Afkar wa Affak, volume 8, numéro 1, année 2020 pp. 345 - 367

Social divisions in British history: childhood in Victorian Britain

التناقضات الاجتماعية في التاريخ البريطاني: الطفولة في الفترة الفيكتورية

Les divisions sociales dans l'histoire de la Grande Bretagne: l'enfance dans l'Angleterre victorienne

Dr. Souad Amimour
Algiers 2 University

Submission date: 03-03-2020 - **Acceptance date**: 07-06-2020 - **Publication date**: 28-07-2020

ملخص

تعتبر بريطانيا الفيكتورية أبرز وأهم فترة في التاريخ الاجتماعي البريطاني بل حتى في التاريخ العالمي. وعلى الرغم من أنها اتسمت بالاختراعات التكنولوجية الرائدة والثورة الصناعية، وتحرر الأطفال والنساء، إلاّ أنّها كانت حقبة مليئة بالتناقضات الاجتماعية مثل: الفقر، والجريمة، والبغاء، وعدم المساواة الصارخة، والاستغلال الاقتصادي للأطفال. يظهر التقسيم غير العادل للمجتمع الفيكتوري في وجود ثلاث طبقات مختلفة وهي: الطبقة الغنية، والطبقة المتوسطة والطبقة العاملة التي تميزت باستغلال أطفالها استغلالا غير إنساني وغير مسبوق في المناجم والمصانع، وبإجبارهم على المساهمة في ميزانية الأسرة شأنهم في ذلك شأن البالغين. وقد أظهرت الدراسات التي تناولت هذه الفترة التاريخية انه وعلى الرغم من الخصائص المميزة لأطفال كل طبقة، فقد كان أطفال كل الطبقات يخضعون إلى نفس نمط التفاعل مع أبائهم والقائم على التمييز على أساس السن وعلى أساس الجنس، وعلى أساس المظهر الخارجي.

الكلمات الدالة: المفارقات الفيكتورية؛ عدم المساواة الاجتماعية؛ التحرر؛ التميز حسب السن؛ التقسيم الطبقي؛ استغلال الأطفال.

Abstract

Victorian Britain, the heart of the famous British Empire which set on five continents, synonymous to power, glory and wealth, is a remarkable and most significant period of British social history and even of universal history. However, despite being the pioneer of technological inventions and the industrial revolution, as well as of children and women emancipation, it was also an era of social paradoxes: poverty, crime, prostitution, striking inequalities, and most of all a shocking segregation and economic exploitation of the children. The rigid division into three distinct classes that characterized Victorian society: the upper, middle and working-classes was duplicated exactly in the world of children. We have, on one side, the working-class child exploited to an inhuman and

unprecedented extent in mines, factories and compelled to contribute to the family budget just like adults; on the other side, the children of the middle and upper-classes, well-off, over protected and looked after by a great array of nannies and governesses. A cross-class social study of these children showed economic differences as well as differences in ideologies, morality, and values regarding the children's roles and lives in the work market and within the family unit. Nevertheless, despite the economic variables specific to each class of children, three important dimensions in the parent-child interactions seem to have been common to all children: age and gender discrimination, as well as distancing.

Keywords: Victorian paradoxes; social inequalities; emancipation; children class divisions; age segregation; child exploitation.

Résumé

La Grande-Bretagne victorienne est la période la plus importante de l'histoire sociale britannique et même de l'histoire mondiale. Bien qu'elle ait été caractérisée par des inventions technologiques pionnières, la révolution industrielle, et l'émancipation des enfants et des femmes, elle était une époque de contradictions sociales telles que: la pauvreté, la criminalité, la prostitution, les inégalités flagrantes, et surtout la discrimination raciale et l'exploitation économique des enfants. La division injuste de la société victorienne apparait dans l'existence de trois classes différentes: la classe des riches, la classe moyenne et la classe ouvrière qui était caractérisée par l'exploitation inhumaine et sans précédent des enfants qui étaient forcés à travailler dans les mines et les usines, et à contribuer au budget familial, au même titre que les adultes. Les études réalisées sur cette période montré, qu'en dépit de leurs différences socioéconomiques, les enfants des trois classes subissent le même mode d'interaction avec leurs parents et qui était construit sur la discrimination selon l'Age, le sexe et l'apparence physique.

Mots-clés: Paradoxes victoriens; inégalités sociales; émancipation; division de classes d'enfants; ségrégation d'âge; exploitation des enfants.

Introduction

Of all the social groups which formed the societies of the past, children are seldom seen and rarely heard in the documents. The history of childhood as a distinct social group had been little examined by historians may be because history had long been considered as a record of public and not private events. In his history of childhood, Lloyd de Mause, one of the pioneer social historians of

childhood wrote; "Historians have concentrated so much on the noisy sandbox of history with its fantastic castles and magnificent battles that they generally ignored what was going on in the homes around the playground" (Lloyd de Mause,1974, p.1). Where historians did touch on the theme of childhood was often set in the context of family history, labour, education or legislation; missing, in this sense, to tell the story of childhood itself. The reason they give is the paucity of sources; the evidence on the subject being scattered, indirect and hard to interpret because there was little evidence by the children themselves. Besides, early sociologists didn't set up theories to back up, coordinate and structure the scattered data

Interest in children and the family is a relatively recent and modern phenomenon in history. The concepts of family and childhood starting to be noticed in the second half of the twentieth century, spreading in the seventeen's. (Journal of family history, 1977). This is the reason why early social scientists, historians and sociologists, like Peter Laslett had started questioning why "these crowds and crowds of little children are strangely missing from the written record... There is something mysterious about the silence of all these multitudes of babes in arms, toddlers and adolescents in the statements men made at the time about their own existence". (Laslett, 1965, p.104)

Of all the books on childhood in the past, Phillipe Aries' "centuries of childhood" is probably the best known. He argues that, while the traditional child was happy because he was free to mix with many classes and ages, a special condition known as childhood was "invented" in the early modern period, resulting in a tyrannical concept of the family which destroyed friendship and sociability and deprived children of freedom, inflicting upon them, for the first time, the birch and the prison cell". Aries' book had been much read since; it had also been much criticized. His argumentation in support of his thesis was criticized when he said that there was no separate concept of childhood in the middle Ages and therefore contemporary artists could not portray a child. This was disapproved, considering the huge evidence of medieval portraits of children. He also argued that the modern family restricted the child's freedom and increased the severity of punishment. But could this be applied to all social classes and both genders,

considering that Aries dealt mainly with children from the upper strata of the society and mostly boys?

The psychoanalytic approach, used later by American historians, is interesting but the risk of such an approach is to present the child constantly as a victim. Lloyd de Mause, for example, in "The history of childhood", uses the psychoanalytic theory techniques to demonstrate how adults have, through centuries, projected upon children their own guilt's and angers and so condemned not only the children to untold sufferings, but future generations to endless conflict and destruction.(De Mause, 1974)

1. Childhood and the Victorians

Why our concern in this particular issue and era? The nineteenth century, and more particularly Queen Victoria's reign, is a remarkable period of British social history, an interesting period of study for all the social paradoxes of that society. Underneath a surface of wealth, glory and power characterizing the British Empire, lied a social underworld full of contrastive and striking weaknesses and social evils mainly in the cities, as a result of the Industrial Revolution. However, along with gender and age discriminations, poverty, workhouses, prostitution, crime and all the other social evils, we can notice significant changes in the economic, political and cultural fields, as well as changes in morality, ideologies and values, mainly regarding the roles and lives of women and children within the family unit, and their emancipation. One cannot also deny the drastic changes in the lives of working-class children thanks to a new legislation in matters of child labour and compulsory education.

1.1 "Re-inventing" childhood

If the concept of childhood is attributed by sociologists of the family to the second half of the twentieth century, wasn't childhood rather invented earlier, by the Victorians, who, despite all the paradoxes and social evils of their society, could be credited, after all, for their new social concern in children fate and for their democratic efforts in order to stop child labour and introduce compulsory education?

In order to get a fairly accurate picture of childhood in Victorian times, where can we look for sources and which evidence can we rely on? Primary sources such as Mayhew and Booth's surveys, the famous and pioneer contemporary social investigators are of great importance even though they somehow reflect an adult and middle- class attitude. Diaries and autobiographies are also worth looking at; however, some authors tend to sentimentalize their past experiences. Oral evidence remains one of the most reliable sources; unfortunately, it can be used only for the late Victorian era.

1.2 Victorian literature for children

> "What is this? " He said at last. "This is a child" Haigha replied, coming in front of Alice to introduce her**…..**" "We only found it today. It's as large as life and twice as natural". "I always thought they were fabulous monsters", said the unicorn. "Is it alive? " (Carroll, 2009, p.153).

The literature for children, although often idealistic, can reveal a great deal about patterns of behavior. It can reveal, for instance, values of a society middle-class parents wish to inculcate to their children.. What characterized this literature was this mixture of fantasy and realism. Victorian literature was preceded by romanticism and followed by modernism or realism. So we could say that it is a fusion between a romantic and a realist style of writing.

How was childhood depicted or referred to? Were perceptions of childhood different from those of to-day? What was this literature intended for? Entertain or instruct? Could we make a distinction among its target readers according to their social status: upper-class, middle-class or working- class children?

The rich Victorian literature on and for children is a revealing and significant source of research. Many of the classics of English children's literature and even universal literature, were produced in the Victorian period :Charles Dickens's Oliver twist, David Copperfield, the Bronte sisters' novels, Lewis Caroll's Alice in wonderland, Stevenson's Treasure Island, etc.Britain was the golden age of English children literature in all its forms: poetry, fiction, essays, novels; the latter being its most leading form. However, these books were not offered to the majority of children of the time. For the middle classes, writing for children was,

more than an art; it was taken as an instrument of moral persuasion, practical instruction, Christian propaganda or social control.

2. Class divisions

The old categorization of rural British society into rich and poor changed in the 19th century with industrialization. The new structure consisted of three distinct classes, different and distant from one another: the upper, middle and working classes. This social pyramid of classes, which characterized the adult Victorian society, each class with its own specificities, was also applied to the world of children.

2.1 Middle-class children

The Victorian literature for children would strike the modern reader by the themes of morality with which it is impregnated. "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it" said the Duchess to Alice (Carroll, 2016, p.66). Fairy tales, old fables and all the imaginative world for children was being replaced by a more serious kind of literature inspired from Rousseau educational doctrines. No more escape into Robin Hood's adventures or Jack the Giant Killer, but instead a confrontation with reality through "puzzles of morality".

Mrs Edge worth's tales, for example, sound like the following one: a little girl Rosamond, could choose whether to spend her money on a shining purple jar, seen in a shop window or a pair of needed shoes. She must then learn the moral necessary when she buys the jar, which turns out to be colourless itself and full of smelly, tinted water and then finds out she is unable to go on an outing with her father because her worn out shoes will not stay on her feet. Later on, the notion of good and bad behaviour, rewards and punishments will be added by the Christian tone of the Evangelical writers, relating the bad behaviour to punishments of heaven and hell. In Mrs Sherwood's "Fairchild Family", children are warned against cruelty and naughtiness by being taken to see a gibbet with the decomposed body hanging in chains.(Sherwood, 2008)

The tyranny of many Evangelical parents often pushed the children to seek the company of non-kin members of the household such as servants, governesses or even cooks. Dorothy Pattison, when rebuked by a constantly angry father and

submissive mother, used to take refuge in the kitchen where she always was welcomed by the kind staff. She was to recall these rare, kind and peaceful moments of her childhood until her death. Sometimes, the resentment expressed by middle-class children through privations and oppressions could be sometimes projected nastily on servants or governesses. Agnes Grey tells about her living experiences as a governess in 1840: the children expressed their repressed feelings by rolling; shrieking in temper, running away, refusing to be washed and dressed, by telling lies, spitting in her face and bellowing at her like a bull. Paradoxically, fairy stories did not disappear completely from the Victorian scene; they were deepened by the use of fantasy and symbolism (Lear-Carroll etc.) "Well! What are you? ", said the Pigeon, "I can see you're trying to invent something!" "I.... I'm a little girl", said Alice. "No, no! You're a serpent!" (Carroll, 2016, p.38)

Edward Lear's stories, illustrations and poems are still impregnated by the morality of a good and bad behaviour, punishments and rewards, but under his "Nonsense Songs" (1846-70) lies an enormous depth-charge of feeling and passion which is directly related to the experiences and conflicts of childhood. They speak, under the fun, not only of the writer's loneliness and rejection in a society where suppression of feeling and 'a stiff upper lip' were considered as virtues, but symbolises the child's frustration in his attempt to adjust to the alien adult world that rejects his richness and impulse. "Who are you?", said the caterpillar. "I....I hardly know Sir just at present", replied Alice, "At least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then" (Carroll, 2016, p.33)

Carroll's L. Alice (1865-6), the masterpiece of Victorian children literature, underneath the fun, also expresses the feeling and imagination of the child overlaid by the anxiety of dealing with the adult word and with growing up. "In Alice", says Jonathan Miller, we can see caricatures of all the principal personalities of a Victorian household. There are uncles and aunts, parents and servants, and throughout the book Alice is always trying to work out the social relations between them. Questions of authority rank and kinship puzzled an intelligent child like Alice. (Miller, 1966)

2.2 Working-class children

For the working-class child, however, it was not so much the burden of codes of morality weighing on him, but an early and direct share of responsibility in the economic survival of his family. At a time of widespread poverty, three out of four children had to work at an early age in order to subsidize their parents' low wages and contribute to the survival of the family or raise its standard. Childhood in a working-class family was almost undifferentiated from work. In his survey on poverty in London, Charles Booth, a contemporary social investigator, divides the wide section of the working class into different classes and in most of these classes, the children worked from an early age. In class A, which is the poorest, the children are street sellers or are to be found separated from their parents in pauper or industrialschools and in such homes as Dr Barnardo's. The proportion of children in class B (casual labourers) is big: 38,000 out of 100,000. Both boys and girls of this class have to seek for employment, whether their father is employed or not. The girls earn enough to pay their mothers four or five shillings a week if they are staying at home; and if the boys do not bring in enough money, they are likely to be turned adrift.

The women in class D (small regular earners) work a good deal and so do the children when free from school: the sons go as van or errand boys and the daughters into daily service or into factories or help the mother in her work . Class E families, the largest, lead independent lives and can afford keeping fairly comfortable homes. As a rule, the wives do not work, but the children all do: the boys commonly assisting their fathers, the girls taking to local trades or going out to service. Finally, in class F, corresponding to the labour aristocracy, the sons take up as clerks and the daughters get employed in first class shops or in places of business. (Spicker,1990)

Nineteenth century philanthropists and historians have much emphasized the exploitation of child labour in the first half of the nineteenth century. But child labour is not a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, nor is it an exclusive product of the Industrial Revolution. Children used to work in their parents households or others'. The pre-industrial family was an economic unit and children were expected to contribute towards it. In peasant families where the

means of subsistence were very tight, sending the children to work or eventually using them as cheap labour, was a valuable ressource. "Children were to pre-industrial society what pensions and disability payments, are to our own". Wrote Gillis (Gillis, 1974)). So child labour had always existed before industrialization; it only became more visible between 1780 and 1830, due perhaps to the greater mobility of children towards factories.

Between 1780 and 1840, as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, drastic changes operated in the economy, politics and consequently in the lives of British people. The spectacular advances in technology, science, transport, engineering etc. drastically changed rural England into an urban one, resulting into a significant internal migration and a rural exodus towards the cities. Facing the technological progress, stood an underworld of social evils, poverty and exploitation of children and women. What better illustration than C. Dicken's novels?

The employment of children in factories and mines as wage-earners subsidiary to their parents was still common in the first half of the nineteenth century. The second and third decades of the century saw great scandals of the early textile factories, the long working hours of the children, their employment in coal mines as well as their geographical isolation. However, despite a progressive legislation to regulate child labour and introduce compulsory education from 1833 to 1893,added to a growing child protector literature, points of view and social investigations, there were still demands for child labour in industries and domestic services and, as a matter of fact, the 1861 and 1871 Censuses showed a peak of children employment. The children contributed to the family budget, with the consent and influence of their parents. According to the children employment commissioners of the time, four or five was the usual age of full-time employment in domestic branches of hosiery, lace and plated straw manufacturing.

In the well known black countries coal mines and textile factories and before the first legislation of 1833(Factory Act) and 1842 (Mines Act), child labour under the age of nine was a common scene in Victorian Britain. Not to mention the famous chimney sweeps whose brutal and dreary life was nothing like what we

can seeing Mary Poppins. Later, with the development of capitalism, of large scale industries and the use of higher technology, children were no longer necessary; instead adult literate workers were needed. This can be illustrated by the Factories and Mines Acts which stopped very young children from being earners, followed by the Education Acts (compulsory education) intended to control these idle children. All these economic and political changes were to affect considerably the economic situation of the family. By the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, children had to be fully maintained by their parents, at least up to the age of ten, whereas in the old days they offset the cost of their upkeep by working. No wonder a good number of working-class parents reacted against the child labour and education legislation. In 1835, factory operatives began to hold meetings throughout Lancashire to call for a universal twelve-hour day, which would extend the labour of children which had been limited to eight hours per day for several years. And again in 1837, the workers agitated for universal ten-hours per day, including ten hours for children. These last two agitations embarrassed the supporters of factory legislation in Parliament; for it appeared that the workers themselves were indifferent to the length of the children's working days and to their health and morals. (Mustgrove, 1968)

The proportion of children under fifteen, in the total population, was increasing steadily, amounting to 36.6% in 1881. These vast numbers of children were beginning to be seen, at a time when education was not compulsory, as a problem and a threat for the social order. (Notestein, 1948)

What did the majority of these children do if they could not work and did not have to go to school and if their mothers were working, or if the quality of life at home was bad? They would automatically turn to the life of the streets, trying to earn a penny or two or stealing or simply keeping busy.

Children of the streets are a familiar scene in Victorian cities. We already know the economic and political reasons that pushed children to the freedom of street life. Henry Mayhew, another contemporary social philanthropist, in his survey of the London poor, investigates further reasons. The first cause he lists is the conduct of parents, masters or mistresses. "The censure", he writes, "is

attributable to parents or those who should fill the place of parents, the state or society". Further he adds: "the brute tyranny of parents, manifested in the wreaking of any annoyances or disappointment they may have endured, in the passionate beating and cursing of their children, for trifling or for no causes, is among the worst symptoms of a depraved nature. Noris this confined to poor families only, but it exists among other classes" argues Mayhew. (Mayhew, 1968, p.468)

Street sellers such as costermongers required the assistance of children as soon as their strength would enable them to do so. For those who could not be employed by their parents or others, will be sent to the street to sell oranges and lemons or nuts or matches etc. In order to earn a penny or two. "Very often", says Mayhew, "adult street-sellers are people who ran away from domestic tyranny". "Had this runaway boy been less honest or perhaps less dull", argues Mayhew, "it would have been far easier for him to have become a thief than a street- trader."

Therefore, choosing a secure way of life, he (or she) would start with a few Lucifer-matches, boot-laces, nuts or onions, this is if he cannot be employed as a permanent assistant to a costermonger, a hawker or a milkman, or if he wants and could afford being independent. These children seemed to like that way of life, preferring it to idleness and poverty: "I didn't mind being sent out", affirms an 11 years old girl, interviewed by Mayhew, "I knew children that sold things in the streets. Perhaps I liked it better than staying at home, without a fire and with nothing to do, and if I went out, I saw other children busy". (Ibid, p 480)

Even the country child, who seem to have been more free and less oppressed than the child of the city, would not have hesitated if he faced the choice between school and work, for example. At the time when schooling was not compulsory, country children attended school mainly in winter when there was no opportunity for field works. But if they faced the choice between going to school or earning a few pence by gleaning, apple picking or pea-picking, work came first. Often, those who did not or could not afford going to school, mixed play and education in the streets, by watching craftsmen performing their duties. (Kintergham, 1973). Consequently children street sellers were a very common scene of Victorian England.

2.3 Upper-class children

In the same way as in adult society where the upper-class man is distinguished from his lower classes counterparts by his non necessity to work, the upper- class child can be defined by his not having to work, whereas the working-class child of either sex was compelled to work from an early age, and the middle- class boy did so but not until his middle teens.

How did it feel like being a child from the aristocracy or the upper classes in Victorian England?

Although the condition of a working-class child in the nineteenth century. sounds harsh, one would wonder, after having read some upper-class biographies, if it would not have been preferable to the easy and isolated life of an upper-class child. Winston Churchill, answers the question in his memoir: '' I would far rather have been apprenticed as a bricklayer's mate, or run errands as a messenger boy, or helped my father to dress the front window of a grocer's shop. It would have been real, It would have taught me more; and I should have done it much better. Also I should have got to know my father, which would have been a joy to me." (Churchill.1948.p.38)

Upper-class children did certainly suffer from the physical separation and distance from their parents, more than the working-class or the average middle-class child. One has only to look at the architecture of aristocratic houses (a matter we thought worth dealing with further) to realize that upper-class. Children spent insulated lives in nursery wings and floors. It was more the Nanny's task to bring up these children than the mother's. By doing so, the nanny had to be very careful in protecting the remote parents from any noise, intrusion or worry from the children. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy shows in "The Rise and fall of the British Nanny" the importance of a nanny in English institutions.

England seemed to be the only country, "producing nannies" and one has only to refer to newspapers of the time, to realize this sort of "industry" where the demand often exceeded the supply. In many large Victorian households, children were rarely seen and heard. Parents "gave audiences" at certain times, usually late afternoons, and for such occasions, their children were suitably prepared, washed

and brushed up. Admonished mothers would make the efforts of coming up to the stairs, tender and gleaming visions, dressed up in their best clothes and jewelry, to say good night on their way out to dinner parties.

The physical and emotional care of young children was considered to be a distraction from the more important business of wider society and "social duties". Therefore, "busy" as they were, these mothers would delegate the task of bringing up the children to the Nanny and this sometimes as early as one month old. No wonder that the child, this very sensitive creature, would develop more affection for the Nanny than for his own mother and vice-versa. Of his glamorous mother, Winston Churchill wrote: "She shone for me like the Evening Star. I loved her dearly, but at a distance." (Arthur, 2017, p.10)

My nurse was my confidante: Mrs. Everest, it was, who looked after me and tended all my wants. It was to her I poured out my many troubles...."After her death, he wrote: "As soon as I heard she was seriously ill, I travelled up to London to see her...She had been my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the twenty years I had lived**.**"(Arthur, 2017, p.14). It was said that her photograph hung in his room until the end of his life. Of his father he wrote with admiration: "To me he seemed to own the key to everything or almost everything worth having... But... if ever I began to show the slightest idea of comradeship, he was immediately offended; and when once I suggested that I might help his private secretary to write some of his letters, he froze me into stone."**(**Arthur, 2017, p.11). For this young boy who was starving for affection, his father was as emotionally distant as his mother.

Moreover, any inclination of the child to develop sympathy or friendship with members of the household staff, were discouraged: the rules of etiquette in social interactions were strictly observed, including the socialization with other children from different social status. Outside the home, they were closely watched by their nannies, not to betray the sense of community by mixing with children from a lower class. The description of Hamilton Gardens that L. David off makes in "The Best Circles" is quite significant: Hamilton Gardens, a section of Hyde Park, used as a playground exclusively for upper-class children, was enclosed by iron railways and a locked gate.

2.4The Victorian house and child distancing

The architecture of the Victorian house could have played a part in the physical and gender distancing between adults, children and servants. Servants had their own quarters. Day and night nurseries situated far from adult quarters, kept the children out of sight and noise. Perhaps, a look at M. Girouard's description of the "Architecture of the Victorian country house", would reveal more about the age, gender and class segregations, happening in an upper-class households. By today's standards, the architecture of a Victorian country house is complicated; this is partly because it had to contain many people. These people were carefully stratified and subdivided to be attributed particular "territories" according to their age, gender, social status and occupations. The ground floor was reserved to the world of adults; the first floor, or sometimes one wing of it, in bigger houses, was the quarter of "second-class" members of the household: children, nurses and servants. "It was considered undesirable for children, servants and parents to see, smell or hear each other" (Davidoff, 1986) except at certain recognized times and places.

The children had to keep to the nurseries most of the time unless they are permitted the "privilege" to enter adult territory for one hour or so, to see their parents. They were, for this ceremony, accompanied by their nurses, and the whole thing happened in the drawing room, the place where parents usually receive guests. In the very large houses, adult quarters were also divided. The mistress of the house has her boudoir to work in; the master, his study or business room. Drawing rooms are ladies' territories but men were allowed in. The library and billiard room tended to become exclusively for males. Unmarried guests are supposed to use different corridors, whether they are males or females. Even the use of staircases was based on gender divisions. This applied also to servants: different quarters and staircases for men servants and maids.

3. Victorian values and childhood

The famous 'Victorian Values' of the mid-Victorian era or the "Golden Age" of Britain are more characteristic of the middle class because it was the most important, significant and influential class through its growing wealth and new role in society. This explains our concern of this particular class in this third part.

Besides, because of their new role in society, middle-class opinions, behavior and values spread to the whole society and were adopted gradually by the other classes above and below.

3.1 Religion

Religion had a great influence on family roles and attitudes among the members of households, especially among the middle classes. Religious values set the place and role the child was attributed in the family. Evangelicalism was the religion of the home; it set a pattern of family life that was taken as a model by the middle classes and probably respectable working-class and copied by the upper class to a certain extent. Evangelicalism idealized and sanctified family life in the nineteenth century and encouraged the subordination of women and children to the household head authority. Emphasis was put on reciprocal duties rather than on mutual love and affection between parents and children.

The doctrines of Evangelicalism were remembered everyday in family prayers, which every member of the family was compelled to attend, including the very young, even if they did not understand much of what was said. Family prayers and the practice of saying grace before and after meals is one illustration of the submission and filial obedience required from children. It was also one of these occasions in which a Victorian father could reinforce his position as the head of the household and assert his dominance over his wife, children and servants.

Filial obedience was one of those unquestionable duties which had to be observed blindly, even at the expense of the children's happiness. "Why did Mrs. Pattison take no steps to protect her children from a father who was clearly not of sound mind; although she loved them? The answer requires a considerable effort of theological and historical imagination", thinks Jo Manton, "one undoubted reason was her belief in Evangelical dogma, as bigoted, if less violent than her husband's (a clergyman) ... "To save their souls, she would prevent anything, even if health and happiness were sacrificed in the process. The second was the fantastic almost unbelievable obedience which Evangelical parents, as of right, exacted from their children"(Manton, 1971). Florence Nightingale, an upper-class pioneer in nursing also often commented on the tyrannical upbringing of "a good Evangelical family".

The Oppressiveness and terror expressed by Evangelical childhoods in auto-biographies, is not difficult to understand if one considers the way the Bible was presented to children: "Lay open the universal sinfulness of nature, the darkness of the mind, the forwardness of the tempers, the earthliness and sensuality of the affections... Declare the evils of sin in all its effects... and Hell to receive all those that die in sin..."No wonder these children grew up with a haunting sense of sin, and a dread of judgment. "Oh don't talk about my life", cried Sister Dora, a middle-class pioneer of nursing", to the amazement of a friend who praised her self-sacrifice. "If you really knew it, you would be down on your knees, crying for mercy for me, a sinner"(Manton, 1971, p. 39). For Dorothy Pattinson (or Sister Dora) from the Pattinson evangelical family, her indoors refuge was the kitchen. There, she was sure of a welcome from affectionate Bessy, the housemaid , from Wright, the parlour maid and above all from Sally, kind Mrs Sally Walls, the cook.....There too, Dorothy learnt a further lesson, never forgotten throughout her life's work: the warmth and goodness of simple people (Manton,1971, p.35)

Another future pioneer of nursing, Agnes Jones, wrote in her diary "Today, I am fourteen. When I look back at the past year, I see nothing but sin, depravity and unhappiness"(quoted in Manton, 1971, p.39). "I keep trying to do right", wrote Charlotte Bronte to her school-friend, Ellen Nussey, "I abhor myself, I despise myself" (Gerin, 1969, p.33-34). An overwhelming preoccupation with death and hell surrounded the Evangelical child and the terrors of Hell were very real to him.

Henry Manning recalled "being told at the age of four that God had a book in which he wrote down everything we did wrong that I remember being found by my mother sitting under a kind of writing table in great fear. Charles Kingsley too, commented on his evangelical childhood: "Believing in obedience to my mother's assurance and the solemn prayers of the ministers about me, that I was a child of Hell and a lost and miserable sinner, I used to have accesses of terror and fancy that I should wake up the next morning in everlasting flames"(quoted in Houghton, 1985, p.63).

In brief, Evangelical children were the victims of Wesley Pattison's advice to parents: "Break their wills... Begin the work before they can speak plain, perhaps before they can speak at all, whatever pains it costs; if you would not damn the

child. Let a child from a year old be taught to bear the rob and cry softly; from that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to affect him." "Break his will now", he added, "and his soul shall live, and he will probably bless you to all eternity". (Southey, 1846, p.368)

So children, especially in religious families, were constantly made conscious that they were only "children" i.e. defective creatures, of a corrupted and evil nature. Refusing to converse with the child and understand him, was a way for distancing. Paradoxically, the greater distance of parents from their children, in Victorian times, went hand in hand with an "exaltation of family life". Another striking contradiction of Victorian mentality is that mixed conception of the child's innocence and sinfulness', naivety and maturity. "Victorian concepts of the child", writes Nina Auerback, in a review on Victorian literature for children, "tended to swing back and forth between extremes of original innocence and original sin; Rousseau and Calvin stood side by side in the nursery".(Auerback, 1973, p.44)

3.2 Gender discriminations and education

Gender segregations in Victorian households were not typical of the upper classes. They seem to have been common to all classes with a difference of degree, related to the economic standard of the family. In fact, Victorian society was a male dominated society "par excellence", and the division of roles and positions for members of the household, as males or females, was only the reflection of what was happening in that society at a wider scale. The segregation started early in childhood, in the confines of the home, so that the child would be prepared to his future role and position in society. Hundreds of illustrations can be found in the many classics of English literature.

Education is a good example: while upper and middle- class boys were sent to public schools to be educated as "Christian gentlemen" or be prepared to enter the professions and civil service, girls were trained to be future housewives. They were expected to be religious, devoted to their families, submissive and sentimentally emotional rather than rational. Independence of mind was discouraged and the importance of domestic duties came before anything else.

Their education, whether it was done by a governess, or in a small private school or by the mother at home, was often inadequate and consisted of little more than French, music, drawing and needlework. "The sisters Pattison had all been taught to feel, what Eleanor (the eldest) called ‘a keen sense of their own inferiority in mind, education, and sex’; and they could not help contrasting this with the care lavished on the education of Frank(their brother),who was now cheerfully passing through Rugby with the minimum of work"(Manton,1971,p75). The rest of them accepted this contrast as one of the facts of nature, but Dorothy, by the time she reached her twentieth birthday, could no longer do so. She reacted saying: «I don’t want to be a drawing room lady; I want to be a nurse. I shan't want them (lessons of music and languages) in this world or the next!"(Ibid) Some girls, however, aware of their ignorance, attempted to find a remedy by wide reading, by interacting with educated people. In the case of the Pattison family, where the use of books was seen by the father as corruptive, the sisters educated each other secretly, with the help of Frank (knowledge was transmitted through his letters from Oxford).

This inadequate education for girls was completed by their mid-teens and from then on they waited only for "coming out" and marrying well, often in strict order of family seniority. It was not until the mid-century when the influence of Miss Frances Mary Buss and Miss Dorothea Beale, the founders of the North London Collegiate School for ladies and Cheltenham Ladies’Collegethat girls started being given a solid education. Emphasis was put on science. Modern languages and classics and sport, for the first time, became part of girls’ education. It was the kind of education which was intended to send a girl onto further training for a career in teaching or nursing, to the universities or professions. Although they were turning out young ladies rather than aggressive feminists, the school played an undoubted part in the liberation of middle-class girls and it was not surprising that many of the Suffragettes (the first women emancipation movement) of the next generation were the product of these schools.

3.3 Children’s roles

For middle-class boys, it was a different matter. In the choice of a career, sons were more often expected to follow their fathers’ footsteps than today, especially

if there was a family business to take over. The choice of a career could sometimes mean the first serious conflict between parents and sons. For the upper-class son, it was more or less the same, with even more injustice: the eldest son would inherit the land by the system of primogeniture, even if he did not want it. This again must have created tensions between him and his parents and probably his brothers too.

Apparently, working-class girls shared as much "freedom" as their brothers by going out to work, but at home, it was a different matter. Outside the home, girls and boys were expected to participate equally and directly in the economic existence of the family unit, although the kind of work they performed varied according to their gender. For example, girls would run errands or mind babies for neighbors and boys would do milk delivery or market stall etc. However, in the confines of the home, there were forms of work exclusively performed by female members, which formed a further obstacle to their obtaining some form of school education. If middle-class girls were trained in a theoretical way to be future housewives and mothers, for working-class girls, it was more of a practical matter and a necessity.

In many households where mothers were away for work, girls would automatically take over the household duties and would act as "little mothers" to their younger brothers and sisters. This is shown by various log books in the country: on attendance of school by girls was often justified as; "their mothers want them" and "home causes". In fact, for those girls whose mothers were out for work, it meant taking over the household duties, i.e. the housework, the cooking and also the tending and care of the younger members of the family. For other little girls, house duties and run errands supplemented school, before and after school, It seems that domestic duties for girls were taken for granted by parents, as part of a female nature and the fact that boys often got away with it, must have created bad feelings between brothers and sisters. A country woman that M. Chamberlain interviewed, said:"When I was small, I had plenty of brothers and sisters....I remember we had to knit father's socks .and make his flannel shirts..We couldn't stop out to play much... We all had to sit and sew. We didn't go out and play. The boys, they had a better time than we did. They had a good time. My father used to spend all the money on the boys if anyone wanted

best clothes, suits and that, he used to buy them all for the boys. But us girls we had to mend and do. I don't think that was all fair. We used to get over so jealous..."(Chamberlain, 2011, p28)

The burden of domestic duties, for girls, as a "female destiny", was sometimes carried outside the home. The Reports on Popular Education in England in 1861 stated that during recreation time, it was considered that the girls should not take part in unsuitable athletic sports, such as football, cricket etc....but that they should "find a little wholesome physical exercise in cleaning out the school".

Conclusion

The Victorian age, underneath the apparent wealth, glory and power of the British Empire, was hiding a significant and striking underworld of social inequalities and age and gender discriminations. Paradoxically this era also brought important changes in the ideology and attitudes towards the child. For the first time in the history of childhood, legislative measures were taken to protect the child against economic exploitation and better his social status.

However, one would wonder whether this state intervention should be seen only as a humanitarian action. Utilitarian ideologies influenced people and their government in thinking that the child welfare could contribute a great deal to the progress of the Nation, so dear to the Victorians. It appeared to economists and military strategists that the prosperity and safety of the state depended on having healthy citizens to run the Empire. Wouldn't this state protection mean also control?

Did this legislation affect the position of the child in the family and the nature of the relationship between him and his parents? Apart from the Factory and Mines Acts and later the Education Acts, which made very young children fully dependent on their parents by the fourth quarter of the century, legislation towards the child welfare was still insufficient and one had to wait until the next century before the state started intervening in family affairs. Meanwhile, in the home, children were at the mercy of their parents: exploited, repressed, neglected or simply isolated. Paradoxically, this was happening in a time of a "sanctification of the home" and "exaltation of family life» so dear to Victorians, mainly regarding the middle-class ideology. In fact, the retreat to the home, for

the middle classes was a way to emphasize the family hierarchy in which children stood at the bottom.

Surely, there must have been exceptions, at an individual level, and the experience of childhood in Victorian England must have varied to some extent among families of the same class and certainly of different classes. However, there are three dimensions in parent-child interactions which seem to have been common to all classes: distancing, inferiority and gender segregation of the child. The cross-class study of childhood pointed out these common dimensions without neglecting some variables such as economic dependence, the impact of religious ideology, the physical and emotional distancing etc... The parameter of distancing must have played a significant part in the nature of family relationships and on the psychology of the child. In respectable working-class families and perhaps in lower middle-class ones, however, such a dimension would have probably been less important partly because there were no intermediaries such as servants or nannies between parents and children; and also because the size of the house would not allow it. So perhaps this kind of families was the healthiest for a child upbringing (Young, 1962, 116). Finally the size of the family is worth mentioning in a study of family relationships. The fewer the children in a family, the more could be spent on each child, the better education and the more attention could be paid to him. An obvious change in the Victorian middle-class family is the decrease of its size, starting slowly in the late 1840s and gathering speed as time went on. The average size of family which was between 5.5 and 6 in mid-Victorian times fell by a quarter at the end of the century (Notestein, 1949). It would be interesting to study further the impact of such a demographic fact on the nature of the relationship between parents and children.

Bibliography

1. Aries Phillipe, 1973. Centuries of childhood, London, Penguin, 1996, Victorian studies, Sept 1973.
2. Arthur Max, Churchill, 2017. The life, an authorized pictorial biography published by C. Cassel, a division of octopus publishing group LTD in association with Churchill Heritage Ltd London.

3. Bradley I., 2006. The call to seriousness: the evangelical impact on the Victorians, Lyons Hudson Ltd, Carroll, Lewis Alice in wonderland Padmore Publishing USA 2016.
4. Carroll, Lewis Alice through the looking glass. Walker books Ltd London. 2009 illustrated by Helen Oxenbury
5. Chamberlain Mary, Fenwomen, Full Circles editions 2011
6. Churchill, Winston. My early life. Oldham Press Ltd. 1948.
7. Cunningham, Hugh. The Invention of Childhood. BBC Books. BBB worldwide Ltd. London. 2006.
8. Davin Anna, 1996.Growing up poor home, school and street in London (1870-1914), Rivers Oram Press, London.
9. Davidoff, 1973. Lee the best circles: society, etiquette and the season, Cresset London.
10. Dickens Charles, 1977. Oliver twist (1837-8) Penguin.
11. Dickens Charles, 1971. Bleak House (1852-3) Penguin.
12. Dickens Charles, 1999. David Copperfield, Wordsworth editions Ltd, U.K.
13. Dyos H. J.; wolff M., 1998. The Victorian city Taylor and Francis, London.
14. Flinn W. M., Smout, 1974. Essays in social history, Oxford University Press.
15. Gillis J. R., 1974.Youth and History, London academic press.
16. Gerin W., 1969. Charlotte Bronte Oxford Paperbacks.
17. Hardy Jonathan Gathorne, 2014. The rise and fall of the British nanny, Phoenix.
18. Houghton E., 1957. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-870, Yale university Press, London, renewed.
19. Hopkins Eric, 1994. Childhood transformed: working-class children in 19th century England, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
20. Heywood J.S., 1969. Childhood and society a hundred years ago, national children home, London.
21. James Alison, James Adrian, 2008. Key concepts in childhood studies, sage publications Ltd. London.

22. Kinteringham J., 1973. Country girls in the nineteenth century: history workshop pamphlets, no 11. Ruskin College, Oxford.
23. Laslett Peter, 1965. The world we have lost, univ. printing House., New York.
24. Lloyd De Mause, 1974. The history of childhood bellew Publishing, UK.
25. Mac Carthy M., 1985. A nineteenth century childhood constable.
26. Manton Jo, 1971. Sister Dora: the life of Dorothy pattison, methien & CoLtd London.
27. Mayhew Henry, 2018. London labour and the London Poor, vol. 1, Forgotten Books U.K.
28. Miller Jonathan, 1966. Alice in wonderland, BBC TV plays.
29. Mustgrove Frank, 1968. Youth and the social order Rutledge and kegan Paul.
30. Notestein Frank W., 1948. The report of the royal commission on population: a review in population studies, vol. 3, n°3, the crescent library.
31. Payne Geoff, 2006. Social divisions, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
32. Roberts R., 1971.The classic slum: salford life in the first quarter of the century 1971,Penguin Books, London,
33. Sherwood Martha, 2008. The Fairchild family, Kessinger Publishing,
34. Smith C. W., 2018. Florence Nightingale, Forgotten Books,
35. Southey R., 1846.The life of Wesley and the rise and progress of methodism (3rd ed.) Longman.
36. Spicker Paul, Charles Booth, 1990. The examination of poverty published in social policy and administration vol. 24 no 1.
37. Thompson Sue, 2005. Age discrimination, Russell house publishing Ltd, Dorset.
38. Young GM, 1962. Victorian essays Oxford university press.