


MANIFESTATIONS OF POVERTY IN WORLD LITERATURE			Literature
			Keywords: Poverty, Hard Times, Spiritual Crisis, Nazrul, Traherne, and Dickens.
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Abstract			
<p>This study would like to examine manifestations of poverty in the light of world literature. For this purpose, it would like to investigate the selected-literary texts, like Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Poverty", Thomas Montague Traherne's <i>Poverty</i>, and Charles Dickens' <i>Hard Times</i>. It aims to look at the real picture of poverty of the age, which has been reflected in their works. It would like to focus upon the manifestations of poverty and its relation with the current age. Nazrul, Dickens, and Traherne have led their personal lives with great hardship, bitterness experiences, psychological problems, like trauma and paranoia during their life span. They have tried to draw a light upon personal inflicting senses and mental disorders of the poor communities through their literary works. They have wanted to explore the practical circumstances and dark aspects of human society, community, and culture with a view to bringing about revolutionary changes of the poor community of the world around. Of course, such writers and their literary works are the symbol of today's society as well as literature. In this sense, it may be expressed that Nazrul, Dickens, and Traherne are the representatives of the age. The researchers' goal is that poverty is profoundly dealt with human life; no literature can express his perfect feeling and imagination if he has not tasted the bitterness experience of poverty in life. In many countries of the world, many litterateurs have focused upon the practical experiences of social problems of their hard times in the name of poverty. Thus, this study would like to foster unexplored-glaring themes of poverty through investigating the selected-works as well as the critical comments regarding poverty made by critics and scholars.</p>			

Introduction

Poverty is a state of deprivation, lacking the usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. It is hunger and lack of shelter. It is being sick and not being able to consult with a doctor. It is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. It is powerless, lack of representation and freedom. It is about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, cloth, and shelter. Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been defined in many ways. It is a situation people want to escape.

So, poverty is a call to action for the poor and the wealthy alike—a call to change the world in order that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities and societies.

Moreover, reflections of poverty have brought about revolutionary changes in the history of English literature. To compose story, poem, drama, novel, epic, song, and other literary genres, many litterateurs have emphasized on the themes of poverty; and some of them have wanted to personify poverty in the form of literary and rhetoric terms. We see the manifestations of poverty especially in novel and play of any literature.

For this purpose, this study aims to look at the manifestations of poverty in the selected-literary texts, like Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Poverty*, Thomas Montague Traherne's *Poverty*, and

Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*. Through the treatment of these writers, the plot-construction, art of characterization, themes, the study would like to shape poverty in many ways with a view to unveiling practical circumstances of human life, society, culture, and community. It also aims to highlight the critical comments of some scholars, critics, and philosophers with a view to conciliating a new framework with literature and litterateur.

Poverty in Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Poverty"

According to Bradshaw:

If the problem of poverty is in the system rather than in the poor themselves, a community development response must be to change the system. This is easy to say but hard to do, which may explain why so many policy programs revert to trying to change individual behavior. How can one get more jobs, improve schooling for the poor, equalize income distributions, remove discrimination bias from housing, banking, education, and employment, and assure equal political participation by the poor persons? None of these tasks are easy; and all require interventions into the systems that block poor persons from gaining the benefits of society. (Bradshaw, 2005, p.11)

Poverty is a very complex issue; it is very difficult to define in a very narrow sense. Those, who have tasted the blood of poverty, can realize the true sense of poverty. Bengali national and rebel poet has experienced bitterly regarding poverty since his childhood, when he was called 'Dhuhkumia' which means 'Man of Grief' by the local people. He has grown up through experiencing poverty and getting mixed with the poor around him. As a result, the poem, "Poverty" still touches the mind of the people around the world. Those who have attended to the deeper meaning of the poem, can come into contact with the poet's mind.

Mohammad Mahfujulla thinks that the poem, "Poverty," is one of the greatest poems written by the revolutionary and national poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam. This poem has been taken from the series of volume, entitled *Sindh-Hindol*. The poem, being published by Kollol Book House in the Bengali year 1333, was reprinted in the same year. At the very outset of the poem, Nazrul Islam wrote:

*O Poverty, thou hast made me great.
Thou hast made me honoured like Christ
With his crown of thorns. Thou hast given me
Courage to reveal all. To thee I owe
My insolent, naked eyes and sharp tongue.
Thy curse has turned my violin to a sword. (Translated by Kabir Chowdhury)*

The world poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote a poem, "Love-Immersion" [My translation] a long ago before Nazrul's poem "Poverty" was published. "Love-Immersion" was taken from the

series of volume, *Chitra*, which was first published in *The Daily Swadhana* in the Bengali year 1300. Tagore revised and reedited the poem for several times. Here are several lines of his poem as follows:

*You have made me Emperor. You have worn me
A Glorious Diadem; You have decorated my voice with flower-gate.* [Our translation]

From the above-mentioned partial quotations of the two poems, it is apparent that in the light of phrase and diction, there are a lot of similarities between two poems. But, the themes of the poems are completely different from each other. One is dealt with poverty; and another is love-immersion. These two greatest Bengali poets were the followers of Romanticism, and the maker of dream as well as aesthetic art. Rabindranath himself said: “I am a born-romantic.” On the other hand, besides dream and aesthetic art, the revolutionary poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, composed many poems and songs against revolutionary treatment, injustice, discrimination, exploitation, and cheat.

Regarding the poor and poverty. Nazrul wrote:

I have no suspicion in my mind to acknowledge the very fact that I can't grow up leaving power and beauty. My magic is as a worshipper of beauty as Keats writes. I am devoted to beauty, I worship Keats' poems and songs; and he is like a guide to me. I am merely a flute in the hand of beauty; I have never seen Padma-flower in the leg; I have seen the eyes of dropped-full of water from his eyes. On the way to the gravestone, I have seen him like a hungry fainted-statue, going away a far place beyond my vision. I have seen him in the battlefield; I have seen him in the dark-cell of a prison; I have seen him on the scaffold. My song is perfect for that beauty and aesthetic art. [Our translation]

Nazrul has composed lots of poems and songs regarding sorrows, unhappiness, struggle, pain, affliction, mental agony, depression, anxiety, satiety, and melancholy besides love and aesthetic writings. Though the theme of his poetry is based on the poor and poverty, the downtrodden, he never thinks of poverty as a great. He never glorifies it. After reading the poem, many readers may seem that Nazrul has surrendered himself to poverty; and he has emphasized upon poverty. But, if we deeply ponder over the inner significance of the poem, “Poverty,” we can realise the fact that Nazrul has never praised the song of poverty. He never saw poverty as a towering place. On the contrary, he has expressed that it is the poverty which has made him a great icon-cum litterateur in the history of Bengali literature. For example, he utters: “O Poverty, thou hast made me great.” Though poverty has not become great, Nazrul has gathered bitter experiences from poverty since his childhood for which he has enabled to realize miserable existence and pensive senses of the poor and the downtrodden. He has become a revolutionary figure to the peoples of the globe. He has stood up beside the poor and poverty-affected people, and protested against the rule of the powerful persons in the society; he has never got afraid of any injustice and oppression. He never hesitates to fight against cruelty. (Mahfujulla, 2015)

Though Nazrul was born in the age of British rule, he fought against the British; on the contrary, he fought for liberty and for the country. His pure love for the poor, the ruled, the oppressed, and the right-deprived people, and relatives of his heart have been reflected in the poem, "Poverty." The poet has also mentioned about the crucifixion of the Christ. He has compared poverty with the honour of the Christ. Due to speaking the truth, greater welfare of mankind, and the existence of the Almighty, he was crucified by the then rulers. Nazrul has also written about poverty: "Thou hast given me Courage to reveal all" and due to poverty, "Thy curse has turned my violin into a sword." From this quote, it is true that poverty is a curse. But, for the rebel poet, this curse of poverty is the weapon of revolution. It is noticeable that nowhere in the poem, Nazrul wrote: "Oh Poverty! You are great." Due to poverty, he has learnt to perform noble deeds. How poverty is painful, hardship, intolerable, he has also mentioned as follows:

*O my child, my darling one
I could not give thee even a drop of milk
No right have I to rejoice.
Poverty weeps within my doors forever
As my spouse and my child.
Who will play the flute? Where shall
I get the happy smile
Of the beautiful?*

It needs no telling the fact that it is the poverty, which can make a man unbearable, untold sufferings, and trauma in his personal, familial, and national life. Due to poverty, a man becomes a passenger of death. Nazrul spent most of his life with the poverty and the poor since childhood; and he utterly realized the dare of poverty. He never glorified poverty. Valentine (1968) points out that the essence of poverty is inequality and different words whose basic meaning is relatively deprivation.

Nobody expects poverty. But unfortunately, unlimited number of people fall victim of severe poverty, oppression, cheat, and injustice for various reasons around the globe. Both the rich, wealthy and the poverty affected-people are living in all countries of the world. There are many poor and helpless people who cannot afford to buy their necessary commodities for livelihood. As a result, they have to suffer from malnutrition, hunger, disease, plague, mental agony, and starvation. It is noticed that global theology has discouraged the poverty in Islam. Though Islam has discouraged the poverty, it never teaches mankind to condemn and to see the rude attitudes to anybody. On the contrary, Islam teaches mankind to love the poor of the poorest and to take care of them with great affection and respect in an equal manner and also, to extend their helping hands for the poor and miserable communities. In this regard, a maxim can be mentioned: "All men are equal in the eyes of law." The composer, Nazrul Islam, of the poem, "Poverty," has expressed his greatness and deep love to the poor in many respects, like poems and songs. He has also inspired mankind to fight for getting rid of poverty of the poor. According to Suparlan (1995):

Poverty can be defined as a low standard of living, i.e. the existence of a certain level of material deficiencies in the number or class of people compared to the prevailing standard of living in the community. Low standard of living is directly visible effects on health, moral life, and self-esteem of the poor were classified as the poor. (Quoted in Rohima et al, 2013, p. 38)

Whom we call ‘Poor’? We can express our feeling in response to this question: Those who have no wealth and finance; who have no land and property; who cannot afford to manage or purchase necessary things, who have no ability to procure food or to take shelter; who spend all days and nights with starvation and hunger, are called ‘Poor.’ These circumstances of the poor are known as poverty. Oppression, injustice, cheat, maltreatment, torture, unequal distribution of wealth lies in the root of the poverty. For this reason, the poet calls the poor:

*The Poor are the company of my pain, the poor are my brothers;
So that I get pure love of a daily pauper in my life!
I will weep for them, I will grasp them in my breast;
The poor are my absolute kith and kin, the poor are the dearest ones!
The more I will have the power to write,
The more I will live on this earth,
I will continue to write for them, I will speak on their behalves,
Like a son’s demise, I will feel of agony in breast for them. [Our translation]*

In densely populated-country, like Bangladesh, there are many poverty afflicted-people and its reasons are manifolds. A large number of people are victim of foreign rule and oppression. There are many men in society and community who have amazed wealth and finance; who are the owners of ample property; who love to cheat the poor; who are unwilling to help the helpless, to raise their helping hands for the victim. If the rich create the employment opportunities for the poor, they can get rid of poverty and hunger.

In this poem, Nazrul’s treatment of love and affection for the poor has clearly been exposed. The national and revolutionary poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam has raised major issues on love for mankind, brotherhood, fraternity, maternity, sympathy, and deep veneration. If such attitudes and outlooks are existed and prevalent in human mind, poverty won’t spread out on earth. According to the teachings of Islam, each people should donate the poor. The poet utters in a song:

*Donate, donate, you donate for the poor.
Your mind will open up later, may your hand open first
Recite the Holy Quran, and, then, listen to the message of the Prophet (Sm.)
Muslim ummah won’t come on earth for enjoyment and pleasure... [Our translation]*

From the aforementioned-lines of the poem, *Zakat*, it can be expressed that it is necessary for all sorts of the rich to donate for the poor. If the rich donated the poor, we could remove poverty from society and community. They would lead a happy, wealth, and prosperous life. If the

rich donate during the Holy Ramadan, sorrow, unhappiness, helplessness, painfulness, and mental affliction of the orphanage and the downtrodden can be protected.

In the Islamic Renaissance of Bengali literature, the greatest poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, has expressed his deep love and affection for the downtrodden communities in many of his poems and songs. Though the poem, “Poverty,” is short in form and style, it is based upon the inner significance and universal meanings for all ages and for all times. The rebel poet, Nazrul, fell a victim of incurious disease since 1942, he became wordless and insane. Since then, the power of his writing has been stopped. If he had a sound health and didn’t fall a victim of incurable disease, undoubtedly, Bengali literature would be enriched and polished. Moreover, the poet would be able to write lots of poems and songs for the poor of the poorest. His motto is to sing an equal song. With a short span of life, what the poet has contributed to Bengali literature is unforgettable. All men are the creation of Almighty. Man is the Supreme Being. But unfortunately, many people are victim of fatal circumstances. On the contrary, due to the victim of greed and cheat, many people have amazed a lot of wealth. Almighty never likes those who earn in an unfair means and cheat another man. In this case, we can accept Sen’s notion (1983) “poverty is an absolute notion in the space of capabilities, but very often it will take a relative form in the space of commodities or characteristics. (Sen, 1983, p.35)

Spiritual Crisis in Thomas Traherne’s “Poverty”

Thomas Traherne was an English poet, clergyman, theologian, and religious writer. The intense, scholarly spirituality in his writings has led to his being commemorated by some parts of the Anglican Communion on 10 October or on September 27. Christian life and ministry, philosophy, happiness, desire and childhood. Traherne’s writings expose the glory of creation; and what he perceives as his intimate relationship with God.

His writing conveys an ardent, childlike love of God. His love for the natural world is expressed in his works by a treatment of nature that evokes Romanticism, two centuries before the Romantic Movement. Traherne was an inconsequential literary figure during his lifetime; and his works were not known or appreciated until long after his death. As a country priest, he led a religious, simple life, and did not participate in literary circles. In many of his poems, Traherne has expressed his deep love and veneration of God. As a preacher of Christianity, his ultimate goal of life is to reach the message of Jesus Christ to his contemporary people.

In the book, *Centuries of Meditations* (1908) Traherne suffers from a lack of faith in his formative years at Oxford. He regards this as a period of Apostasy; and that later, he finds his way back to faith:

I knew by intuition those things which since my Apostasy, I collected again by the highest reason. My very ignorance was advantageous. I seemed as one brought into the Estate of Innocence. All things were spotless and pure and glorious: yea, and

infinitely mine, and joyful and precious; I knew not that there were any sins either complaints or laws. (Traherne, 1906)

In the above quote, Traherne expresses that he did not suffer a loss of faith, but rather identified his maturation away from a natural, innocent child's view of the world and his place in it, from an innate understanding of the wonder of God's creation to a burdened grappling with the rules and expectation of a church and society as an apostasy itself, which he had to overcome by careful and disciplined manner. K. W. Salter comments: Traherne 'writes of the senses as if they were spiritual and of the spirit as if it were sensuous' (Salter, 1965).

Traherne is concerned with the stability of the Christian church in England during the Restoration period. In his theological writings, he presents his passion for the Anglican faith and the national church that is evident in his contradictions with Roman Catholicism and Non-conformism during his political and religious upheaval. (Inge, 2007, p. 412) The discoveries of unknown manuscripts establish his fame as an Anglican divine and his works offer fresh and comprehensive arguments on the theological arguments about divine nature, ethics, morality, and sinful nature.

Traherne dedicates considerable examination to the subject of sin and its place-vs-the church doctrines. In *A Sober View of Dr Twisse*, he expresses sin and salvation within the frame of a larger discussion of questions of election and reprobation. The poet writes:

He was excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, where nothing can enter that hates God, and whence nothing can be excluded that loves Him. The loss of that Love is Hell: the Sight and Possession of that Love is Heaven. Thus did sin exclude him Heaven? (Jan, 2005, p. 133)

Traherne's works are inherently mystical seek to understand and embrace the nature of God within his creation and human soul. He seems to present his own journey of faith in *Centuries of Meditation*, a work of 'spiritual intensity,' and 'the wide scope of the writer's survey' which focus on 'all heaven and earth he takes for the province of the pious soul.' His work is said to look 'upon the hidden things of the soul; and, in them, he sees the image of the glory and love of God' and 'the eternal theme of the goodness and the splendour of God.' (Ward et al, 1921)

Traherne's poems present the glory of creation; and what he perceives as his intimate relationship with God. He draws on the writings of Aristotle and on the early Church Fathers for his concept of man and nature. He says that 'understanding set in him' secures his felicity. He argues that man can only experience felicity or happiness by understanding the will of God and divine love; and he fosters divine beauty as a childlike. He seeks to explain the Principle of Nature through his inclination to love truth and beauty seek him to identify felicity as its source and a natural experience. (Balakier, 1998, p.136) Traherne wants to find his creator through felicity.

Felicity is the embodiment of divine happiness and God's love in His abode, where mankind can enjoy eternal peace and happiness. No sinful act can touch human mind and soul. To purify human soul, man should come forward to the perfect of God. During his life time, Traherne utterly realizes that earthly pleasure and felicity cannot give any console and mental satisfaction. He mixes mystical elements and seeks to highlight the aspects of truth, knowledge, and the faculties of the mind and heart by theological and rational examination. His poetry and prose works have been described in opposite terms as 'bafflingly simple' (Drake, 1970, p.493).

He delves into the origins of faith, the nature of divinity and the faith, divinity, and the innocence of childhood and his style seems to enforce with verse that takes on the form of an incantation.

In the poem, "Poverty," Traherne has expressed his ultimate love and faith to God. He suffers from spiritual crisis because he has lost his firm faith and love to God. Spiritual crisis haunts his inner psychology with having devotion to God. Worldly pleasure has grasped his mind; and the world is too much with him. The poet feels loneliness and mental agony where he resides alone in the abode. He finds no company except himself in his lonely hall. There are "some few cups and dishes;" "the table and the wooden stools," where the holy people used to dine. There was a painted-cloth, where an obsolete story was wrought. The poet would like to come into contact with the Jesus Christ and God. He wants to have devoted to Him. He wants to see the glimpse of light through the glass, where he imagines his love for the Deity. The poet has possessed only a little amount of wealth; he doesn't want more than that. He doesn't want to get wealth, self-power in the worldly life; on the contrary, he wants to get the genuine love of God. He doesn't hanker after worldly pleasure, because he thinks that such a pleasure cannot bring any eternal peace and happiness in human mind. As a result, the poet thinks that worldly happiness and wealth grieve him much pain and sore. He wants a "scanty store" so that God's mercy bestows upon him. He wants to forget his ease, health, hands, eyes, mind, and soul. He doesn't want to think of the sun, the moon, stars, and above all, his family members, because he argues that such things cannot console his mind. He wants merely ultimate love of God. Though the poet's mind craves for greedy objects just to satisfy the demand of temporary happiness as well as peace, inner psychology doesn't want him that he should get entangled into earthly pleasure.

The poet wants to control his mind to get rid of worldly greed and pleasure. He wants to make us understand that Deity's love is original and perfect for him. He has created mankind for worshipping Him. Without His love and grace, man can't do anything. Man has become blind to wealth, power and self, conceit, and earthly name and fame. As a result, he keeps himself aloof from God. The poet doesn't want to see the kings of kings. He wants neither kingship nor pompous throne. He wants to take rest under the shadow of God's kingdom where no sinful act would touch his soul and mind. His love is perfect, infinite, and free with whom the poet wants to accompany. No man's grace and power fills His abode. His intimacy with God is apparently presented in many poems. In this discussion, the poem, "Poverty" is a glaring example of his deep faith and respect to God.

According to the poet's viewpoints, God's court is pure, kind, and liberal, which is full of joy and pleasure. There are plenty of jewels, goods, and treasures in His abode. Man can enjoy what he wants. He also imagines: in order to enrich the poor and to cheer the pitifully sad and abandoned man, God's palace must be decorated and adorned gorgeously and pompously in order that there would be no poverty, anxiety, and melancholy. No human love and peace cannot inflame the poet's mind and soul. Only divine love and grace can console him. Traherne has expressed his deep love and respect towards his God. Worldly pleasure and greed didn't grasp his mind.

Traherne is a poet who writes, not of mundane love nor transient joys, but of the beauty of the world, becomes precious to him, because he glimpses the perfection and goodness of its maker. He is aloof, kindly, and understanding. Neither in his poems, nor in his prose works, is there any mention of the strife that marks the times: the contentions between the King and Parliament; the bickering between the established-church and the hosts of dissenters, especially the puritans; there is no direct reflection against the greediness of landowners of the time, who under the new land system were crushing their tenants to bitter poverty. (Perkins, 1939,p.11) Traherne is careless of such problem. His detestation of mere materialistic prosperity is reacted to social conditions what he sees. Knowing the corruption of his contemporary age, he believes it more important to hold out the ideals of Christian life to his contemporaries than to write harangues on the political and social evils. Against the greed of property rights, he opposes the idea of the Fatherhood of God; the simplicity of the child who does not know anybody; the wealth of the real riches God has bestowed upon mankind in the body; and in all nature as contrasted with the empty riches of man's invention to which he anchors his heart to the forgetting of the things that count. Living alone, absorbed in the love and contemplation of God, Traherne attains, by the time of his death in 1764, a philosophic liberty; and an intuitive knowledge of God, which convinces him that felicity is possible to every individual. (Traherne, 1908, p.12)

Traherne's aim in the "Disquisition" is the demonstration of the infinite and eternal glorious nature of the soul:

Being a lover of the world, & concerned with, yet felicity of all persons, I am willing to gratify your desire in treating of the soul: not out of any vain humour to appear abroad; but from a native desire yet glory of God may be seen with many eye, & every person filled with bliss. (Osborn, 1964, p.246)

Here, as a lover of the world, Traheren is very anxious of felicity and happiness; he wants to gratify his desire to treat human soul; he believes that God is omnipotent and omniscient. Only God can bestow bliss on mankind. Intellectual soul interests him; the soul with infinite understanding, infinite capability, and an insatiable desire to know. It is towards the intellectual soul that God's love and knowledge are directed for all mankind.

Traherne's mystical experience gives him a distinctive character. He feels that the joy and illumination he experiences is not self-regarding. He believes that the joy of an ineffable order

increases by common sharing and does not, like goods of this world, diminish by use. Felicity is to be reached out to mankind, because its real value lies in the communal sharing:

*The light which on ten thousand faces shine
The Beams which crown ten thousand vines
With Glory and delight, appear
As if they were
Reflected only from there all for me
That a Greater Beauty there might see.* (Traherne, 1908)

To the poet, all aspects of human experience, apart from the adoration of God are secondary, derivative, and ancillary. When the commerce of the human soul with the divine ceases, people become blind and fall prey to vile passions. In the state of delusion, they take the sham for the real. Traherne has gathered a bitter experience of human predicament; he has tasted the miserable existence of the poor community during the 17th-century England.

His poem, “Poverty” is very simple style; word, phrase and diction are easy to understand, but the poem bears the inner significance of human soul and the pure and perfect love of God have been presented. Due to poverty, man forgets God’s law and gets himself involved into many wrong doings; and earns money in an unfair means. The poet thinks that man should not want to give value of earthly pleasure. In heaven, man can enjoy what he wants. Almighty justifies human mind through giving them plenty of complexities and problems; we all know that every man’s life has ups and downs. He must try to cross his barrier by hook or by crook. Due to poverty, man falls victim of premature death. It doesn’t mean that he is defeated in his way of life-struggle. Almighty knows everything how to govern the world; and how to maintain His creation.

The main theme of a short poem, like “Poverty” is dealt with the spiritual crisis of the poet himself. Leaving all sorts of earthly pleasure, he wants to maintain his life according to the dictum of God. As a religious and devout person, his aim is to inspire his contemporary people of the age to follow the right path of God. The poem signifies the symbol of love of God.

Poverty in Charles Dickens’ “*Hard Times*”

Dickens was an outspoken writer who wrote about poverty and social stratification of the Victorian society. He employed fiction to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian age. He showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of the English society, and contributed to several important social reforms. His awareness of the social ills of his time are derived from his traumatic childhood experiences. He believed in the political and ethical potential of literature, and used his fiction as a springboard for debates about moral and social reform.

In the novel, *Hard Times*, Dickens became an outspoken critic of unjust economic and social conditions. His deeply felt social commentaries helped to raise the collective awareness of

the reading public. He was from first to last a novelist with a purpose, and was always ready to attack some specific the abuse in the existing social system. Throughout his life, the novelist showed himself as the champion of the weak, the outcast, and the oppressed. He himself suffered the harsh abuse of the poor by the English legal system. In the year 1830s, the poor in England had no voice. Their children were often mistreated and subjected to the poorest of working and living conditions. (Oshi et al, 2015, p.40)

Dickens grew up as a poor child who had to take up labour at an early age. He was ill-treated due to poverty, and in a way different from other children who were from wealthy families. His deep sense of injustice and inequality, and the belief that everyone should be treated the same. He had first-hand experience of the bad working conditions in life. He wrote novels about the suffering of the poor children. His attacks on society were based on traditional moral beliefs and humanism, rather than on social or political issues. (p.41)

Dickens was the only novelist who drew the attention of the reading public to the deprivation of the lower classes in England. He was much more successful than his predecessors in presenting the ills of the industrial society, including class division, poverty, bad sanitation, privilege, and meritocracy and the experience of the metropolis. He became universally associated with social issues. (p.42)

In *Hard Times*, Dickens expresses his complete rejection of the claims of classical economics, and shows his moral concern for the social well-being of the nation. Social endeavours go far beyond the eloquent phrasing, plot devices and characterizations and sensitive handling of the joys, lows, woes, and worries of the human condition. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens goes far beyond the mere experiences of the workhouse. Depiction of poverty is extended to London's squalid streets, dark houses, and thieves' dens. He has given voice to those who had no voice, and established a link between politics and literature through social commentary. He presents the everyday existence of the lowest people of the English society, and realistically, portrays the horrible conditions of the 19th-century workhouses. *Hard Times* is more than any other of his condition of novels that was influenced by Carlyle's social criticism. Dickens has created a condition of English novel, which was engaged with contemporary and social issues. He is deeply concerned with the conditions of the urban labourers and the excesses of laissez-faire capitalism. He exposes the exploitation of the working class by unfeeling industrialists and the damaging consequences of propagating factual knowledge at the expense of feeling and imagination. (p.43)

The novelist shows his compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of the English society, and contributes to several important social reforms. Dickens, as a social critic, exerts a profound influence on the later novelists who were concerned about social issues. His works play an important role in the implementation of social policies that change the lives of the poor. His active involvement in promoting social reforms raises public awareness against poverty, deprivation of education, child labour, and prostitution. He can be considered a reformist as well as a great social critic of the Victorian age. He succeeds in making the Victorian

public opinion more aware of the conditions of the poor. He depicts persuasively the disorder, squalor, light, decay, and the human misery of the modern industrial city. The novelist believes in the ethical and political potential of literature and the novel in particular. He highlights his fiction as a springboard for debates about moral and social reform. In *Hard Times*, Dickens shows himself as a spoken critic of unjust economic and social conditions. His deeply-felt social commentaries helps to raise the common awareness of reading public. (Oshi et al, 2015, p.44)

Dickens writes his novels with the intimate and first-hand knowledge of the persons and places just as he visits Preston to survey the effects of the strike of manufacturers before writing *Hard Times*. He emphasizes the importance of reality by having sympathy for the poor and helpless labourers who are neglected and mostly sufferers. His philosophy of facts is a perfect example of the heartless and cruel aspect of materialistic Victorian society where Gradgrind and Bounderby are the chief exponents of ideology. *Hard Times* is a great social document; and it has exposed the hollowness of the Victorian society. It is one of the significant writings bearing social criticism and economic inequality. It is a severe attack on the industrial vices and faulty political economy which is responsible for the exploitation of the poor working class and weak section of the society. The novel presents the current issues, like strike at working place which refers to the Preston strike in 1853-54 which was eight months old and had deep impact on the political economy of England. (Sharma,2017, p.19) In this regard, Daiches argues: “*Hard Times*” is based on the morality of the utilitarian industrialism and its effect on the possibilities of human happiness” (Daiches, 1960, p.1056).

The social consciousness of urbanization and industrialization is reflected vividly because Dickens is touched to the heart by the prevailing social condition. Significantly, *Hard Times* throws light on the actual conditions of life of the poor and the prosperous of the 19th -century English society. He describes a city regulated by the utilitarian rules that influence life at every stage in family and work place, from infancy to adulthood. *Hard Times*, more than any other of his novels exposes the conditions of England, its social problems, like education of the poor people, industrial relations and the unequal rights of people which shows class distinction. The novel shows that divorce laws were not easy. (Sharma, 2017,p.21) Cazamian observes Dickens in this novel as an “intermediary link between the social thought of Carlyle and Ruskin” (Cazamian, 1973, p.173). He lays bare the exploitation of the labour class by merciless industrialists. He shows the drastic results of suppressing feeling and imagination to teach them humanity. He is critical about utilitarian laws; so he aims at ensuring justice through ethical and moral means. (Sharma, 2017, p.22)

Through his narrative and characterization, Dickens explains the ideals as well as the harmful effects of industrialization and utilitarianism. He feels that a dependence upon capitalistic practicality without sympathy and brotherly understanding causes difficulties between capital and labour.

The oppressors are so much callous and self-centred that they can go to any extent to nourish their monetary greed; and one can find everywhere poor and helpless victims. Dickens presents the growing anger of the sufferers by resulting into a revolt against the oppression and suppression of the prevailing industrial system. Williams remarks: “*Hard Times* is a harsh indictment of the relentless industrialization of the 19th-century made in the name of progress that was making men into machines” (Williams, 2012, p.380).

Dickens’ *Hard Times* is a great social reflection; and it highlights the hollowness of the Victorian society. Dickens wants to support an idea by presenting his characters in opposite situations and meeting with failures and frustrations in life. His goal is to expose the negative aspect of English education system and emotion and fancy are like skeleton and flesh of a body, both vital to make the system. He wants to give the idea that fancy is a positive alternative to the philosophy of facts so that people can lead a contented and progressive life; and the theme of the novel is vital and outstanding in presenting the social turmoil and transformation in the 19th-century Industrial England. (Sharma, 2017,p.24) According to Briggs: “*Hard Times* can also be considered as a dark fable. The industrial city represents the sad reign of the fables, colonised by soul less humans” (Briggs, 1955, p.19).

Dickens has a special use of characterization in which characters seem to be real for the reader, as T.S Eliot writes: “Dickens’ characters are real because there is no one like them” (Bloom, 2004,p.7). Not only has the description of Coketown presents the picture of society, but also the precise description of each character. Dickens’ characterization portrays the different social classes in an industrial town, in which the three characters: James Harthouse, Josiah Bounderby, and Stephen Blackpool are the representatives of the upper, middle, and working social classes, respectively. Dickens, in *Hard Times*, would like to present the differences between the three social classes, their education, work, living conditions, and even the dialects in the novel focus upon the class distinction of the Victorian society. (Ilhem, 2012)

Upper Class

The main character, Mr. James Harthouse is the representative of the upper class. Mr. James Harthouse, a rich man, an aristocratic member of society visits Coketown because he becomes bored with life; and he looks for something new and refresh, about whom Dickens writes:

Now, this gentleman had a younger brother of still better appearance Than himself, who had tried life as a Coronet of Dragoons, and found it a bore; and had afterwards tried it in train of an English minister abroad, and found it a bore; and they had then gone yachting about the world, and got bored everywhere. (Dickens, 1854, p.102)

From the time of his arrival to Coketown, Mr. Harthouse’s goal was to seduce Louisa and to find his lost love. James Harthouse, a young politician without having principles, comes to

Coketown, takes advantage of Louisa's unhappy life with Bounderby and attempts to seduce her" (Drabble, 2000). Mr. Harthouse bored because he came of a rich family and ten hours of work to feed oneself was not his concern, or a part of his regime. There is no much description of the living condition in the upper class's family. There is a little evidence from the late 19th-century to support the family picture of the bourgeois family at the light of the Industrial Revolution as a secure emotional refuge from the physical and moral horror of an encircling market economy. (Harris, 1994)

Middle Class

Mr. Josiah Bounderby is a man of the middle class. He is "a rich man: a banker, a merchant, and a manufacturer," Dickens goes on to personify him as:

A big, loud man, with a stare and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, [...] A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such as trained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was the Bully of humility. (Dickens, 1854, p.16)

Mr. Bounderby leads everybody to believe that he works hard to reach the position of a wealthy man and a factory owner, and claims that each member from the middle class works hard to get the honour of being where he is. In any conversation, he speaks of his poor childhood; and how his mother abandons him and leaves him to his drunken grandmother to attract people's sympathy:

I hadn't a shoe to my foot. As to a stocking, I didn't know such a thing by name. I passed the day in a ditch, and the night in a pigsty. That's the way I spent my tenth birthday [...]. (Dickens, 1854, p.16)

To the point when his mother, Mrs. Pegler appears and uncovers the reality that she did not abandon him. He has no interest in helping and speaking with people whose class is lower than him as Dickens says to Mr. Jupe: "[...] we are the people who know the value of time and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time" (p.28), he keeps mocking and laughing at the people of circus speech's bad manner when Mr. Blackpool asks for his help. He never makes any consideration to other people's feeling, because he always regards them as workers that can be replaced easily any time. (Radja,2014, p.37)

Poor Working Class

Mr. Stephen Blackpool is a representative of the poor working class. A worker in Bounderby's factory and lives a hard life with his drunkard wife. People call him old Stephen although he is forty years old. Dickens regards him as:

A rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron grey hair lay long and thin, old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition. (Dickens, 1854, p.54)

Although Stephen always knows what he wants is something difficult and comes to be impossible; he is a pessimistic and honest-type man. He falls in love with Rachael who is from the lower class and works at the same factory with him. Getting married with Rachael was his only dream which was something impossible just like Bounderby tells him when he asks for divorce.

Similarities and Differences

This paper would like to highlight similarities and differences among Kazi Nazrul Islam, Thomas Traherne, and Charles Dickens through investigating their literary works. These authors are of different countries and of different periods: Kazi Nazrul Islam was a revolutionary poet of the 20th-century Bangladesh. Thomas Traherne was a poet, clergyman, theologian, and religious writer of the 17th-century England. Dickens was a fiction writer and social critic of the 19th-century England. These writers have come of middle class families; their personal experiences regarding life and familial matters are not similar. At every sphere of life, they had to stumble to bear the heavy burden of poverty. Yet poverty didn't dishearten their mind. As globe trackers, they have travelled a long way with a view to fulfilling their glorious success. They never got afraid of death. Through their literary merit, they have enabled to occupy prominent place in the history of English literature.

Anyway, If Nazrul would compose poetry and songs in the English language, undoubtedly, his writings would be globalized. Nazrul is an unrivalled poet in the Bengali literature. Though Nazrul didn't write in English, his writings have been translated in many languages around the world. He was a Bengali rebel poet, writer, and musician. He is the national poet of Bangladesh. He is popularly known as Nazrul, he has produced a large number of poetry and music with themes that include religious devotion and rebellion against oppression and injustice. On the other hand, Traherne's writings present the glory of creation what he perceives as his intimate relationship with God. His writing conveys an ardent, almost childlike love of God. His love for the natural world is expressed in his works, including the poem, "Poverty" by a treatment of nature that evokes romantic issues.

Moreover, Dickens is regarded as a reformist and a great social critic of the Victorian age. He succeeds in making the Victorian public opinion more aware of the conditions of the poor and the downtrodden. He depicts persuasively the disorder, squalor, light, decay, and the human misery of the modern industrial city. He believes in the ethical and political potential of literature and the novel. He highlights his fiction as a springboard for debates about the moral and social reform.

From the above discussion, we can realize that Nazrul's and Dickens' treatment of the poor and poverty is very much similar. One is a rebel poet and another is a great novelist; both of them aim to look at unveiling the social system of the age. Nazrul's poem, "Poverty," focuses on the deep love and affection for the poor communities. On the contrary, Dickens' novel, *Hard Times*, depicts poverty and social stratification of the Victorian age. Both writers' slogan is to present the miserable situation of the poor, the oppressive, and the ruled. They have gathered much more personal experiences about the financial constraints since childhood. They have tasted the bitter experiences of poverty as minute observers socially and economically. As a result, both of them have enabled to become icons and legendary figures for all ages around the world through their writings.

If we look at Nazrul and Traheren, we see that both poets have similar attitudes towards their respective religion and God. Nazrul has composed poetry and songs for rebellion, religion and devotion to God; Traherne has written poetry for deep love and veneration to God. He is a mystic and metaphysical poet of the 17th-century England. He suffers from spiritual crisis though he is a clergy man. Both writers are found to have expressed their profound love to God. The title of the poems of both poets is "Poverty." Its theme is based on spiritual crisis of human mind. In Nazrul's poem, we see two aspects: love towards God and love for the poor of the poorest; the poet has expressed his deep love and respect to God and mankind. Now, it is clear to us that Traherne's and Dickens's attitude is not similar. Dickens didn't raise any issues about religious questions in *Hard Times*; but, Traherne's "Poverty" deals with Christianity. And, Nazrul's "Poverty" depicts also the devoted soul to God and perfect love for the poor and God. Dickens is an expedient thinker like Francis Bacon. Traheren is a devoted and mystic poet like Herbert and Vaughan who are known as the Metaphysical poets. Among Traherne, Nazrul, and Dickens, in this regard, Nazrul can be regarded as a "Catalyst" writer, because Nazrul and Traherne have similar attitudes towards God in the light of Islam and Christianity, respectively; and Nazrul and Dickens have also similar attitudes to the poor and poverty. But, Traherne and Dickens are different type of writers from each other. Traherne has written for Christ and God, and Dickens has written for the poor of the poorest of the Victorian age.

Significance of the Study

The aim of the paper is to foster different aspects of poverty through Nazrul's, Traherne's, and Dickens' thoughts and ideas. Poverty can demolish and destruct human social, economic, and political life at any time. Poverty can also turn a man into tragic demise. The literary works of

these writers bear the perfect testimony of human complexities and barriers. Nazrul, Traherne, and Dickens are the representative of the age. Spiritual as well as psychological crisis of human mind have been minutely reflected in their works. This paper signifies the bitter experiences of the authors' personal lives and the born-poverty of mankind. A born-poverty affected man can realize the unhappy state of another man's life. Nazrul's and Dickens' personal experiences are the glaring examples of the born-poor, who are socially and economically handicapped. This paper also highlights the contemporary social, economic, and political system of the authors.

In the paper, the current researcher tries heart and soul to focus upon the writers' contemporary age in the light of literary works as well as brief notes of biographies. The paper would like to examine the social, political, and economic system of the age. With the passage of time poverty is like an orbital wheel, which attacks human being like a giant and crushes human life. We should not be disheartened and broken heart seeing poverty. We can mention a proverb in this regard: "Make hey while the sun shines." We should have strong will and courage to fight against poverty. Those who have defeated poverty have enabled to bring a radiant success in life. Though Nazrul and Dickens are utterly poor, they never surrender themselves to poverty, rather they fight against it. Poverty is natural to human being. We should not despise any poor people in society or in community; rather we should raise our helping hands in time of danger and poverty. Should it be our only motto to help the poor of the poorest without differentiating race, color, caste and religion?

We have same blood and flesh. We are all human being. We are for all and all is for us. Here is an English song of Declan Galbraith:

*Everyday I ask myself
What will I have to do to be a man?
Do I have to stand and fight
To prove to everybody who I am?
Is that what my life is for
To waste in a world full of war?*

From the sentences said above, we can learn that there may not be any alternative way without loving and helping the poor. We want peace, but we don't war. May peace prevail always in humanmind? Should it be our only motto of life? We should try our level best to help any person who reside beside our door. Those who have scarified their lives for the greater welfare of mankind have become legendary figures for all ages and for all times.

Conclusion

The current researchers have tried to focus on the manifestations of poverty through Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Poverty", Thomas Montague Traherne's *Poverty*, and Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* and critics' and scholars' viewpoints. These writers have faced a great deal of great hardship, bitterness experiences, and psychological conflicts during their lifespan. They have

wanted to throw a light on personal inflicting senses and mental disorders of the poor communities through their works in many ways with a view to bringing about revolutionary changes of World literature. Their texts have well-popularised and globalised with the passage of time in the history of English literature. Certainly, these writers and their texts are the symbol of both postmodern society and postmodern literature. No writer can express personal feeling and imagination if he has not tasted the bitterness experience of poverty in life. However, this study has fostered different aspects of poverty through investigating the selected-works as well as the critical comments made by critics and scholars.

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