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**INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MORAL DUALITY IN VICTORIAN FICTION****Xatamova Marjona Maxammad qizi****Scientific advisor:** Khazratkulova Ezoza Ismat qizi

Abstract. This article examines the representation of industrialization and moral duality in Victorian fiction. The Industrial Revolution, which reshaped nineteenth-century Britain, brought not only economic and technological transformation but also profound ethical tensions within society. Through analyses of Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the study explores how Victorian authors portrayed the moral conflicts arising from urbanization, class inequality, and the rise of utilitarian thought. Industrial cities, harsh labor conditions, and fragmented identities serve as narrative spaces in which progress and corruption coexist. The article concludes that Victorian fiction reflects a complex moral landscape shaped by industrial modernity, emphasizing the need to balance material advancement with humanistic values.

Keywords: Victorian fiction, industrialization, moral duality, urbanization, class conflict, utilitarianism, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Robert Louis Stevenson, literary analysis.

Introduction. The nineteenth century marked a turning point in British history as technological innovation and industrial expansion reshaped nearly every aspect of social life. Factories, mechanized labor, and growing urban centers transformed traditional ways of living and introduced new ethical dilemmas. Victorian authors, witnessing these radical changes firsthand, reflected on the moral consequences of industrial progress through their literary works. Their novels capture the era's anxieties about class inequality, environmental degradation, psychological instability, and the tension between humanistic values and utilitarian efficiency. This article investigates the relationship between industrialization and moral duality in Victorian fiction. Focusing on Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, it examines how industrial society is portrayed as a space where progress coexists with corruption, and where individuals struggle to reconcile ambition with ethics. Through these works, Victorian literature reveals a profound ambivalence toward modernization celebrating technological advancements while questioning their impact on human dignity. Industrialization profoundly altered the physical landscape of Britain, giving rise to sprawling industrial cities characterized by pollution, overcrowding, and harsh working conditions. Charles Dickens vividly captures this transformation in *Hard Times*, where Coketown is described as a monotonous





and oppressive environment dominated by factories, smoke, and machinery [1]. The city becomes a symbol of the moral dehumanization brought by industrial society. Its uniform structures and polluted atmosphere reflect a worldview that prioritizes economic productivity over human welfare.

Similarly, Elizabeth Gaskell's depiction of Milton in *North and South* underscores the social conflicts embedded within industrial environments. Milton based on the real industrial city of Manchester embodies the tensions between mill owners and laborers, where strikes, hunger, and exploitation are realities of everyday life. Gaskell does not villainize either side; instead, she portrays industrial society as morally complex, shaped by competing economic necessities and ethical expectations [2]. Through these urban landscapes, Victorian fiction exposes the moral fissures created by industrial capitalism. One of the central moral questions raised by Victorian industrialization concerns the relationship between wealth, labor, and responsibility. Factory owners gained unprecedented economic power, while workers often endured dangerous conditions and poverty wages. Literature of the period highlights this imbalance not merely as social injustice but as a moral crisis. In *North and South*, Gaskell explores both sides of class conflict through the interactions between Margaret Hale and John Thornton. Thornton represents the self-made industrial capitalist disciplined, rational, and proud while the workers he employs struggle for fair treatment and humane working conditions. Gaskell frames their conflict as a moral negotiation rather than a purely economic struggle, suggesting that progress requires mutual understanding, empathy, and ethical compromise [2]. Dickens's novels similarly emphasize the exploitation inherent in industrial labor. In *Hard Times*, the workers, referred to as "Hands," symbolize the reduction of human beings to mechanical functions within industrial capitalism [1]. Their loss of individuality reflects the moral dangers of a system that values efficiency above compassion. Industrialization not only transformed society externally but also reshaped internal states of mind. Victorian fiction frequently portrays characters torn between conflicting desires, values, and identities mirroring the psychological pressures of modern urban life. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* provides the most explicit representation of moral and psychological duality. Although not centered on factories or labor, the novella reflects the era's anxieties about the fragmentation of self in a rapidly modernizing world. Dr. Jekyll embodies Victorian respectability and rationality, while Mr. Hyde personifies uncontrolled instinct and moral corruption. Their dual existence symbolizes the tension between public virtue and private impulse in an industrial society where anonymity and urban chaos enable hidden transgressions [3].

Stevenson's London, shrouded in fog and ambiguity, serves as a metaphor for industrial modernity a setting where moral boundaries blur, and





identity becomes unstable. The rise of utilitarian philosophy during the Industrial Revolution introduced new ways of assessing human value based on efficiency, productivity, and quantifiable outcomes. Victorian novelists often criticized this ideology for reducing moral complexity to numerical logic. In Dickens's *Hard Times*, Thomas Gradgrind exemplifies the dangers of strict utilitarian reasoning. His devotion to "facts" over emotion and imagination leads to personal and familial suffering, illustrating how industrial rationality can undermine empathy and moral depth [1]. Dickens suggests that the mechanization of thought mirrors the mechanization of labor, both contributing to an impoverished moral landscape. Gaskell also critiques utilitarian efficiency through her nuanced portrayal of industrial management. Thornton initially embraces rational, profit-driven decision-making, yet he gradually learns that successful leadership requires emotional intelligence and ethical responsibility. This narrative arc reflects Victorian hopes for a more humane form of industrial progress one that incorporates moral considerations into economic life [2].

Conclusion. Victorian fiction provides a rich and multifaceted examination of the moral consequences of industrialization. Through the works of Dickens, Gaskell, and Stevenson, industrial society emerges as a setting defined by dualities: progress and exploitation, rationality and emotion, respectability and corruption. These authors reveal that industrialization, while fostering innovation and economic expansion, also threatens to erode human dignity, social harmony, and psychological integrity.

Ultimately, Victorian literature advocates for a balance between technological advancement and ethical reflection. Its persistent emphasis on moral duality invites readers both past and present to consider how modern forms of progress can coexist with compassion, justice, and humanity.

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