

Marxist Philosophy and the Themes of Materialism and Capitalism in Dickens's *Hard Times*

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to analyze the themes of materialism and capitalism in one of Charles Dickens's novels entitled *Hard Times*, which is thick with industrial capitalism. Specifically, it aims at (1) finding the themes of materialism and capitalism by coding themes in terms of words and/or phrases frequency in Dickens's *Hard Times* and (2) analyzing and interpreting the theme of materialism and capitalism exposure through the characters' discursive, setting, and narration in the novel. This research was included in a thematic study that employed a quantitative content analysis. The findings showed that the themes of this novel were materialism and capitalism. Some of the most frequently used words are 'fact', 'money', and 'capital', representing materialism and capitalism. The story of this novel reflects the vice or negative society that happened in England during the 18-19th century as the impacts of industrial capitalism and materialism.

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Introduction

Understanding meaning in a literary work is a way of recognizing social reality. Literature is a medium taking philosophy to the men and women in the society (Deshpande, 2018) as philosophy is meant to be used in daily human behavior. Karl Marx (in Birch, 2005) argued that the recognition of literature forms (for example, a novel) does not exist solely within the genre but due to political, social, and economic pressures upon the genre. Literature is a reflection of life and society (Bhat, 2019). A Marxist position bases social reality on a history of struggles in the middle class and production systems (May & Aclan, 2021), which reflects a dialectical relationship between history and society. The capitalist society of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' criticism in the west has been founded on a base of exploitation. Consequently, Marxist analysis of that society is effectively centered on conflict of one form or another.

Khazoeva et al. (2019) stated that Marxism adequately reflects the nature of capitalism and, therefore, as a social doctrine. It is a truth in principle, and, in this regard, the position of Marxism is unshakable. The social theory of Marxism is based on the recognition of the contradiction

between the social nature of production and the private capitalist way of appropriating the results of labor as such to require the rejection of capitalism by communism. In his book *Wealth of Nations*, John Adam Smith first proposed the term capitalism, a famous moral philosopher who appeared in England during the Industrial Revolution (Berend, 2015). It became instrumental in developing laissez-faire capitalism, which many political thinkers and economists later attacked. Heilbroner (1965, p. 16) explained that the second stage of capitalism began about 1750 and reached its height in England during the 1850s. This stage was also known as Industrial Capitalism. It institutionalized long working days ruthlessly characterized by female and child labor exploitation in the factory system.

Marxism is a worldview of societal analysis that focuses on class relations and societal conflict, materialism, and a dialectical view of social transformation. The Marxist methodology uses economic and sociopolitical inquiry, which applies it to analyze and criticize the development of capitalism and class struggle. Marxism bases its concept on a materialist understanding of societal development, taking as its starting point the necessary economic activities required by human society to provide for its material needs. Marxism aspects are the most important to comprehend how capitalists think and consider their properties as a tool to gain more wealth, whether the property is well-being. There are four significant aspects of Marxism proposed by Wood (2004). They are dialectical materialism, social alienation, exploitation of class, and economic determinism (Kenny, 2007).

The teachings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels brought dialectical materialism as a philosophical approach to reality. According to them, materialism indicated that the material world has an objective reality independent of mind or spirit. They accepted the reality of mental or spiritual processes and affirmed that ideas could arise only as products and reflections of material conditions. Alienation is a psychological and social condition found in individuals resulting from the private ownership of capital and human labor. Its owner alienates workers because they work only to earn money to meet their needs rather than experience self-actualization (Marx, 2000; Wendling, 2009). The routine of mechanical activity done by the laborers directed by others is a form of alienation and exploitation. Materialistic values that can decrease individuals' importance on the positively associated universalism cause alienation (Hurst et al., 2013). Exploitation includes the act of using human resources or mistreating people for the particular benefits of the owner. The upper class treats the proletarians as their private property. According to Immerfall and Goran (2010), the fundamental notion in class concept is social relations. It means particular relations within production and not only market relations.

Some literature studies used Marxist criticism to analyze novels regarding materialism and capitalism for the past decade. The current study presents three of those conducted by

Mwetulundila (2016), Siahaan (2018), and Nurman et al. (2021). A study on an African novel Matigari was conducted by Mwetulundila (2016) by using Marxist analysis. The novel's writer, Ngugi, used Marxist ideology to tell the people of Kenya the non-existence of equality and justice. Matigari, the main character in the novel, was a hero who brought changes because of his prophetic role and confidence to face the law enforcement of the capitalist system. Matigari built a house and wanted to gather all his people into it with his own hands to avoid a predicament. The situation described in the novel was about workers' exploitation and alienation from the products they have produced. Moreover, orphan girls have turned to prostitution to feed their families. There was a big gap between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in the country. Siahaan (2018) showed how ideology and revolution influence the characters' lives in Orwell's novel Animal Farm. Old Major sounded Marxist ideology by making the pillar called the seven commands to motivate the revolution action. The researcher stated that in Animal Farm, a fuller view on ideological systems was revealed. Marxist ideology becomes a fundamental tool for domination, a means by which people or animals can be enslaved—capitalist ideology functions to protect the privileges of the bourgeoisie subject (Svensson, 2020). Nurman et al. (2021) examined Ron Rash's novel entitled Serena to find the portrayal of social class difference and labor exploitation. The researcher applied Marx's social class and exploitation theory and International Labor Organization (ILO's) indicators of labor exploitation. The data used in this research were words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that indicated social class distinction and labor exploitation. The findings showed the existence of the bourgeoisie and proletariat in the novel.

The bourgeoisie characters were portrayed in Serena, Pemberton, Buchanan, and Wilkie as the timber business owners. The proletarians relied on bourgeoisies for employment to fulfill their lives. The labor exploitation found in this novel was an excessive working hour, like working for eleven hours shift a day with only fifteen minutes break. Low salary, lousy living conditions, and hazardous work were also found to be labor exploitation characteristics. Alidou (2018) conducted a previous study on materialism in novels, in which love and materialism themes were analyzed in Agatha Christie's Death of Nile. It was documentary research in which the researcher has done a close reading and elaborated a series of questionnaires to some people. This research highlighted the dangerousness and consequences of materialistic love in love affairs. To sum up, these novels are thick with the aspects of Marxism theory in the capitalist society, specifically those related to the gap of social classes, labor exploitation, and prostitution. remind

In Marx's real life, he quickly absorbed the local literary talent and voraciously read volumes of Shakespeare, Milton, Defoe, and Dickens (Kornbluh, 2010). Charles Dickens was one of the great novelists and humanitarians who began to combine his literary works with the reality of social conditions in the Victorian age. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the industrial revolution

became British. Charles Dickens and Friedrich Engels (as cited in [Berend, 2015](#)) described that the living conditions of the workers in crowded and polluted industrial cities were deplorable. The way Dickens described his characters in this novel had meaded the researcher easy to recognize the characteristics of capitalism as appeal in the characters. It revealed how Dickens described his characters with peculiar words, physics, manner of speech, and clothes (Peck and Coyle, 2002, p.106). *Hard Times* is such a great classic novel of English literature that many researchers, even the 21st-century researchers, have analyzed the texts within through many analyses. Zubair Ahmad Baht ([2019](#)) explored many research objectives in his research on *Hard Times*, such as; the novel's resistance and the Utilitarian principle in education. Makhloof ([2020](#)) has conducted a lexical analysis on Gradgrind's and Louisa's dialogue to determine the factual versus emotional mentality. The researcher stated that the first half of the 19th century was manifested by stress on emotions, followed by the second half perceiving the emergence of science regarding materialism, realism, and industrialism.

Marxism and its relation to materialism and capitalism are exciting topics to discuss since we are still living in capitalism. A critical attempt dealing with this study is analyzing materialism and capitalism as themes brought by the author, Charles Dickens, into his novel *Hard Times*. There are two purposes in this research: 1) Finding the themes of materialism and capitalism by coding themes in terms of words and/or phrases frequency in Dickens's *Hard Times*, 2) Analyzing and interpreting the theme of materialism and capitalism exposure through the characters' discursive, setting and narration in the novel.

Method

This was the research of interpretation of a literary work that directly analyzes, interprets, and evaluates the work. It employed two methods, namely thematic studies, and quantitative content analysis. The type of this research was a thematic study ([Deshpande, 2018](#)) that selects materialism and capitalism themes used to interpret and evaluate the novel of Charles Dickens entitled *Hard Times* in terms of those themes. Meanwhile, quantitative content analysis was used to measure or calculate certain aspects of the contents (Eriyanto, 2011 in [Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020](#)) in words closely related to the themes. The words were counted and categorized into each theme presented in word clouds. The Marxist theory was used to analyze the characters' speeches and setting ([Birch, 2005](#)). The data source was taken from Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times* ([Dickens, 2005](#)). The stages in the content analysis were coding texts and creating codes, counting word frequencies, and illustrating with visualization in the form of word clouds.

Results

The Themes of Materialism and Capitalism

The themes associated with Marxism in Charles Dicken's novel are Materialism and Capitalism. They are characterized by the frequent use of particular words related to those themes in tables. The table of word frequency shows that the word choice used by the author was related to materialism, and the most frequent word used or mentioned is 'fact', which was uttered by Thomas Gradgrind. Depicted as a school principal, Gradgrind's 'mind' was full of 'fact' rather than 'fancy'. He believed all the material matters identically are connected with 'fact,' everything that can be 'calculated'. He viewed people by the 'calculation' of their 'wealth' and appearance. According to him, a human was worth it if having the amount of 'money.' In other words, it means people who can 'pay' at any demanded 'cost'. Words related to (industrial) capitalism were capital, factory, social, labor, banker, bank, society, gentlemen, parliament, work, engine, machine, struggle/ing/ed, slave, class. They are presented in tables 1-2 and displayed in the word cloud in figure 1-2.

Table 1. Materialism Theme

<i>Word</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Fact	136
Mind	119
Money	36
Fancy	22
Calculation	14
Cost	10
Pay	6
Wealthy	3
Calculated	3
Total :	349

Table2. Capitalism themes

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Work	127
Bank/er	66
Labor	17
Gentlemen	16
Class	16
Machine	14
Parliament	12
Factory	11
Struggle/ing/ed	6
Slave	3
Capital	3
Total:	291

susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery, this is fact. This is taste." (Dickens, 2005, p. 9)

The statement above proves that Gradgrind was proud of himself for being practical and taking possession of other thoughts. As the school owner, he taught his way of thinking to his students. He stated that using numbers and scores in league tables is crucial for education. This kind of behavior shows the vice of capitalism since private schools were owned and managed by individuals has come to such matters as funding in the capitalist society. The sewing of 'fact' concept in the students' minds seemed that the owner wanted his private school to be the training ground for the students, to be prepared in capitalist society. There was a hope that the students would be potential winners in the competitive world of capitalism.

There was a conversation between two students, Sissy and Louisa Gradgrind, after being taught by Mr. M'Choakumchild. They discussed how their teacher taught National Prosperity; below is what Sissy said.

"National Prosperity. And he said, Now, this schoolroom is a Nation. And in this nation, there are **fifty millions of money**. Isn't this a prosperous nation, and a'n't you in a thriving state?" (2005, p. 63)

The way Sissy, whose real name was Cecilia Jupre, reviewed the lesson about the comparison between their class and a nation was closely related to the book Wealth of Nations by John Adam Smith. The book was the first to introduce the term capitalism. The schoolroom was under the control of the nation. In other words, the curriculum was controlled by the government.

Another character depicted as a capitalist in the novel was Josiah Bounderby, who happened to be Gradgrind's friend. Bounderby was the kind of person concerned with the value of time as much as the value of money. For him, shortly, time is money. Dickens revealed this capitalist character not only by illustrating or describing his appearance but also in the words he said.

"By your leaves, gentleman," said Mr. E.W.B. Childers, glancing round the room. "It was you I believe, that were wishing to see Jupe?"
"It was." Said Mr. Gradgrind. "His daughter has gone to fetch him, but I can't wait; therefore, if you please, I will leave a message for him with you."
"You see, my friend," Mr. Bounderby put in, "we are the kind of people who know the value of time; and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time."
(2005, p. 34)

Bounderby said these words during his conversation with Childers, one of the circus members, at Pegasus Arms Circus. At that time, Bounderby accompanied Gradgrind to meet Sissy's father, one of the circus members. The purpose of their visit was to get Sissy out of school as she hardly managed in the lesson of fact and figures. However, they did not want to wait because they determined themselves as 'the kind of people who know the value of time'. In this way, the paradox

between the high and the low social class in the capitalist society at that time could be seen clearly.

Bounderby was poor but became a successful banker and famous because of his wealth and power. He claimed himself as 'a self-made man' who had come up from poverty in his childhood. He was the perfect model for a success capitalist and for the virtue of capitalism. However, there is a statement that shows the vice of capitalism. It is in the way Bounderby disparaged Children. Dickens revealed the paradox between superiority and inferiority on the basis of money created by the capitalist. Bounderby came from the inferior class, but he had posited himself at the superior class.

In describing Bounderby character, it was clearly stated by illustrating the characteristic of a bourgeoisie who was:

“... a **rich man; banker, merchant, manufacturer**, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare and metallic laugh. **A man made of coarse material**. Which seemed to have been stretch to make so much of him.” (2005, p. 17)

The word 'what not' means that Bounderby is a wealthy person, which not every person can be like him. The bourgeoisie in the novel, precisely the capitalist, had a bank, which meant owning such a great deal of money by making a profit from the saving interest. Yet, he did not stop at that stage. He also made more money as a merchantman from the properties he sold. In addition, he was a manufacturer who bought raw materials and made them into goods or end products through the hands of the factory labors. Dickens also depicted Bounderby's character as having a metallic laugh, which meant he is a man with no emotion. The imagery of 'a man-made of coarse material' was meant to describe that Bounderby had been through hard times in his life in the past, long before his silky appearance.

Those hard times of Bounderby were the times he pursued his wealth. Living a miserable childhood had made him fight for a better life associated with wealth and money. Bounderby himself told this to Mrs. Gradgrind.

“For years, ma'am, I was one of those miserable little wretches ever seen. I was so sickly that I was always moaning and groaning... How I fought through it... I was determined, I suppose. I have been a determined character in later life, and I suppose I was then. Here I am, Mrs. Gradgrind, anyhow, and nobody to thank for my being here but myself.” (2005, p. 18).

Bounderby's character reflects an individual who has the right to reap the rewards or suffer the risks of economic decision-making in a capitalist society. This could be the virtue of capitalism, but his last statement, which said 'nobody to thank for my being here but myself', meant that he became an individualist. Ambition and individualism have brought him to such outstanding achievement, and he became one of the high-class society members.

Bounderby was as proud as Lucifer that he thought he could achieve everything he wanted in life, including marriage. He felt that, finally, he was a part of the high-class society that he deserved to marry a lady from the same social class. It was Louisa who happened to be his best friend's daughter. Without considering the age disparity between Louisa's and his, Bounderby proposed to Louisa through her father. Although Louisa did not want to marry Bounderby, she accepted the proposal to please her father, and so the marriage was arranged in such a short period.

Meanwhile the marriage was appointed to be solemnized in eight-week times, and Mr. Bounderby went every evening to Stone Lodge as an accepted wooer. Love was made on these occasions in the form of **bracelets**, and on all occasions during the period of betrothal, took a manufacturing aspect. Dresses were made, **jewelry** was made, cakes and gloves were made, settlements were made, and an assortment of Facts did appropriate honor to the contract. (2005, pp. 116-117)

Louisa's marriage in this novel mirrors the marriage phenomenon in the capitalist society during the 18th century when young daughters were forced to get married as decided by their fathers. Mostly, the marriage was arranged for wealth or money; thus, the wedding ceremony was held in such an elegant manner. Dickens clearly described how the marriage was associated with bracelets, and all things were produced by manufacture. Louisa's marriage was not based on two hearts in love; it was just a contract between Bounderby and Gradgrind. They treated Louisa, who has no feeling, compassion, or love in her upbringing, like property. They thought that Louisa would be happy with all those luxurious things. Meanwhile, Bounderby thought that marriage was as much as he valued money. He believed that those who had not enough money would not have a happy marriage. Happiness is not always related to materialism.

As the value of money became such a way of thinking, there was a tendency for people in the capitalist society to think and behave on the basis of money. This kind of behavior was revealed by Bounderby's character, specifically during his conversation with one of the labors, Stephen Blackpool said:

"But it's not for you at all. It costs **money**. It costs a mint of **money**."

"How much might that be?" Stephen calmly asked.

"Why you'd have to go to Doctor's Commons with a suit, and you'd have to go to get an Act of Parliament to enable you to marry again, and it would cost you (if it was a case of very plain sailing), I suppose from a thousand to fifteen hundred pounds" said Mr. Bounderby.

"Perhaps twice the **money**."

"There's no other law?"

"Certainly not." (2005, p. 82).

This conversation occurred in Bounderby's factory. Stephen was asking for advice from Bounderby about the law of marriage because he had a wretched marriage. His wife liked to get drunk, got out from her job, sold the house furniture, and pawned the clothes. Stephen Blackpool

was meant to leave his wretched wife, thus asking such advice from Bounderby. Being asked by Stephen about the law of marriage, Bounderby responded so boastfully and revealed his thought that the power of money can achieve all things. This evidence shows that Bounderby's way of thinking was based on the value of money. He was more interested in money than any real thought. Further, he said that the existence of such law is not for the poor like Stephen, who had not enough money affordable to get in court. Stephen could not even afford to buy a suit to go to the Common House. As we know, suits were the proper wardrobe to go before the Doctor's Common in that era. In addition, to get married again, Stephen had to get a kind of legitimation from the parliament, which would cost him a lot of money. As the owner of the factory, Bounderby knew precisely that Stephen's wage could not fulfill all the things he wanted to compensate.

Money has controlled the law and many aspects of life in the capitalist society. Only the have could go to the court and possibly won the case, but not for the poor. Even the courtesy to come to the typical house was wearing a suit. Those who belong to the poor or low-class society did not have a chance to be equal before the law except having much money. While, the high-class society, they could make all things happen. Bounderby was a banker, and he made a profit from customers' saving accounts, and he also made a profit from the factory production by employing low-wage labours. The way Dickens criticized the capitalist society was clearly stated in the narration of Coketown below.

This, again, was among the fictions of Coketown. Any **capitalist** there, who had made sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence, always professed to wonder why the sixty thousand nearest Hands didn't each make sixty thousand pounds out of six pence, and more or less reproached them everyone for not accomplishing the little feat. What did you can do? Why don't you go and do it? (2005, p. 127).

The role of money or capital was revealed literally in the bank mechanism where the depositors, or as Dickens named them as capitalists, profit from taxes as compensation for the customers' savings. The more saving the customers had, the more profit they could get. On the contrary, the Hands, which were referred to as the labors in the factory, could not afford to earn much money from their wages. The wages they earned from working as labors in the factory were not sufficient to fulfill their daily needs, not even enough to have savings in the bank.

Indeed, it shows that capitalism's deviance referred to self-enrichment on a negative side. This paradigm showed how the capitalists held control in many aspects of society. The capitalist possessed his wealth from two enterprises: a bank and a factory. From the bank, he held the saving and used them to support the factory. He possessed the income from production from the factory, then saved the factory's profit back to the bank. The balance was raised from assets, saving, entitlement programs, manufacturing, public investments in schools, roads, and other public goods. This rotation or mechanism of capital was controlled by the rich. Meanwhile, the poor still

earned low wages. The rich became more prosperous, but the poor remained the same. Therefore, the class position was primarily determined by an individual's position within the economic system, such as Bounderby and Gradgrind, and to some extent, achievement.

Capitalism has taken part for the goodness of the high-class society, but less for those of the low-class society. The high-class society tends to belittle or look down on the low-class society. It can be found in how Bounderby named Stephen bad things like waspish, raspish, and ill-conditioned chap. He compared Stephen to a wasp, a flying animal that can sting and by calling raspish, he felt that Stephen was as annoying as an unpleasant thing heard when there was a sore throat. He even called Stephen an ill-conditioned chap, which meant humiliation done by the rich to the labor. The following evidence was found in the novel.

“You are such a waspish, raspish, ill-conditioned chap, you see,” said Mr. Bounderby, “that even your own Union, the men who know you best, will have nothing to do with you. I never thought those fellows could be right anything; but I tell you what! I so far go along with them for a novelty that I’ll have nothing to do with you either.” (2005, p. 164)

The above excerpt is just one piece of evidence among many others in the novel to justify that there were actions of dehumanization in the capitalist society. Comparing a man to a wasp was dehumanization. Calling someone as raspish, as if he must be riding, is also dehumanization. There has almost always been a relationship between master and slave badly exists in the capitalist society. The master had the power to say or do any bad things to the labor, as if he had the authority upon the labor's life.

It was common for people to appraise one's class by their appearance and the cost they spent. And so was Dickens depicted the characters in his novel. There was a conversation between two of Bounderby's workers.

“What do you think of the gentleman, Bitzer?” she asked the light porter, when he came to take away.
“Spends a deal of money on his dress, ma'am.”
“It must be admitted,” said Mrs. Sparsit “that it's very tasteful.”
“Yes, ma'am,” returned Bitzer, “if that's worth the **money**.” (2005, p. 133)

Mrs. Sparsit was Bounderby's housekeeper, and Bitzer was an employee of Bounderby's bank. They were talking about the visitor's appearance. Bitzer's opinion revealed that a measure of wealth was seen mainly by a person's appearance by which money income accounted for one's consumption. Their conversation proved a tendency to judge people by what they wear. The visitor, later recognized as James Harthouse, was a wealthy young man who had a good taste of wardrobe and certainly could afford to buy such taste. In this way, money has determined the taste, and Bitzer's valuation on money was influenced by the fact he had learned from Gradgrind's

school. Those were related to the thought of 'fact' and 'figure'. He could see the fact of a person and figure them by measuring money from a person's appearance. Here, capitalism has made some people think that the accurate measure of a better life is money.

Here was another character depicted to show the vice of capitalism. The young Tom Jr. was Louisa's brother who had a failure upbringing. He grew up with the facts in his mind taught by his father, Mr. Gradgrind. In his view, all matters in life dealt with what was rational and objective. According to his father's lesson, he should leave the fancy and imaginary things. He did not even have the feeling of empathy for his sister. Yet, he manipulated his sister for the sake of money.

"I say, Loo! I thought I'd come, and just hint to you what was going on: though I supposed you'd most likely guess, even if you didn't know. I can't stay, because I'm engaged to some fellows tonight. You won't forget how fond you are of me?"

"No dear Tom, I won't forget."

"That's **capital** girl," said Tom. "Good- bye, Loo." (2005, p. 104)

Tom was an apprentice in Bounderby's bank, which influenced his thinking that money is the most crucial thing in life. This attitude seemed more like a retaliation of his rigorous education during his childhood which manifested in changing his lifestyle into a self-interest hedonistic person. He wanted to please no one except himself with money. He liked gambling and other sorts of hedonistic world. He called his sister a 'capital girl' because, in his unconscious mind, he could see that Louis is a kind of investment or capital used to make a profit for him.

There is another evidence of how Tom deployed her sister's affection to him revealed in Tom and Harthouse's conflict.

"Tom, you are considerate: you expect too much of your sister. You have had money of her, you dog, you know you have."

"Well, Mr. Harthouse, I know I have. How else was I to get it? Here's old Bunderby always boasting that at my age lived upon two-pence a month, or something of that sort. Here's my father drawing what he calls a line, and tying me down it from a baby, neck, and heels. Here's my mother, who never has anything of her own, except her complaints. What is a fellow to do for **money**, and where am I to look for it, if not to my sister?" (2005, p. 188)

"....she didn't marry old Bounderby for her own sake, or for his sake, but for my sake...." said Tom. (2005, p. 189)

Harthouse found out that Tom was manipulating his sister for money. Furthermore, Tom confessed that he did not like the old Bounderby, but he was interested only in Bounderby's wealth. The way Bounderby compared Tom's youth to Bounderby's long prior youth had made Tom silently revolted. He claimed that what he did was a matter of legal action toward his sister. Here, such deviance effect of capitalism showed in the individualist manner, which made a person become such cunning as Tom that he lacks sympathy or compassion to his sister. As one of the

capitalist characteristics, individualism might have proved that it could support an individual like Bounderby to pursue his self-interest and change their social class in a capitalist society. Yet, many people acted like Tom, who also wanted to fulfill his interest in money without his pursuit but manipulating her sister.

Both Tom and Bounderby revealed how capitalism did a remarkable job of constraining greed and ambition. The most basic rule of capitalism that all exchange is voluntary is an oppressive check on the pursuit of selfish interest at the expense of others. Tom has finally committed a crime for robbery in Bounderby's bank.

Discussion

Materialism and capitalism have a long history in philosophy, particularly in the Marxist or Marxian, which becomes an enormous insight from the old-time until today. In this insight, there are two broad strains: the complex materiality, which refers to the things that humans can touch, see, hear and smell. There is another reality dealing with our minds, ideas, concepts, thoughts, spiritual, and meaning. The debate between the two is "which determines the other?" In other words, do the thought we have come out of the material reality that the material shapes the ideal or realm? This is in line with Levine (as cited in [Svensson, 2020](#)), who stated that if we want to discover forms and how they function, it can be started by the immaterial, abstract organizing principles that shape material realities. Besides, it can be started with the concrete, particular material thing, and abstracts to general, utterable patterns and shapes.

If someone believes that the hard reality is first and foremost, he determines the realm of ideas called materialism. It is shown by the thought of Thomas Gradgrind, who considers that humans should be regulated and governed by facts and must discard fancy. When a school focuses on its students' memorization skills, it also implements the capitalist principle. Memorizing facts is a tool for higher education that has consequences for the students to seek higher education. This circumstance has made competition for colleges or universities, which creates a competitive environment over collaboration such as the market economy. The word 'fact' was also analyzed by lexical features ([Makhloof, 2020](#)) through Gradgrind's advocacy of factual knowledge, which render the language economical, indirect, and circumlocutionary. Following Gradgrind's way of thinking, materialism influences society, including the school curriculum and his daughter's marriage with old Bounderby full of materialistic reasons rather than love. It means that materialism has influenced the perspectives in many aspects of human life.

The expression 'a man-made of coarse material' was used by Dickens's to thicken the materialism theme in the novel, specifically through the character of Bounderby. This novel has revealed that the vice characteristic of materialism and capitalism is mainly related to selfish

interest with its end on some erroneous behavior which also affects the society. The vice effects of capitalism shown in the novel were alienation, egotism, ambition on self-enrichment, materialism, criminal offence, social classes paradox, and dehumanization. These vice characteristics of capitalism also became the theme of the novel *Matiguri* in which the main character brought significant changes in the capitalist society (Mwetulundila, 2016). As one of the products of self-interest in the capitalist society, egotism has been revealed by Mr. Gradgrind's character, who forced his principle of fact on the students. Ambition on self-enrichment and materialism were two deviant behavior shown by Gradgrind and Bounderby's characters. As part of capitalism motives, materialism has also driven such a criminal offense as done by Tom's character. The paradox between high and low social classes mainly occurred in the conversation between Bounderby, the capitalist, and Stephen Blackpool, the labor, revealing the dehumanization done mainly through the boastful capitalist Bounderby. The domination of Marxist ideology in the form of dehumanization through slavery to humans and animals was revealed in *Animal Farm* (Siahaan, 2018). It is also similar to low class and labor exploitation, as shown in *Serena* (Nurman et al., 2021).

The emphasis on materialism, self-enrichment, and encouraged self-interest as the primary motivations of capitalism bring such implications to criminal behavior. Crime may also occur because of economic deprivation and contradictions in capitalist societies. Besides, there is such rebellion from the working-class crime against the inequality and system. There is almost always conflict among social classes in the capitalist society because people want to achieve their interests. The negative link between materialism and well-being is, thus, confirmed (Górnik-Durose, 2020). To sum up, the story of this novel reflects the vice or negative society that happened in England during the 18-19th century as the impacts of industrial capitalism and materialism.

Conclusion

In this study, the themes and interpretation of materialism and capitalism in Charles Dicken's *Hard Times* were based on a Marxist philosophical approach. It can be concluded that this novel is appropriate to analyze through historical materialism in which the perspective is about the primary role of materials, physical shelves, and the complex realities over ideas. Besides, it is what shapes ideas, thoughts, and concepts. In addition, *Hard Times* is the mirror of society, especially industrial capitalism, as shown by the story's characteristic of factories and labors. The writer views that such an old novel as *Hard Times* can be analyzed using dialectical materialism. There is a relationship between materialism and idealism that impact one another. In addition, this novel has its resistance to be analyzed from dialectical materialism theory. The reader may find the truth from a one-sided perspective, rather than the truth as a whole by seeing from both contradictory

perspectives. It is also suggested to elaborate more about the current influence of capitalism in education in the real world, as it also exists in the novel.

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