

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHARLES DICKENS' EXPOSITION OF SOCIAL CLASS PREJUDICES IN OLIVER TWIST

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research work is to show to the reading audience how discrimination impacts social relationships and has negative effects on people pertaining to different social classes. It seeks to critically highlight how the discrimination factor works among people belonging to different social classes and their consequences on society both particularly and as a whole. The findings of this study reveal that *Oliver Twist* is a good illustration of the social injustices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century England. Throughout the novel, Charles Dickens teaches us that treating a person unfairly because of his/her appurtenance to a certain social class is characteristic of Barbary and ignorance. All in all, *Oliver Twist* is a spotlight on the evil of discrimination.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, class, society, impact, injustice

**Résumé :** Le but de ce travail de recherche est de montrer aux lecteurs les impacts de la discrimination sur les relations sociales, et comment est-ce qu'elle affecte négativement les personnes appartenant à différentes classes sociales. Elle se voudrait une étude qui pose un regard critique sur les interactions entre les différents personnages eu égard à leurs relations dans l'œuvre écrite par. A cet effet, elle met en relief comment le facteur de la discrimination agit parmi des individus appartenant à différentes classes sociales et ses conséquences sur la société aussi bien de façon particulière que globalement. Les résultats de l'étude révèlent que l'œuvre est une bonne illustration des injustices sociales dans l'Angleterre du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle. Tout le long du roman, Charles Dickens nous enseigne que le fait de traiter une personne injustement pour cause de son appartenance à une certaine classe sociale est caractéristique de la barbarie et de l'ignorance. En somme, *Oliver Twist* attire l'attention sur le mal de la discrimination.

**Mots Clés :** Discrimination, class, impact, injustice, société

## Introduction

Soyemi Olusegun defines literature as being *an imaginative interpretation of what could happen in real life*. (Djangbo (2011-2012)). Every literary work reflects, politically, socially, and culturally the perception of its author on some situations or events of his time. It is one of the ways through which human beings can express themselves on the political, social, and economic status of their community. Each novelist or writer has a message to convey. It deals with many themes namely, women's identity, love, racial segregation, to mention but a few. That is what Taofiki Koumakpai & Joiny Towa-sello (2016) frame in the following words:

As for Charles Dickens, he also depicts some social illnesses and points out his concept of women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through novels such as *Great Expectations*, *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*. [...] Charles Dickens, as a social novelist, has put emphasis on women's proper identity, making strong advocacy in favor of education and Facts

Taofiki & Joiny (2016, p.86)

A due consideration of such a stance clearly confirms that Charles Dickens, far from engaging in an idle business of jotting mere words on a paper, is really dedicated to address through the craft he's great at and undeniably much enjoys the social evils of his time. This is to be the concern of men of letters and not the other way round. Through his work, it is evident that human wickedness constitutes a barrier to social justice. As Hergie A. Seguedeme & Joiny Towa-sello (2017) point out: "as it happened to Jesus-Christ, his disciples and the kings of his time, human glory pushes them to commit crime by killing their fellow creatures. Their goal is not even thinkable." (Hergie and al. (2017)). Four key points make up the structure of this work. The first presents the theoretical background of the study. The second one deals with the different aspects of discrimination among men according to their societal stratification. The third point concerns itself with the consequences of discrimination on society both particularly and globally considered. A delineation of perspectives and approaches of solutions in dealing with discrimination appears under the development of the fourth point.

### 0.1-Theoretical Background

#### -Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

Human beings are basically evil. Love, peace and joy that are to contribute to the thriving of men are regrettably lacking in the world. A reflection of such a state of our world Charles Dickens indirectly says discrimination is the cause of. The question which is to be answered is to know how this social malady impacts negatively social relationships by the way of foiling just interactions among people belonging to different social classes. Such considerations are the *raison d'être* of the present academic endeavor. The purpose of the study is to make readers consider how discrimination works and why a collective effort at mercilessly dealing with it should be promoted. There's an expectation that after

an analysis of the facts, readers be able to reason out how incongruent it would be if such is the state of affairs in the world not to respond to the call of collectively standing against discrimination in all its forms.

### **-Methodological Approach**

It is obvious and reasonable that the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century England has boomed the economy of the country. As such there has been a division of the men into classes according to the economic estimation of the society of the then United Kingdom. Therefore, new historicism as it *does not posit historical processes as unalterable and inexorable, but it does tend to discover limits or constraints upon individual intervention* (Greenblatt 1990, p.74) is used here for the purpose aforementioned, to wit how the historical context has propelled men to the extreme of the social stratification to the ends of subjecting them to their own evil schemes -in nature- because of certain natural and/ accidental disadvantages that they had.

### **-Literature Review**

In human social behavior, the notion of discrimination refers to the act of making a distinction between persons belonging to different social classes or their category in terms of gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion, etc... As for gender identity, it has been a concern for centuries. Hergie A. Seguedeme (2016) posits that;

If I take into account how home-life has been described so far in the novels, I am inclined to think that it is the male partner, the father and presumably the protector of the family, who is responsible for the chaos prevailing in the house. He is often described as a devil who turns home-life into a hell (Walter Morel in *Sons and Lovers* in vivid example of such a man), whereas the wife and the mother is often depicted as an angel who struggles against her devilish' husband to make her home look like paradise.

Seguedeme (2016, p.169)

From the quotation above, at the first glance, I could say that women are favored, being treated as angels while men are perceived as devilish. But it is not always so, as girls and women have made major strides since 1990, but they have not yet gained gender equity. The disadvantages women and girls are facing constitutes a major source of inequality (Human Development Reports, 2018). There (was) a discriminatory atmosphere which (stands) as the peculiar predicament to women's blossoming (Koumakpai, Taofiki & Towa-sello K. Joiny, 2016).

But when talking about classism, it does not necessarily have to do with gender inequality. There is the other side of the coin that Charles Dickens pinpoints it in such a novel as *Oliver Twist*, when he criticizes the Parish Boards' attitudes towards Oliver, the main character of the novel (Dickens 1838). The same reality he converges on in *Great Expectations*, thus providing the proof that discrimination among individuals belonging to different social classes he most of all seeks to combat. In fact, Estella was adopted and raised by the wealthy and eccentric Miss Havisham to become a lady. However, when Pip, the protagonist

of the novel was introduced to Miss Havisham, Estella treated him with great disdain and distrust (Dickens 1861). This is laid bare in the following passage; She fired when she asked the last question, and she slapped my face with such force as she had, when I answered it. 'Now?' said she. 'You little coarse monster, what do you think of me now?'<sup>1</sup>

In his turn, George Eliot's *Middlemarch* emphasized the issue of unfair treatment of people which is introduced early in the novel. Here, the reality depicted by Eliot runs counter to the traditional and normal judgment any reasonable man might first make in consideration of the normal course of things among individuals belonging to different social classes. Dorothea Brooke is an intelligent, wealthy woman who gave herself the task of redesigning cottages for her uncle's tenants. But she ends up breaking with her former husband on account of his coldness towards the very fact that the latter resented her energy and enthusiasm though an elderly Reverend.

There is another representation of the fact, which Charlotte Bronte, in *Jane Eyre*, a novel reflecting her own living conditions. Jane, the main character is belittled by her cousins' John Reed and his sisters Eliza and Georgiana because of her social class appurtenance. Mr. Blocklehurst's assaults on her at Lowood School, Miss Scatcherd's harshness towards her person..., are instances in which the author critically reveals the Victorian stigmata on women on one hand and on individuals of different social classes in particular. This says a lot on how extremely abhorrent discrimination is.

In a nutshell, discrimination is any attitude that tends to put stigma on others due to their social status, religious beliefs, nationality, or skin color. Being one of the major societal concerns, discrimination in social classes should be a main case of study. It is what I devote this research work to for the purpose of investigating how Dickens conceives of it through the characters he associates with it.

## 0.2 Theoretical framework

Different lenses allow critics to consider works of art based on certain assumptions. Those assumptions come from the theories and decide what particular aspects of a work are important. My concern here is to relate the issue of social classes to the context in which it originated and how it has impacted the whole world's view on this till this very day. In fact, New Historicism is a literary theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. According to Taofiki Koumakpai, & Joiny Towa-sello (2016),

New Historicism is a theory in literary criticism which suggests that literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. This theory arose in the 1980s under the leadership of Stephen Greenblatt who appears to be its main proponent. It gained ground and became quite popular in the 1990s.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Dickens, (*Great Expectations*)!!!! What's that? A book, an article? London: Oxford University Press, 1861, p. 76

Taofiki &amp; Joiny (2016, p.86)

The interpretation of the quotation above follows the pattern according to which New Historicism takes two forms: the first form is about analyzing the work in the context in which it was created, and the second form concerns analysis of the work in the context in which it was critically evaluated. That's the reason why "New historicists assert that literature 'does not exist outside time and place and cannot be interpreted without reference to the era in which it was written'" (Kirszner and Mandell, 2018). It is a generalized truth that the treatment and evaluation a scholar makes of a given theme lies in the cultural prescriptions of the environment he/she is in and/or the social class he/she judges him/herself to belong to. For example, there is no conceiving of an adequacy of ideas regarding which class of the society hinders the thriving of the other. That's why there cannot be an objective reading of these kinds of works. The adoption of the present methodological approaches then best suits the goal to be achieved. The picture Dickens portrays in interactions between characters such as Oliver, Mr. Bumble, Mr. Grimwig, Fagin, Monks, Jack Dawkins, and Nancy elucidates his opinion on discrimination on the basis of social classes with a special emphasis on the life of the main character and the relationship between him and the parish boards. In fact, Oliver was a poor boy of the underclass. The parish guardians were from the middle class. The young boy was born in a workhouse, a building where able-bodied poor boys are compelled to labor. Oliver's mother died at his birth, thus he was taken as a parish child. Oliver was ill-treated, hit several times for non-rational motives. As Charles Dickens could say: "for the next eight or ten months, Oliver was the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception. He was brought up by hand." (Charles Dickens 1838, p.07). Being deceived by the ones around him, he fled to London in hope of having a better life. However, life had been as harsh as ever, because he inadvertently entered criminal gangs. Before he could realize it, there was no way out. Oliver, like the other young people of the underclass, was neglected and cheated by the guardians. Dickens pointed out their treachery in these words:

The elderly female was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children; and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for herself. So, she appropriated the greater part of the weekly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them.

Charles Dickens (1838, p.08)

They appropriated the allowance dedicated to the weekly stipend of the poor boys to their own use. And the boys were left in the subjection of the slow inaudible buffetings of starvation in the stomach, despised by all, and pitied by none. They were traded and offered like vile objects. So, the narrator insisted on the fact that:



Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Charles Dickens (1838, p.21)

As the supper allotted by the dietary was not satisfying to the starving children, the act of asking for more food was considered an impious and profane offence. And the due punishment of such a crime is to be sold or offered as an apprentice. The drudgeries endured by the people of the underclass were more like that of enslaved men. Though they were parish men and women who preached Christian morality, they behaved without compassion towards the paupers under their care. One of them is Mr. Bumble. He is a pompous, self-important beadle; a minor church official for the workhouse where Oliver was born. Dickens, mercilessly satirizes his self-righteousness, greed, hypocrisy, and folly, of which his name is an obvious symbol. He makes a mess of the lives of the poor in the workhouse, especially Oliver's. He destroyed and ruined their hope. Death was their only issue for freedom from a harsh living condition. The government compelled them to have no hope, except from believing in a miserable life. Many of the poor have committed suicide or were killed, which put on high the mortality rates. In addition, the poor were subject to disdain and distrust. They inspired reproof and disgust. Mr. Grimwig, in Dickens' novel, talking about Oliver, says:

'He may have worse; I say [...] 'Where does he come from! Who is he? What is he? He has had a fever. What of that? Fevers are not peculiar to good people; are they? Bad people have fevers sometimes; haven't they, eh? I knew a man who was hung in Jamaica for murdering his master. He had had a fever six times; he wasn't recommended to mercy on that account. Pooh! nonsense!'

Charles Dickens (1838, p.158)

Mr. Grimwig is from the upper middle class. He is Mr. Brownlow's pessimistic and curmudgeon friend. Always dragging with him a sense of superiority, he could not help despising the poor. The poor taken advantage of because of their social class, and as a result were prone to developing an inferiority complex. They were used and exploited. Charles Dickens wrote the novel *Oliver Twist* to draw people's attention on classism, and to unveil the governmental hypocrite, nefarious policies against the underclass. On the other side, what is remarkable is Dickens's choice of a character which bears a Jewish name. Fagin is a fictional character in Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist*. In the preface to the novel, he is described as a 'receiver of stolen goods'. He is the leader of a group of children whom he teaches to make their livings by pickpocketing rich people, and other criminal activities, in exchange for shelter.

Oliver was not Fagin's only pupil. There was a sickly, vicious young man, prone to violent fits and teeming with inexplicable hatred. With Fagin, Monks schemes to give Oliver a bad reputation. He acted to mess Oliver's life, attempting to hide the latter's chance to discover who he really is. As he says in the novel: "so the only proofs of the boy's identity lie at the bottom of the river, and the old hag that received them from the mother is rotting in her coffin." (Charles Dickens (1838, p.472).

Murder or robbery are but a game to Monks. Although a monk is a man who devoted part or all of his life to a religion, Monks did not seem to epitomize his name. I consider the acts of Fagin and his pupils as a reaction against wealthy aristocratic discriminatory attitudes. The reason behind such atrocities the boys were victim of is nothing else than the gang leaders' intelligent design to exploit them so as to climb the societal ladder in order to meritoriously bear the name they have been given by the narrator. There is also the possibility that failing the moral social ostracism which they themselves accepted as their definite fate mentally and that they were really victim of, chances are they could be relishing their commandment of the boys for the purpose of gaining a sense of importance and worth.

### 1. Oliver Twist: an autobiographical weapon?

The novel is about the life of Oliver, an orphan born in a workhouse, and Dickens uses his situation to criticize public policy toward the poor in 1830s England. Oliver is between nine and twelve years old when the main action of the novel occurs. Though treated with cruelty and surrounded by coarseness for most of his life, he is a pious, innocent child, and his charms draw the attention of several wealthy benefactors. His true identity is the central mystery of the novel Charles Dickens (February 7, 1812 to June 9, 1870) was a prolific and highly influential 19<sup>th</sup> century British author, he was a journalist, editor, illustrator and social commentator who penned many highly appreciated novels in the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, ect... Dickens is remembered as one of the most important and influential writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among his accomplishments, he has been lauded for providing a stark portrait of the Victorian era underclass, helping to bring about societal change. When Dickens died of a stroke, he left his final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, unfinished. As it is said: "Dickens was one of the great literary geniuses of all time and one of the most popular. It has been estimated that one out of ten Britons who could read, read his works, and then read them aloud to many others!"<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Different aspects of Discrimination in social classes

### 2.1 Institutional discrimination

Throughout the history of England written by Tim Lambert<sup>3</sup>, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were increasing demands for reforms. These demands were translated by the people's desire of redistributing more fairly constituencies and

<sup>2</sup> "Dickens' Popularity" The Victorian Web. Retrieved from [www.victorianweb.org](http://www.victorianweb.org). Visited on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 3 PM

<sup>3</sup> Tim Lambert is a famous British historian

they also wanted the franchise extended. For the right to vote was not given to all men in that period. At that time, there were two types of constituencies, boroughs or town areas and country or rural areas. However, the constituencies had not been changed for centuries and they no longer received the approbation of the population.<sup>4</sup> Institutional discrimination appears in laws, and practices that make up a society, it is called institutional classism. Power and authority are given only to the people of the upper class. And when the ruling scepter is given to the most lickerish, these people set laws that still favor the wealthy class to the detriment of the underclass. The poor will be poorer and the wealthy will still be richer. This is the system of classism. The opportunity of enjoying modest living is not given to everybody. The Institutional Classism places the wealthy and materially powerful n top of the underclass and bid them obey or die of hunger. The government consciously renders people's lives miserable by instituting regulations that disadvantage the poor. This is what Tim Lambert alludes to in saying that:

However, despite its booming industries there was a great deal of severe poverty in 19th century London. Even at the end of the 19th century about 20% of the population were living at subsistence (bare survival) level. About 10% of the population were living *below* subsistence level. Houses were often overcrowded. In the East End there were many doss houses where for a few pennies a night people could hire a bed. However, if you had no money at all you had to enter a workhouse. In the workhouse conditions were made as harsh as possible to dissuade people from asking the state for help. The inmates were made to do hard and unpleasant work.<sup>5</sup>

The government set an economic system which creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet. Economics, education, health outcomes, fashion, and music are inherently designed to favor people who have more money or wealth over those who do not have any. Classism can be seen in many institutions such as banks, colleges, and other institutions and this is how the supposedly inferior class has remained for centuries subject to diverse injustices from their part. Having said that classism can manifest also in interpersonal relationships and this is what the next subtitle is dedicated to.

## 2.2 Interpersonal Classism

Discrimination in social classes is also known as 'Classism'. This discrimination on the basis of social class still occurs in societies around the world today. Interpersonal classism includes individual attitudes, behaviors, and practices that are set up to benefit the upper class at the expense of the lower class or vice versa. It is defined as an: "Acceptance and justification of classism by working class and poor people, such as feelings of inferiority to higher-class

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<sup>4</sup> "History of England" a book or an article? by Tim Lambert: [www.localhistories.org](http://www.localhistories.org) , visited on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 11:45 AM

<sup>5</sup> "A Short History of England" by Tim Lambert: [www.localhistories.org](http://www.localhistories.org) , visited on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 9:45 AM



people, feelings of superiority to people lower on the class spectrum than oneself, hostility and blame toward other working-class or poor people, and beliefs that classist institutions are fair.”<sup>6</sup> The main point that I seek to make is that instance of things in which involvement in certain societal duties is regulated by the social class one belong to. In other words, the interpersonal classism is justified by the people of the working class as they feel inferior to those of higher-class or vice-versa. The difference in social status between people determine how they behave toward each other and the prejudices they likely hold toward each other. In other words, people of higher status do not generally mix with lower status people. This justifies the Association of Magazine Media’s definition of classism stated as such: Classism is “any attitude or institutional practice which subordinates people due to income, occupation, education and/or their economic condition.”<sup>7</sup> Interpersonal classism creates a feeling of inferiority in the people pertaining to the underclass, while it makes the upper class feel superior, this influences decision-makings. The wiser would not be always the wealthy and not every poor is wise. However, the poor would substitute his point of view to the one of the wealthy man. As it is written in the Holy Bible, King James Version: “ The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answered roughly.”<sup>8</sup> The poor makes earnest, humble or urgent request for help from someone in authority, but the latter answers in a violent manner. All around the world, the attitudes of the upper class towards the underclass are sometimes rough and disregarding.

### 2.3 Economic Discrimination

This is discrimination based on economic factors. These factors can include job availability of goods and services, and the amount of capital investment funding available to minorities for business. This can include discrimination against workers, consumers, and minority-owned businesses. In British history, the industrial revolution created an unprecedented demand for female and child labor. Industrialists were in greater demand than ever. Mines, factories, and shops needed help, and not enough men or women could fill their needs. Children were cheap, plentiful, and easy to control. Children had always worked alongside their parents, but before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they usually worked part time. In the new textile factories, women and children were often made to work very long hours for very low wages.<sup>9</sup> Here, industrialists used the poor to get rich. In 1792, well-meaning magistrates met in Berkshire and devised a system for helping the poor. Low wages were supplemented with money raised by a poor rate. Many areas of England adopted the system, but it proved very expensive and the government decided to change things.

In 1834, they passed the Poor Law Amendment Act. In future, the poor were to be treated as harshly as possible to dissuade them from seeking help from

<sup>6</sup> This is quoted from “Classism definitions”. [gustavus.edu](http://gustavus.edu). Retrieved on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018, visited on 22<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 09:43 AM

<sup>7</sup> The Association of Magazine Media is a nonprofit trade association for the magazine media industry.

<sup>8</sup> *Holy Bible*, King James Version. Proverbs 18 :23

<sup>9</sup> “*The factory Acts, A History of English Government*”, [localhistories.org](http://localhistories.org), visited on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 8:00 AM

the state. In future able bodied people with no income were to be forced to enter a workhouse. In practice some of the elected Boards of Guardians sometimes gave the unemployed outdoor relief. They were given money and allowed to live in their own homes.<sup>10</sup>

For the unfortunate people made to enter workhouses life was made as unpleasant as possible, as described in *Oliver Twist* written by Charles Dickens. Married couples were separated and children over seven were separated from their parents. The inmates were made to do hard work like breaking stones to make roads or breaking bones to make fertilizer. Though Charles Dickens does not extensively mark instances in which the rich oppress the poor, Karl Marx's writings do just that and in them, a greater expanding of such issues will be found.

### 3. Consequences of Discrimination in social classes

The effects of classism are felt by individuals throughout the world. The negative and damaging impacts of classism are felt in such areas as education, employment, housing, and overall political and economic power. By the age of three to ten, children are already eager to know more about the people around them. But a description that tends to lower some and elevate others would probably compromise relationships. As a sociologist could say:

Prejudices may soon develop targeted toward these categories of people based on what children learn from parents, friends, and others they come into contact with through places such as church, school, and day care. It is not until later in a child's development that he begins to distinguish other people according to their personal wealth and social standing in the community.<sup>11</sup>

These children's behavior or mindset would be automatically changed for the rest of their life. A child could not make a distinction until he is guided and taught about the fact. Life chances at education and jobs are highly influenced by the class a person is born into. The higher one's social status, the better one's chances of securing a solid education and meaningful career. Where one individual may be provided a paid for education and career opportunities upon graduation, another may have to work harder to get pay for their education and to obtain employment independently upon graduation. People in this situation, without an adequate understanding of how class works, may internalize or justify classism and blame themselves for their inability to obtain or maintain their desired class status. Discrimination in the basis of social class creates low self-esteem, low expectations, discouragement, and can lead to bitterness towards others who are working class which can further divide communities. As Garrity (2005) points out: 'We are almost always identified by economic status in

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<sup>10</sup> "History of England" by Tim Lambert: [www.localhistories.org](http://www.localhistories.org), visited on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 11:45 AM

<sup>11</sup> "Social Class Prejudice". *Encyclopedia.com*. Retrieved on 08<sup>th</sup> January 2019; visited on 23<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 10:30 AM

our culture.” (Garrity 2005, pp.22-23) A certain treatment a person has been given tends to mold him/her accordingly. Thus, society can put you down or raise you up, it depends on how you are related with. Talking about classism, a scientist says:

It is therefore, the fundamental oppression. All other It is therefore, the fundamental oppression. All other oppressions have been invented and devised as means of supporting this fundamental oppression. These other oppressions operate for dividing the economically exploited group of people against each other on the excuse or pretext of race, sex, etc., thus weakening their unity against the exploitation and maneuvering each group to assist in enforcing the other groups to submit to the economic oppression.<sup>12</sup>

Discrimination on the basis of social class is the fundamental oppression in the world. The other forms of oppressions assist in ensuring that the poor adapt to the economic subjugation.

Any postcolonial society, in which people are marginalized, worse, looked down as inferiors, will be divided to the point of resistance and possible rebellion. Power, whether economic, social or cultural in the hands of a few people can be disastrously devastating. A house that is divided will soon tumble down. Interestingly, it will tumble down or gravitate towards indiscipline when one side gets away with atrocities, corruption or injustices.<sup>13</sup>

Classism, if not dealt with will degenerate into violence, conflicts and rebellion. When people will be fed up with the wrongs they endure in silence, they will stand for their rights. Street manifestations would probably end up in materials destruction or even worse.

#### 4. Approaches of Solutions

There is no quick fix, because the power of change, primarily, lies in the hands of the privileged and they are few who sacrifice their own comforts, or those of their future generations to benefit strangers. So, the burden lies on the individual. We must each make a personal resolution to make a priority of social justice; maintain an attitude toward working on classism and other oppression issues which is urgent, and keep a long-term perspective toward change. God has created men equal, therefore, irrespective of who you are and your social background, we are all equal. Classism hurts society; it increases stereotyping, demeans people, and it should not, under any circumstance, be tolerated or accepted. In any given opportunity, it should be publicized and protested against. There is a parental responsibility that imposes. Genitors should play their part in this common battle by instilling ethical behavior into their kids, so that they may be able to prevent future behavior of classism. In the same way,

<sup>12</sup> “The Oppression Of Classism- Re-evaluation Counseling”, retrieved from <http://www.rc.org>; visited on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 3:50 PM

<sup>13</sup> “Letter: Classism oftentimes a mask for silent wrongs in Jamaica”, [www.allcaribnews.com](http://www.allcaribnews.com); visited on March 07<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 4:07 PM

consequences of classism should be taught to students. They can be invited to write articles or note that promote unity in society. Education is key to understanding what is unknown and unfamiliar. We must start raising awareness. We have to get the problem out of its hidden place to the public. In order to hush up classism, we should adopt model non-classist behavior and attitudes. For this cause, we should: 'Identify and work to counteract present injustice and then prevent further generations of citizens who are blind to the plight of their fellow man. What can we do in our own lives to bring about the so much longed for change. How can we teach children to recognize abuses against our fellows?'"<sup>14</sup> There must be personal involvement to eradicate classism. Everyone should get involved in activities or events outside of their comfort zones to get in touch with other people's realities. Young men must be encouraged to dream big, and think outside their class box. To eradicate this phenomenon in institutions, policies, and politics, government support is needed. Persons in authority should understand that their role is to create a fair living condition to their citizens.

Studies have also found that the rich exert far more influence over government than the rest of us. This imbalance means that wealthy people who do something about inequality may have more power to make an impact than everybody else.<sup>15</sup>

We cannot end classism until people make an effort to develop long and lasting unselfish relationships with others. Once that is done, they can work on bridging the gap between classes.

One way that classism is perpetuated is by blaming the poor for their circumstances. This is a kind of victim blaming. Many people engage in victim blaming by asserting that the poor do not make sound financial decisions, are not intelligent, and do not work hard enough. To keep from engaging in victim blaming yourself, you should familiarize yourself with some common ways in which people blame the poor for their circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Blaming the poor for being poor is perpetuating the internalization of classism. Instead of blaming them, we should lend them a hand. In reality, poor people work harder than the other, but come out with low income. So the problem is not working harder, but favoring everybody to have a chance to succeed.

## Conclusion

The history of all existing society is the record of class struggles. Freeman and slave, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman. In a word, oppressor and

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<sup>14</sup> "Facing Classism": [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com), visited on March 06<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 09:14 AM

<sup>15</sup> "Classism- News, Research and Analysis- The Conversation", [theconversation.com](http://theconversation.com). Visited on March 06<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 10:23 AM

<sup>16</sup> "End Victim Blaming", [books.google.bj](http://books.google.bj). Visited on March 06<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 01:34 PM

oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight; a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In his novel, such as *Oliver Twist* which is about the inequalities and unfair treatment endured by the poor people, the lower class, Charles Dickens criticizes the way the government unhook lower class and how discrimination impacts social relationships and has negative effects on people pertaining to different social classes. One of the most theme depicted in the novel is the discrimination in social classes which is translated mostly by the discriminatory attitudes of Mr. Bumble, a parish board, towards poor Oliver. From my literature review to my theoretical framework, I have found out that discrimination in social classes is one of the multifaceted inequalities which leads to unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice. In human social behavior, discrimination is making a distinction towards a person based on the social class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong. These include gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion. Thus, as I have pointed out in chapter four, there are different aspects of discrimination in social classes such as institutional, interpersonal, and economic discrimination. In *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens explores the different aspects of social concerns. I have found out that the main character was discriminated throughout the novel. *Oliver Twist* is notable for its unromantic portrayal by Dickens of criminals and their sordid lives, as well as for exposing the cruel treatment endured by the poor people in London in the mid-19th century. Oliver was born and raised into a life of poverty and misfortune in a workhouse. Around the time of Oliver's ninth birthday, Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle, removes Oliver from the baby farm and puts him to work picking and weaving oakum at the main workhouse. In this early example of the social novel, Dickens satirizes the hypocrisies of his time. Other big themes of the novel are child labour, the recruitment of children as criminals, and the presence of street children. Finally, I can say that discrimination on the basis of social classes is still evident today. It hurts society and causes much bitterness. And everybody should get involve in the fight against classism.

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### Other

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