Charity In Life Of Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens, the most influential individual of his time, has an amazing story. He was raised in a very poor home and did not receive a good education. Contrary to what was expected of a child raised in such circumstances he became a success. Charles Dickens was a very popular writer and had a great influence on his contemporaries and generations to come through his books, his charity works, and his life.

A man, who devoted much of his time to writing books, Charles Dickens, was also known for his charitable works. Charles Dickens started writing in 1836, but by 1845 he had put his writings aside and focused on looking for different opportunities to be charitable. One of the first organizations Dickens associated himself with was an asylum, for women and girls who had begun working as prostitutes (Tomalin 173, 179). In these homes, Charles Dickens worked hard to assist the owners of the home by providing an education for those who came to seek refuge.

Though the conditions of the asylum were not immaculate and very simple, each girl or woman was able to have their own beds. Despite the humble conditions these houses were a safe haven and had become home to many women. The women were well-nourished and were finally able to pursue something other than prostitution (Tomalin 206-207). To keep the women in the homes from becoming more depressed they were instructed not to speak of their past experiences. For encouragement Charles Dickens read the women a speech he wrote himself:

If you have ever wished (I know you must have done so, sometime) for a chance of rising out of your sad life, and having friends, a quiet home, means of being useful to yourself and others peace of mind, self-respect, everything you have lost, pray read…attentively…I am going to offer you, not the chance but the certainty of all these blessings if you will exert yourself to deserve them. And do not think that I write to you as if I felt myself very much above you, or wished to hurt your feelings by reminding you of the situation of which you are placed, God forbid! I mean nothing but kindness to you, and I write as if you were my sister [sic] (Tomalin 206).

Charles Dickens' speech worked, and soon girls and women were given new opportunities and with their new education they received jobs of traditional women of the time (Tomalin 179). Sadly, despite all Dickens had done for the asylum, the women living there scattered soon after his death (Tomalin 401). Dickens really wanted to integrate religion in the lives of these women, but felt if religion was forced on the women and girls they would dread the very thought of God. He knew the women would not adjust well to another requirement in the home therefore, he decided to encourage (Tomalin 205).

Another one of Charles Dickens' outreaches was with children's homes. Charles Dickens found that conditions in boarding schools for unwanted children across London was dismal. These children were living in harsh conditions and were not treated humanely. The food they were given to eat was unsanitary and lacked the adequate nutrients needed, for growing children. The children in these homes were also forced to do hard work not suitable for young children. Charles Dickens used his books to depict these harsh conditions and the way these children were treated. He affected the world in a great way. Dickens assistance in the boarding schools helped many poor children go to school, his voice brought attention to the lack of

education at the time even adults were not given a good education either (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”). Although his works did not cause an immediate reaction and change, he helped open the eyes of the rich to see the plight of the poor (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”). The world began to see the errors of their ways between the social injustices.

As Charles Dickens delved deep into charitable works he soon found another cause to occupy his time. This new passion led Charles Dickens to become an influential force in the field of medicine. He constantly visited the poor, sickly people of London. He also brought out esteem medical teams to the slums of London to treat the sick and malnourished (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”). Dickens’ passion for serving others through medicine became one of the ways he had the greatest impact on society. Because of his eagerness Charles Dickens wrote books and articles on the importance medicine. He held fundraisers for health institutions and to raise money for different projects. “He was an influential supporter of many different health institutions” (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”). Charles Dickens supported the medical advances in a cure of the sicknesses in Europe.

Charles Dickens’s influence through his charitable works was not the only thing he was able to accomplish in his life. He influenced many people through his literature and he wrote about the struggles of the people in poverty in England at the time. Charles Dickens felt he could bring change by writing books and plays to show the immoral injustices going on around the world, but more specifically in London (Tomalin 44).

He continually wrote books focusing on the cultural issues and money problems, faced by those of “impoverished and uncertain backgrounds” of people (Tomalin 38). Charles Dickens’s writings gave a voice to the poor. He was able to depict the lives of people who toiled in the workhouses and those who lived in the orphanages and slums (O’Rourke). Charles Dickens’ works left a trail that led to many reforms in London (Tomalin 146). He showed that the world, though filled with evil, could change for men and women alike (Tomalin 83).

Charles Dickens gave every Victorian stereotype in his books good and bad. His books included the influence of values and business of society with personal fortunes. His novels brought to light many social issues. In his book Nicholas Nickleby he illuminated the flaws in the social system as he portrayed the terrible conditions children in which the boarding school children were forced to live in bringing out the flaws in the social system (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”).

Another issue brought to the light was through his book Oliver Twist. In this book, he focused on the theme of the rejected and abused children living in the boarding schools (Slater 111). In Charles Dickens’s book A Christmas Carol a character named Tiny Tim brought along the issues of how those with medical conditions that hindered the growth in social status were treated (“HowCharlesDickenschangedhistory”). A Christmas Carol “went straight to the heart of the public and has remained lodged there ever since, with its mixture of horror, despair, hope, and warmth, its message —a Christian message—…are not merely frivolous pleasures but basic expressions of love and mutual support on all human beings” (Tomalin 149-150).

Charles Dickens was born when media was just becoming popular making him the first literary celebrity (O’Rourke). Charles Dickens had a hard childhood and was not in school for most of his life, but working and he was only taught to freehand by his deadbeat father (Tomailn 40). By

the age of twenty-eight, Charles Dickens had become a very famous and successful man. Although he received much glory, he was tired of the spotlight (Tomalin 111). Because of his background, he would remember his life and experiences when he saw how the impoverished were treated and would be able to write novels. He was able to portray others lives, showing his anger in the error of how humans treated other humans (Tomalin 149).

Though Dickens tempered spirits he was given the gift of humor he had an “an amazing ear for speech patterns”(O’Rourke) (Marzials 58). Because of Charles Dickens’ abilities to compose works capable of not only for pointing out social injustices but also for entertainment, he is still an influential force today. People enjoy works that make them laugh, cry, and think. Charles Dickens was able to capture these elements in every one of his novels. Many think Charles Dickens’ greatest influence was creating a new genre of his own for entertainment; but if it was not, he has influenced writers either way. His books are still read and taught around the world today (O’Rourke).

Charles Dickens was a man who could not only influence others through his books or his charity works, but also through just his life in general. He had many distractions in his early life but was still able to provide for his family despite them (Tomalin 36). Charles Dickens saw the world more vividly than others. He pursued his goal of finishing his education. He went to law school, but soon dropped out. Charles Dickens felt as if the law was shady business. He felt the need to report on the issues with the justice system in London and became a reporter. He wrote in the courtroom reporting what went on in the courthouse. Although he was only able to write in shorthand he soon developed his grammar and sentence structure (Tomalin 40). After writing for the courts Charles Dickens decided to quit. He found the issues of poverty, ignorance, and degradation of men, women, and children more important.

Dickens was a very visual writer he was able to capture scenes, characters and imaginative details. He was able to capture the symbolic realities of landscapes and characters. Although his health was deteriorating Dickens still performed his work schedule of writing, editing, and performing readings. Despite the warnings given to him because of his health, Dickens traveled to the United States. He was attacked by many fans, he was stalked even within his hotels, but also was honored wherever he went. He was able to write vividly about the corruption of the political and justice system, he put intense scrutiny on the national government.

By the age of twenty-five Charles Dickens had achieved more in his life, than his entire family combined had ever achieved (Tomalin 76). Despite his fame he became tired of the spotlight, yet Charles Dickens still wrote on issues of the current times. He became the voice of people who were not able to speak up for themselves (O’Rourke). Although his books, however, did not receive an immediate uproar he was able to open everyone’s eyes. He is still influencing writers today

It is extremely hard to overestimate Charles Dickens cultural impact he had in the nineteenth century, but his voice has changed peoples’ views even now in the twenty-first century. Many people still hail him as one of the greatest authors of all time (O’Rourke). Because of this achievements Dickens is still held in very high standards today. He has affected the world in great ways and before he died he made a name for himself not only by his novel but also as a playwright, an editor, an actor and a social reformer. When he died at the age of fifty-eight the New York Times announced his death as the “Death of the Great Novelist…Mourned by two Continents” (O’Rourke).

The impact Charles Dickens left on the world was one of great influence. His books has led to many movies and reprints. Over three hundred movies and plays have been made regarding Charles Dickens books. A Christmas Carol has been remade many times and each remake has been able to influence the new generations that have not heard or read any of Dickens novels (O'Rourke). Because of A Christmas Carol this social revolution finally gave hope to the poor not only in England but also in other countries.

In Charles Dickens began a series of writings, the Pickwick Chronicles, spoke of truths on the judges, politicians, middle and upper class showing of their injustices to the less fortunate than themselves. Each article was sold, and gave the nation fits of laughter, melodramatic and each persons feelings (Tomalin 68).

Oliver Twist, Charles Dickens' second book he wrote tell of a teenager who has traveled London and became part of a gang. He learns to pickpocket and is caught but worked for his wrong doings in a very undignified manner. Dickens criticized this poor treatment, within the book, of orphans. This book was writings about a desolation of those children without a mother. Dickens shows the mixture of terror and a fascination within Oliver. Oliver is corrupted, but has been given a glimpse of a peaceful, and orderly world (Tomalin 97).

In David Copperfield Dickens did not fill the book with the usual comedy or hypocrisy like in his previous books. David Copperfield was more precise and painful, with dealing with the social issues. The first fourteen chapters of his book was a showing of the early childhood. Dickens showed the pain of a child being separated from his mother. He shows that children were humiliated and punished without any reason why. David Copperfield was sent to a boarding school, it was run on a very harsh and unjust system. David Copperfield was Dickens first book to be written in first person. It was the second novel that Charles Dickens gave a voice to the child (Tomalin 217).

Great Expectations, Charles Dickens another great novel, is a novel the not only includes wealth and poverty, but also maintains a good balance of good and evil. Great Expectations, Pip's story, is a slight depiction of his works in women homes. He maintained a balance of humor, pathos, social commentary, and mystery, allowing more entertaining and evocative writings. Dickens novels were the first publishing "blockbusters" and in many ways he is credited for the dizzying proliferation of novels published today (O'Rourke). Though he was successful in his jargon, Charles Dickens did not want to be primarily known for being a satirist (Slater 113).

In England, Charles Dickens has been regarded in such high standards, there is a showcase titled Dickens and London that displays paintings that artists depicted from his novels. Dickens and London is a very significant work of art because it is the first major display focused on a novelist in England for over four decades. Along with Dickens and London he also has another exhibit held in the United States at New York's Museum of Modern Art (O'Rourke).

The influence Charles Dickens has had because of his literary, his charitable, and his life works, he became the most influential writer of his time period. He was the most famous writer of the nineteenth century and was able to show that the world could change for the better (Tomalin 83). His works left a trail and a mark so powerful that his literature, and charitable works are still known around the world and other writers have been influenced by his works (O'Rourke).