Khatak saw class-differences between the poor Pushtoons and the rich in his surroundings and his sympathies are with the poor toiling masses who served the rich classes. In this way, he wanted to change the inhuman class-relations of his time in which there was no social justice and economic equality.

Charles Dickens is a prolific critical realist novelist with a variety of artist qualities who has written many famous novels in the world such as "Oliver Twist" (1837), "David Copperfield" (1849), "Hard Times" (1854), "A Tale of Two Cities" (1859), "Great Expectations" (1860) and others. In his novels, Charles Dickens tried to arrange and choose the appropriate and beautiful words, similes, metaphors, symbols and maxims in order to produce an interesting story to his readers so they are motivated to read his novels and look for the message. The readers will find and catch the point of what he has written. He is one of the English Victorian novelists who seeks to write a full and intricate picture of complex socio-economic conditions of his time. In this manner, he is fully aware of disorder, injustices and hardships of the proletarians of the times. Samekto writes that, "Charles Dickens was the first writer who wrote didactic novel. This period produced more literary works of prose and Charles Dickens produced "problematic novel", the main purpose of which was against the social imbalance in society by showing it so that the society could feel the situation. Moreover, Charles Dickens' works are packed with criticism of the government policy for the betterment of the citizens of England" (Samekto, 1976, p. 65 cited in Mar'atuttoyibah, N., 2007,, p.16).

In addition, Charles Dickens' novel "Hard Times" criticises the capitalist process of bourgeois Industrial Revolution, describing the real socio-political conditions of the

capitalist Victorian era. Whereas, George Bernard Shaw also says that, “Hard Times” is a novel that, “of passionate revolt against the whole social order of the modern world” (Shaw, G.B., 1971). Many characters of his novels, of course, have utterly completely different social class background, that influenced by the conditions of the capitalist Industrial Revolution. Charles Dickens’ character Slackbridge is the poisonous orator as a mere figment of the middle-class imagination. Whereas, social class differences is the dominant subject, that appears in the story. Charles Dickens’ “Hard Times” is a novel that aims at highlighting the socio-economic and political ethos of the time. The Industrial Revolution of Europe had influential changes on irrevocably human labour, consumption, family structure and social structure. This revolution introduced technology throughout European and non-European world. These conditions affect some problems of life and the social change that reveals the impact of social class differences. For example, Slackbridge is a character of the working class, who was just opposite to the Stephen Blackpool. Sissy describes Gradgrind as an eminently wise father who is very cold and does not have any feelings. Because of the explanation, he unendingly educates his youngsters the fact and convinces them that they should not understand the notional imagination and fancy. However, he actually loves his youngsters. As Charles Dickens writes that, “He was associate amative father, once his manner; but he would all told likelihood have delineate himself (if he had been place, like Sissy Jupe as ‘an eminently practical’ father” (Dickens, C., 1995, p. 100).

In this way, Charles Dickens depicted the changes of the working class’ conditions. He struggled and protested against the exploitation of the capitalists or bourgeoisie. The socio-economic ethos of the Revolution of Europe had influential changes on irrevocably human labour, consumption, family structure, system, and even the terribly soul and thoughts of

the individual. This revolution concerned with industry and technology. This affects some downside of life and the social amendment that reveals the impact of the look socio-economic class-variations. In this way, due to his concern with the measurement and calculation of his character in “Hard Time”, Mr. Bounderby tends to use fact and statistics as the basic reason in any aspect of his life such as he uses statistics in making decision of Louisa’s marriage.

The railways chapter of Charles Dickens’ novel “Dombey and Son” presents a scene that affirms the industrial progress in England. In this manner, this means, the railway scene marks a transformation stage in the capitalist development. “Oliver Twist” presents a world of sophistication distinction and Charles Dickens condemns child labour in “Pickwick Papers”. Similarly, Charles Dickens describes the character of Sam Weller who is Pickwick’s servant and in “The Curiosity Shop” Quilp’s character is presented in the same manner. In fact, “Bleak House” is a portrayal of the historical class-division of the bourgeois England. Charles Dickens delineated the class-system of the bourgeois English social formation of his times, however, conjointly needed to alter it into a socially and economically just and socialist egalitarian social formation.

CONCLUSION

The present research study attempted to prove the focal point of research by conducting comparison between the two great writers of the world, Khushal Khan Khatak and Charles Dickens that they were class-consciousness egalitarians. This point of view arouse in them class-struggle that enabled them to depict the problems and miseries of the poor class realistically and critically. Although, Khushal Khan Khatak was a feudal lord and tribal chief of the Khattak tribe, belonging to the feudal era, he presented the miseries of the serfs and struggled to change their inhuman social conditions.

On the other hand, Charles Dickens came from a poor class and had harsh and bitter experiences of child labour. Moreover, he was the product of the capitalist age; he realistically portrayed the true picture of hardship of the proletarians and struggled to change their social conditions. Unlike Charles Dickens, Khushhal Khan Khatak neither was poor nor had the working class background but he felt the feelings and problems of the poor Pashtoons. In this regard, they not only presented the class-distinction of their times but also wanted to uplift their beloved class, socially on the level of the socio-economic equality, justice socialist egalitarianism.

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