

Bleak house

Literature



**ASSIGN
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Charles Dickens Novel “ Bleak House” was published in the 19th Century at the time in History of the Industrial Revolution, which came upon many issues for England such as Pollution, Factories, Urbanisation and Diseases and so on. The opening of the novel to Bleak House is written in a third person narrator, which gives off the tone of being variously ironic, detached and urbane in the opening of the Novel, as it gives us an in-depth of the issues around setting the scene in London.

As Charles Dickens wanted to entertain his readers, he still points out the key features to the Industrial Revolution giving the readers an insight to what really happened, enticing them to read on and unravel the attitudes and meanings of the Novel and time in history. The opening of the Novel starts off with a proper noun, “ London” this is an abrupt and astonishing short ‘ sentence’. In fact technically, it is grammatically incomplete (ellipsis), as it does not have a verb or an object. Therefore it somehow implies the meaning to ‘ the scene of London’ which we are introduced to afterwards.

In the first few sentences there are several names (proper nouns), all signalled by capital letters “ London, Michaelmas Term, Lord Chancellor, Lincoln’s Inn Hall, November, Holborn Hill). This helps create the very dependable and realistic world Dickens presents in his fiction. The readers believe that this is the same London which we could visit today (sense of realism). The proper nouns also emphasise very specific and concrete nature of the world Dickens creates for the readers (giving an insight to their understanding).

Lord Chancellor sitting’ the present participle ‘ sitting’ is positioned the novel being told in the present tense (at this point), which is rather unusual. The effect is to give vividness and immediacy to the story. The reader is being persuaded that these events are taking place now, which links back to the realism of London. The derivational suffix ‘ Implacable’ is an unusual and very storm term to describe the weather. It means ‘ that which cannot be appeased’. What it reflects is Dickens’s genius for making almost everything in his writing original, striking and dramatic.

The archaic expressions “ but newly and wonderful” are used by Dickens to suit the subject, whereas the readers would be more familiar with ‘ recently and astonishing, the derivational suffix ‘ wonderful’ is being used in its original sense – of ‘ something we wonder at’. The verb ‘ waddling’ reinforces the humorous manner in which Dickens is presenting this Megalosaurus – breadth of his vocabulary in naming the beast with such scientific precision, which links back to entertaining the reader. Waddling’ is followed by another simile “ like an elephantine lizard’.

Here is Dickens’s skill with language yet again. He converts a ‘ large’ noun (‘ elephant’) into an adjective (‘ elephantine’) and couples it to something which is usually small (‘ lizard’) to describe, very appropriately it seems, his Megalosaurus. The present participle ‘ lowering’ is an unusual verb. It means ‘ to sink, descend, or slope downwards’. It has quite a softness vibe (there are no sharp or harsh sounds in it) which makes it very suitable for describing the movement of smoke.

The noun 'snowflake' in "As big as full grown snowflakes" surrounds by a clever meaning as the comparison becomes another simile: 'as big as'. And then 'full grown' almost suggests that the snowflakes are human. This is a device much favoured by Dickens (anthropomorphism) attributing human qualities or characteristics to things which are they inanimate. Then 'snowflakes' is a well-observed comparison for an enlarged flake of soot, because they are of similar size and texture.

Dickens immediately goes on to play with the notion that whilst soot is black, snowflakes are white. The stative verb "imagine for the death of the sun" is whereby Dickens has metaphorically stated that the snowflakes have changed colour. And if the sun has died the light and life it brings to the earth has also been extinguished – which reinforces the atmosphere of pre-historic darkness he is creating (Industrial Revolution, the pollution and changes in the atmosphere).

The dynamic verb "jostling one another's umbrellas" emphasises the amount of people that are there at the time being, therefore linking back to the conditions in England, the noun umbrella stands for the necessities of the people around them, therefore as they are 'jostling against each other' there is an issue such as poverty and despair, this is followed by an adjective 'general' and abstract noun infection' which Dickens concludes that the 'infection' is an aspect of the historical content from the Industrial Revolution which ties together issues of pollution, factories, urbanisation and diseases.

The adverb of Place "Fog everywhere" brings the sense of the fog 'accumulating' (gathering), all around London. The readers may interpret this

generally by the foggy weather, therefore not being able to see things clearly as it's quite dull and dark yet quite vicious as it's effecting the whole of England not by a weather state but by their lives through the Industrial revolution e. g. pollution and the diseases.

Dickens has repeated the noun ' fog' continuously to build tension yet an image in the reader's minds of how terrible it was in those days and the amount of ' fog' metaphorically speaking pollution and diseases, Dickens uses adjectives to describe the state of the ' fog' against present participles and nouns (green aits, meadows, defiled among tiers, Essex Marshes, Kentish heights etc. It's quite interesting how Dickens has emphasized the movement of ' fog' through various ways in use of verbs such as shipping, creeping, hovering, riggings, drooping, wheezing and so on. Here Dickens is building the readers knowledge yet the insight of ' fog everywhere' whereas enlightening the reader the daily life of Londoners whereby informing them of how difficult it is.

The present participle " gas looming through the fog" brings in the aspects of the Industrial Revolution as it metaphorically indicates the gas looming as in the ' pollution' looming through the places in London effecting all the people there. Here the reader gets a sense of imagery and understanding of the effects in London, followed on by the noun " much as the sun may" Dickens refers back to the ' death of the sun' therefore revealing that the ' places in the streets' have died and extinguished the fact that darkness has taken over the ' fog' is unbeatable.

The use of superlatives (hyperbole); “ raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest” Dickens exaggerates the issues which have been caused, as it gives us the sense of being variously ironic – as it’s clear all these problems have been caused by the ‘ High Court of Chancery’ therefore Dickens has unravelled that the fog (pollution, diseases, urbanisation) was in fact due to the High Court of Chancery which is full of idiotic and needlessly complicated lawsuits as he is ‘ at the very heart of the fog’.

To conclude, from what has been gathered Charles Dickens opening to the novel “ Bleak House” was perhaps representing the vague view of progression in the future e. g. the fog. Dickens suggests that it’s unclear and blinkers view, therefore Britain’s in the Industrial Revolution cannot see the Bleak future, which have links with pollution, factories, urbanisation and disease. That has been caused by ‘ the very heart of the fog’; Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery. The title of the opening novel sums up Dickens expression of London, a bleak; hopeless, comfortless house.