

**Childhood as a Theme in Dickens Novels "Great
Expectations" and "Oliver Twist":**

Analytic Studies

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Dedication

This study is proudly dedicated:

To my mother whom I owe a lifetime of the mother's most self -
sacrificing devotion

To dear father

To my brothers Mujahid and Mutasim

To my sweet sister Mawada

To my family in Alsharafa

To all my friends and colleagues without exception

To whom my pen forget and not my heart

I dedicate this modest work with respect and love.

Acknowledgements

In the name of Allah, God who teaches us with pen and teaches human beings what they do not know all praise and gratitude be to Allah having power upon all people on earth, giving the inspirations, health, and power to me, so I can finally finish this dissertation. I also owe deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. AbdulGadir Mohammed Ali Adam for his help, guidance and patience. Without him thoughtful comments, advice and encouragements, this study would have never been completed. My sincere gratitude is also extended to my Co –supervisor Dr. Amna Osman to for her invaluable assistance and support.

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Abstract

Literature is essential whatever it is and its scope. It is a good media of communication and carries the cultural values before different nations. One of the famous periods in literature is the Victorian era. The study aims to analyze and make comparison between the target books in the usage of childhood themes, prove that the case of children in both novels is absorbed from real cases according to the children general status at that time, draw the attention to the real purpose of using children in the novel and explain the reasons beyond the chosen themes. The study implemented content analysis approach. Data has been collected and presented then a qualitative analysis has been carried out. The study comes up with many findings that most students do not know about the Victorian era and do not aware of the Two novels Great Expectations and Oliver Twist. More British novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists and their works are not embedded in the courses of faculties of art and education for students who study English instead of depending on two or three British literary writers, students do not study and make studies in Dickens novels privately, teachers at secondary schools and universities do not use effective methods in teaching literature, Teachers never motivate their students to read literature in all its genres especially Arabic and British ones, Department of foreign language both secondary and university level do not encourage students to read and search in the British literature in all its genres. The recommendations of this study Students should be aware about Victorian era, customs and traditions, which the writer represented in the novels Great Expectations and Oliver Twist. In addition to that, department of foreign language both secondary and university level should encourage students to read and search in the British literature in all its genres .Furthermore, teachers at secondary schools and universities should use effective methods in teaching literature. In addition to that, teachers should motivate their students to read literature in all its genres especially British ones, students should study and read all the works of Charles Dickens for their importance.

بحث في موضوع الطفولة في روايتين "آمال عريضة" و"أوليفر توست"
دراسة تحليلية
ملاذ عصام محمد أحمد الأمين

ملخص الدراسة

الأدب ضروري في كل المجالات وهو من وسائل التواصل الجيدة ويحمل القيم الثقافية قبل الشعوب المختلفة. وأحد الفترات المشهورة في الأدب هو العهد الفكتوري. هذه الدراسة تركز على الطفولة كموضوع رئيسي في الروايتين من دكنز (آمال عريضة وأوليفر توست)، هدفت الدراسة إلى تحليل موضوع الطفولة في الروايتين المذكورتين من، ومن جانب آخر لإثبات أن حالة الأطفال في كلتي الروايتين هي ملاحظة من الحالات الواقعية وفقا للحالات العامة للطفولة في ذلك الوقت. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، نتحصل على البيانات بواسطة التحليل المستهدف للروايتين (آمال عريضة وأوليفر توست). توصلت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج أهمها: أنّ أغلب الطلاب لا يعرفون عن العهد الفكتوري ولا يدركون عن الروايتين (آمال عريضة وأوليفر توست) للكاتب "دكنز" أكثر الروائيين البريطانيين، الشعراء، كتاب المسرحيات والروائيين أعمالهم لم تكن مضمنة لفصل في كليات الأدب وتعليم الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية يدل على اعتمادهم على إثنين أو ثلاث من كتاب الأدب البريطاني وأيضا الطلاب لم يدرسوا ولم تعد دراسات في أعمال "دكنز" بشكل خاص؛ المعلمين في المدارس الثانوية والجامعات لا يستخدمون طرائق تدريس فعالة في تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي، المعلمين لا يحفزون طلابهم على قراءة الأدب بكل أنواعه خاصة العربية والبريطانية، قسم اللغة الأجنبية في المرحلة الثانوية والجامعية لا يشجعون الطلاب على القراءة والبحث في الأدب البريطاني بكل أنواعه. توصي الدراسة بأن يتعرف الطلاب على العهد الفكتوري عاداته وتقاليده والتي ذكرها الكاتب في الروايتين (آمال عريضة وأوليفر توست). بالإضافة إلى ذلك يجب على كل أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات والمدارس الثانوية أن يشجعوا الطلاب على الدراسة والبحث في الأدب البريطاني بكل أنواعه. علاوة على ذلك يجب على الأساتذة في المدارس الثانوية والجامعات استخدام طرائق التدريس الفعالة في تدريس الأدب. إضافة إلى ذلك يجب على الأساتذة تشجيع الطلاب على قراءة الأدب بكل أنواعه خاصة الأدب البريطاني. يجب على الطلاب دراسة وقراءة كل أعمال "دكنز" لأهميتها.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Childhood is a period of time during which children play, learn and steadily grow to become proper members of our society. Additionally, it is also that time many adults dearly wish to return to with its minimal responsibilities and relative freedom from the adult's concerns. Yet, as the history teaches us it was not always a phase to be taken for granted.

To people's minds, they presently live in a highly children oriented society, but as the Lloyd deMause dramatically pinpoints "the further back in history one goes, the lower level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused." It was of ten times challenging to even reach the adulthood and for us it may be hard to imagine what kind of hardships people and especially children had to undergo.

Dickens novels present a portrait of the macabre childhood of a considerable number of Victorian orphans. A social commentator and critic his novels revolve largely around the motif of child abuse. A social novelist, Dickens focused on the poverty - stricken parts of London, where lived a whole lot of grief - stricken people, neglected, unloved and forever suffering. Sad faces of children; cold and hard hearted adults, appear everywhere in his novels. His writings called for reform at every level of society and he showed us how a warm heart could relieve the pain of cruelty and mind less indifference of society.

The children in his novels represent the real children of the actual world with actual experience and a tragic background – they experience poverty, orphanage, neglect and deprivation of education. They are a reflection of Dickens own childhood experiences – he could well understand the aim of oppression. "Dickens believed that his own imagination – in fact, his overall well - being depended on the contact he kept with his childhood". He had abiding faith in the innocence and magic of children. The characters he created were thus very close to his heart. With great resentment, he penned down vehemently the condition of these helpless children in Victorian society his novels were social commentaries of his time.

1.1 Statement of the Study

Dickens is one of the greatest novelists in the Victorian era, he depicts the theme of childhood in many of his short stories and novels, most of readers are not aware of these usages to these themes.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study is submitted to fulfill the following objectives:

1. Analyze and make comparison between the target books in the usage of childhood themes.
2. Prove that the case of children in both novels is absorbed from real cases according to the children general status at that time.
3. Draw the attention to the real purpose of using children in the novel and explain the reasons beyond the chosen themes.

1.3 Questions of the Study

1. Does Dickens use the theme of childhood as it comes from real background which was full of suffering of children at that time?
2. How did Dickens succeed in reflecting the real situation of the children at the Victorian era?
3. What are the reasons for using children in the novels?

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Dickens as many other writers of the Victorian era intend to reflect the general social, political and economic status.
2. The writer uses the children in the target novels in order to draw the attention to exploited children by wicked people and institutions.
3. Children in both novels are used to reflect the real social classes. According to the general status in the Victorian era.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The topic under investigation is beneficial for literature students, readers and researchers specially the literature of the Victorian era, because it analyses the target novels by relating them to the general economical, political and social status at Victorian era.

1.6 Method of the Study

The researcher will implement content analysis approach. Data will be collected and presented then a qualitative analysis will be carried out. The researcher will consult some references from the library and websites from the internet.

1.7 Limits of the Study

This study is limited to Dickens novels " Great Expectations and Oliver Twist " especially in the themes of childhood. The study will be conducted in the year 2017.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The main topic of this study is the theme of childhood in the novels *Oliver Twist*, and *Great Expectations*. Each of the novels has one main child protagonist and many other child characters which play subordinate roles in the plot and in the construction of the whole novel. The novels were selected because of the fact that the theme of childhood is crucial for them. The aim of this study is to examine and analyze the themes of childhood in the novels mentioned. Certainly the reader will be interested in the way in which Dickens depicts the main heroes of his novels. How he portrays them in their childhood and at the beginnings of the stories can tell us quite a lot about the future development of their characters. In the pages that follow it will be shown that the story of the main protagonist in each novel is formed by his family situation which is the key factor which determines the approach to the child in the novel. However, not only the description of the hero's family is important in Dickens.

The contrast between families in different social strata may tell us a lot. Some similarities can be found among all protagonists *Oliver Twist*, and *Pip*. They are orphans and this fact predestines their fates. However, the family situation and family background from which these characters originate differ in the novels. *Oliver Twist* is an orphan born in the work house and lives without any relatives from the very beginning of the story. He is portrayed as abandoned orphan without any living siblings or other relatives. Similarly, *Pip* has his own family around him. He lives with his older sister and her husband *Joe*. We will see that the family situation and social status have a big influence on the development of the stories. It seems clear that we cannot look at the main protagonists separately and that we must at least briefly point out some other child characters that play important and relevant roles in the stories. The character of *Oliver Twist* is certainly related to other children in the novel. The gang of young thieves and children in the workhouse in *Oliver Twist* play an important role as for example the character of *Estella* does in *Great Expectations*. Therefore also these characters will be briefly mentioned and commented on.

The analysis of the characters in the novels should not be done without regard to a wider context. All the characters are related to the environment in which they exist and behave in some ways. The settings of the novels, as well as the social status of the children,

are probably related to the main characters and therefore some space will be devoted to these aspects of the novels.

When analyzing the aspects of childhood in the novels it might be useful to mention the social situation in the Victorian society and mainly its consequences for the children. Due to the fact that Dickens's works were extremely popular and widely read in his time, it might be useful to take into account the socio-historical context of the period. There might be some connections between the literature and reality and the writer might be influenced by the reality to some extent. Therefore a chapter dealing with historical background of Victorian England is included. Moreover, the first chapter of this thesis examines the concept of childhood because it might be useful to see how the concept of childhood has been created and how it has changed.

2.1 Historical Background of Victorian Era

According to Nicholas Nickleby, (1993:14-15) The period of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), which is usually called "The Victorian Age", was an age full of contradictions, of industrializations and technological progress, of extreme poverty and the exploitation of factory workers, of social reforms, of scientific discoveries and religious unrest. The application of steam-power to machines and textile industry, the cutting of new canals and the building of new roads and railways (which made transport easier and cheaper), transformed Great Britain from an agricultural country to an industrial one.

This transformation resulted in the migration of rural people from the countryside to the industrial areas in search of job. Many of the cities and towns of the North, the most industrialised area, were actually created in this period. So within a few years more English and Welsh people lived in cities and towns than in the countryside. Urbanisation created an intolerable overcrowding: houses were mainly built back to back and side by side. They had no piped water, no sanitariums. The living conditions in these slums were very poor. As a consequence, typhus and cholera were very common. The political parts in this period was liberalism, which defended the freedom of individual from any external restraints likely to prevent the complete realization of his/her potential. The economic theory of free trade was an important aspect of liberalism and popular among both the Whigs and the Tories. It advocated an unlimited competition and objected any interference by government in industry and commerce.

For much of this period, industrialization meant the exploitation of factory workers. Men, women and children worked in factories sometimes up to 14-16 hours a day while factory owners paid very low wages and closed down factories during periods of economic slump. The gulf separating the rich from the poor was so deep that a Tory Prime Minister wrote of two nations, and several contemporary novelists (like Charles Dickens) criticized the desperate situation of the working class in their novels.

When Queen Victoria came to the English throne, the nation could be divided into the aristocracy, the middle class and the working class. If such were the living conditions of labourers, those of the other two social classes of Victorian society were quite different. Industrialization and technological progress further advanced the position of the middle class. By the end of the century, they held power previously held by the aristocracy and class distinction became more financial than hereditary.

Victorian middle classes were very proud of the nation's triumphs in technology and engineering which had so changed the look of the environment, as well as of its political stability, the freedom of its press its legal system. Optimism was their dominant mood. They believed the way of living could be exported to all parts of the growing empire. Their material progress, their interest in making money and reaching a good position was also reflected in the house they lived in: there was a proliferation of ornaments in buildings and an accumulation of pieces of furniture inside the Victorian house. There was a strong belief in the family, which was usually large and in which the father's authority was unquestioned. Middle class girls were closely guarded by their parents till marriage. There was a prudish attitude towards sex, in fact, a lady was supposed to live in ignorance of it. Generally middle class girls spent their time reading novel, having singing lessons, and learning to play the piano. This was the good side of the picture. The other side, the bad one, was represented by prostitution and very high crime figures in large cities (London in particular).

Slowly, the situation of the working class improved: under the pressure of men of letters and public opinion, the government introduced several bills which improved the situation of the lower classes. In 1847 and 1867 the "Factory Acts" regulated child labour in factories: in 1842 the "Mines Acts" forbade the employment of children under ten and women underground. Finally, in 1870, the "Education Acts" provided a new system of state primary school.

2.2 A Biography of Charles Dickens

The researcher thinks that here is a close connection between the writers life and his writings. So, the readers always find many of events as an autobiographical to the writers life. Goldberg, Michael Goldberg (1992: 21-23) indicates that "Charles John Huffam Dickens was born at 13 Mile End Terrace, Portsmouth (now the Dickens Birthplace Museum) on Friday, 7th February, 1812. His father, John, was a clerk in the naval pay office, and Charles's early years were spent moving whenever and wherever his father's postings dictated. In January 1815, John was transferred to London, and the young Dickens first encountered the city with which his later life and fiction would become so indelibly linked. Two years later, the family moved to Chatham in Kent where Charles enjoyed the happiest years of his childhood. His mother taught him the rudiments of reading, and he received an education courtesy of a schoolmaster named William Giles. Charles also enjoyed long walks through the Kent countryside with his father.

Life in London Dickens's childhood idyll ended abruptly in 1822 when John Dickens was transferred back to London and his income reduced severely. John, a man who was never able to live within his means, plunged heavily into debt. His wife, Elizabeth, attempted to alleviate the family's financial predicament by opening a school for young ladies, but that failed and, in 1824, John Dickens was arrested for debt, and incarcerated in the Marshalsea Prison. Elizabeth and the younger children went with him. However, the sensitive Charles was sent to begin work at Warren's Blacking Factory. The young boy, who had truly believed he was destined to be a gentleman, now found himself sticking labels onto pots of boot blacking. His misery was exacerbated by the fact that his beloved elder sister, Fanny, had been enrolled at the Royal College of Music. Charles longed to resume his education, but left to his own devices, he roamed the streets of the capital, where he mixed with the low life of early 19th-century London, taking in everything he saw.

John Dickens was released from prison after 14 weeks, as his mother-in-law had died and left him a little money. But he was still not out of debt. However, in 1825, he took Charles away from the blacking factory, and despite vociferous objections from Elizabeth, who wanted their son to continue bringing in a useful weekly wage, John sent him to school at Wellington House Academy. Charles never forgave his mother. Dickens stayed at the Academy for about two years, before his father's debts forced him back into employment, this time for Ellis and Blackmore, a firm of solicitors in London's Gray's

Inn. Whilst there, he learned shorthand, and after 18 months felt confident enough to establish himself as a shorthand writer at Doctors' Commons, near St Paul's Cathedral in the City. By 1830 he had met and fallen madly in love with a banker's daughter named Maria Beadnell. A year later he began work as a reporter for his uncle's newspaper the Mirror of Parliament. In 1832, he applied for, and was granted, an audition at the Covent Garden Theatre, but on the day in question illness prevented him from attending. Dickens's love of the theatre and desire to perform remained with him for the rest of his life and resulted in his amateur theatricals and later his public reading tours.

Dickens's career as writer takes off By May 1833, Maria's ardour had cooled considerably and their relationship ended. In an attempt to overcome his broken heart Dickens flung himself into his writing, and at the end of the year his first story A Dinner at Poplar Walk was published. By 1834 he was working for the Morning Chronicle newspaper and became friends with its music critic, George Hogarth. In 1835 Hogarth became editor of the Evening Chronicle, and he invited Dickens to contribute sketches to the paper. These would eventually appear in print as Sketches by 'Boz'. Dickens had also fallen in love with Hogarth's daughter, Catherine, and on 2nd April, 1836 the two were married at St Luke's Church, Chelsea.

Following a honeymoon in Kent, they settled into chambers in Furnival's Inn, Holborn. By this time the first instalment of Pickwick Papers had appeared, despite the suicide of its originator and illustrator Robert Seymour. Hablot Browne, who for the next 20 years remained Dickens's chief illustrator, replaced Seymour, and when Dickens introduced the character of Sam Weller, Pickwick Papers became a publishing phenomenon. In December 1836, Dickens met John Forster, who at the time was the literary and drama editor of The Examiner. The two became firm friends, and Forster effectively became Dickens's agent for the rest of his life and, following the author's death, his primary biographer.

The Death That Devastated Dickens in January 1837, Charles and Catherine's first child, also named Charles, was born, and by April the family had moved to a house in Doughty Street more suited to both Dickens's growing family and reputation. Catherine's younger sister, Mary, moved in with them, and Dickens developed an intense platonic relationship with her. Then, on 6th May, 1837, Mary died suddenly at their house, leaving Dickens utterly devastated by the loss. His success increases Over the next few years while living at Doughty Street, Dickens cemented his reputation with Oliver Twist (1837–38), Nicholas Nickleby (1838:39), and began work on Barnaby Rudge (1841). His family also

increased with two daughters, Mary and Kate, born in 1838 and 1839. By 1839 Dickens's growing fame enabled them to move to a grander house at 1 Devonshire Terrace, Marylebone. Their fourth child, Walter, was born in 1841, and in January 1842, Charles and Catherine set off on a six-month tour of America. Such was his fame now that Dickens found himself mobbed on several occasions. Back in London he wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843:44) and, a year later, what is perhaps one of his best known works, *A Christmas Carol* (1843).

A Mid-Life – Crisis by (1855), with his family swollen to ten children, one of which, Dora, had died in infancy, Dickens was becoming restless. In February, he received a letter from Maria Beadnell, now Mrs Winter. He replied enthusiastically, pouring scorn on her assertion that she was now toothless, fat and middle aged. 'You are always the same in my remembrance' he wrote. They planned to meet at his house when his wife was 'not at home', but Dickens was shattered to find that Maria was exactly as she had described herself. His passion cooled and he, rather cruelly, portrayed her in *Little Dorrit* (1855:57) as Flora Finching, once pretty and enchanting, but now fat, diffuse and silly. Dickens Buys The House of His Dreams. In 1856, he purchased Gad's Hill Place in Kent, a house he had first seen whilst walking with his father in the idyllic years of his childhood. In January 1857, he directed and acted in Wilkie Collins's play. *The Frozen Deep* and as he researched professional actresses to play the female parts, he met the young actress Ellen Lawless Ternan who became his intimate friend and probably his lover. The following year Dickens formally separated from his wife, and viciously attacked her in an article published in several newspapers. His daughter Kate later recalled, 'My father was like a madman... He did not care a damn what happened to any of us. Nothing could surpass the misery and unhappiness of our house.' His younger sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth, became his housekeeper, and rumours began to circulate that it was his affair with her that had caused his marital breakdown.

2.2.1 Public Readings and Secret Lives

In August 1858, Dickens began the first of a series of reading tours that would, over the next 12 years, prove extremely profitable. By 1860 Gad's Hill became his permanent residence. Over the next ten years, as he and Ellen Ternan became more involved with each other, his personal life became more and more enigmatic. It is possible that he took a house in France for Ellen and her mother, where he visited them frequently. However, Dickens's secret life came close to exposure in 1865 when he, Ellen and her

mother, were travelling back from France and their train was involved in a serious accident at Staplehurst in Kent. Although Dickens tended to the injured and dying, he refused to attend the subsequent inquest probably for fear it would make public the fact he was travelling with Ellen Ternan.

2.2.2 The Death of Dickens

Over the next few years, Dickens undertook several private reading tours in England and America. But his health was failing and by 1870 he looked considerably older than his 58 years. Then on the 8th June, 1870, having spent the day working on what was to be his last unfinished novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, he collapsed at the dinner table and died the next evening. Images taken at the Guildhall Museum, Rochester.

2.3 The Concept of Childhood and Historical Background

Harrison, (2000:12-13) claims that

"As already mentioned in the introduction, in this chapter the concept of childhood and the way of life of children in Victorian England are examined. It is very difficult to define the concept of childhood, but it might be at least useful for the reader to mention some ideas concerning childhood".

Chris Jenks's book *Childhood*³ is used in this chapter. Jenks is primarily a sociologist and although we do not attempt to examine childhood from a sociological point of view, it might be interesting to see how sociology defines it because sociology examines society, and literature is an inseparable part of society and culture. Then we focus on how the concept of childhood has changed and these changes are well described in the work *Centuries of Childhood* was a medieval historian who focused on childhood and although his book primarily deals with French culture, his notions are applicable to western culture in general. Another source used in this chapter is the book *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* by Lawrence Stone. This book is used because it is focused on England and it explains the changes in family life in the period leading up to the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that the reader must be aware that this book does not deal with the Victorian era, it is useful for us. If we want to examine life in Victorian England, we should know what changes preceded the situation of the Victorian era. A lot of useful information about the social situation can be found also in *Life in Victorian*.

2.4 The Concept of Childhood and its Changes

According to James, (1990: 4-45) The image of childhood has changed over time as well as the modes of the recognition and reception of childhood. The recent approaches to the study of childhood suggest that childhood should be understood as a social phenomenon (or cultural product) not as a natural (or biological) one. And Jenks in his study proposes that: “The social transformation from child to adult does not follow directly from physical growth and the recognition of children by adults, and vice versa, is not singularly contingent upon physical difference” (Jenks 7). When examine childhood and its changes it should always bear in mind the relation between child and adult because the attitude towards children has changed in accordance to the way in which the adults have recognized children. As Stone points out there were several different attitudes towards new-born children in the seventeenth century. The traditional Christian view saw children as sinful creatures. Stone explains how these children were treated according to this view: The first, and the most common, was the traditional Christian view, strongly reinforced by Calvinist theology, that the child is born with Original Sin, and that the only hope of holding it in check is by the most ruthless repression of his will and his total subordination to his parents, schoolmasters and others in authority over him. (Stone 255).

The environmentalist view considered children not to be bad and not to be good. The child was viewed as *tabula rasa* which is formed by future experience. “In the eighteenth-century England the environmental theory tended to supersede the Calvinist in middle- and upper-class circles, before it was overwhelmed again in the nineteenth century.” (Stone 256). Others claimed that character qualities and abilities are genetically determined and that education can only strengthen the good ones and restrain the bad ones. And finally utopians suggested that the child is born good and is corrupted by its experience in the society. The sources used for this chapter suggest that the manner of children’s recognition by adults and patterns of child care changed through the passage of time. Accordingly we might have the impression that in the Middle Ages until the twelfth century there was no place for childhood in art and in society in general. It seems that society was not aware of the existence of the concept of childhood. When it is suggested that the concept of childhood did not exist in early medieval society, the adults were not fully aware of the difference between them and children.

The first evidence that the society became aware of the children’s difference is the fact that children came to be portrayed and depicted in paintings and literature. With the

only exception of Jesus children were scarcely portrayed in medieval paintings. And they were not portrayed as children in modern times, but they looked like adults. They were apparently considered of such little importance that they did not warrant representation in a unique and particular form. Where such images do occur, as by necessity in the motif of the Madonna and child, the baby Jesus appears uniformly, from example to example, as a small shrunken man, a wizened homunculus without the rounded appeal and vulnerability of the latter-day infant. (Jenks 64) The situation changed in the seventeenth century when children became central themes of family portraits: No doubt that the discovery of childhood began in the thirteenth century, and its progress can be traced in the history of art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the evidence of its development became more plentiful and significant from the end of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth (47).

Another important change concerning childhood took place in the seventeenth century. Until the seventeenth century children had been dressed as adults. However, from the seventeenth century onwards we can see portraits of children dressed in children's clothing. In this we can see another aspect in which the children were distinguished from adults. This change was more observable in boys clothing because girls were dressed from childhood as little women. Clothes worn by adults looked very similar to children clothes. Children wore on their clothes special ornament which distinguished their clothes from the clothes of their parents. In case of little babies it was hard to distinguish between boys and girls with reference to their clothes. It should be mentioned that all these differences in clothing were related only to middle and upper classes of the society. Children in the lower classes were dressed in the same way as adults.

It can be seen that the seventeenth century played a crucial role in the changes of attitudes towards children in some ways. The eighteenth century was even more important in some aspects. The development of the notion of childhood is manifested by the fact that in the second half of the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century we can already find writers who produced books for children. Jigsaws, games and various toys became available for children. In the eighteenth century we can also notice that a great change in parent-child relations took place in the upper classes of the society. More and more children in the upper classes started to call their parents "mother" and "father" instead of "Sir" or "Madam". Until the eighteenth century parents had not spent much time with their children and these were often left to their governesses and wet-nurses.

As Stone claims, in the eighteenth century relations between parents and children in higher classes became more affectionate, more permissive and families became more child-oriented. Mainly mothers changed their priorities and became strongly attached to children: Many wives and mothers, when faced with the choice of personally supervising their children, or leaving them to servants, nurses and governesses and accompanying their husbands on pleasure or business, unhesitatingly chose the former, despite the recognized probability that the decision would drive their husbands into the arms of a prostitute or mistress. (Stone 288). It should bear in mind that this was the case of upper classes. In lower middleclass families strict discipline was demanded and we might gain the impression that the children were not treated so affectionately in lower class families throughout the whole eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It might seem reasonable to presume that in families of the poor the situation was even worse. The poor were much more affected by their living conditions and consequently their attitudes towards children were different.

As Stone suggests, cruel behaviour towards children was not exceptional. "They were in the habit of treating their children occasionally with rough, even extravagant affection in good times, and with casual indifference, and not infrequently with great brutality, when in drink or in bad times." (Stone 295). In these families contraception was not widely used. Women who had to look after the children were unable to work and earn money. Consequently the poverty of these families increased and children were often exposed to malnutrition. It might be like that the children were often needed to increase the income of the family and therefore they were forced to work from their early age. Many illegitimate and also legitimate children were left abandoned in the streets. Therefore foundling hospitals and workhouses were established to look after them. Stone proposes that despite the fact that these institutions saved the children from the death in the streets, their life in these institutions was miserable:

During the eighteenth century rapidly increasing numbers of infants were simply abandoned in the streets, and left to become a charge on the parish. Most of them were sent off to the parish workhouses, which were built after 1722, and where the death rate was almost as high as if they had been in the streets. (Stone 297).

The prospects of these children were miserable. Girls were sometimes used for prostitution and boys could be enslaved by various criminals. The atmosphere of these miserable conditions is depicted in Dickens's novels, as will be shown. Another contribution of the eighteenth century was that it also brought change to teaching methods.

These were less brutal and less violent. Flogging and other brutal practices were not recommended any more. From what we have known about the situation of children in the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, we can probably understand why Stone claims that the eighteenth century is recognized as “Golden Age of Childhood”. All these changes that took place in the eighteenth century pre-empted the development in the nineteenth century.

Theme of childhood also appeared in English literature. The first poets who brought it into literature were William Wordsworth and William Blake. The theme of child care and education was also subject of philosophical writings of the whole seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the philosophers who were interested in this topic was John Locke. He published his *Some Thoughts Upon Education* in 1693. Stone points out that beyond other issues he expressed his opinions on physical punishment:

He approved of physical punishment, in moderation, at an early age before a child had developed powers of reasoning. After that, however, he insisted on the almost exclusive use of psychological stimulus of competition and emulation and the psychological punishment of shame at failure. He flatly declared that flogging was wholly ineffective as a means of moral or intellectual improvement. (Stone 280).

In the eighteenth century Jean Jacques Rousseau produced another important and influential work on educational theory. In his *Émile: or, On Education* he recommended education for children adapted to their age. Rousseau was not an advocate of corporal punishments and he preferred learning through experience as we have already mentioned (Stone 256).

We can see that many changes concerning the attitude towards childhood and child rearing practices took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Therefore when we talk about the Victorian period and nineteenth century this development should be taken into account.

2.5 Children in Victorian England

The researcher now move on and examine the conditions to which children were exposed in the Victorian era. By Victorian era we understand the period of Queen Victoria’s reign from 1837 until 1901. Also in the nineteenth century the living conditions of people were dependent on their social status. The prospects of children from well situated families were different from the expectations of children whose parents were at the bottom of the social scale.

From reading about life in Victorian England it might have the impression that the gentry could afford to live quite a comfortable life. Their children were educated privately at home or they attended local grammar schools. During Victoria's reign boarding schools became very fashionable. School education was a part of life for middle-class children as well. They also attended grammar schools and private schools and the educational institutions varied according to their prestige. Cheaper schools naturally considered to be worse than the more expensive ones. J.W. Reader remarks that attitudes towards education for boys and girls were different. Requirements for girls' education were specific in some ways: They were generally supposed to be less in need of "mental cultivation" than boys, and less capable of it, and too much education was thought to be ruining their prospects in the marriage market.

On the other hand they were expected to have certain "accomplishments", particularly music and drawing, and a smattering of ill-assorted, undigested general knowledge, ranging from the dates of the Kings of England to the origins of guano. (Reader 121) Children coming from working class families also attended schools if their family situation allowed them to do so. In many cases the education meant better start for their lives and future careers. Children from poor family backgrounds were not usually so lucky and they could not spend their time at schools. Both parents usually had to work and support the family and therefore small children were often looked after by their older siblings. Also the work of small children in poor families was needed. They had to work to earn money and also at home. We might notice in various sources that children were often employed for example in textile industry. In the 1840s this work trades exploiting children. Young boys were often employed as chimneysweeps. The profession of chimney sweeper is mentioned also in *Oliver Twist*.

According to Reader (2000: 50), only young and tiny boys were suitable for this work and the job was very dangerous and hard. "The job meant climbing up long, twisting soot-covered flues, and the brutality required to get a boy to do it was sickening." (Reader 87). As will be shown in the following chapters, Dickens's children characters are set into similar conditions and therefore the world of his books stood very close to the world of the readers in his time. This fact probably helped to increase his popularity among his contemporaries. as regulated by law, but there still remained unregulated.

2.6 Childhood as a Theme in English Literature

Lodge and David, (1999) In 1960, Philippe Ariès advanced the hypothesis that the idea of childhood was practically inexistent before the early modern period. The controversy about the existence or absence of the idea prior to that time in history gave rise to a host of studies on childhood. But what does the word “childhood” mean? Our awareness that it refers to a distinct period of human life is natural but how do we determine its duration? How long does childhood last?

Many psychologists and Children’s Studies specialists have emitted an opinion on the subject and they have come to the conclusion that “childhood” is a complex term. All have agreed that it refers to a set of experiences and behaviours, characteristic for the earlier part of our lives, meant to prepare us for adulthood and active life. As to its duration, both individual differences and differences over a historical time span should be taken into account. In this sense, childhood is defined in opposition to maturity and adulthood – one is no longer a child when one becomes an adult. However, this opposition has not sufficed and the multiplication of research and critical writing on the subject is telling. The common denominator of many studies on childhood is the attempt to grasp its essence, to define the experience of being a child and to explain the nature of children. One of the most important conclusions these studies have drawn is that our notions of childhood have changed. They have been adapted to the changes in our society and to our conceptions of what a child should be. Thus, the ideas about childhood during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries evolved continually. Writing and literature tell us more about this evolution.

Childhood has for long been one of the central themes of English literature. Children were the subject of a great number of Elizabethan lyrics and we can find them in the work of Dryden and Pope. However, as a truly substantial and self-sustainable theme, childhood arose with the novel. Its importance gradually increased through the 18th century. Later on, the theme developed and matured, and we can easily find its numerous ramifications in the literatures of the 19th as well as the 20th centuries. Today, childhood is seen as essential for the critical understanding of the literary production of the 19th century and the Victorian period .In addition, the 19th and 20th centuries saw the steady emergence of a real literature for children, either for their instruction or entertainment. Thus, the child became either the central subject and/or object of a plethora of writings since the 18th century. These reflected the dichotomy of childhood which was seen as a symbol of

growth and development on the one hand and as a symbol of regression and ignorance of the world on the other.

Earlier, authors like Janeway (*A Token for Children*, 1671 – 72) were spreading the doctrine of original sin. During the 17th century, such authors constructed highly moralising, religion-oriented visions of childhood, all of which were based on the theory of the Christian “fallen state” and looked down upon children with great pessimism. Childhood was seen as the most decisive period for the acquisition of the fundamentals of spirituality and for the construction of true faith. However, the thinkers of the 18th century started promoting Reason as one of the highest virtues and offered a new, more optimistic and much brighter view on childhood. The century became a period of transition, of which childhood was the supreme symbol, celebrating the cult of Nature, the purity of mind and soul, and the triumph of innate goodness. Contrary to what was professed in earlier centuries, childhood was perceived in an increasingly positive light. Soon, it became a favourite theme of the sentimental novel and the poverty and misfortunes of guiltless, insightful and virtuous children were an object of considerable import and frequent discussion in the works of many women writers (e.g. Elizabeth Bonhote’s *Hortensia; or, Distressed Wife*, 1769).

The period saw the emergence of the idea that in childhood, the concepts of imagination, sensibility and nature were joined in one. The influence of Rousseau and his *Emile* (1762) on this representation of childhood in the literature of the times is undeniable. However, the connection between sentimentality and childhood was not exclusively reserved to the 18th century. In her early novels, George Eliot moulded childhood according to the same principles. Her children were portrayed as carefree and unencumbered with adult sorrow and the awareness of death. An interesting particularity of her work is the attention Eliot pays to baby-talk and children's ways of talking. For Blake (e.g. *Songs of Innocence*, 1789) and Wordsworth (e.g. *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, 1807 or *We are Seven*, 1798), the child became a theme of a certain weight. For Blake, childhood signified innocence and for Wordsworth, the child had natural piety and wisdom and his famous “The Child is father of the Man” (1802) became an increasingly popular motif. For him and for many authors, writing of childhood was what later Lewis Carroll believed to be the writing of life.

The child and the process of growing up were common metaphors for the regeneration and renewal of society, while childhood was seen as the equivalent for humanity in its infancy. Gradually, children became symbols of hope and childhood was

seen as synonymous to new beginnings. Such was the case in Charles Dickens's *The Great Expectations* (1860 – 61). Naturally, the child in Dickens grew to be the incarnation of spontaneity, love, and innocence on the background of the ugliness, squalor and inhumanity of industrial London. Dickens offered his readers a view through the child's eyes, creating a palpable experience of childhood. Indeed, many of his novels bear the names of children – *Oliver Twist* (1837 – 39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838 – 39), *Dombey and Son* (1846 – 48), *David Copperfield* (1849 – 50), *Little Dorrit* (1855 – 57). Charlotte Brontë in her *Jane Eyre* (1847) explored the victimisation, loneliness, and isolation of children within a hostile environment. Virtually deprived of childhood, the girls at the Lowood school for poor and orphaned children are vowed to a life of slavery and an early death. *Jane Eyre* fed on a strong heritage of gothic villainy and persecuted femininity to denounce the rigid education and brutal practices of the schooling system.

While Brontë chose to give the reader an account of the negative effects a difficult childhood might have on an adult's life, Henry James focused some of his writings on children exclusively. James was mostly concerned with the innocence of childhood and of how this innocence can be corrupted if the family circle is disbalanced. The major themes of both *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) are knowledge and ignorance, and they explore a number of problematic Freudian concepts among which children's exposure to sexuality and the early contact with death.

During the second half of the 19th century, Lewis Carroll was one of the authors who wrote extensively of and about children. His *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) and *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889: 93) were specifically illustrated for an audience of children and even their cover art was conceived in such a way as to please children. Lewis Carroll's correspondence with his editors is one of the numerous testimonials that a real concern about children and childhood had developed. Moreover, Carroll's writings contain a great deal of information about what it meant to be a British child during the Victorian period. Laden with political implications and comments on the British Empire, Alice's world places a heavy burden on the shoulders of its youngest subjects whose childhood is to prepare them for servitude.

Almost at the same time in America, Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* (1876: 96) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) appear as stories of childhood escape, of wilful isolation from society and a continual struggle against conformity. In line with the tradition of Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrayal of children (e.g. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852), Twain's works

discuss freedom and liberty in a reaction against the limits and constraints of society. All of these are themes that echo Blake's natural, joyful, carefree, and enlightened romantic child. During the 20th century, childhood developed into a favourite theme for an ever increasing number of genres. The examples vary extensively from C. S. Lewis's indirect portrayals of children at times of war to the poems, diaries and writings by children (e.g. the poignant *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1944), of children writing of the various experiences of their own childhood. While in earlier centuries childhood was a preparation and a period of growing up, the early 19th and 20th centuries saw the rise of the idea of holding on to childhood with authors like J. M. Barrie (*Peter Pan*, 1902: 11) and Ray Bradbury (*Dandelion Wine*, 1957 and *Farewell Summer*, 2006). They represented the magic, wonders and transience of childhood and inspired many contemporary novelists, adults and children alike.

The scope for the study of childhood in literature is wide indeed. Today, researchers are asking more questions. They are discussing problems that had never been looked into before and their work has uncovered a remarkable variety in the portrayal of children and childhood in literature, beyond the fundamental polarities of the good and the bad child. Studies, among which those of Banerjee, Immel and Witmore, have shown that childhood stands at the heart of many works of literature from which it was initially thought absent. Thus, from the 20th century onwards, there has been a global and unprecedented interest in childhood.

2.7 Child labour in Victorian England

Child labour at the time was synonymous to slavery. Children were subjected to inhuman torture, exploitation and even death. These child labourers were forced to work in factories and workhouses at the insistence of their parents and workhouse guardians. Child labour, in Victorian England, was part of a gruesome system which snatched children of their childhood, health and even their lives. Many children in Dickens's times, worked 16 hour days under atrocious conditions, as their elders did. Philanthropists, religious leaders, doctors, journalists, and artists all campaigned to improve the lives of poor children. In 1840, Lord Ashley (later the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury) helped set up the Children's Employment Commission, which published parliamentary reports on conditions in mines and collieries. Nevertheless, as the century wore on, more and more people began to accept the idea that childhood should be a protected period of education and enjoyment. However slow education reform was in coming, it did come.

Poverty however was found to be the root cause of child labour during this period. A victim of child labour himself, Dickens criticizes the debilitating effect to which he was subjected. With his father imprisonment for debt in 1824, at the tender age of twelve he was sent to the blacking factory in Hungerford Market London, a warehouse for manufacturing, packaging and distributing blacking or polish for cleaning boots and shoes—in order to support his family. His early life is a recurrent element in most of his novels. The bitter experiences of his childhood helped him to empathize with the deplorable condition of children in Victorian society. He therefore writes: "No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that day by day, what I had learned and thought and delighted in and raised my fancy and emulation up by was passing away from me..... cannot be written." As a child labourer, he would dine on a slice of pudding and for his twelve hour daily labour, receive a meagre wage of six shillings a week.

2.8 Child Characters in Dickens Novels

Philippe.(1990: 12-15) holds that "The rise of industrial capitalism created a huge demand for cheap labor, which children certainly were forced to fend for themselves, many families endured such extreme poverty that their children's wages were indeed crucial to their survival. In his novels, Dickens revealed an intense concern about the vulnerability of these children. Dickens's child characters are either orphaned or their parentage is not clear. His novels are full of neglected, exploited, or abused children: the orphaned Oliver Twist, the crippled Tiny Tim, the stunted Smike, and doomed tykes like Paul Dombey and Little Nell. We find Pip (Great Expectation), Esther (Bleak House), Oliver (Oliver Twist), David (David Copperfield), Estella (Great Expectation) and Sissy Jup (Hard Times). The children he depicted in his novels are vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation. He also brings to the foreground how children were deprived of education due to their social status. Jo, Pip and Oliver are abandoned children who receive no education in the early stages of their life.

Great Expectations, the favorite of many, is immensely popular for its self-portrait of the author and for the warmth, feeling, and reality that it imparts to what is essential in human experience. Because of the deep impressions his own childhood made on him, he presents children, especially Pip, with sympathy and understanding, creating a sensitive orphan boy with whom every reader is able to identify. Great Expectation“ tells the story

of the unfortunate life of Pip Pirrip, an orphan, raised by his harsh older sister. It also features the child Estella, herself an orphan adopted by the embittered Miss Havisham. „Christmas Carol depicts Tiny Tim, the most famous characters of Dickens's work. A sickly and mild boy, Tiny Tim is fated to die if his family cannot afford medicine and better food.

It is claimed that the character is based on the invalid son of a friend of Dickens who owned a cotton mill in Ardwick, Manchester. Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe in *Hard Times* is abandoned by her father, mother and all her family and lives in a care home with her nasty brother – in-law Peter, a circus performer. Gradgrind offers Sissy the chance to study at his school and to come and live at Stone Lodge with the Gradgrind children and dog Daisy. At first she is the outsider in this household and is considered to be stupid, because she is guided by feelings of love, and has an emotional, fanciful nature. Later, however, her values are recognized by Gradgrind and Louisa. When Mrs. Gradgrind dies she largely takes over the role of mothering the younger Gradgrind children. „*Oliver Twist*“ portrays the miseries and degradation of destitute children. Oliver's life is characterized by loneliness and lack of potential care. A victim of child labor, Oliver is sold to an undertaker, later escapes the horrid experience and goes to London where he is exposed to criminal activities of a gang led by Fagin. „*The Old Curiosity Shop* is a tale of the virtuous and lonely Nell Trent, who through the gambling, debt and nervous breakdown of her grandfather is dragged into a fugitive existence. Again, *David Copperfield* brings forth the miseries of David's life, the mistreatment of his stepfather, his life at boarding school and as a child factory worker. These characters represent living personifications of universal feeling .

2.9 Plot Overview of Great Expectations

Pip, a young orphan living with his sister and her husband in the marshes of Kent, sits in a cemetery one evening looking at his parents' tombstones. Suddenly, an escaped convict springs up from behind a tombstone, grabs Pip, and orders him to bring him food and a file for his leg irons. Pip obeys, but the fearsome convict is soon captured anyway. The convict protects Pip by claiming to have stolen the items himself. (www .sparknotes Great Expectation .http).

One day Pip is taken by his Uncle Pumblechook to play at Satis House, the home of the wealthy dowager Miss Havisham, who is extremely eccentric: she wears an old

wedding dress everywhere she goes and keeps all the clocks in her house stopped at the same time. During his visit, he meets a beautiful young girl named Estella, who treats him coldly and contemptuously. Nevertheless, he falls in love with her and dreams of becoming a wealthy gentleman so that he might be worthy of her. He even hopes that Miss Havisham intends to make him a gentleman and marry him to Estella, but his hopes are dashed when, after months of regular visits to Satis House, Miss Havisham decides to help him become a common laborer in his family's business.

With Miss Havisham's guidance, Pip is apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Joe, who is the village blacksmith. Pip works in the forge unhappily, struggling to better his education with the help of the plain, kind Biddy and encountering Joe's malicious day laborer, Orlick. One night, after an altercation with Orlick, Pip's sister, known as Mrs. Joe, is viciously attacked and becomes a mute invalid. From her signals, Pip suspects that Orlick was responsible for the attack.

One day a lawyer named Jaggers appears with strange news: a secret benefactor has given Pip a large fortune, and Pip must come to London immediately to begin his education as a gentleman. Pip happily assumes that his previous hopes have come true—that Miss Havisham is his secret benefactor and that the old woman intends for him to marry Estella. In London, Pip befriends a young gentleman named Herbert Pocket and Jaggers's law clerk, Wemmick. He expresses disdain for his former friends and loved ones, especially Joe, but he continues to pine after Estella. He furthers his education by studying with the tutor Matthew Pocket, Herbert's father. Herbert himself helps Pip learn how to act like a gentleman. When Pip turns twenty-one and begins to receive an income from his fortune, he will secretly help Herbert buy his way into the business he has chosen for himself. But for now, Herbert and Pip lead a fairly undisciplined life in London, enjoying themselves and running up debts.

Orlick reappears in Pip's life, employed as Miss Havisham's porter, but is promptly fired by Jaggers after Pip reveals Orlick's unsavory past. Mrs. Joe dies, and Pip goes home for the funeral, feeling tremendous grief and remorse. Several years go by, until one night a familiar figure barges into Pip's room—the convict, Magwitch, who stuns Pip by announcing that he, not Miss Havisham, is the source of Pip's fortune. He tells Pip that he was so moved by Pip's boyhood kindness that he dedicated his life to making Pip a gentleman, and he made a fortune in Australia for that very purpose.

Pip is appalled, but he feels morally bound to help Magwitch escape London, as the convict is pursued both by the police and by Compeyson, his former partner in crime. A complicated mystery begins to fall into place when Pip discovers that Compeyson was the man who abandoned Miss Havisham at the altar and that Estella is Magwitch's daughter. Miss Havisham has raised her to break men's hearts, as revenge for the pain her own broken heart caused her. Pip was merely a boy for the young Estella to practice on; Miss Havisham delighted in Estella's ability to toy with his affections. As the weeks pass, Pip sees the good in Magwitch and begins to care for him deeply. Before Magwitch's escape attempt, Estella marries an upper-class lout named Bentley Drummle. Pip makes a visit to Satis House, where Miss Havisham begs his forgiveness for the way she has treated him in the past, and he forgives her. Later that day, when she bends over the fireplace, her clothing catches fire and she goes up in flames. She survives but becomes an invalid. In her final days, she will continue to repent for her misdeeds and to plead for Pip's forgiveness.

The time comes for Pip and his friends to spirit Magwitch away from London. Just before the escape attempt, Pip is called to a shadowy meeting in the marshes, where he encounters the vengeful, evil Orlick. Orlick is on the verge of killing Pip when Herbert arrives with a group of friends and saves Pip's life. Pip and Herbert hurry back to effect Magwitch's escape. They try to sneak Magwitch down the river on a rowboat, but they are discovered by the police, who Compeyson tipped off. Magwitch and Compeyson fight in the river, and Compeyson is drowned. Magwitch is sentenced to death, and Pip loses his fortune. Magwitch feels that his sentence is God's forgiveness and dies at peace. Pip falls ill; Joe comes to London to care for him, and they are reconciled. Joe gives him the news from home: Orlick, after robbing Pumblechook, is now in jail; Miss Havisham has died and left most of her fortune to the Pockets; Biddy has taught Joe how to read and write. After Joe leaves, Pip decides to rush home after him and marry Biddy, but when he arrives there he discovers that she and Joe have already married.

Pip decides to go abroad with Herbert to work in the mercantile trade. Returning many years later, he encounters Estella in the ruined garden at Satis House. Drummle, her husband, treated her badly, but he is now dead. Pip finds that Estella's coldness and cruelty have been replaced by a sad kindness, and the two leave the garden hand in hand, Pip believing that they will never part again. (Note: Dickens's original ending to *Great Expectations* differed from the one described in this summary. The final Summary and

Analysis section of this Spark note provides a description of the first ending and explains why Dickens rewrote it.

2.10 Plot Overview

Oliver Twist is born in a workhouse in 1830s England. His mother, whose name no one knows, is found on the street and dies just after Oliver's birth. Oliver spends the first nine years of his life in a badly run home for young orphans and then is transferred to a workhouse for adults. After the other boys bully Oliver into asking for more gruel at the end of a meal, Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle, offers five pounds to anyone who will take the boy away from the workhouse. Oliver narrowly escapes being apprenticed to a brutish chimney sweep and is eventually apprenticed to a local undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry. When the undertaker's other apprentice, Noah Claypole, makes disparaging comments about Oliver's mother, Oliver attacks him and incurs the Sowerberrys' wrath. Desperate, Oliver runs away at dawn and travels toward London. (www Wikipedia Oliver Twist).

Outside London, Oliver, starved and exhausted, meets Jack Dawkins, a boy his own age. Jack offers him shelter in the London house of his benefactor, Fagin. It turns out that Fagin is a career criminal who trains orphan boys to pick pockets for him. After a few days of training, Oliver is sent on a pickpocketing mission with two other boys. When he sees them swipe a handkerchief from an elderly gentleman, Oliver is horrified and runs off. He is caught but narrowly escapes being convicted of the theft. Mr. Brownlow, the man whose handkerchief was stolen, takes the feverish Oliver to his home and nurses him back to health. Mr. Brownlow is struck by Oliver's resemblance to a portrait of a young woman that hangs in his house. Oliver thrives in Mr. Brownlow's home, but two young adults in Fagin's gang, Bill Sikes and his lover Nancy, capture Oliver and return him to Fagin.

Fagin sends Oliver to assist Sikes in a burglary. Oliver is shot by a servant of the house and, after Sikes escapes, is taken in by the women who live there, Mrs. Maylie and her beautiful adopted niece Rose. They grow fond of Oliver, and he spends an idyllic summer with them in the countryside. But Fagin and a mysterious man named Monks are set on recapturing Oliver. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Oliver's mother left behind a gold locket when she died. Monks obtains and destroys that locket. When the Maylies come to London, Nancy meets secretly with Rose and informs her of Fagin's designs, but a member of Fagin's gang overhears the conversation.

When word of Nancy's disclosure reaches Sikes, he brutally murders Nancy and flees London. Pursued by his guilty conscience and an angry mob, he inadvertently hangs himself while trying to escape. Mr. Brownlow, with whom the Maylies have reunited Oliver, confronts Monks and wrings the truth about Oliver's parentage from him. It is revealed that Monks is Oliver's half brother. Their father, Mr. Leeford, was unhappily married to a wealthy woman and had an affair with Oliver's mother, Agnes Fleming. Monks has been pursuing Oliver all along in the hopes of ensuring that his half-brother is deprived of his share of the family inheritance. Mr. Brownlow forces Monks to sign over Oliver's share to Oliver. Moreover, it is discovered that Rose is Agnes's younger sister, hence Oliver's aunt. Fagin is hung for his crimes. Finally, Mr. Brownlow adopts Oliver, and they and the Maylies retire to a blissful existence in the countryside.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEME OF CHILDHOOD IN GREAT EXPECTATION

According to Jenks, Chris. (1994- 22-26) "In the beginning chapters of 'Great Expectations', Dickens paints a vivid picture of childhood. The reader is able to enter Pip's mind and see the world through the eyes of a child. The word "pip" itself is a seed from a plant. Seeds need to be nurtured if they are to grow and flourish. Dickens believed that children have certain needs, these included to be free from abuse and to be able to know and imagine. Through his portrayal of child characters in the novel, Dickens' social commentary shows that childhood is a bad, lonely and twisted period when adults rarely and inadequately provide for important needs that children have.

In the first chapter of the book we learn that Pip is an orphan with no friends and no caring family. When Pip tells us his name and how he cannot pronounce the word "Pirrip" we discover how poorly educated he is. We also learn how Pip's imagination and childhood naivety affect his take on life; although most of his family died, Pip does not treat this as a major catastrophe but instead this secludes him and makes him use his imagination even more. Through these opening accounts of Pip, we can instantly see that Dickens treats childhood as an isolated and formative period. Perhaps this reflects Dickens' own personal childhood.

Dickens treats childhood as a time when you are simple-minded, for example, Pip is best friends with Joe at the start of the novel when Pip is a little boy with no selfish thoughts; it is only when he grows up and becomes a gentleman that he disowns Joe and becomes a snob. Dickens treats childhood as a time when we see little difference in other people, before the complexities of class emerge in adulthood. An example of this is Herbert and Pip when they were both boys, Herbert is obviously more eccentric and posh, but this thought never goes through Pip's mind, he only sees Herbert as slightly strange.

Dickens implies that childhood is one big learning curve; when we are children we start to learn how to have fun, how to play and how to act sensibly. It is also a time when we develop a sense of responsibility and take account of our own actions. For example, Pip would often get punished by the "tickler" when he fell out of line, this harsh whip could be seen as cruelty but Mrs Gargery may have been merely developing a sense of self-discipline in Pip. When we are children we also learn how to form relationships;

unfortunately Pip struggled to form relationships well, especially with Estella. Dickens shows that childhood is essentially a lottery with somewhat devastating consequences for some as to the resultant adults produced. Dickens highlights the debate of nature vs nurture in the novel. Can someone's background like Pips really affect who he turns out to be, or is it destiny? Dickens plays with the characters Estella and Pip throughout the plot, was Estella born evil? Can Pip become a gentleman despite his tragic childhood? Will Pip and Estella ever get together? This ongoing debate in the Novel shows Dickens' interest and fascination about this topic, set against a wider Darwinian and Victorian background. Dickens' treats childhood in the book as a sociological experiment.

At points in the story Pip has to do things for Joe that only an adult would do for a child, an example is when Pip would teach Joe to read. This interesting relationship between Joe and Pip is sometimes seen as abnormal, but really, Joe and Pip are just two children being friends. Dickens could be suggesting that childhood is never only a certain point in our lives and that fundamentally, we are all children. Dickens also highlights the fact that we all act like children twice in our lives, he does this especially though Mr Wemmick's aged father. When Pip visits Mr Wemmick's father, he has to nod repeatedly, "nod away at him, Mr Pip, that's what he likes", this nodding is similar to something someone would do to a baby or small infant, not a fully grown man. Dickens treats childhood as a recurring cycle and that in the end, when we are grey and old we become children again.

Dickens portrays childhood as a sad time; he does this through Pip's family and personal life. Most of Pip's relatives are dead, "him too; late of this parish", and he has to put up with the evil Mrs Gargery as his substitute mother, she is heartless and wicked and only shows remorse on her final deathbed. Pip also has to deal with the constant heartache of Estella and how she plays with his mind. This is clearly a confusing and miserable time for Pip and the way childhood is portrayed is extremely negative. Childhood should be a time of freedom and enjoyment, but instead Dickens creates burdens that the children in the novel have to live with. For example, Dickens burdens Estella with the nagging Mrs Havisham, Estella has no life of freewill, her childhood is callously controlled. Dickens gives Pip the threat of Mrs Gargery's punishments, "She had brought me up by hand", and also the burden of helping Joe. Neither Pip nor Estella has the chance to do as they wish; they are always being ordered around or under threat.

Throughout Pip's childhood he is constantly surrounded by guilt and shame that plays on his conscience. As part of this guilt, Pip is always subtly reminded of justice. Whether it is through the gallows that are on the marshes near to where he lives, or the soldiers and Magwitch, or even the great prison ships at the dock, there is always a sense of guilt and justice in Pip's childhood. Dickens is showing that Childhood is a time where you learn the boundaries between right and wrong, and the idea of guilt and justice adds to the feeling that Pip's childhood is not free and normal; instead he lumbers the responsibilities of an adult. This could echo Dickens' own childhood and how he was placed into an adult's world far too soon.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 The Theme of Childhood In Oliver Twist

According to Ascot Caroline (1994 22-27)"This chapter deals with the novel Oliver Twist which first appeared in the magazine Bentley's Miscellany in 1837. An immense and quite complicated plotis developed in this book as well as in all Dickens's novels. Characters of the novel come from all classes of society and mainly the lots of people living in the lowest positions in society and the reality of their daily life are presented in the novel. In this novel the readers might witness author's strong social commentary. Particularly the conditions of living in the streets and work housesor other charitable institutions are depicted and criticized. On the other hand, country life is strongly idealized and the picture of the countryside seems to be very contrastive to that of the city life. The main protagonist of the novel is Oliver Twist, an orphan born in an unnamed workhouse in an unnamed town.

The chapter aims to elaborate on the relationships among the characters and to show how they influence each other. It also attempts to explain how Dickens works with child's perspective and the portrayal of the family. Because Oliver's story is related to many other characters and it might be useful for further analysis of the novel to outline its plot very briefly at first. Oliver's story begins in a workhouse where he is born and where his motherdies giving a birth. There he spends the first nine years of his life and later he is apprenticed to Mr Sowerberry, an undertaker. After his escape from Sowerberry, he fleets to London where he joins a gang of young thieves over mastered by an old Jew, Fagin. After being caught at picking pockets, helives at Mr Brownlow's where he recovers from an illness and where he experiences kindness and love for the first time in his life. Consequently he is kidnapped back to Fagin's gang and involved in a burglary. When injured and almost killed, the inmates of the house which he tried to rob take him inside and they all live together for some time.

Then many things from his past are revealed and the reader is told about Oliver's background. It is brought to light that one of the thieves is Oliver's half-brother and that he tried to destroy all evidence about this fact. The story of a girl from the gang, Nancy, is finished when she is killed by one of Fagin's pals. At the end, Oliver comes to a bigfortune, he inherits some money from his father and is adopted by Mr Brownlow. It also comes to light that Rose Maylie, the girl who takes care of Oliver in the country, is his aunt

(a younger sister of his deceased mother). Fagin is imprisoned and consequently hanged. Oliver lives together with Mr. Brownlow in the country near to their friends. The whole story is set into the 1830's England, so time of the story is closely related to the time in which the novel was written and published.

4.1 The Main Protagonist and other Child Characters

The first section of this chapter examines the depiction of the main character and also some interesting issues related to secondary child characters. Oliver's story begins with his birth and ends when he is yet a boy or a young man. A great deal of space in the novel is devoted to the description of Oliver's miserable living conditions, his sufferings and inner feelings of terror. When the reader witnesses the scenes from the workhouse also a strong and harsh social criticism should be taken into account. The rules on which the workhouses are based, as well as the laws concerning the poor valid in England, are not only described, but also judged there with irony. "What a noble illustration of the tender laws of England! They let the paupers go to sleep!" (Oliver Twist 13).

This quote comments on the end of the day when Oliver goes to sleep after picking oakum together with other children. A realistic description of the workhouse conditions is gained through describing various kinds of sufferings that children had to undergo. Apart from the fact that they were beaten and had to work hard, they suffered from starvation as shown in the first part of the novel: "Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months..." (Oliver Twist 15). Children were not abused only physically but also mentally. Adults consider Oliver and other children inferior and they often and strongly express that they look down on such beings as children. There is not any hope for children in adult's behaviour and comments on children's future destinies. Current social conditions of the orphans in the workhouse are considered satisfactory and Oliver is considered to be of a rebellious character. The child is intentionally terrified about his future and his prospects. Even the authorities do not seem to deal with children as with valuable human beings: "I know that boy will be hung." (Oliver Twist 16).

Despite these miserable conditions which are described in the former paragraphs, the reader might gain the impression that the character of Oliver Twist does not endure the inner development in the same way as for example the main protagonist of Great Expectations does. Instead of that, Oliver's moral qualities seem not to be damaged by the influence of his background. Even after his life with thieves he is presented as a naive, pure and innocent child, who, despite his life experiences and tortures, still believes in good:

The darkness and the deep stillness of the room were very solemn; as they brought into the boy's mind the thought that death had been hovering there, for many days and nights, and might yet fill it with the gloom and dread of his awful presence, he turned his face upon the pillow, and fervently prayed to Heaven. (Oliver Twist 98).

The main protagonist does not seem to undergo significant changes of character. The reader might have the impression that the author seems to be concerned in the description of protagonist's living conditions and in justices rather than in the portrayal of his character development. From this point of view, the character of Nancy can be interpreted in a similar way. She is a girl whose life is also miserable, she lives among the thieves and she is something like a prostitute for Sikes. However, her good character qualities do not seem to be much harmed by her surroundings. She is presented as a compassionate young girl, who tries to do her best to protect Oliver from beating and who dares to disobey Fagin: "I won't stand by and see it done, Fagin, cried the girl. You've got the boys, and what more would you have? – Let him be – let him be – or I shall put that mark on some of you, that will bring me to the gallows before my time." (Oliver Twist 143).

In fact, Nancy sacrifices her own life to protect and save Oliver. On the other hand, some of the child characters seem to be already accustomed to their way of life in bad society and this is the case of the young thieves in Fagin's gang, who seems to be quite conciliated with their lots and convinced that this way of life is not so bad and uncomfortable after all. Although we do not have much information about their former way of life, it might be supposed that they come from the poor family backgrounds. Lanckford5 regards them as victims of the society in fact: "By the plot's subliminal logic these are the workhouse boys again, grown older, no longer asking for more but taking it, and at least partly justified by the corruption and injustice of the society on which they prey." (Lanckford 22).

4.2 The Childs' Perspective

The narrator of the novel describes the world through child's eyes in some situations. He is well aware that children do not think in the same way as the adults do and that they do not understand everything. Oliver for example does not know the meaning of the word "orphan" and it must be explained to listen to me. You know that you're an orphan, I suppose? ' What's that, sir? inquired poor Oliver." (Oliver Twist 12). The narrator can put himself in child's place and accept his way of thinking. Consequently also

the reader can easily identify himself with the child. The author emphasizes child's feelings and his point of view in the novel very much.

As Lanckford points out, the narrator is focused on child's feelings especially at the beginning of the novel: Throughout the early chapters Oliver has been the psychological and moral center of the action. While the other characters are presented almost exclusively in a theatrical mode, their identity established only as it is indicated by their actions and appearance, Oliver's inner feelings are described directly by the narrator. (Lanckford 23) As an example, the author shows how children are terrified in the environment that is not suitable for them. And Oliver has to face many situations that are not convenient for child's psyche. When he is left at Sowerberry's to sleep among the coffins, a feeling of horror and scare appears: "Oliver, being left to himself in the undertaker's shop, set the lamp down on a workman's bench and gazed timidly about him with a feeling of awe and dread, which many people a good deal older than he, will be at no loss to understand." (Oliver Twist 36).

The author's concentration on Oliver's feelings might be an attempt to show how children's feeling and thinking are different from adults. And if children think differently they should not be treated as adults.

4.3 The Portrayal of the Family in Relation to Childhood

The picture of the family is closely related to the theme of childhood. A portrait of an ideal and functional family cannot be found in Oliver Twist. The main hero comes from the workhouse and when the reader learns something about his family background he realizes that Oliver can be called a bastard. In fact he is a child born out of an extramarital relationship. In addition, there does not appear a typical family consisting of two parents and children in the whole novel. Instead of this classical family model, other types of "families" can be found there. Other people attempts to substitute parents and play their roles for Oliver Twist. The authorities in the workhouse, Mr Bumble and Mrs Mann, substitute the parents in some aspects. They have a big influence on children in the workhouse and try to bring them up.

However, it is clear that this substitution is not successful at all. Mr Brownlow and Mrs Bedwin, who take really parental care of Oliver when he is ill, also substitute his parents for some time. However, their tender care seems to be very contrastive to the behavior of the authorities of the parish workhouses. As a result of their devotion, Oliver's feelings change from fear and misery into grace and feelings of tranquility. His sojourn at

Mr Brownlow's is depicted as something completely different to his up to now life experience: "They were happy days, those of Oliver's recovery. Everything was so quiet, and neat, and orderly; everybody was kind and gentle; that after the noise and turbulence in the midst of which he had always lived, it seemed like Heaven itself."(Oliver Twist 116).

As Frederick⁶ suggests in his article, the same feeling of safety are typical for Oliver's sojourn at Mrs Maylie's: "We recognize at once the crucial role of Mr. Brownlow's and Mrs. Maylie's homes as havens in the uncompromisingly dichotomized world of the novel. Only here can Oliver breathe, only here does he know kindness and civility." (Frederick 465). These quotes demonstrate how important the author considers even the illusion of a functional home for a child. From one point of view it might be said that although there are not typical families in the novel, groups of people who might be regarded as families in some aspects can be found there. The inmates of the house that is robbed can be regarded as a kind of family. Also Fagin's gang of thieves might be regarded as a substitution of a real family for the boys. Frederick considers Fagin's gang to be "a parody of domestic life". (Frederick 467).

The marriages in the novel are unhappy and damaged. Oliver's first experience of domestic life is represented by Sowerberry's family. The marriage and subsequently the family life of Mr Bumble and Mrs Corney are presented in a similar way. The tone of its description is strongly ironic. Their marriage is not the marriage based on mutual love and respect. It rather looks like a constant fight for supremacy. This indicates that the marriages which are not based on love and could never be happy and satisfactory. Even the relationship of Oliver's parents is depicted as problematic because of external influences and the reader might suppose that the split-up of Oliver's parents brought his mother to the life on street and consequently this background destroyed a happy start of his life. The theme of the importance of blood ties among the relatives and family ties generally seems to be presented in the novel as well. Two people to whom Oliver inclines became his relatives at the end of the novel. The reader realizes that Rose Maylie is in fact Oliver's aunt and Mr Brownlow adopts Oliver as his son.

From the development of the novel it seems that a real value of human relationships is not dependent on blood ties. It seems that more important are the opinions shared and social and family background in which the characters live. Despite the fact that Monks is Oliver's half-brother, they do not share any positive emotions for each other. On the contrary, Oliver's warm relationship with Rose and Mr Brownlow are formed on the basis of his life experience with them.

In conclusion, it could be said that in *Oliver Twist* the author examines the way of life of the orphans, who are dependent on social institutions, and their living conditions are strongly criticised. Although the novel is narrated by the omniscient narrator, the main hero's point of view is crucial and the whole society is depicted in relation to the main child character and its story. The classic model of the family is broken in the book and the uneasiness of life without functional family background and support is depicted. Therefore it might be reasonable to presume that by this the importance of family for children is emphasized. Through the description of Oliver's feelings the importance of a child and its point of view are highlighted. The main child protagonist seems not to be so active in life than for example Pip in *Great Expectations*. Oliver's adventures and experiences seem to happen more or less without his active participation. The ending of the novel, that is totally different from the destiny of a poor child at the beginning, might lead the reader to an agreement with Lanckford who suggests that Oliver might be seen as an allegoric character rather than a real boy (Lanckford 20).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will display the conclusion ,findings and recommendations.

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the themes of childhood in two different novels by Charles Dickens. We have come to the conclusion that there are some similarities and some differences among two novels. The thesis has argued that the adults usually treat children as inferior creatures and cause them many troubles. And on the other hand, all three protagonists have also the adults who take care of them and who either are (Joe, Miss Betsey and David's mother) or become (Mr Brownlow) their family members and who represent the relics of their domestic stability. Blood relationships influence children as well as these "substitutes" of the real families. Although the protagonists either are or become orphans at the beginnings of the plots, the theme of motherhood and the relations between mothers and children are depicted differently.

In *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* the main characters are orphans from the beginning of the stories and the readers could not learn much about their mothers. Children commemorate them with devotion and their life stories are veiled by mystery. In addition, the influence of mothers on their children is shown there. These findings suggest that the author wanted to show how mothers (or parents generally) can influence and form their children and how their influence is important for forming their character qualities which can be either improved or totally spoilt. The mothers can be also interpreted as basic elements for the family.

The novels also differ in the way of describing the living conditions of children. Generally speaking it can be said that the author reflects on the situation in society and he describes it in his novels. However, the description of the living conditions of children is different in each of the novels. In *Oliver Twist* mainly the poverty and the awfulness of child labour are depicted. As an illustration that children had been apprenticed from their early age Dickens employed the episode with chimney sweep or the description of the work in workhouses. The difference between living in the rural areas and in the cities is

depicted in all two novels. The description of the society corresponds with the facts mentioned in the first chapter. In other words, the reality of the contemporary society is depicted in all three novels and this might lead the reader to the conclusion that it helped to increase Dickens's popularity among his contemporaries.

5.2 Findings

1. Most Students do not aware about Victorian era and its characteristics .
2. Teachers at secondary schools and universities do not use effective methods in teaching literature.
3. Teachers never motivate their students to read literature in all its genres especially Arabic and British ones.
4. Students are not aware about all the works of Charles Dickens .
5. Department of foreign language both secondary and university level do not encourage students to read and search in the British literature in all its genres
6. More British novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists and their works are not embedded in the course of faculties of art and education for students who study English instead of depending on two or three British literary writers.
7. Students do not study and make studies in Victorian era novels as general.
8. Students do not study and make studies in Dickens novels privately.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher recommended the following

1. Students should be aware about Victorian era, customs and traditions which the writer represented in the novels Great Expectations and Oliver Twist.
2. Teachers should portray and explain for their students the life of the villagers in the Victorians , which is influenced by British heritage and culture.
3. Teachers at secondary schools and universities should use effective methods in teaching literature.
4. Teachers should motivate their students to read literature in all its genres especially British ones.
5. Students should study and read all the works of Charles Dickens for their importance.
6. Department of foreign language both secondary and university level should encourage students to read and search in the British literature in all its genres .

7. More British novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists and their works should be embedded in the course of faculties of art and education for students who study English instead of depending on two or three Arabic literary writers .
8. Students should study and make studies in Victorian era novels as general.
9. Students should study and make studies in Dickens novels privately.

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