

## The aspects of New Historicism as reflected in "Jude the Obscure" by Thomas Hardy and "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens

Hasan Marwan Yahya

Institute of Fine Arts /Directorate of Education in Nineveh

### Abstract

Before the emergence of New Historicism, there was enormous tension between New Criticism and Traditional Historicism. They Were split on how to analyze the literary work; New Historicism came to solve this problem and rejected the trends of the new criticism and the traditional historians. But on the other hand, new historians believed that literature couldn't be studied in isolation. Under this state, I clarify the importance of this literary theory in my topic: The aspects of New Historicism as reflected by "Jude the Obscure" by Thomas Hardy and "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. It believes in the Textuality of History and the Historicity of Texts. The movement also believes in the Objectivity of history as a myth. It considers that history is not a linear and progressive account of past events. It believes that power relations are the most critical context of interpreting texts; we read texts to examine the working of power. It focuses on marginalized voices and texts. It believes that text and context should study together. It includes culture in the field of history. It believes that culture and identity are mutually constitutive (shape and are shaped by each other). It has been criticized for its pessimism. It identifies the task of a new historicist critic. I have analyzed and diagnosed the work of the new historians and how they solved the problems between the traditional historians and the new critics through an objective, rational and impartial study to reach a good vision, the right one, and an acceptable level in the analysis of the literary text. The issue is paramount in understanding the literary text in its correct form. I have thoroughly analyzed the theory of new historicism. I could highlight the most critical points in this theory and compare them with the concept of traditional historicism and the new criticism. On the other hand, I have applied this theory and its principles to two literary works: 'Jude the Obscure' by Thomas Hardy and 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens. And through applying the theory in practice, I could embody the whole concept of literary works.

**Keywords:** New historicism theory, Marriage, Religion, Labor child, Industrial Revolution, Objectivity of history, Textuality of History, and Historicity of text

جوانب التاريخانية الجديدة كما تتجلى في روايتي "جود الغامض" لتوماس هاردي و"أوليفر تويست" لتشارلز ديكنز

حسن مروان يحيى

معهد الفنون الجميلة- مديرية تربية نينوى

الملخص

قبل ظهور نظرية التاريخانية الجديدة (New Historicism)، كان هناك توتر كبير بين النقد الجديد (New Criticism) والتاريخية التقليدية (Traditional Historicism). فقد اختلفا في كيفية تحليل

العمل الأدبي؛ إذ جاءت التاريخية الجديدة لحل هذه المشكلة، ورفضت توجهات كل من النقد الجديد والمؤرخين التقليديين. ومن جهة أخرى، آمن أصحاب التاريخية الجديدة بأن الأدب لا يمكن دراسته بمعزل عن سياقه. وفي هذا الإطار، أوضح أهمية هذه النظرية الأدبية في موضوعي: جوانب التاريخية الجديدة كما تنعكس في رواية جود الغامض لتوماس هاردي ورواية أوليفر تويست لتشارلز ديكنز. تؤمن هذه النظرية بمفهوم نصية التاريخ (Textuality of History) وتاريخية النصوص (Historicity of Texts). كما ترى أن موضوعية التاريخ ليست سوى أسطورة، وأن التاريخ ليس سرداً خطياً وتقدمياً للأحداث الماضية. وتعتقد أن علاقات السلطة تمثل السياق الأهم في تفسير النصوص، إذ نقرأ النصوص للكشف عن آليات عمل السلطة داخلها. كما تركز التاريخية الجديدة على الأصوات والنصوص المهمشة، وتؤمن بضرورة دراسة النص والسياق معاً. وهي تُدخل الثقافة ضمن مجال التاريخ، وترى أن الثقافة والهوية يشكّلان بعضهما بعضاً بصورة متبادلة. ومع ذلك، فقد تعرضت هذه الحركة للنقد بسبب نزعتها التشاؤمية. كذلك تحدد مهمة الناقد التاريخاني الجديد. لقد قمت بتحليل وتشخيص أعمال منظري التاريخية الجديدة، وكيف تمكنوا من حل الإشكاليات بين المؤرخين التقليديين والنقاد الجدد، وذلك من خلال دراسة موضوعية وعقلانية ومحادية، للوصول إلى رؤية سليمة ومقبولة في تحليل النص الأدبي. وتُعد هذه القضية في غاية الأهمية لفهم النص الأدبي بصورته الصحيحة. كما قمت بتحليل نظرية التاريخية الجديدة بصورة معمقة، واستطعت إبراز أهم النقاط الجوهرية فيها، ومقارنتها بمفهوم التاريخية التقليدية والنقد الجديد. ومن جهة أخرى، طبقت هذه النظرية ومبادئها على عملين أدبيين هما Jude the Obscure للكاتب Thomas Hardy، و Oliver Twist للكاتب Charles Dickens، ومن خلال التطبيق العملي للنظرية، تمكنت من تجسيد المفهوم الكامل للأعمال الأدبية وفهمها في ضوء مبادئ التاريخية الجديدة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النظرية الجديدة في التاريخانية، الزواج، الدين، عمالة الأطفال، الثورة الصناعية، موضوعية التاريخ، نصية التاريخ، تاريخية النص.

## The Introduction

New historicism is a literary theory founded by Stephen Greenblatt and began in the late 1970 and early 1980 in the United States of America and soon became recognized as a nuanced theory to approach literature and history. It is supposed to consist of two words new and version. It is influenced by Foucault's book on Power, Knowledge, Discourse, and the all-pervasive nature of power. It is also influenced by Clifford Geertz's anthropological study of culture, believing that human beings cannot live and exist without culture. It is a reaction to the traditional historians and the Marginalization of the literature. It is also a reaction to the new criticism and the Enshrinement of the literature as new criticism and formalism considered literature independent of historical and authorial factors. The New historicism against these attitudes and believed that literature couldn't be studied in isolation. The new historians are against the idea of establishing the boundary between history and literature because history is the basis for ancient history, and literature is a secondary thing that enhances the position of history in the analysis. They worked to establish a hierarchical relationship and put history above literature, so the new historians stood against this idea and their orientations. (Sharma,2014.)

The New Historians were also against the movement or method of New Criticism, considered a formative movement in the literary outlook that

dominated literary criticism in America in the twentieth century. Its orientations focused on examination in reading to discover how the literary work functions as an entity. The movement got its name from John Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. They emphasized that the structure of the text and its meaning are closely linked and should not be tested separately, and they aimed to exclude historical contexts in their analysis. Therefore, the new historians stood against this trend and considered it an isolated method and that literature could not be isolated. They also stood against the idea of creating separations and boundaries between literature and history because critics of the new ones sanctified literature and made it above history and that literature is free from external factors. Therefore, they blindly marginalized history. (Balkaya,2014.)

The Textuality of History and Historicity of text becomes the basic notion of dealing with New Historicism. From their point of view, history is textual, and the texts are also historical. Louis Montrose's book *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture* and the textual narratives are the primary way we deal with the past. The historicity of text" means that literary, cultural texts and social embedment of all modes of writing participate in the construction of history, the firmly established of a text in the public-historical, political and cultural atmosphere of its making. History is considered a narrative and a text at the same time; when a historian selects it to write, he will be a teller of the story according to his vision in the form of narrative through language. As Michele mentioned, language itself is a power structure, and this language is already affected by the ideological power structures of the society that we live in. therefore, on the first point, the historian uses language. Secondly, history is narrative, and the third point, the narrative, depends upon the historian's situation and point of view. (Philip,1995.)

While "Historicity of text" means that literary texts and fictionality participate in constructing history, Foucault opposed ancient historians. They erase and eliminate all contradictions and discontinuities in actual history. Instead, form an intelligible and coherent narrative history and compliance with the controlling ideology of the state. From his point of view, there is no objective history because history is a narrative like a language produced within its context and governed by social, economic, and political interests and dominant institutions. The new historians worked to remove the borders, the intention of history and literature and the opening of a new dialogue between them. (Philip,1995.)

In the myth of the Objectivity of history, ancient historians actively tried to describe history to us as honest, realistic, and written from an objective viewpoint. However, the new historians have seen such kind of history as a myth. That cannot be achieved, and the produced history is partially written with a subjective viewpoint based on the writer's interpretation and also affected by facts and the societal conditions at the time of writing history. (Pramod,2009.)

Traditional historians believed that history is progressive and linear to events, so it is first linear, and there is a causal relationship between different events, and events are linear. Secondly, it is progressive, and humans ultimately tend to improve themselves and their history of progress. The new historians have questioned and examined these two beliefs, linear and progressive. The new historians see this as a hypothetical, simplistic thing, believing that history cannot simply be understood as linear and progressive. A particular culture can be progressive in some areas, and this culture may be regressive in others. That progressivism Regression is a subject of definition, for example, sexual idealism, which the fundamentalist right-wing criticizes as an unfair practice and social pariah, while the left-wing sees it as something that does not make a person socially pariah. They ask why this is an outcast and should be welcomed, so it can be considered that the right-wing is regressive and the left-wing is progressive. Therefore, the argument is that history's linearity, simplicity, and causality are myths, just like history's Objectivity. Therefore, from my point of view, this belief of the new historicism is a correct and logical belief that embodies the reality we cannot ignore. (Greenblatt,2008.)

Power relations are the most important context for interpreting texts, and we read texts to examine the working of power. The new historicism treats literary texts as an area where power relations are made apparent. When you read Shakespeare or any canonical author, you realize the historicist approach. It's not just to know what the spirit of the age is like the traditional historians used to do but to see how power relations are becoming visible in work. According to new historicism, literary texts play an important role in revealing the power of structures and functions, and they have the potential to subvert the power structures that give society and the ideologies of the ruling class the people in power. The ideologies of religion and politics all these ideologies can be traced when we read between the lines of literary texts. We know how the imperialist power defined the people in their colonies as uncultured and brutal, looked at them as animals, and gave themselves the legitimacy to describe and deal with them. The colonized people accepted this because they believed the colonizers would make them more cultured. And this is the power of discussion that Foucault focuses on it. The new historicists have agreed and adopted, and thus the power becomes the main objective of the new historicists applying. (Horowitz,2005)

By focusing the new historicists on marginalized voices and texts, we can know how power functions and how to trace the function of power in a literary-cultural or historical text. The new historicism marginalized the text, and the texts have been silent, and voices have been excluded. The new historicism focused on the study of marginalized texts and considered that the voice considered insignificant to be included in mainstream history. Greenblatt's essay 'Counter history and Anecdote' discusses the new historicist focus on the voices

that have been excluded or considered too ridiculous or insignificant to be included in history. Stephen Greenblatt talks about EP Thompson in the voices of Luddite cropper, the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, the utopian artisan voices excluded by mainstream history. The new historicists wanted to include marginalized voices to bring the plurality of voices that included an equal representation of historical narratives. A master narrative told from a signal cultural point of view claims to be the only accurate version of history that masters historical understanding. We will witness the plurality of voices and know the other stories that existed; thus, we will believe in the grand receipt of mainstream history. (Catherine& Stephen,2000.)

Another way for New Historians to trace the working of power within cultural artifacts within cultural motifs is by text and context studied together. To understand a literary work from the New historians' view is essential to trace the accomplished literary work in the embodiment of its context. According to them, literary work is vital when it can embody the cultural ideology and what are the cultural motives that inspired the literary work. Therefore, they believe that the text and context must be taken and studied together. The new historians do not only believe in analyzing the literary text nor believe that non-literary texts are secondary texts. Both are co-text to each other. To study a literary work as a co-text, the new historians borrowed from anthropology a term called 'Thick Description,' which is the study of the literary text along with what was produced by the culture that accompanied the success of the literary work. It could be a literary work or a form of folkloric dance expressing the culture of that society that produced the literary work. Or it could be a dramatic work, or it could even be the traditions of wedding parties, rural play, penal laws, and copyright laws. It means that the thick description helps new historicists to read the literary text in its context. To know what a literary work means and its strengths and weaknesses could be done by studying all the cultural practices along with the literary text because those cultural practices supposedly give meaning to that literary text in the age in which it was produced. The literary work could get meaning along with the cultural practices followed in that area. (Greenblatt,2008.)

The new historicism included culture in the field of history. Traditional historians did not consider the issue of culture as not a historical one, as Marxist historians did see the issue of culture as a product of relations, state, and ideological hegemony factors. All these characteristics were the only subjects of history and crime deviance childhood, family relations, race, and gender; all these issues were cultural and should not be included in historical narratives history. According to traditional historians, the creation of history was their topic of history. The subjects of the traditional historians described wars, monarchs, grand epic events, revolutions, and political systems. Of course, they were interested in knowing the spirit of a particular age and remarkable

historical figures. Greenblatt defines new historicism as the criticism centered on cultural artifacts. So clearly, he could include culture in the point of view of history by including culture in the discipline of history. New historians expanded the scope of history. They dealt with the subject of private life as a subject of history as much as the issues of public life as they expanded the scope of history. They dealt with private life as a subject of history as much as the issues of public life. Many power plays adopt this kind of subject. They went on within private lights. This issue was never included in mainstream history because they said it is culture, so they do not want to include culture in their historical analysis. They do not want to get into the culture because culture needs stability. For example, in the Victorian area, women were supposed to stay home, raise families, and be the epitome of purity and sanctity. Men were supposed to get out and show some particular masculine traits. So, if we do not study this oppression of women, then we never bring history and what new historicists did; they included these cultural motifs into the study of mainstream history and thus expanded the view of history. (Sharma,2014.)

The culture shapes our subjective selfhood, the identity we embrace—the culture we are born in and in return. Our collective identities shape the culture we are born into it. In (1980) "Renaissance self-fashioning," Stephen Greenblatt makes the essential point that new historicist critics argue that any age or cultural trait is self-fashioning. All the people in this culture in this society shape the culture. So, for example, my perception of myself, how I choose to define myself, and what identity I have embraced for myself depends upon the culture I live. (Greenblatt,2008.)

Another example is Ross's character in the American sitcom 'friends'. We can see that the male protagonists of the sitcom are afraid if there is a phobia of homosexuality. When Ross's son plays with a Barbie doll, he constantly tries to replace that Barbie with a GI Joe toy which is highly masculine and highly representative of the rugged American masculinity, as a concept advocated in America. So what this means is that the character Ross is a product of the American conception of masculinity (Ross's homophobia is a product of the American homophobia of the 1980 and 1990 s). people like the character of Ross because he represents the same concerns that American popular culture shares. So, Ross is the representative of American homophobia, the cultural homophobia that is pervasive in American society. From watching Ross being homophobic and Chandler being homophobic, the Americans, especially the American males, learn that homosexuality is something to be afraid of and mocked. We can see how a cultural product is first shaped by society and how the American fear of homophobia shapes the character of Ross (which is encouraged by their representations like Ross's character). (Greenblatt,2008.)

We also can see how the character of Ross in the homophobia that represents shapes the American identity and product people who have watched friends thinks of and make fun of it. This issue is how culture produces itself (the collective identities of society shape culture and, in turn, shape them), and culture produces itself because it shapes the identity in a particular society. The identities, in turn, shape the culture. It is a cyclical process, but New Historicists maintain that although these processes are mutually constitutive, the culture forms identity, and identities collectively form a culture. Both these factors are dynamically unstable, neither culture nor identity. It is a fixed concept that identities keep on negotiating and become identities keep on negotiating. (Greenblatt,2008.)

On the one hand, traditional historians would ask the question, what is the nature of people in a particular period? On the other hand, the new historicists would ask questions like what processes such as political, educational, legal, religious, institutions, and ideologies promote or change each other. So, this is the question that new historicists would ask our subjectivity. Therefore, it is not a static concept or a fixed state that this is how I am or how you are, but our identities are a process, a lifelong process of negotiation that carries on within a culture; identities are also constructed. There is only limited scope in which religion, our political system, our social institutions, and our educational institutions are the institutions that controlled on whom we become. We must be conscious of such ideology in operation, which is the task of new historians. We must be aware of how power is played within cultural formations and how a society, how the ideological apparatus imposes its power on us, and how they impose constraints and limitations on us. Whatever is inconvenient to them, whatever is convenient to the social systems. They deem it abnormal, and they deem it insane, criminal, and perversion. So, what is legitimate, regular, and natural, is defined by the power structures, and this is how they control us. We don't question them as we have accepted these definitions already as natural. Because they have been historicists, who teach us how innocent-looking structures can be a space where power play is coming into action and how we can be aware of such formations. (Balkaya,2014.)

New historicists have been criticized for their pessimistic attitude. They think that all the power is everywhere, and in the new historicist view. However, we can reveal that the working of power within a cultural formation power cannot be subverted. They believe that the power flows in all directions, upwards and downwards. Therefore, the subversion of such power is not possible it could not be possible because there are three reasons: first of all, wherever there is an attempt for subversion, and there are gestures of descent and gestures of resistance by the subverting agents, it is often appropriated by the dominant structures (the dominant authorities appropriate subversion. subversion is co-opted, manufactured, and demonized). How they are appropriating is the three

points. First of all, subversive forms are co-opted, they are assimilated, they are included in the dominant ideology, they are converted, and subversion is, therefore, avoided. Secondly, sometimes the dominant structures produce subversion to show that they can contain it. For example, an employer encourages lousy behavior so that he can fire one employee to set an example for other employees. The other employees would be afraid that if they replicated the behavior, they would sometimes create subversion to prove that they could contain it. (Catherine& Stephen,2000.)

The third point is that when the inflammatory forms of the agents of subversion cannot be co-opted and cannot be contained. The dominant structure demonizes them as attempts to subvert the social order and then represses them while eliciting consent for this action by the larger society. What does this mean that they create such a situation in which the subverting party openly shows resistance, which creates some inconvenience for the larger society? Thus the dominant structure takes consent from the larger society that this subversion needs to be controlled by force. For example, in regular classrooms, when a particular student is out of control and cannot be dominated by a teacher and disagree with obeying the teacher's command, the teacher tells the whole class that he will not teach further until the person steps out of the class. Here the student who is misbehaving is the subverting agent. The teacher elicits consent from the whole class that the students step the misbehaving student out of the class. So that the teaching can continue, this is what a dominant structure does; it demonizes the agent who is trying to subvert the teacher's authority to enable the teacher to elicit consent from the rest of the class for his action. This issue is how power contains subversion in these three ways; in the last instance, we see that power needs to have subversion to justify itself and to make itself visible as power. The teacher needs such students to prove his dominant position in the structure of a classroom, and this is how he will make his power visible in the classroom. (Catherine& Stephen,2000.)

Coming to know what is the task of a new Historicist critic. In the absence of the possibility of subversion, the inflammatory agent cannot subvert the power structures, so what is the point of such a critical theory? What can new historicists contribute if they suggest that power can subvert? Thus, the new historicists say that a historian or a literary critic should recognize that their writings should be willing to question and examine the assumption behind their interest in the past. They can describe the forces and processes through which power circulates itself. Their interpretations are also subject to specific historical conditions and practitioners of new historicism, and their writing is also subject to specific historical conditions. Also, New Historicist suggests that we should not believe in simplistic definitions of explanations that look smooth linear, and unconflicted. And we should be skeptical. The definition of structures should be viewed with skepticism, and thus we should understand the complexities of

simple-sounding concepts. Therefore, we should avoid generalizing an epoch of the nature of human beings of anything that seems to be a grand receipt. Finally, we should also view New Historicism with the same suspicion with which the New Historicists view the previous approaches that are the motives of the new historicist way of thinking. Therefore, from my point of view to everything that I have analyzed and diagnosed objectively, it becomes clear to us that the new historicism has been able to add a lot in the direction of correcting the course of analysis for the literary work. (Catherine& Stephen,2000.)

How can we analyze the literary works from the new historicism? I will compare two literary works and analyze them according to this theory. So the first work is the novel "Jude the Obscure" by Thomas Hardy, which is a novel mainly about how marriage, religion, education, and production systems suppress an individual and ambitious individual. Jude and Sue are suppressed by the marriage system and how marriage puts much pressure on the protagonists, both Jude and Sue. To know what the novel means, we must study the area of publishing and all the cultural practices. We have to see what was the cultural state of marriage, what were the laws of marriage, what will divorce laws like, what were the religious practices, was the religious system, in any case, suppressive on an individual's ambition. So, we will go to the history of Cambridge and Oxford institutions and see what was happening during that time in Cambridge and Oxford. We have to meet with some anecdotes that tell us the truth of the events that Hardy talked about and give an individual struggle in these renowned universities. Also, we can collect anecdotes and little stories, and we can gather oral narratives. So, we can see how Jude the Obscure gets greater meaning and a plurality of voices when we do not rely on what Hardy says. We also read the work along with all the other cultural texts available to us, and we treat the literary and non-literary texts as co-text, and none of them get privileged over another. Traditional historicism ignored or marginalized voices from private life as something subjective and something irrelevant to mainstream history. New historicism tries to compensate for this omission by bringing issues concerned with private life into the foreground of historical inquiry. (Horowitz,2005.)

We can see how the marriage and the religious systems oppress and suppress Jude and Sue. When Jude meets Sue for the first time, he quickly falls in love with her. Jude believed that they were made for each other. As they were a symbol of idealism and rationality, Sue supported him in his dream of studying, and there are many common factors between them in literature and education. They spent most of their time together, and their relationship became more than charity. Jude describes marriage as a curse, referring to the miserable marriage situation in British society in the Victorian era. Most of them were commercial deals, and a few of them started with love. Thus, with time, these marriages became cold between the two parties, and society's view of divorce was very

contemptuous. Jude fell in love with Sue and adored her, even though they do not marry because they believe that inbreeding always ends in sad endings. Therefore, inbreeding is a mistake, a curse, especially in the Foley family. This curse is doubled when Jude establishes His relationship with his cousin Sue. In the end, Jo and Sue greatly desire to be together, but they can't for many reasons. First, they are cousins, and being together is forbidden and forbidden. Second, Jude wanted to be with her, but Sue couldn't identify her feelings and decided to marry someone else to carry her reputation. Third, she couldn't find happiness with Phillotson. Through the relationship between Jude and Sue, we can see the reflection conflict between the traditionalists and the reformers in that period. And the willingness to break the strict restrictions placed under society expresses a rejection of these restrictions. (Hardy,2016.)

Jude's dream of studying and he could not complete it while he is from the poor class reflects the class social situation in the Victorian era and how it was divided. The upper classes are the ones who can realize their dreams and build their future, while the poor classes have no future. On the other hand, Arabella's seduction prevented him from continuing his dream and achieving it by completing his studies. This matter reflects the weakness of social communication in the Victorian era between men and women, as society was subject to strict rules. Most men do not know anything about the nature of women, so Jude plays this role, so soon, he is seduced by Arbela, and he falls in love with her and marries her without realizing the truth. (Hardy,2016.)

Jude's criticism of marriage reflects his rejection of religious rituals, as he considered marriage an essential thing in the Christian religion at that time while he was in an affair with his cousin Sue, and without sexual relations, considered this a curse. This thing reflects the spiritual commitment in the souls of British society in the Victorian era, despite the lack of tendency to revive religious rituals. Still, they are spiritually committed to the principles of religion, so that Jude will be used as evidence. There were also dialogues between Sue and Phillotson about the importance of Jerusalem in British society at that time. (Hardy,2016.)

The issue of human rights, which was much unfair to women, was embodied through the role of Sue, who appears as a companion of thought and intellectually educated. She has a relationship with Jude but without a sexual relationship. She criticizes the view of British society in the Victorian era for the time as being emotional and reflects the intellectual persecution of the time at that stage. Depriving a woman of her marital rights and mothering children upon divorce, she cannot file divorce suits. All of these matters are considered legitimate rights for women. However, this era of time has neglected women's rights in this society. There is no representation for the woman, she is not

allowed to work, and her life is taken away. Therefore, this period is considered a period of injustice regarding women's rights. (Hardy,2016.)

Disappointment is one of the themes addressed by Thomas Hardy in his novel, which reflects the disappointment of British society in the Victorian era, despite the prosperity in which the British economy was growing. However, society was governed by outdated rules and inconsistent with modernity in Britain's growth and development. This disappointment was embodied in Jude's disappointment with obtaining a university degree, losing his future, and marrying Arabella. This disappointment was also embodied in Sue's marriage to Phillotson. (Hardy,2016.)

Relationship marriages have been tested and proven to fail because marriage in Britain was considered a paper contract in the church. There was no absolute arrangement and preparation for marriage. Through the novel, we understand the nature of British society in the nineteenth century, which differs from the rest of other societies. Marriage in that period included a set of strict rules, which included matters of money, courtship, and physical intimacy. In the novel, Jude married Arabella out of a love affair, and she was, in fact, not in love with him. But because of the social necessity that British society suffered during the Victorian era. There was a shortage of men. The population census figures revealed that the number of women was much more than men for many reasons, including that the number of male deaths was more than the number of female deaths. In addition, men served in the British armed forces outside the country, and all men were subject to migration. This matter explains Arabella's eagerness to marry without knowing the marriage requirements. Therefore, the relationship after marriage was miserable and failed. And through the end of the relationship between Jude and Arabella. Hardy shed light on the issue of divorce and its laws in the Victorian era, where it was tough to obtain a divorce. Unfaithful with her and V. The goal of Arabella was not only relationship and romantic feelings but rather that these feelings are a prelude to marriage. Here, Thomas Hardy reflects on the state of British society in that period; the matter of marriage was not built on socially healthy foundations. Marriage was a business project or a romantic topic, and Arbela and Jude reflect this. Thomas portrayed British society in the Victorian era in a realistic way, as he criticized some aspects and praised others. He believes that this period, despite some criticism, is, from his point of view, one of the best historical periods for the British nation. (Hardy,2016.)

I will compare "Jude the Obscure" by Thomas Hardy with "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. This novel was written during the period of transformation that Britain witnessed in the Victorian era of social and political changes as a result of the development witnessed in this period of rapid industrial development. The division of society into classes, so the poor suffered from severe deprivation, and thus crime rates in society increased. This novel embodies the reality of

those events, as social violence and child labor, especially among the homeless and orphans, are among the most critical problems that this novel embodies. Equality due to stratification may drive delinquency to crime, which has been observed in increased crime rates. He tries to shedding light on the crime of child labor and the violation of the rights of children who are supposed to go to education and have the material things they need; this crime increases the rates of ignorance and illiteracy in society. The government aims to solve these problems, prevent child labor, adopt these children for financial and health care, and provide educational opportunities for them. (Touya,2016)

The period that accompanied the publication of the novel was Britain witnessing massive development in industry and prosperity, as it was the first in the world in terms of prosperity. But this prosperity was accompanied by problems at the social level—the gap between the rich and the poor increased, leading to class emergence in society. Society was divided into the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class (working class). This novel embodied the oppression practiced by the upper class, that is, the bourgeoisie, on the working class and their heinous exploitation. The children of this class were the most vulnerable to exploitation, as child labor, which was common in this era, was one of the most critical problems that emerged in this period. Therefore, the demand of business owners for children was no use of child labor during the industrial revolution Britain witnessed in the Victorian era. (Touya,2016)

On the one hand, because they were cheap labor, children were obedient, obedient, and receptive to punishment much more than adults. Therefore, child labor constituted a large proportion of the workforce in coal and mineral mines. This novel highlighted these social problems, the injustice inflicted on children, and how they were exploited, as they were forced to work in harsh conditions. The history of child labor in Britain dates back to the seventeenth century, and as a result of the criticism directed at the relevant authorities in the Victorian era to take the necessary measures to end the exploitation of children in Britain. In 1834 the government passed the Child Labour Law to protect them. Many works were published during that period in Britain, including Frances Milton Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*. It is considered the first novel that embodies the brutal system of business owners during the industrial revolution that Britain witnessed in the nineteenth century for child labor. And how Sir Matthew Dowling adopted Michael when he was a child and used him in factory labor under the pretext of helping the poor, and when he finished his need for him, he sent him to the Poor Children Foundation. Another example is the novel "*Helen Fleetwood*" by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1841), which also dealt with and embodied child labor in the working classes and their exploitation and the psychological problems that this terrible labor entailed on children. (Touya,2016)

Charles Dickens, through his novel, embodies his interest in and sympathy for the private life of the children of the working class, so he portrayed this painful period in his work and used the method of metonymy and simile to express this. Oliver is in the orphanage with several children, which is supposed to be an example of a decent life because he represents the concern of the authorities concerned with this underprivileged segment. Oliver and the children symbolize the suffering of this class with the concerned authorities to modify their social status and provide them with an adequate livelihood. The lack of food in the orphanage symbolizes the low wages that workers in this class receive, which are not enough for them to live in dignity. The distance between the orphanage and London symbolizes the concerned authorities' distance from the miserable conditions in which this class and their children live. The insufficient wages they receive to meet their daily needs. And the reaction of the orphanage administration to Oliver's objection and punishment reflects the injustice suffered by the children of this class and the violation of children's rights by the relevant authorities at that time. Oliver's escape to London indicates the transition of this problem from a class problem to a problem belonging to the whole society. Oliver fell mercy of Artful Dodger is a metaphor for the oppression of the bourgeoisie and business people and the brutal regime of the working class and their children and their oppression. Oliver's wealth at the end of the novel is symbolic of the hope of the working class to improve their living conditions. Oliver's decision to remain in the country after he became rich is a metaphor for his pride in the working class who live in the country because they cannot live in the city, which is better than London and is a metaphor for the bourgeois class that inhabits London. (Touya,2016)

One of the topics that Charles Dickens criticized and tackled was an individualism in the Victorian era. The emergence and rise of capitalism during the Great Industrial Revolution was an ideology where the capitalists believed that individualism was necessary. It is the best thing for society, and the individual's preoccupation with work is the best thing, but this ideology was destructive to the individual and society. It killed societal and social ties and was considered a harmful ideology at the individual and societal levels. Dickens embodied this criticism in the novel with the character Fagin, for he was rich, a euphemism for capitalism, and he is a horrifying evil, referring to the thought capitalists hold. He was called the Devil. Dickens described him with the ugliest forms of hypocrisy, immorality, selfishness, and meanness to express his anger and criticism of the capitalist thought at that time and that he was an illegal merchant, a metaphor for that this thought was a deception on the British society in the era of Victoria. (Touya,2016)

Dickens embodied the importance of social and family ties in Victorian society at the time of the emergence of capitalism and individualism during the industrial revolution. Dickens, through his novel, expresses the societal

discontent with the individualism that was beginning to grow at that time. Dickens weaved the narrative of this society in a novel and its fight against the spread of capitalist thought. He has made relatives for the protagonist in expressing his opposition to capitalism. Mr. Brownlow is related to Oliver, as Mr. Brownlow's wife is Oliver's aunt Rose Maylie and Mocks is Oliver's half-brother. And wealth that Oliver obtained indicates the nature of these links at the individual and societal levels. These links come to express the reality of society's resistance to capitalist thought at that time. (Touya,2016)

One of the topics that Charles Dickens addressed and criticized at that time was the failure of religious institutions and government authorities toward the poor. Dickens directed his criticism to those institutions and organizations sponsored by the church and government through orphanages and charitable institutions. The law of 1834, which assisted the poor and children, identified those crippled with this government aid who lived in orphanages, but in reality, these homes were like prisons, and the children were inmates. They were deprived of their freedom, the food was little and sound, and the clothes wore thin. Those responsible for managing those homes were cruel and flagrantly violating children's rights. Dickens expressed this fact in his novel through Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Mann. He described Mr. Bumble as a detractor in the church, and his treatment of the poor is supposed to be exemplary and by the religious principles espoused by the Christian religion. Still, he was brutal, foolish, and selfish in dealing with the poor. Mrs. Mann, a government official, was physically abusing children and starving them children; she was responsible for it. Through these two personalities. Dickens reflected the weak response of the religious institution and government authorities towards this significant problem, and what they presented was not commensurate with the size of this human tragedy. (Touya,2016)

Dickens his disappointed by his belief that the problems between the working class, the bourgeoisie, and the employers could be resolved if there was a sincere intention of devising a new method of dealing between them. He embodied this belief in the meeting on the London Bridge between Nancy, Mr. Brownlow, and Rose Maylie. Still, Dickens expressed his disappointment in reaching an agreement between these two worlds by Lucy's refusal to cross the bridge with Brownie and Mrs. Rose. (Touya,2016)

## The Conclusion

After examining and investigating New Historicism, I compared this theory with traditional historicism and the new criticism. The result of my work was that New Historicism believes in the Textuality of History and the Historicity of texts and that separating the text from its historical background is impossible. There are no boundaries between history and literature. The New Historicism believes in the Objectivity of history as a myth, while the traditional historians considered history an objective enterprise. It considers that history is not a linear and progressive account of past events, while traditional historians believe that history is progressive and linear to events. It believes that power relations are the most crucial context for interpreting texts. We read texts to examine the working of power, and it's not just to know what the spirit of the age, like the traditional historians used to do but to see how power relations are becoming visible in work. It focuses on marginalized voices and texts so we can know how power functions and how to trace the function of power in a literary-cultural or historical text. It believes that text and context should study together. For the new historians, it is essential to trace the accomplished literary work in the embodiment of its context because, from their point of view, the literary work. It includes culture in the field of history. It believes that culture and identity are mutually constitutive (shape and are shaped by each other), but, according to traditional historians, the creation of history was their topic of history. The subjects of the traditional historians described wars, monarchs, grand epic events, revolutions, and political systems. Of course, they were interested in knowing the spirit of a particular age and remarkable historical figures. It has been criticized for its pessimism because they think that all the power is everywhere, and in the new historicist view. However, we can reveal the working of power within a cultural formation; power cannot be subverted.

Practically, I applied this theory to two literary works. The first work is the novel "Jude the Obscure" by Thomas Hardy. I have studied the area of publishing along with all the cultural practices. I have examined the cultural state of marriage and the laws of marriage. I also examine the laws of divorce and the religious system. The results were identical to the facts mentioned in the work of Thomas Hardy "Jude the Obscure". The second work is the novel "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. I have examined Victorian culture and society and point of view on the events that Charles Dickens mentioned at that time. I have examined "Oliver Twist" and many works that appeared in the same era. I have also examined the facts that Charles Dickens mentioned, such as Frances Milton Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, and "Helen Fleetwood" by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1841). The results were identical to the facts mentioned in the work "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens

ايار 2026  
May 2026

مجلة دراسات في الإنسانيات والعلوم التربوية  
**Journal of Studies in Humanities and Educational Sciences**  
Print ISSN 3006-3256 Online ISSN 3006-3264



العدد 13A  
No. 13A

## The References

Sharma, R. (2014) New Historicism: An intensive analysis and appraisal. *Indian Review of World Literature in English*, 10(2), 1-11.

Veeser H. A. (1989). *The new historicism*. Routledge. Retrieved September 25, 2022, from <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=678021>. John Brannigan. (1998). *New Historicism in literary study*.

Horowitz M. C. (2005). *New dictionary of the history of ideas*. Charles Scribner's Sons. D. Felluga. (2003). *General Introduction to New Historicism*.

MAZA S. A. R. A. H. (n.d.). Stephen Greenblatt's new historicism and cultural history or what we talk about when we talk about interdisciplinarity. *Modern Intellectual History* 249–265. Stephen Greenblatt M. Novak S. J. & University of California Los Angeles. (1995). *Complete psychiatrist oral history transcript 1992: Milton Greenblatt*. Oral History Program University of California Los Angeles.

Wolfreys Julian. (2006). *Modern North American criticism and theory: a critical guide*. In 15. Stephen Greenblatt (1943-) and the new historicism (pp. 103-111). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2006). essay. Retrieved September 25, 2022.

Greenblatt S. J. (2008). *Marvelous possessions: the wonder of the new world* ([7th print.]). University of Chicago Press.

Brannigan, J. (1998). *New Historicism and cultural materialism*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Hardy T. & Pite R. (2016). *Jude the obscure: an authoritative text backgrounds and contexts criticism* (Third). W.W. Norton & Company.

Maza, S. (2004). Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism, and cultural history, or what we talk about when we talk about interdisciplinarity. *Modern Intellectual History*, 1(2), 249-265

Philip Rice; Patricia Waugh. ( 1995). *Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated

Kennedy G. A. (1989-2013). *The Cambridge history of literary criticism*. Cambridge University Press.

Touya A. (2016). *Oliver twist by Charles dickens*. Pimento Digital. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1236934>.

Veaser H. A. (2013). The new historicism. Routledge. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10875872>.

Catherine Gallagher & Stephen Greenblatt. (2000). Practicing new historicism. University of Chicago Press. Ltd. London

Wilson R. & Dutton R. (1992). New historicism and renaissance drama. Longman.

Thomas B. (2022). The new historicism and other old-fashioned topics. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691233208>

Balkaya, M. (2014). Basic principles of New Historicism in the light of Stephen Greenblatt's Resonance and Wonder and Invisible Bullets. European Academic Research, 2(5), 7068-7078.