



**University of Sudan for Science and Technology**  
**Faculty of Graduate Studies**



**Child Abuse in the Victorian Era with reference to Charles Dickens Novels (Oliver Twist, David Copper Field, Great Expectation and Hard Times).**

إساءة معاملة الأطفال في العصر الفكتوري إستدلالات بروايات تشارلز دكينز (أوليفر تويست وديفد كوبرفيل الآمال العظيمة و الأوقات العصيبة)

**A Research Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for The Degree of M.A in Literature**

***Submitted By:***

***Omeima Abd-algaleel Hakim***

***Supervised By:***

***Dr. Wigdan Yagoub***

**2016**

## ***DEDICATION***

I dedicate this work to the members of my family  
as most beloved ones

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Wigdan Yagoub who kept rereading great help to me throughout the course of this thesis. To my teacher Zuheir Al-maghrebi whose assistance to me is highly appropriated. To the colleagues with whom I shared great relevant thoughts and ideas Awatif Abd-allah and Nana Mhmoud. Lastly to members of my family for their significant support.

## **Abstract**

This study extensively displays the dramatic life conditions experienced by English Children in towns and cities as cheap workers or rather un-paid labour force threatened by three evils; illness, poverty and ignorance. The immediate outcome of which is hatred and deviation.

This study deals with four of Dickens's social novels (Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Hard Times and Great Expectations) that make public the disastrous living conditions of the English child a time of the countries prosperity and welfare which quite ironically. It is a common sense that political, social and economic reform is the direct task of Politicians Sociologists and Economists ' however, novelist may at times go far ahead to reform or even to revolution.

## ملخص الدراسة

تستعرض هذه الدراسة بوضوح و توسع الظروف المعيشية المأساوية التي عايشها الأطفال الإنجليز في المدن الكبرى و الصغرى بوصفهم عمالة زهيدة الأجر بل وربما تكاد تكون بدون مقابل ، وهم مهددون بالشرور الإجتماعية الثلاث : المرض و الفقر و الجهل ، و المردور المباشر لهذه الشرور هو الحقد و الإنحراف .

تتناول هذه الدراسة أربع روايات للقاص الإنجليزي تشارليز دكينز ( أوليفر توييز و ديفد كبرفيل و الأزمنة الأوقات العصبية و الآمال العظيمة) و هي الروايات التي أسفرت عن الأحوال المعيشية المأساوية للطفل الإنجليزي أثناء عهد وإذدهار ورفاهية ذلك البلد وهو ما يعد من قُبيل سخرسة الأقدار. من البديهي أن الإصلاح السياسي و الإجتماعي و الإقتصادي من مهام السياسة و علماء الاجتماع و الإقتصاديون غير أن القصاصين يمكنهم أحيانا أن يسبقوا أولئك و هولاء في الإصلاح بل وربما في الثورة.

## Table of contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Dedication	I
Acknowledgment	II
Abstract in English	III
Abstract in Arabic	IV
Table of contents	V
<b>Chapter One :Introduction</b>	
0-Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of the study	2
1.2 Question of the study	2
1.3 Hypothesis of the study	3
1.4Objective of the study	3
1.5 Significance of the study	3
1-6 Methodology of the study	4
1-7 Limitation of the study	4
<b>Chapter Two: Theoretical From Work and Previous Study</b>	
<b>Part One : Theoretical From Work</b>	
Introduction	5
2.1 Definition of Child	6
2.2 Types of abuse	6
2.2.1 Emotional Abuse	6
2.2.2Verbal Abuse	7
2.2.3 Economic Abuse	7
2.2.4 Mental Abuse	7
2.2.5 Sexual Abuse	7
2.3 The concept of child labour	8
2.4 Types of Child Labour Jobs	8
2.4.1 Blacksmith	8
2.4.2 Textile Mills	8
2.4.3 Mines	9
2.4.4 Chimney Sweeping	9

2.4.5 Farming/ Agriculture	9
2.4.6 Prostitution	10
2.4.7 Child Maids	10
2.4.8 Thieves	10
2.4.9 Pierces	11
2.4.10 Scavenges	11
2.4.11 Catchers	11
2.5 Child Labor in Victorian England	11
<b>Part Two : Previous Study</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter Three :Analysis of the four novels</b>	
Introduction	20
3-1 Oliver Twist	20
3-2 David Copperfield	27
3-3 Hard Times	30
3-4 Great Expectations	34
3-4-1 Abuse in Great Expectations	34
<b>Chapter Four :Conclusion</b>	
4-1 Conclusion	38
4-2Recomendation	38
4-3 Suggestions for further studies	39
Bibliography	40

# CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Questions of the study

Hypotheses of the study

Objectives of the study

Significance of the study

Methodology of the study

Limitation of the study



# **Chapter One**

## **0- Introduction**

Literary experience provides readers with two distinct values that serve to refine and sophisticate readers or audience, Firstly, pleasure of the spirit, which immediately appeals to the realm of imagination, fantasy and emotion. Secondly, in sight, that imparts its effect directly to the intellect and serves thought.

Novelists, since they first evolve, then have been true and honest means of change, reform and even rebellion throughout history. Moreover great novelists have proved to be good leaders of their peoples as well as documentation of the history of their countries.

This study will try to thoroughly to investigate the ironic characteristic of the Victorian novels as an effective tool of social criticism bearing in mind that such category of novels relate to social rather than the political novels ,though in some traits of policy and history.

The British Empire on which the Sun never sets could not and cannot feel proud of its powerful expansion with generation of its dear, innocent young boys living as workers in cool mines and textile factories , with hoards girls earning their daily bread from prostitution while consumption and venereal diseases.

This study will highlight the role of novelists in making clear the nature of material civilities that masks a whole body of the social evils.

Furthermore, the study will provide material evidence based on factual facts to proclaim the present welfare and good living – condition that the English nation is nowadays enjoys is but the very outcome of patient and perseverant effect of novelist have been exerting.

## **1- 1Statement of the study- problems**

The social evils that afflicted the feeble segment of society "children of both sex" in the Greatest Empire in the nineteenth century couldn't be made open to the public, specially the upper class as a preacher of human low except through the white-spread novels that exposed the turmoil of children and their abuse by their own society.

## **1.2 Questions of the study**

1.2.1How had the industrial revolution affected poor families?

1.2.2 Why were children one of the main sources of labour force in the Victorian England.?

1.2.3What were sorts of child labour common during the time of Queen Victoria.?

## **1.3 Hypotheses of the study**

**1.3.1** The Industrial Revaluation was supposed to elevate sufferings from over the back of the Englishmen, however; it made easy the live of the upper class and crushed the lower one.

**1.3.2** Children as a labour force have some advantage for example, cheap wage, movility and availability.

**1.3.3** Children jobs may be divided in to two categories: socially agreeable like miners, textile workers, blacksmiths and housemaids. Disagreeable like robber in, theft and prostitution.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

**1-4-1** To investigate the Victorian novels as a literary device intended to the serve as the tool of social reform.

**1-4-2** To incorporate social novel with political and historical novel.

**1-4-3** To draws public attention to consider children circumstance at the Victorian time.

#### **1-5 Significance of the study**

From the reading the four novels selected as a sample the cause of children abuse has been illustrated so clearing and detailed that no other media could equal.

The role of the lower class children made public through these novels awake the conscience of the nation invoked the Reform Bill.

#### **1-6 Methodology of the study**

This study is based on descriptive analysis and historical criticism.

Analysis of four selected novels by **Dickens** will be analyzed altogether, in terms of *Child abuse* and to sum up focal concern of this study.

### **1-7 Limitation of the study**

This study covers the novels of Charles Dickens that treat child turmoil during the Victorian Age 1837- 1901.

The analysis of the novels (*Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations*) will consider the common issues that the four novels share as regards children conditions from both sexes.

# CHAPTER TWO

Literature review & Previous Studies

# Chapter Two

## Theoretical From Work

### Introduction

**The Victorian Era** most commonly refers to the reign of Queen Victoria that took place from approximately 1837 to 1901. In 1870, near the midst of her reign, about 750,000 children were engaged in **child labor**. That only includes children less than fifteen years of age, and excludes children who worked in their family's business, or on their family's farm.

Families may decide to send their young to work due to family poverty, industrial needs, or just to get their children in the habit of working for a living. Family poverty explains itself; families were poor, so they put their children to work to get money. Factories hired children usually because they didn't need to get paid as much money as adults. Also, a lot of the machines were more easily handled by tinier people. People in the Victorian Era believed that if children realized what responsibility and hard work was at a young age, they would soon adapt to it and be very great workers when they get older.

### 2.1 Definition of Child

International conventions define *children* as aged 18 and under. Individual governments may define "*child*" according to different ages or other criteria. "Child" and "*childhood*" are also defined differently by different cultures. A "*child*" is not necessarily delineated by a fixed age. Social scientists point out that

children's abilities and maturities vary so much that defining a child's maturity by calendar age can be misleading.

## **2.2 Types of abuse**

When most people think of abuse or violence we think of it as just being physical. But actually, *abuse*, *violence* and *child labour* can happen in different ways. Generally, there are six types of abuse that can exist in a violent relationship. *Physical* is one of them but sometimes the *violence* won't get that far. *Abuse* and *violence* normally start with *emotional*, *mental* and/or *verbal abuse* and can eventually escalate to things like *physical*, *sexual* and maybe even *economic abuse*.

### **2.2.1 Emotional Abuse**

Insults, put downs, intimidating you, embarrassing you in public, talking down to you, not listening to or respecting your feelings, making threats, telling you are not "GLBTQ," "man," or "strong" enough, being jealous, possessive, controlling; excessive or threatening texts, checking up on you, accusations of cheating, making you feel like you need to justify yourself, giving you no privacy, shaming you for your sexual orientation.

### **2.2.2 Verbal Abuse**

Yelling, shouting, swearing, continuously arguing, interrupting, talking over you, put downs, using loud and threatening language and tone to cause fear, name calling, intimidating you, mocking you, abusive language.

### **2.2.3 Economic Abuse**

Withholding money, opening up a joint account but you don't have access, forcing you to leave your job, forcing you to get fired, shaming you for how you spend your money, not allowing you to work or get an education, putting all the bills/credit cards in your name, preventing you from using a car.

### **2.2.4 Mental Abuse**

Playing mind games with you, twisting everything around so nothing is their fault and all of their behavior was caused by something you did or didn't do, accusing you of doing things that they are doing, lying, manipulating you for control or sex, threatening to "out" you to parents, friends, classmates, distorting reality so you think you are losing your mind.

### **2.2.5 Sexual Abuse**

Rape, unwanted sexual touching, vulgar comments, pressure for sex, forcing you to have unprotected sex, forcing you to get pregnant or to have an abortion, sexing, forcing you to have sex with other people or to watch your partner have sex with someone else, forcing you to use or participate in pornography.

## **2.3 The concept of child labor**

*Child labour* is, generally speaking, work by *children* that **harms** them or **exploits** them in some way (*physically, mentally, morally, or by blocking their access to education*).



BUT: There is no universally accepted definition of *child labour*. Varying definitions of the term are used by *international organizations*, *non-governmental organizations*, *trade unions* and other interest groups. Writers and speakers don't always specify what definition they are using, and that often leads to confusion.

## **2.4 Types of Child Labour**

### **2.4.1 Blacksmith**

Being a blacksmith was a tenacious job that was a hard job for adults, let alone a child from ages 5-15. It required a lot of hard work and effort to mold metal into usable utensils and objects. Although being a blacksmith was not very easy, the economic and social position of it was much higher than compared to working on a farm or in a factory

### **2.4.2 Textile Mills**

Working in Textile Mills is one of the worst places for a child to be, let alone be there around the clock. This laborious job causes children in the Victorian Era to have bad physical growth. Standing in an enclosed heated atmosphere for hours of not moving around is like telling a child to stand outside all day when it's 110 degrees outside.

### **2.4.3 Mines**

Working in mines during the Victorian Era was very dangerous. In the mines, they are told to break walls open and search for any valuable objects. The walkway in a mine is very narrow and short, making it perfect for children to drag carts of coal through. A five

year old dragging something that weights more than himself is an extremely difficult task, especially for a child that was underfed and weak. It was not a surprise to see a child accidentally slip. These kinds of events were common and fatal.

#### **2.4.4 Chimney Sweeping**

Before mines, chimney sweeping was the most difficult and most dangerous job there was. Children were apprenticed and taught how to get inside a chimney and clean out all the soot and creosote. Young children were used for this because of the small opening. It was quite often that children would get burnt, fall, or suffocate from the debris.

#### **2.4.5 Farming/ Agriculture**

Children started working in the field at around age five. Being a farmer during this era was risky because of the unpredictable weather conditions. They had to be very careful with soil and watering. Even though people work for many hours on the field, the effort would be easily lost if the crops weren't fresh and healthy. Farming was not as easy as it seemed because being outside in the beaming sunlight all day isn't very comfortable.

#### **2.4.6 Prostitution**

Prostitution in the Victorian Era was considered *"a fate that's worse than death"* to women. Men with money were willing to pay a standard pricing of about twenty pounds for a healthy working-class girl between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Men

were willing to pay a hundred pounds for a middle-class girl of the same age; and as much as four hundred pounds for a child from the upper class under the age of twelve. It was very common for a young girl to experience their first sexual experience this way. Not only that, but it was also common to get a sexually transmitted disease because of no safe treatment.

#### **2.4.7 Child Maids**

At around the age of twelve, children were hired to work as maids or nursery maids. Maids were normally girls that helped take care of children or clean around the house. When older maids were hired, they were expected to cook food for their master. Life as a maid wasn't very good, but it was considered alright because your master would provide food for you to eat.

#### **2.4.8 Thieves**

Being a thief in the Victorian Era was a risky job. It took a lot of time to become a skilled thief. They were usually taught techniques to use to take someone's belongings. For example: in the book *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens uses the character Fagin to show us how he taught his “students” to steal. When you were a thief, your boss expected you to come back with money or something of good value. Therefore, if you came back empty handed, you would have most likely been punished.

#### **2.4.9 Pierces**

Pierces were children that worked in linen factories. They inspected all threads to make sure they were connected. If the reel of threads was broken, they had the job of piecing it back together.

That is where they got the name of piercers. This job was very time consuming and boring.

#### **2.4.10 Scavengers**

A scavenger's job was to get under the factory's machines, and get all the bits of fluff that got caught there. Being a scavenger was a hazardous job for children because they could easily get caught under the machinery and die, or get seriously injured.

#### **2.4.11 Catchers**

In the Victorian Era it was common to see *cheap labor*. At the brick yards, *children* were used to re-stack bricks. They would toss bricks to each other in a line to shift the piles of bricks to another side of the yard.

### **2.5 Child Labor in Victorian England**

*Child laborers* played an important part in developing the country's economy. Children, one of the main sources of labor in Victorian England, endured less than adequate living and working conditions.

During the Victorian Period children were good sources of labor. Beginning work as young as six or seven employers saw many benefits to hiring children. Adolescents were a significant part of the labor force because they could be paid lower wages. Also their naturally small and nimble hands and bodies were easily maneuverable. Employers most often hired children over adults because kids were powerless and would not revolt. Economic conditions forced poor children into working, sometimes as hard

and long as their parents. Essential to the economy, Parliament supported child labor saying a child was more useful to his family working.

Child laborers led very hard and grossly disgusting lives of filth. Generally the living quarters of laborers were poorly built, rotting, even falling down, with little ventilation. There were no indoor plumbing causing people to throw human waste on unpaved streets. Houses were often crowded and rented by the room or even by the corner. Dirty floors and leaky roofs did not stop people from living in overcrowded basements and attics.

The majority of the day of young workers was spent without their family. The factory system split up families for as much as fourteen hours. The time they did have together was either spent eating or sleeping. Young daughters developed no housewife skills because they were working and their working mother was not there to care for and teach them. The role of father was decreased since he was not the sole supporter of the family. The life of a child laborer was much like this; thus they learned little about life.

Despite its major importance education played a very small role in the lives of children. In the Victorian Era there was a refined belief that education was not needed. Few working kids had more than two or three years of schooling. In 1840 only twenty percent of the youth population had any schooling at all. Then in 1870 the Education Act was passed stating that all children, ages five through ten, must attend school. Yet, it was not until 1881 before the act became nationwide. Many children tried to avoid school

mainly because of the hot, noisy, odorous, and unsanitary classroom environment. School buildings were inadequate along with schoolteachers. Most of the teachers were not properly trained and were usually failures in life. Children often picked work over school due to the fact that working earned them money while school earned them nothing.

There were many different indoor jobs a *child laborer* could have during the Victorian Period. Two of the most commonly heard of jobs included servants and sweatshop workers. *Boys* and *girls* became household servants around ten or twelve. They would help around the house doing all sorts of different activities and odd jobs.

Children were required to follow many rules around the family since they were of the lower class. Younger servants could not even be seen, heard, or around the family or their friends. Sweatshops were very small makeshift factories, usually ran by poor immigrants. The daily conditions of the shops were dirty, cramped, and unventilated. Fire was a serious threat because escape routes were usually narrow stairs that were hard to climb. Though most shops were illegal, Parliament did not stop them since the economy's stability relied on their operation.

Two of the most popular jobs during the era involved outdoor work; they were chimney sweeping and mining. One of the most brutal forms of *child labor* was chimney sweeping. Many young boys would apprentice with masters to be trained adequately. They learned how to climb inside chimneys to clean off the soot and creosote. However, there were many dangers like burns, falls,

and suffocation. Mining quickly turned into the most dangerous of child occupations. People who worked in mines faced daily threats of cave-ins and explosions. *Girls* and *boys* as young as five worked twelve to sixteen hours a day. Children were sent down to haul up loads of coal from cramped passages. Often accidents would occur when children lost hold of mine carts causing them to run over them. In 1833 a law was passed limiting the amount of hours kids could work in textile factories, and in 1842 the law was extended to child in mines. Finally in 1847 Parliament outlawed females and boys under ten from working in mines (*Child Labor*).

The environment a child worked in during this time period was, at the least very dangerous. Textile mills were crowded and poorly ventilated causing such diseases as fussy jaw, black lung, and other fatal lung diseases. In the factories candles were used for lighting. These easy to knock over light sources were a huge fire hazard. Poorly heated, dim factories full of unskilled workers put many innocent children in danger. The lack of knowledge about machinery caused workers to be crushed, mangled, or beaten to death in belts. Often polluted and unsanitary buildings caused much death and illness.

During the Victorian Era children were often mistreated and subjected to the poorest of working and living conditions. This time period was characterized by the use of children to help develop the economy. Child laborers received less than the essentials needed at home, school, and at work. The life of a young worker was in essence a life of a slave.

Dickens as a social commentator exerted a profound influence on later novelists committed to social analysis. Some of his concerns with the Condition-of-England

### **The Previous Studies:**

After a patient prolonged search for relevant previous studies only one study proved to be within the reach of the researcher, which denotes rarity of attention attached to the issue the Dickens's novels have always been the subject of careful investigation by many critics' workers and even interested readers.

Dickens's 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. His novels combine sharp, realistic, concrete detail with romance, farce, and melodrama; the ordinary with the strange. His messages about poverty and charity have travelled through decades, and we can learn from the experiences of his characters almost as easily as we can learn from our own experiences.

All of his novels share distinct characteristics that mark them as "Dickensian". He had the instinctive ability to place humanity under a microscope – meticulously probing, dissecting and analyzing – to collect the fodder for his life's work. His characters play into popular Victorian stereotypes: the innocent orphan, the unscrupulous businessman, and the sleazy criminal.

Dickens unambiguously criticized the system of workhouses, debtor's prisons, and orphanages that kept England's poor virtually enslaved. 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.

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's own childhood experiences – he could well understand the pain of oppression.

*Child labour* at the time was synonymous to slavery. Children were subjected to inhuman torture, exploitation and even death. These *child laborers* 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 times, worked 16 hour days under atrocious conditions, as their elders did.

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.

In **Hard Times** Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe 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's existence.

**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.

. Dickens was not only the first great urban novelist in England, but also one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era. Dickens showed compassion and empathy towards the vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of English society, and contributed to several important social reforms.

Dickens could foresee how *child labour* would gradually be a part of a social disorder and finally culminate into a social curse through centuries. He could foresee what curse evils such as "*child labour*" could bring to society.

# CHAPTER TREE

Analysis of the novels based on  
a critical point of view

## Chapter Three

### Introduction

This study will show how the *children* were *treatment* in the novels of Dickens *Oliver Twist* (1839), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Great Expectations* (1861). In my analysis of Dickens' novel, researcher deal with how poor children became a source of *cheap labour* and how they were forced to work in hard and tough conditions.

Dickens was individually aware of the exploitation to which the children were subjected because of his own history at workhouse. His work house experience parallels Oliver's work house experience. Children were exploited and forced to work under harsh circumstances.

The *Victorian* society, mainly the middle class, believed in strong moral values and morals. However, they did not do anything on larger scale to help them or change their condition. Children were susceptible to mistreatment. Dickens successfully portrayed the cruelty of children in the nineteenth century Britain. He evoked readers' sympathy to the terrible conditions of children.

Economic development was led by the Industrial Revolution which began in the middle of the eighteenth century, but it became the cause of many social problems. One of the major problems was an increase in *child labour*. Financial condition of working class people was miserable to an extent that the whole family, even women and children, had to work to add family's income. Families thought that if they had more children, there would be more hands to work.

*Child labour* became a part of industrialization and various laws were introduced to prohibit it. However, *child labour* existed even before the Industrial Revolution had started. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the working class children helped their parents in household

chores and farming. They helped in different kinds of work as stated, "When in the late eighteenth century, industrialization began to shift the location of the textile industries from home to factory; it was natural to look for children as a key component of the workforce." Instead of labouring in fields or at homes, children preferred working in factories and mines because they were better paid in factories or mines. Many children started working at the very young age because their families relied on their income.

### ***3-1 Oliver Twist***

The novel *Oliver Twist* consists of events in Oliver's life in different locations. The first place in which the reader encounters Oliver is at the workhouse where he is taken at the age of eight. Dickens' exposes the injustices of the workhouse officials and their practices through grotesque realism. The description of the workhouse board members is a satire on their incompetent administration of the system. When Oliver goes to the workhouse, he is introduced to "ten fat gentlemen" and one who was "particularly fat" with "a very round, red face" (12). The fat gentlemen are juxtaposed against the children at the poor house who were starved as evidenced by the scene in which the older children forced Oliver to ask for more food.

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 behavior 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.

Oliver is not forced to work hard, but here he is being exposed to the real picture of poverty and death. The image of coffin represents death and reminds the reader of Oliver's circumstances that he is an orphan. Oliver is an innocent child, who is trapped in a world where his only alternatives appear to be the workhouse, Fagin's thieves, a jail, or an early grave. He is kept in workhouse which is strictly controlled under the new poor law. Oliver, with other boys is forced to work long hour only for thin gruel as meals. The boy's at workhouse at last becomes so wild and hungry that they hold a council to ask for more food. Oliver is allotted by lottery the terrible task as the representatives of the rebellious gang. He is forced to accomplish the work and takes the action:

*"He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: "Please, sir, I want some more."*

Oliver rebels against the system by asking for more food can be seen a self -assertion or claim for identity in terms of equal treatment. Oliver is thrown out of workhouse and apprenticed to an undertaker Showerbery who introduced him to death. The use of direct force is evident at every



level of the management of workhouse. Oliver flees to London because he is unable to hold the oppression of the workhouse. He escapes from undertaker but his hope for better life ends when he comes in contact with Doger who takes him to an old Jewish Fagin, who is master of underworld and initiates young people to crime.

*"'Stop thief! Stop thief!' The cry is taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd accumulates at every turning. Away they fly, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements: up go the windows, out run the people, onward bear the mob, a whole audience desert Punch in the very thickest of the plot, and, joining the rushing throng, swell the shout, and lend fresh vigour to the cry, 'Stop thief! Stop thief!'" (Chapter 10, pages 83-84)*

This quote provides a central example of the danger of mob mentality, a concept so important to the book as a whole. When the cry is first taken up against Oliver, it is carried by individuals - Mr. Brownlow, the Dodger and Charley Bates, the butcher, the baker. Once enough people are participating, however, the individuals are lost. People are only described in the communal, and the only body individually described is an entire audience. The mob dominates completely, and with the loss of any individualism comes the loss of any individual culpability: no one considers it his/her responsibility to be sure that Oliver is really a thief; no one asks for evidence or details of the situation. Dickens' repetition of the cry at the beginning and end of the paragraph emphasizes the feeling of the inevitability of the cry, once enough voices have joined in.

*[...] overpowered by the conviction of the bystanders that he was really the hardened little wretch he was described to be, what could one poor child do? (15.63)*

This passage suggests that you become what people think you are – you can be "overpowered" by the opinions of other people. So if you treat someone like a criminal, they become a criminal? That's an interesting take on where criminal behavior comes from.

*"He'll come to be scragged, won't he?"*

*"I don't know what that means," replied Oliver, looking round.*

*"Something in this way, old feller," said Charley. As he said it, Master Bates caught up an end of his neckerchief, and, holding it erect in the air, dropped his head on his shoulder, and jerked a curious sound through his teeth, thereby indicating, by a lively pantomimic representation that scragging and hanging were one and the same thing. (18.39-41)*

Oliver doesn't know cant, or criminal's slang – but neither do we. We're in the same position as Oliver, here – in need of a translator. And Charley is so obliging as to throw in a little pantomime to go along with his translation.

But what about Dickens's language, here ? He describes Charley's pantomime with very precise, almost journalistic detail, as though he's just a detached observer who doesn't know what's going on, either. Why would he do that? Is he trying to distance himself from the criminals who know cant? But we know he knows the slang – he's the one writing it. What else could he be up to here?

### 3-2 David Copperfield

David has a very warm relationship with his mother and he considers their living alone only with Pegotty to be the happiest time of his life. Although his mother is regarded as a very naive and girlish person, she devotes all her life to David and his upbringing. It is David's mother who represents home for him and in the opening chapters her irreplaceable role in David's life is emphasized. When David returns home from his trip with Pegotty and thinks of their home, he becomes aware that without his mother his home would mean nothing:

*"...and I felt, all the more for the sinking of my spirits, that it was my nest, and that my mother was my comforter and friend."*

*(David Copperfield 39).*

However, their relationship is very soon harmed by David's stepfather and his sister. It is shown how the child suffers from forthcoming changes in his life. His mother marries without letting him know about it and he is very surprised and even frustrated by the changes in her approach towards him which he cannot understand at all.

. Although she always behaved affectionately, when David returns home from the trip, he is welcomed in a surprisingly stoic manner:

*"On one side of the fire sat my mother; on the other, Mr Murdstone. My mother dropped her work, and arose hurriedly, but timidly, I thought."*

*(David Copperfield 41).*

From this moment onwards everything in David's home and life is changed. David's life with Mr. Murdstone and their relationship is depicted as a horrible experience for a small boy. He is treated with disregard to his person and later also physically punished. For Murdstone David has the same value as an animal, maybe even worse, and their conflicts become more and more important.

*"David he said, making his lips the ' I don't know I beat him "*

*(David Copperfield 43).*

From this quote it is evident that David is worth for nothing in Murdstone's eyes and his existence is compared to the existence of an animal. However, despite all these problems and sufferings with the Murdstones, David has another person who cares for him beside his mother, and that is Pegotty.

David realizes her importance for him when they have to separate for the first time in his life:

*"From that night there grew up in my breast a feeling for Pegotty which I cannot very well define. She did not replace my mother; no one could do that; but she came into a vacancy in my heart, which closed upon her, and I felt towards her something I have never felt for any other human being." (David Copperfield 55)*

Early in his childhood David has a very strong feeling of guilt as well as some other Dickens's child characters. When he bites Mr. Murdstone in a self-defense he is aware of the meaning of this action and reflects on in this way:

*"My stripes were sore and stiff, and made me cry afresh, when I moved; but "they were nothing to the guilt I felt. It lay heavier on my breast than if I had been a most atrocious criminal, I dare say."*

*(David Copperfield 53)*

David's suffering in childhood continues at school where the boys are frightened by Mr Creakle and where David is humiliated by the sign he has to wear on his back as a result of biting Mr Murdstone.

David's life and the feeling of safety ends with his mother's death. It can be also interpreted as an end of one period and start of his new life.

*"The mother who lay in the grave was the mother of my infancy; the little creature in her arms was myself, as I had once been, hushed for ever on her bosom."* *(David Copperfield 117)*

David's life at his aunt's seems to be quite comfortable and here the story moves to his adulthood. To sum up, the terror of David's life with the people who do not care about him and who does not love him is depicted with all its horrors and misery.

In *David Copperfield* the bigger part of the book deals with David's maturity than with his childhood experiences. The *childhood* is depicted colorfully with all its *horrors* and *suffering*. However, David's graduation at the age of seventeen is the turning point of the novel. Although he is already a young man physically, David is not *mature* in terms of his behaviour and thinking.

### 3-3 Hard Times

Hard Times suggests that nineteenth-century England's overzealous adoption of industrialization threatens to turn human beings into machines by thwarting the development of their emotions and imaginations. This suggestion comes forth largely through the actions of Gradgrind and his follower, Bounderby: as the former educates the young children of his family and his school in the ways of fact, the latter treats the workers in his factory as emotionless objects that are easily exploited for his own self-interest

One of his novels, *Hard Times*, has been commended for its social criticism of industrialization:

“It had been studied, for example, in relation to his beliefs about education, the Preston strike, disputes between capital and labour, and his general views on the quality of nineteenth – century urban industrial civilization”.

*“Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else” (Dickens).*

This is the *philosophy* Mr. Gradgrind believed in and enforced in every way he could. This is the philosophy that Charles Dickens in his novel “*Hard Times*”.

In the school owned and operated by Mr. Gradgrind, children were taught only facts, they were saturated with information and all other „wonderings“ were suppressed. There was no room for creativity and it was a stifling environment for imagination. In the novel, it allows the reader to compare these students, especially Mr. Gradgrind's children to the very machines that are

littered throughout the town, as they both function in the same monotonous manner.

These *utilitarian* beliefs presumably surfaced due to the country's surge into industrialization and for the need of knowledgeable individuals. However, Dickens effectively enumerates the flaws in this method of education and child raising through features of the characters in his novel and also through the events that occur. Dickens' novel contains three books: "Sowing", "Reaping" and "Garnering". Each name of the book and even the names of the chapters bear great significance and are directly linked with the themes. For at the beginning of the novel, Mr. Gradgrind says:

*"Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the mind of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them."* (Dickens)

The process of sowing began, but one might believe that Gradgrind is sowing bad seed, for the children would be incomplete. They are children after all, and the saying "all work and no play makes Tom a dull boy" is all too true , (do not use commas in place of full stops) this is indeed revealed as the novel progresses.

In the school, the students are treated as though they are inmates in a prison, the school is described as dark and bleak, the children are not called by names, but by numbers. There are no extra-curricular activities, and all the time spent in school, is used solely to teach the children subjects such as mathematics. This environment in itself suffocates the mind, and is not conducive to

learning. Just as the workers are trapped in the factories; the students are trapped in the schools. Their identities are stripped, and they are trained as though they themselves are machines and their sole purpose is to compute and produce facts and figures. Thus, it is not so surprising, that Louisa cannot express her feelings, or that Tom plunges himself into reckless activities or even that Bitzer becomes a cold unfeeling man. For these persons are only portraying what their environment has made them.

These values, and methods of *child raising* are not only instilled in school, but when the children return home, it is further instilled. Thus the children are forced to be these „robot“ like creatures both at home and at school. This completely robs the children of the childhood they should have had, a childhood full of colorful things, the outdoors and fun.

The true criticism of the *educating* and *raising* of the *children* is seen when the children are actually grown and it is time for them to apply what they have learnt. But the question raised, is how can they apply a concept to a different situation when all they were ever taught to do is regurgitate the information? As such, the children just function and one may even begin to think that, this function is a dysfunction. For Louisa, Gradgrind's daughter (comma please) is persuaded by her brother to marry her father's friend Mr. Bounderby. She has no desire to marry him, that is to say if she knows what desire is at all, none the less when she approaches her father to request advice he simply throws facts and figures in her face and tells her the situation is like none other and to marry would be best for everyone, so she does.



*"I am coming to it. Father, chance then threw into my way a new acquaintance, a man such as I had no experience of; used to the world; light, polished, easy; making no pretences; avowing the low estimate of everything, that I was half afraid to form in secret; conveying to what degrees, that he understood me, and read my thought. I could not find that he was worse than I. There seemed to be a near affinity between us. I only wondered it should be worth his while, who cared for nothing else, to care so much for me." (Hard Times 213)*

Louisa blames her predicament on her father's faulty education based on utilitarian principles which has left her alienated from her emotions and has made her incapable of experiencing any kind of emotions. She then collapses on the floor as she is unable to contain the *mental pressure* to which she has been subjected as a result of the turbulence in her life caused by an unhappy marriage and by the sudden entry of James Hart house in her life.

The influence of the childhood events on the personality of an individual is illustrated through the example of Louisa Gradgrind. In her adulthood, she remains unaware of the emotions within her as a result of her faulty education in her childhood based on utilitarian principles, cold reason and hard facts.

Dickens attacks the *Victorian school system*, showing that they placed too much emphasis on saturating the children with information and not paying enough attention to other aspects of development.

Ultimately, at the end of the novel, when all the flaws are exposed, and all has been said and done, it is clear to us that Gradgrind's method of education and child raising is inadequate as it does not produce well rounded individuals, however, Sissy and

the little sister Jane, who was under Sissy's care are better individuals, as they were raised by Gradgrind , but still embodied fanciful notions and utilized their active imaginations. Mr. Gradgrind raised and educated his children on the premise that *"Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else."*

### **3-4 Great Expectations**

Great Expectations is considered one of Dickens' finest works of literature. It was indicative of Dickens's strong feelings for injustices and poor conditions committed on women and children of that time. Through the main character, Pip, Dickens's demonstrated the compassion he felt for children.

#### **3-4-1 Abuse in Great Expectations**

**Pip** and **Estella** face *physical, verbal* and *emotional abuse*. Pip, the young seedling, suffered much abuse. His parents did not administer the abuse; his sister raised him by hand after their parents die. On one occasion Pip describes the abuse from his sister:

*"I soon found myself getting heavily bumped from behind in the nape of the neck and the small of the back, and having my face ignominiously shoved against the wall, because I did not answer those questions at sufficient length (64)."*

Pip tells us that his sister had a hard and heavy hand" and that she was "much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me. Later in the novel Pip informs us that his sister had wished him in a grave more than once.

*"He calls the knaves, jacks, this boy ! And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!" (page 55).*

Pip once again has the feeling of guilt, this time for just being a common *laborer* and the *humility* of his background. It is extremely uncomfortable to be around someone who arrogantly shows that they are of a "higher class" than him or her. At sometimes adults speak condescendingly to teenagers.

The young girl he likes, Estella, *verbally abuses* Pip. She calls him *boy* and *mocks* his *boots* and *coarse hands*. She calls him coarse and common. Lilia Melani says that because Pip is habitually mistreated he expects to be abused and is comfortable being abused, which is not the same thing as liking or wanting to be abused. Melani also states, Estella's cruelty fits his expectation of abuse, his sense of powerlessness, and his low self esteem, so he is drawn to her. According to Melani, a variant of the expectation-of-abuse theory is that Pip's sense of guilt requires punishment, which Estella amply provides. Because Pip feels responsible for his mistreatment by Estella, he kicks the wall and twists his hair.

Estella too, is *abused*, but *emotionally*. Miss Havisham and her relatives *influence* her and teach her and essentially *control* her. Estella is passive, since she obeys Miss Havisham's orders to lead men on. She sees herself as an object, since she only serves the purpose of attracting men and she is totally under Miss Havisham's control. It has been suggested that Estella hates herself, which is probably true because she only serves the

purpose of looking attractive to lead men on and she exists in a way that Miss Havisham has molded her to be.

Pip represents the effects of *physical abuse* and *verbal abuse*. His sister abuse causes him physical pain, but it also negatively affects his self-esteem. His only blood relative wishes that he were in a grave, this is horrendous. This makes Pip feel unwanted and unloved. This alienates Pip and caused him to stay away from everyone, to not get attached to anyone, except Estella. Estella verbally abuses Pip, hurting his feelings and causing him to feel worthless. She calls him coarse and common, causing him to feel poor and unworthy of her so he hits himself and pulls his hair. Being abused caused him to take it one step further and abuse himself. When a person is constantly abused they expect to be abused and become comfortable being abused. This is the case with Pip. He is submissive to his sister causing him to feel powerless. Pip feels inferior to Estella so he submits to her and would do anything she says.

Estella represents the effects of *emotional abuse* and *dominant parenting*. She seems emotionless, conditioned to attract men and not fall in love with anyone. She is rendered nothing more than an attractive object. She is numb and emotionless and unable to love anyone.

Pip has also felt extreme amounts of *stress* throughout the novel. Everyone is always encouraging him to satisfy his **"great expectations"**. Pip has not really made fun of anyone but he has discarded the people that care about him most; Joe and Biddy. He left them for money and success and did not even glance back to

look at them. Pip, in later, understood this when Magwitch revealed that he was his benefactor. Pip immediately was embarrassed and ashamed that he had left Joe and Biddy for a defiled convict that he stole from them for. Dickens's expresses his sorrow he feels for children like Pip but then has Pip turn around and be ungrateful for his *great expectations*. Mr. Jaggers tells us about them when he says,

*"Now, I return to this young fellow. And the communication I have got to make is that he has great expectations." (page 129)*

. Pip just did not realize what he was getting into when he found out about his **great expectations**.

# CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion,

Recommendations and

Suggestions for further studies

## Chapter Four

### CONCLUSION

The Victorian society, mainly the middle class, believed in strong moral values and morals. However, they did not do anything on larger scale to help them or change their condition. Children were susceptible to mistreatment. Dickens successfully portrayed the cruelty of children in the nineteenth century Britain.

One of the major problems was an increase in *child labour*. Financial condition of working class people was miserable to an extent that the whole family, even women and children, had to work to add family's income. . Families thought that if they had more children, there would be more hands to work. *Child labour* became a part of industrialization and various laws were introduced to prohibit it. However, *child labour* existed even before the Industrial Revolution had started.

The exploitation of children in factories can be seen in *Oliver Twist* when the man in the white waistcoat wants to sell Oliver to Gamfield as a chimney sweeper. Later on, Oliver is sold to Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, and is given the role of a funeral mute.

The study has argued that the *adults* usually treat children as inferior creatures and cause them many troubles. The novels 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 *situation* in schools and different approaches to the pupils in different schools are described in *David Copperfield* for a change.

The difference between living in the *rural* areas and in the *cities* is depicted in all three novels. On the contrary, *Pip* and *David* are strongly influenced by their environment and they go through the development of their character qualities. In **Great Expectations** and **David Copperfield** therefore go on the way full of various obstacles to find their real identity and their place in life and society. **Hard Times** proves that fancy is essential for human happiness, and in this aspect it is one of the best morally uplifting novels.

In summary, the theme of childhood appears in all the novels mentioned in many aspects.

## 4.2 Recommendations

This research concentrates on some novels by Charles Dickens which are about child abuse in Victorian Era.

The researcher recommends teachers and students the following:

- Teachers should reinvestigate these novels and explain to their students all things related to children treatment.
- Students should be aware about child abuse and their right.
- Charles Dickens novels uses as the tools of social reform through the curriculums of the schools and universities.



### **4.3 Suggestions for further studies**

The researcher suggests the following:

- The researcher suggests children novels must be review on television or radio.
- The researcher suggests that Charles Dickens social novels should be examined as dynamic social mind.

## ***Bibliography***

1. Abuse in Great Expectations, by Charles Dickens , [umesh ramjattan](#). 2005
2. *A critical Study of Charles Dicken's Representation of The Socially Disadvantaged*. Pamela Makati, December 2008
3. Approaches to Childhood in Novels by Charles Dickens, Daniela Němcová 2011
4. Child Labor In *The Victorian Ear* , Jennifer Wing and Rachel Tangard 2008
5. The Harshness of New Industrial System in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, Widya Nirmalawati , 10 Desember 2008
6. Treatment of Children in Dickens Novels. *GRIN Verlag*, 2013

### ***Web site:***

*Charles Dickens – Hard Times*

<http://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-literature/charles-dickens-hard-times-english-literature->

[www.123helpme.com](http://www.123helpme.com) -Child Labor in Victorian England

[www.eNote.com](http://www.eNote.com) Great Expectations

[english.uwosh.edu](http://english.uwosh.edu) -Victorian England.

Treatment of Children in Dickens Novels

<http://www.grin.com/en/e-book/289223/treatment-of-children-in-dickens-novels>

Charles Dickens as Social Commentator and Critic

[[Victorian Web Home](#) —> [Liverpool](#) —> [Authors](#) —> [Charles Dickens](#) —> [Works](#)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/..//Victorian /times/>