

**The Loss of Childhood in Children's Literature of the
Victorian Era as Portrayed in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's
Adventures in Wonderland*, and Charles Dickens' *Oliver
Twist: An Analytical Study***

الحرمان من الطفولة في الأدب الفيكتوري: روايتي أليس في بلاد
العجائب وأوليفر تويست أنموذجاً: دراسته تحليلية

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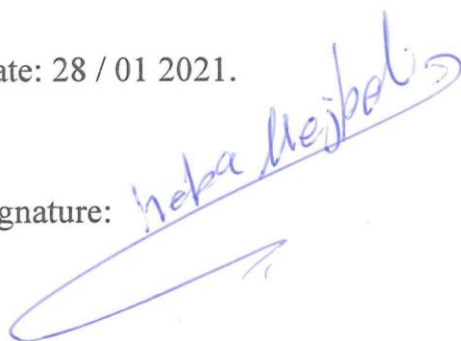
Authorization

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Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis entitled “ **The loss of childhood in children’s literature of the Victorian Era as portrayed in Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, and Charles Dicken’s Oliver Twist An analytical study**”.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my sunshine, my mother, who always power in life and she is my guide to a better life, she is sympathetic and she guides my way of life.

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The Loss of Childhood in Children’s Literature of the Victorian Era as Portrayed in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Charles Dicken’s *Oliver Twist*: An Analytical Study.

By: Heba Sleman Mejbek

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Abstract

This thesis aims at examining representations of the theme of “loss of childhood” in two Victorian literary works that belong to Children’s literature, Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland* (1865) and Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* (1837). By providing a close reading of the texts, making use of the historical background in which the two texts were written, the study aims at investigating portrayals of the problems which children in the Victorian age suffered from, without considering their social status. Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland* features Alice’s experience of getting exposed to the world of adults. As she is one of the upper social class ladies, Alice does not face economic, psychological or social issues. She is portrayed in the novel as a child who is surprised by the social ethics and manners that are imposed on her by adults; Alice suffered from the complexities of the world of adults; therefore, she loses the chance of living a normal childhood. Thus, she goes through a dreamy story in which she expresses her worries about the restrictions she has to follow as an upper-class lady in the Victorian age. Since Alice’s behaviors are controlled by the rules of her social class, she is not permitted to behave like a child. In contrast, Oliver appears in Dickens’ novel as a poor, orphan who suffers poverty, loneliness, and being neglected. Oliver stands for poor orphans of Victorian society and the tough conditions they had to cope with. He is denied living a proper childhood in a community that suffers from the ills of the Industrial Revolution. Although both novels are set in the Victorian period, they deal with timely issues that children might suffer from. Thus, the study shows the significance of children’s literature and its role in shedding the light on the problems that children might face.

Keywords: Children’s Literature, Loss, Victorian age, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, *Oliver Twist*.

الحرمان من الطفولة في الأدب الفيكتوري: روايتي اليس في بلاد العجائب واوليفر

تويست أنموذجا: دراسة تحليلية وصفية

إعداد: هبة سليمان مجبل

إشراف: د. نسرين يوسف

الملخص

تهدف هذه الأطروحة الى اختبار تجسيد موضوع فقدان الطفولة في عملان أدبيان من العصر الفيكتوري ينتميان الى أدب الاطفال وهما عمل كارول لمغامرة أليس في بلاد العجائب (1865) واوليفر تويست للكاتب تشارلز ديكنز (1837). من خلال تقديم قراءه عميقه للنصوص الأدبية، والاستفادة من خلفيه هذه النصوص التاريخية، تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف صور المشاكل التي عانى منها الاطفال في العصر الفيكتوري مع عدم الاخذ بالاعتبار من وضعهم الاجتماعي. يعرض الكاتب كارول في رواية أليس في بلاد العجائب تجربته اليس في التعرف على عالم البالغين. بما ان اليس تعد أحد افراد الطبقة اجتماعيه العليا، لذلك لا تواجه اليس مشاكل اقتصاديه او نفسيه. تظهر اليس في الرواية على انها طفله مقيده بالأعراف الاجتماعية والاخلاق التي يفرضها عليها الكبار، اليس غير قادره على تحمل فوضى عالم الكبار، بالتالي تفقد فرصه عيش طفولة طبيعية. انها تمر بقصه حالمة تظهر فيها مخاوفها بشأن القيود التي يتعين عليها اتباعها كسيده من الطبقة العليا في العصر الفيكتوري. لم يتم السماح لأليس بالتصرف مثل الاطفال، يتم التحكم في سلوكياتها من خلال قواعد طبقتها الاجتماعية. على النقيض من رواية اليس يظهر اوليفر في رواية ديكنز على انه طفل يتيم فقير يعاني من الفقر والوحدة والاهمال. يعتبر اوليفر تويست مثال على الايتام الفقراء في المجتمع الفيكتوري والظروف القاسية التي كان عليهم التعامل معها. هو يعاني من الحرمان من ان يعيش طفولة كريمة في مجتمع يعاني من امراض الثورة الصناعية على الرغم من حقيقة ان كلتا الروايتين تدور احداثها في العصر الفيكتوري الا انهما تتعاملان مع مواضيع كان قد عانى منها الاطفال في ذلك الوقت. تظهر الدراسة اهميه ادب الاطفال ودوره في إبراز المشكلات التي قد يواجهها الاطفال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أدب الاطفال، الحرمان، العصر الفيكتوري، اليس في بلاد العجائب، اوليفر تويست.

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction:

In the Victorian period, childhood was not treated as a separate stage of development. The child was looked upon as an adult without legal status. At the end of the eighteenth century, some new points of view towards children emerged. Parents slowly started to consider their children as independents with desires, wishes and fears much. In the 18th century, England witnessed a high level of child death rate and a dropping birth rate which made children more invaluable (Pinal, 2017).

Children's literature that was created during Queen Victoria's period portrayed two different kinds of childhood. The emergence of industrialization in England resulted in promoting capitalism, which consequently divided the society into two classes: the rich and the working class. Literature of the Victorian Era responded to such occurrences in the community by providing literary accounts of that. For instance, Charles Dickens shows much concern with the working-class of poor children in *Oliver Twist*; he depicts their suffering and the hardships they went through. On the other hand, children of the rich class in the Victorian age lived a comfortable life and were brought up with the care of servants. The sharp contrast in which children of the Victorian Age lived was among the major issues Victorian authors dealt with. Literature that dealt with such issues played some role in creating change concerning children in the Victorian Age such as the Education Act of 1870, which defended the children's right of schooling. (Pinal, 2017).

Authors of children's literature usually select topics that suit the interests of children. This is due to that the main purpose of children's literature is to teach the child a typical style of thinking and acting. The general concept may be directed at conduct (i.e.

personal or public behavior) or cultural ideas. The child can build his/her own way of thinking and beliefs on the literature they choose to read. Besides, the function of children's literature is to represent children's daily life and the issues they suffer from; this kind of literature attempts to suggest solutions for these problems.

Children's literature as a distinct genre flourished in the Victorian age, with the fairy tale as the form gained much attraction among the different sorts of literature of that time. According to Laura Berry, children also became an unquestionable public category in the 19th century, which provoked a whole new social debate about children and their responsibility towards society (Berry, 1999). Orphans are considered as the most oppressed among children and are often discriminated against due to the fact that most of them were born outside marriage. Since there is no other official organization to look after these children other than the workplace, they are often neglected and live in a miserable conditions (Pool, 2013). Berry believes that in the early Victorian era, people's awareness of the fate and future of these children was significant when there were as many works aim at protecting children included in children's novels in social change (Laura, 1999).

Even though there were a considerable flourishment and development of children's literature through the Victorian era, it has a dark side likewise other kinds of literature. In this era, many factories began to appear in England. The owners of these factories exploited the fact that children are good bait and cheap labor to operate the factories and machines. They can order children to work at a lower price than adults, a problem resulted from the industrial revolution. A child was forced to work in the factory from 12 to 18 hours in one day and six days a week. Many children started working compulsory

before the age of seven years. However, the Victorian era was a period of peace and flourishing of England, bringing peace, having material, and achieving a considerable industrial progress to the country, thus London as a result became an important production center. Men, women and children are humiliated while working in factories. Therefore, most of writers in the Victorian age wrote about the issues of childhood loss impose on the poor children in the Victorian era, especially Charles Dickens who is considered as the most famous writer of the Victorian age who touch on the unfair social treatment of children and the miserable conditions that they are forced to live in.

Charles Dickens is one of the main writers of the 19th century. His second novel *Oliver Twist* was continuously published in Bentley's "Miscellany" from 1837 to 1839 (Grub, 2091); the novel depicts the life of young Oliver's story of orphans, who finally found his identity and status in society despite all the difficulties. This novel depicts the abuse of orphans by society. According to Lydia Murdoch, Oliver's portrait became the standard image for the entire child for the entire century, thus it affects the typical image of the society about orphans (Jacqueline, 2017). Not only the novel focuses on orphans, but also it introduces readers to other neglected groups in society, such as unmarried mothers, criminals and prostitutes. Children, at that time, depicted as the main protagonist, and there are several orphan roles illustrates the focus on children (Jacqueline, 2017).

The most exposed children are those who are homeless. Even in the 18th century, the number of those children in London was still a social problem, and likewise, this number continued to increase in the age of *Oliver Twist* (Banerjee, verse 4). The novel points to this situation through Oliver's observation when he first arrived in London and

witnessed the "pile of children" on the street. Homeless children in London indeed live a miserable life without food or shelter and they are forced to commit different crimes (Banerjee, verse 4). Even when Oliver was brought to the judge in London, the novel continued to point to the frequency of homeless children. The fact that the official was able to guess Oliver's life indicated that he had seen several children in similar situations (Paul, 2017). They are different in terms of homeless child outcomes, thus expecting that *Oliver Twist* will end happily is very rare (Gerald, 2017).

Lewis Carroll is another famous writer in the Victorian era who criticized the Victorian age indirectly. His works were well received; Carroll, in his works, doesn't like the representation of the facts of oppressing of children, the loss of their childhood and the loss of their innocence during this age. For instance, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is one of the most famous of his works which began as telling a story to three girls of Oxford, Lorina, Edith and Alice. Carroll wrote the novel and completed it in February 1863. The first name of the book was *Alice's Adventures Underground*, which was later changed to the present name at the time of publication. By the way, Alice is a little girl, who was a victim of a fictional world inhabited by strange creatures. She faces many challenges in this strange world, which forces her to think about her inevitable and rapid growth to become young. She must depend on herself in recognizing how to deal with the dangers and confusion of wonders before returning to her daily lessons in the real world.

Carroll uses the words of nonsense, satire, and parody. He does not follow the previous typical stereotype of children's books, which obliges the writer to provide a moral lesson in every story since he does not believe in the common rules of this era such

as the moral lesson in each story. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll establishes a relationship with the reader through putting the whole picture in front of the reader and leaves the explanation to them. In other words, *Alice's Adventures in his book* allows the reader to observe and appreciate the writer's style and techniques, which convey a clear message about the reality of children in Victorian society.

Moreover, Lewis presents, in a comic manner, undesirable facts about the Victorian age through *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Alice is attracted by a white rabbit which takes out a watch of his coat and screams that he will be late, deriding the Victorian man who has become a foolish slave to his busy schedule of growing industries for gaining more money. The reason for using the Rabbit instead of strange describing the mediating dream state is to introduce Alice and the readers to the fantastic nature of Wonderland.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study aims to examine how children's literature in the Victorian era depicts the theme of the loss of childhood. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Dickens' *Oliver Twist* have been chosen to carry out this study. Although these two works have received much attention and have been examined many times by different scholars, they have not been compared enough with regard to the theme of the loss of childhood. By bringing the two works together, this thesis aims to shed light on the problems that children of the Victorian age faced. While *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* presents issues that upper-class children suffered from, on the other hand, *Oliver Twist* depicts the hardships that working-class children faced. Thus, the two works

provide a comprehensive image of children of the Victorian age. The thesis examines how Alice must face the state of turmoil, and become fully mature to escape from this world, and how Oliver, on the other hand, must face the tough life and the situation of orphans to raise social awareness and public attitude to this problem.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aims at:

Investigating literary depiction of the loss of childhood in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Illustrating depictions of the loss of childhood in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. Comparing how children in both works *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Oliver Twist* are represented.

1.4 Questions of the study

1. How does Lewis Carroll represent the theme of the loss of childhood in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? How does Charles Dickens depict the theme of loss of childhood in *Oliver Twist*?
2. Are there similarities or differences between the two literary works in presenting children's living conditions?

1.5 Significance of the study:

Children's literature plays a very significant role in representing children's issues and exposing these issues to be clear for all. Through providing literary depictions of children's suffering, writers can raise public awareness about some problems that children face. This study aims to analyze *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Oliver Twist*. Both works attempt to draw a picture of the suffering that children faced during the

Victorian period. Although the two novels are not new, they are much related to our time as they deal with universal issues, especially the loss of childhood.

1.6 Limitation of the study

The current study is limited to the analysis of both Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Dickens' *Oliver Twist* only; therefore, it cannot exceed other works of Children's literature or any other works written by the authors.

1.7 Definition of terms

Children's literature:

Children's literature contains texts which attract children and provide messages and ideas aim at amusing, expand knowledge, investigate and learn more about the world (Lukens, 2007). Children's literature is important for Children's language improvement as it provides chances to practice spoken language as well as suggesting meaning for these terms and vocabularies (Johnon, 2011).

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland:

It is a fictional novel written in the Victorian era in 1865 written by the English author Charles Lutwidge under the pen name Lewis Carroll. It tells the story of a young girl called Alice falling through a rabbit hole into an underground strange world inhabited by strange creatures. The tale deals with logical and actual incidences, which give the story lasting popularity with the issues of adults and children.

Oliver Twist:

It is a fictional novel written in the Victorian era in 1865 written by the English author Charles Dickens. Oliver is an orphan who is known for his goodness and innocence; he is forced to experience different tough circumstances, and he does not only escape from the barbaric powers trying to destroy him but also he manages to do so with his protected purity which plays an important role in Oliver's lasting purity.

Chapter Two

2. Literature investigation

2.1 Theoretical studies

Trugman (1969) discusses issues related to Victorian children's literature. She touched on the ability of Children's literature to make change in society. She believes that the future of communities relies heavily on the literature that is offered to children. Nodelman (2002) provides an overview of children's literature in the context of the professional discussion and examines the field of literary books produced by adults for children.

Nikolajeva's (2002) provides an in-depth study of theories related to children's literature. She argues that picture books can be so useful to children as they offer new ways of communicating with children that go beyond the traditional methods. In addition, they provide recent and updated mythologies and theories regarding children's literature.

O' Malley (2003) investigates how the concept of childhood in the late Eighteenth century is constructed through the ideological work performed by children's literature as well as pedagogical writing and medical literature of the era. O'Malley links the evolution of the idea of the child to the growth of the middle class which used the figure of the child as a symbol in its various call for social reform.

Shuttleworth (2004) discusses the difficulties that children face in the Victorian era when children were not given a lawful voice, and their rights were limited. There were difficulties in asking for the rights of both children and the working class.

Mc Callum and Stephens (2010) state that texts presented for children usually promote a particular ideology. They believe that there is no narrative without an ideology. Novels for young readers maintain the primary focus on events and personalities similar to the actions in the world inhabited by readers, as they are always damaged by an ideological position.

Reynolds (2011) presents an overview of the history of children's literature, explaining how children's literature is developed and the challenges and obstacles facing this development of this genre. children's literature, asking many questions about the form that the future of literature should take for children. The writer is exploring the links between children's literature adult fiction.

Rees (2012) intentionally focuses on characters and themes related to childhood from some of Charles Dickens' works. He re-emphasizes some of Dickens' key insights regarding Victorian childhood, especially its miseries and suffering. Children characters such as Pip, at an early stage of the novel, in *Great Expectations* and Oliver in *Oliver Twist* are good examples of such a childhood.

Nikolajeva (2016) touches on the questions of the space and locale in children's literature. The study explores how metaphorical and physical extent can create a natural sight of strength, knowledge and identity in the texts from the early nineteenth century to the present.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Holmes (1959) states that the joy Lewis Carroll presented to logic and philosophers, as well as children, is wonderful and rare. While reading Alice's *Adventures in*

Wonderland, the reader feels that Carroll goes on a fabulous journey during which he escapes his real world. Carroll ends his journey with writing the novel, and returns to his real world actually as Carroll returned to his real name (Charles Dodgson).

Hahn (2009), states that Alice's adventures are not just stories and tales about a little girl who discovers different strange worlds. Throughout her tales, the reader becomes more conscious of how language works. The novel introduces ideas with the help of verbal humor instead of accurate statements on linguistic matters. The writer tries to arouse the possibilities offered by different linguistic levels of phonology, morphology, grammar, and semantics in *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*. The investigation of these levels aims to discuss the case for the linguistics logic of Lewis Carroll's verbal irony.

Bahr (2013) discusses *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*. According to him, it is a multi-layered text; Carroll, in an intelligent way, plays with language and many stylistic devices like wordplay to delight young readers. The book also discusses Carroll's excessive use of ambiguity in the words, sentences, and characters that are very fond of ambiguity that forms curiosity and comedy to attract readers.

Beer (2016) describes Carroll's book through an amazing theoretical way that depends on guessing. As he clarifies, Carroll created a scenario where everything can speak and share its point of view. Carroll created Alice's world with a sense of enlightenment and dangerous play to deliver those feelings to the readers of all ages. Lewis wrote his Alice books during the 1860s, where the Victorian era was flourishing. The society was experiencing a new vision whether on social or economic aspects. Hence, his novels functioned as a great source and reference to the awakening period. In addition, it was a very pleasing source for readers of all ages.

Fidlgo (2016) states that the writer's ideas are reflected in Alice's books. When we are analyzing the work, and we find many examples of the ideas introduced by the author. One of these examples is repeated throughout the story, and it is important to be well mannered, especially if you were from a high-class family. Alice is a daughter of a rich family; Carroll describes her in his story as well educated, and he is always trying to be polite to others, but she always ends up violating things.

Schorn (2017) argues that Alice is praiseworthy for many reasons. She is a feminist character who creates her tale. She navigates wonderland with a sense of force and power. Alice's book is almost a comic extract of feminist topics. She does not really have much power over her experiences in wonderland and she is often disappointed. Lewis portrays female with different positions of power, but in fact no female has any true power since male only has the dominate voice.

Moore (2018), states that Lewis Carroll the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a considerable fan of puzzles. When you join Alice on her trip through wonder and meeting strange characters, the reader can solve mind-bending puzzles along the journey. Each of these puzzles is set within a short adventure of Alice.

Daniel, (1998) argues that the idealized nature of Oliver is distinguished by his goodness and innocence; Oliver's inherent goodness, which plays an important role in how he was perceived by the readers. In the Preface to the 1841 edition, Oliver's character is described by Dickens as "the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance" (xiii). Oliver is indeed exposed to risky circumstances, and he does not only flee the barbaric powers trying to corrupt him, but he manages to do so with his protected purity. This is even observed by Fagin, who says that "he was not like

other boys in the same circumstance”, thus pointing to Oliver’s goodness which prevented Fagin from corrupting him.

Sally, (2007) claims that the heroism of nineteenth-century orphan characters is based on the very circumstance that they endure all the difficulties and that they, despite sufferings, manage to remain good. In other words, the moral character of the protagonist had a certain narrative power over Victorian readers. In Dickens’ novel, Oliver ultimately triumphs as he continues to be good despite all the miseries and the hardships he goes through (Berry 53).

Consequently, Oliver’s endurance and goodness secured his position as the protagonist of the story; such characterization made him worthy of the public’s admiration and support. In addition to what was discussed in the previous paragraph, Oliver’s goodness is not only important for how readers perceive the character, but it also plays a significant role for the development of the story and Oliver’s ultimate redemption (Peters 42).

On three occasions adults recognize the purity in Oliver’s personality: when Oliver appears before the magistrate, his first meeting with Mr. Brownlow, and when he meets Rose and Mrs. Maylie (27, 90, 274). Dickens’ intention shows that there was much focus on the goodness of characters in Victorian literature. However, Dickens’ portrayal of the Victorian community shows the social ills and moral decline it suffered from. A reader would expect a good society to take care of Oliver and to compensate him for the loss of his parents.

Panil, (2017) argues that the study of children's literature is the most important period of children's writing and it represents texts by a variety of genres in the Victorian era. This age opened up a new source for the deeper conception of childhood. In this study, the writer mentioned that the literary terms of childhoods often have their origin in adult desires. Childhood is different from adolescence that is characterized by innocence.

Chapter Three

3.1 Methods and Procedures:

This study is based on an analytical methodology. It provides a close reading of the two texts; in addition, it offers a study of children literature and novels by reading them basing on the historical contexts in which they were produced. The purpose of this research is to treat the issues related to childhood oppression and child abuse in the Victorian era. Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens are famous authors who wrote indirectly about these issues relate to the suffering of the children. This may be clarified by creating a close reading of their work to show how the theme of the loss of childhood is central to their works. The current study explains the status of children in society who had to suffer from oppression, lack of freedom, deprivation of self-determination, poverty, and long working hours.

3.2. Sample the Study

This thesis examines two famous literary works that belong to children's literature at the time of the Victorian Period, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. Both of these works represent the life conditions of two children; one of them belongs to the poor working class, while the other is a little lady from the upper class.

3.3. Procedures of the study

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher followed the following procedures:

1. Reading the selected work of Lewis Carroll *Alice's Adventure Wonderland and Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens.

Collecting data about Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens.

Reviewing the theoretical literature and empirical studies related to the topic under investigation.

4. Reading children literature.

documenting the references according to APA style.

Chapter Four

Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The Victorian period started in 1837 with the reign of Queen Victoria and ended in 1901. The period witnessed rapid growth in population, improvements in technology, and tough conditions for the working class and children. Literature was a defining feature of this era is defined by the literature published, including novels and long works about society and all aspects of everyday life. In brief, one of the major aspects of life that Victorian literature dealt with was children. In this regard, Gavin notes that “childhood in Victorian literary works for adults was a vulnerable, usually painful, powerless, and frequently lonely. A child is often presented as a victim of adult power, emotional or physical cruelty, social neglect, illness, and early death” (2012, 9). This is clearly depicted in Dickens’s novels and tales in which poor Victorian children lived in misery and in small houses, they did not have expensive toys or clothes, and they had to work hard in order to get fed.

Children play an important role in Dickens’s stories. The poor conditions of the children, the starvation, and the child labor are central themes for him to write and portray distinctive depictions of their poor conditions. Dickens, through his writings, persuade people to be nice and helpful to children. Oliver Twist appears in the novel as a poor child whose mother died and whose father was absent. He spends many years in a workhouse for orphans, where he is treated badly. Dickens provides pictures of the injustice and the way children were mistreated included in the following quotations:

‘Please, sir, I want some more Dicken, 2012, p20.’

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

‘What!’ said the master at length, in a faint voice Dicken.2012.P 20.

Previously, the children of the workhouse hold a council in which they decide who should ask for more food as they suffer slow starvation. Oliver is the one who does so regardless of the results of such behavior. The master, shocked and surprised, looks at him as if he had asked for the impossible. This response by the master represents how adults were oppressors and how they mistreated children as they believed that they had the right to do so. Anyway, Poverty led to hunger and hunger led to work or crime. Besides, Children used to work on farms, in homes as servants, and in factories. They also worked as chimney sweepers. In the novel, we can see children working as chimney sweepers, smoking as if they were adults, or as thieves and murderers committing crime.

Contrary to what has been said about poor children, wealthy Victorian children used to be pampered and they did not have to go through the poor living conditions of the poor. They were given good quality clothes and toys and were able to attend school and be part of the educational system. Alice from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is an example of a child belonging to an upper social class. She does not have to work like Oliver to get money to eat and to afford his poor starving life. Therefore, she is not oppressed and mistreated by adults like Oliver Twist. Although Alice does not live in poor conditions, the character goes through a journey of learning and Carroll presents a different kind of Victorian children as well as a different type of suffering, as Wood says:

Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) hold in suspension the tensions

between defining the child as idealized other and the culpable object, to be beaten if necessary to fit the form. Carroll's choice of nonsense mode to render the contradictions of Victorian childhood signals a new approach to the problem, one that conjoins idealism and realism.

Upper-class Victorian children were taught conventions and behaviors, particularly girls. Wood states that Alice is aware that she needs to act following the codes relevant to her superior social restrictions. However, Alice is secure in her understanding of the polite conversation and general conduct conventions. She speaks to her inferiors and scolds the breaches of these conventions as her right. The reader can notice how she acts or addresses others, depending on the way she has been educated. For instance, at the tea party the following conversation happens:

Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all-round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine," she remarked.

"There isn't any," said the March Hare.

"Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it," said Alice angrily Carroll, 2011. P 56.

One can see here that Alice is strongly restricted by the social rules and customs according to which an upper-class Victorian lady is supposed to behave and to speak. She does not accept any behavior that is not considered civil and proper according to such rules. Alice gives herself the right to insult those who do not, according to her, meet the standards of civility. Thus, Alice transfers the hard rules of her society to the wonderland.

As the reader can notice, Alice keeps changing in size. This fluctuation between being big and small is suggestive and very significant for giving hints for the expectation of her fate; Alice feels lost and that she does not know who she is anymore. Perhaps, Alice experiences this feeling when she realizes that she is growing up. She, deep inside,

hates the idea of becoming an adult as she has to stick to the rules of being an upper-class Victorian lady; Alice is unable to stand the complexities of the adults world. In this regard she says: "and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing". Children were under the adults according to the social hierarchical classification. For instance, when Alice eats the mushroom, she gets large, and Wood says that "becoming large at Will would appear to offer Alice the means to dominate others, negating one of the chief reasons adults have power over children".

The victorian belief was that children required adult's care and attention. they were seen as innocent and pure human beings who must be cared for and guided by the adults. Besides, it was the parents' duty to see that their children's character was properly formed and created. For the majority, during the early and mid-Victorian years, religion had a vast impact on most English families, mainly the middle class.

A close reading of the two texts:

Both texts reject the idea of child labor. Although, the authors of *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* touch on the same points, they take different approaches. Charles Dickens tries to evoke the pity of his readers and to make them sympathize with his characters. Therefore, Dickens introduces Oliver as a very simplistic boy who lives in very tough conditions and goes through a series of heartbreaking events. Besides, Oliver's innocence is presented in the novel as unbreakable. Even after a life of deprivation and abuse, Oliver is not affected and never tends to a life of violence like many people have been driven to corruption due to the effects of the miserable life. In similar ways, Carroll attempts to depict his main character

Alice as an innocent girl. She is simple-minded and ready to learn, making her sound innocent but smart. Thus, a more gentle and distinctive narrative is often used by Carroll to explain how children experience the world. Both authors set out to glorify adolescence as well. Dickens aims to gain an awareness of what a forgotten childhood looks like and what parents can do to prevent this critical period from being lost on children. He gives his readers a pair of forgotten childhood stories. He sends a message to his community that children must be protected and that they have the right to live.

Both authors used their books to encourage and call for social change. Dickens fought child labour and the Poor Law, while Carroll was concerned with teaching children. In other words, both writers, in their texts, called for social change in a time of industrialization, transformation, theological skepticism and revolutionary scientific hypotheses. They also debated serious social ills and asked for change. Therefore, their works have been considered valuable pieces of art that deal with everyday life's matters.

Thus, both poor and rich children were represented in Victorian literature. Writers of both kinds of characters intended to portray childhood in a way that could be connected to the events happening in the period and which could reflect some aspects of reality such as hunger, child labour, illness, and education. Alice's life on one hand is presented in a context of fantasy, whereas Oliver's is presented in a harsh, difficult society and difficulties. To sum up, the two novels depict both the poor and the rich children in the Victorian society.

4.2 Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

4.2.1 Lewis Carroll – biography

Lewis Carroll, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson's pen name, was born in Daresbury, Cheshire, England, on January 27, 1832, and died in Guildford, Surrey, on January 14, 1898. He was a logician, a mathematician, a photographer, and a writer from England. For *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its complement, *Through the Looking Glass*, and *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876), his most popular poem, is nonsense literature of the highest order. He was a passionate photographer and writer of essays, political pamphlets (i.e. small book) and poems. Dodgson has traditionally been seen as economically, culturally, and personally conservative. "Martin Gardner describes Dodgson as a Tory who was "expected by lords and inclined to be snobbish towards inferiors". In his *Oxford Reminiscences* (1900), Reverend W. Tuckwell found him "austere, shy, accurate, immersed in mathematical reverence, watchful of his dignity, steadfastly conservative national, religious, social theory, his life mapped out in squares like Alice's landscaping". In *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, the editor notes that "his diary is full of such humble depreciations of himself and his work, interspersed with heartfelt prayers (too sacred and private to be repeated here) that God will forgive him the past and allow him to carry out His holy will in the future. With that curious girl chasing a rabbit into a hole in the ground, Lewis Carroll starts Alice's adventures. Alice does not follow the rabbit because he can speak; she remembers in retelling the tale to her sister that it all seemed quite natural at the time." What feeds the interest and the curiosity of Alice is the attention of the White Rabbit to his pocket watch and the time, She follows the rabbit because she had never seen a rabbit before with either a waistcoat-pocket or a watch to take from it.

4.2.2 Lewis Carroll and his views on Childhood

Lewis Carroll has adopted the same ideas as Dickens in his book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Yet, he published a different approach. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson wrote a novel narrating the adventures of Alice under the pen name of Lewis Carroll in 1865. At this point, England had adopted a new notion that children were weak and innocent. Many laws had been imposed around the world to protect children at work and home. However, it took years for these new regulations to be completely applied. "The lack of implementation of these laws continued until 1891 when more than 100,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 were already serving as domestic servants in England" (Gubar). School for children was still not a concern in England in the early 1860s. Therefore, with these continuing concerns, Carroll has set out to confirm childhood innocence and childhood as a nostalgic period of schooling and pleasure.

With wonderful and dreamy sounds that meant becoming more child friendly, Carroll wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in which he narrates the story of little Alice who goes on a journey to the wonderland as she progresses from childhood to adolescence. In his book, Carroll carefully reflects his thoughts on children's innocence. He introduces the reader to the story of an innocent girl who later on becomes mature enough to make her own choices and decisions. By making her a very imaginative and simple girl, Carroll reveals Alice's innocence to the reader. This is especially true when he tells her that by using her own logic, she is trying to make sense of the world around her. Alice talks to herself after meeting the Duchess: "If I'm a Duchess, I'm not going to have any pepper in my kitchen. Soup is doing very well without it. Perhaps it is only the spice that makes people hot-tempered, and the vinegar that makes them salty, and the

chamomile that makes them salty" (Carroll, 43). Alice appears in the book as a brave, curious, and knowledgeable girl. Such characterizations make her a lovely character that would attract the reader. Lewis Carroll said about the girls, "Their innocent unconsciousness is very lovely and gives one a sense of respect, as in the presence of something holy" (Gubar). However, he goes beyond idolizing Alice's innocence and idolizing adolescence as well. The concept of childhood as a period of education and pleasure that occurs one time in a lifetime has been used by the writers of the period.

Carroll also set out to idolize childhood as a wonderful part of his life. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll depicts childhood as a time for fantasy, schooling, and relax. Alice is frequently being asked by the people in her neighborhood to recite lectures. She, accordingly, recites Father William's poetry. This work introduced a conversation between a father and his son. The son insists that his father is old; yet, he still does many things to the young. He asks his father how he has kept his jaws so strong, to which he answers: "In my youth, I have taken the law and have argued every case with my wife; and the strength of his muscles which he has given to my jaw has lasted for the rest of my life" (Carroll, 19). Here Carroll suggests that the laws should be discussed, and because they are connected to education, the laws on education should be treated in particular.

Carroll adds other educational concepts to his plot such as the variable books Alice sees during her journey to the rabbit's hole. In addition to the lessons she learns depending on herself, Alice learns to be more careful and not to move suddenly to conclusions. Moreover, she learns to keep her feelings and personal thoughts and views to herself from time to time. Such lessons that Alice learns are enough for believing that

she becomes mature. Carroll does not only idolize childhood as a time of schooling but he also glorifies it as an innocent, playful and purer time of life.

Carroll's novel's imaginative nature provides children with a more positive perspective. To give the story a distinguish features, he uses fantastic parks, intricate sports, and colorful characters, which is what childhood should be like. He also refers to the viewer's romantic feelings for teenagers at the end of the novel. Alice wakes up from her lovely dream and shows all of it to her sister, who watches little Alice run away and reflects on her sister's dream. Alice's sister, who is almost an adult, shuts her eyes and "half-believed in Wonderland, but she knew she had but to open them again, and it would turn into a boring truth" (Carroll, 67). Since she is almost an adult, and she, Alice's sister, has lost part of the childhood that would encourage her to carry the same beliefs as Alice, Wonderland is possible for her. And she imagines herself an elderly lady who would recall her own nostalgic adolescence and delight in one of her younger daughters. She imagines how "she will feel all her simple sorrows, and take comfort in all her simple joys, recalling her own life as a child, and happy summer days" (Carroll, 68). With this conclusion, as mentioned in his last line, Carroll gives the reader a chance to recall and focus on their own youth and feel nostalgic.

4.2.3 Themes in the story of *Alice in Wonderland*

The Tragic and Inevitable Loss of Childhood Innocence

Lewis Carroll, who was intrigued by the world of childhood, was a creative, imaginative artist who wrote one of the most famous and lasting children's pieces of art because of his distinguished explanation of children's minds, *Alice's Adventures in*

Wonderland, in 1865. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was widely criticized and called a ridiculous novel because of its ironic nature.

However, in 1871, Carroll published the complement of the novel, *Alice Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Discovered There*. Carroll wrote the books of Alice in a melancholic tone to reflect that becoming an adult is miserable. The book is still classified as mysterious and its message is implied, so a few have realized that the books show the hardships that a child goes through when getting to adolescence.

Carroll narrates Alice's story, using a dream as a way to escape from her chaotic adult life, in which she faces an adult world and leaves a magical childhood. Alice starts her journey in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, in which she leaves her childhood and becomes an adult. Just like any girl, Alice finds it impossible to live in an adult world, a world that is so different from hers. Thus, she searches for her personality and maturity in the glass she gazes at.

Adolescence is a transition phase between childhood and adulthood. It is at this point where the personalities of people are shaped and constructed. Teenagers must discover their position in society and arrange their talents, desires and concerns in a way that they can communicate them in society. The ultimate role of adolescence, according to Piaget (1985), is to put teenagers in adult society. In the case of Alice, the adult life and the society surrounding her are very challenging. That is why Alice has a problem with this uninteresting universe, and she really needs to leave it and have adventures.

The social message that Carroll's book presents is the issue of identity that characterizes the transition that children are experiencing in adolescence. Psychologist

Erik Erikson (1968) considers that adolescence is a period when people are looking for personalities that will form them for the rest of their lives. As far as Erikson's psychosocial growth theory is concerned, people have experienced a crisis of identity during their adolescence. In addition, Erikson distinguishes between three aspects of the personality of an individual. These three types are the diffusion of identification, from which teens are not obedient to their normal way of being the incorrect identity, which leaves them isolated; and the derogatory identity, characterized by unfriendly behaviors. Teenagers ought to think to discover themselves. Alice follows the white rabbit in this direction and falls into the rabbit hole. The burrow (i.e. the rabbit hole) symbolizes its own unconsciousness. Inside her unconsciousness, Alice discovers several doors she wants to open. She has to change her height to do so. The fact that she needs to change her height is a result of the changes that teens have experienced through adolescence.

Throughout *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice has subjected to different physical changes. The pain that she experiences is never expected to stand by her. such pains reflect the pain Alice feels while transmitting from childhood to adulthood. These transitions are stressful, and she feels pain, anger, and sorrow as she goes through them. She struggles to make her body height secure. In Chapter 1, she gets furious as she keeps finding herself too large or too short to reach the greenhouse. In Chapter 5, she loses control of specific areas of her body as her neck expands to a silly length. This frequent variation is the way a child can feel as her body expands and shifts during adulthood.

Life as a Meaningless Puzzle

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice faces a series of puzzles that appear to have no simple solutions, imitating the way life breaks hopes. Alice wants the circumstances she faces to make more sense, but they repeatedly contradict her desire to organize and build Wonderland. Alice is trying to understand the Caucus race, to solve the issue of Mad Hatter, and to understand the Queen's ludicrous croquet game, but it was all in vain. In any case, the obstacles and challenges posed to Alice have no meaning or solution. Even though Lewis Carroll was a logician, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is very ironic including different puzzles and logic games. However, Alice learns that she can't hope to see sense or meaning in the events that she meets, even though they seem to be challenges, puzzles, or games that would usually have answers that Alice would be able to solve. Carroll touches on the ways in which life damages hopes, even though things appear familiar or easy to solve.

Death as a steady and implied Threat

Alice constantly finds herself in circumstances where she faces death, and although these dangers actually happen, they imply that death is expected to be behind the silly events of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as an inevitable and potential result. Death appears in Chapter 1, where the writer suggests that Alice would not say anything about dropping off her own building because she'd definitely be killed. Alice takes chances that might potentially destroy her, but she never expects that death would be a potential result. Later on, she begins to understand that her encounters in Wonderland are much more dangerous than they seem to be. As the Queen cries, "Down with her head!" She understands that Wonderland can not only be a ludicrous realm where hopes are

repeatedly thwarted. Death may be a true threat, and Alice begins to realize that the threats she faces may not be strange or happen in vain.

4.2.4 Motifs beyond Alice Adventures in Wonderland

Dream

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland takes place in the imagination of Alice so that the characters and phenomena of the real world engage with the components of Alice's unconscious state. The theme of dream describes the spread of non-sensical and disparate events in the plot. As in a dream, the plot follows the dreamer as she observes different episodes in which she seeks to understand her perceptions concerning herself and her world. While Alice's interactions lend themselves to deep conclusions, they reject a singular and harmonious explanation.

Subversion and destruction

Alice soon learns through her journeys that the only trustworthy feature of Wonderland she can count on is that it will break her hopes and test her comprehension of the basic order of the universe. In Wonderland, Alice discovers that her classes no longer remain as she used to consider it since she staggers her multiplication tables and wrongly recites poetry she had memorized while in Wonderland. And Alice's physical proportions are not clear as she expands and shrinks irregularly throughout the plot. Wonderland obstructs Alice's ability to comprise her experiences into a rational structure where she can make sense of the connection between cause and effect.

Language

In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Carroll deals with linguistic matters such as using puns and playing on several meanings of terms throughout the book. Besides, Carroll invents vocabulary and phrases and creates new uses for words. Alice's exclamation, "Curious and curious!" suggests that both the surroundings and the vocabulary that it uses to explain them reach beyond the standard rules. Anything is possible in Wonderland, and Carroll's creation of the new vocabulary illustrates this sense of limitless possibilities.

Curious, Nonsense, and Confusing

Alice uses these terms in her quest to identify phenomena that she has difficulties during her journey of life. Although the terms are generally synonymous, she typically assigns interesting and confounding interactions or encounters she tolerates. She's going through things that are interesting or disappointed, trying to get a better understanding of how the person or situation happens in the world. When Alice appears to be nonsense, as she does with the trial in Chapter 12, she denies or criticizes experience or encounter.

Lewis Carroll and the deconstruction of Childhood

While Carroll may have been excessively focused on childhood and devalued the child on paper, the child has not been passive in this phase. In Alice's novels, Carroll takes us beyond traditional experience, allowing the infant to sleep for decades. Carroll somewhat unusually had the infant active as an advocate of reform rather than passive in the process of transition. For the first time, since infancy in the 18th century, Carroll empower the child's capacity not only to adopt didacticism but to challenge social morality. Carroll is destabilizing and deconstructing adolescence, rather than maintaining

convention by empowering, stabilizing everything. At the time Carroll was writing, improvements to the concept of childhood were taking place in conversations regarding the age of consent, innocence and control, and Carroll was participating in them.

Symbols in *Alice in Wonderland*

1-The garden

Alice finds herself in a huge hall at the end of the rabbit hole, surrounded by locked doors. She becomes disappointed and sad, and she misses her family and her pet. However, as a tiny door appears and she manages to gaze at the inside of a beautiful garden, she gets curious and excited to explore this place. The garden, full of beautiful colors and cool fountains, is a harmonious vision and Alice is forbidden from moving through it. Her attitude towards the garden represents her desire, her will, and her belief in goodness and happiness. In this regard the narrator says:

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway Carroll, 2011, P 8.

Such description of the garden reflects Alice's desire for purity and for the need to escape from her real world, which is full of complexities and ambiguity. To sum up, the garden signifies Alice's innocence and purity.

2- Eating and Drinking, Growing and Shrinking

Alice is about to grow up and, in Wonderland, she experiences many strange physical changes. Being in Wonderland is unexpected and confusing at times; it is like transforming from a child into an adult. In the hall of doors, mysterious potions and cakes give her the ability to grow and shrink, but she always misses out on the size she needs to be. When she is at her smallest, she is swept away by the pool of tears and when she finally manages to grow, thanks to the edible pebbles in the White Rabbit's house, she grows too much and gets stuck. This endless uncertainty is a visual way that Carroll plots Alice's spiritual journey as she comes to terms with both the physical and psychological changes that are part of growing up:

" 'It was much pleasanter at home,' thought poor Alice, 'when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole--and yet--and yet--it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life Carroll, 2011, P. 109.

4.3 Oliver Twist

4.3.1 Charles Dickens'-Biography

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, a busy naval port on the south coast of England where his father, John, worked as a navy payroll clerk. When Dickens was four, his father was transferred to another naval town, Chatham. He worked there for eight years. This is where young Dickens developed his love of the countryside. Those chapters of Oliver Twist that describe Oliver's life with the Maylies reflect Dickens's happy memories of country life. Dickens enjoyed reading and learning and

delighted in school, which he began attending at age nine.

Dickens enjoyed a merry childhood; yet, this happiness came to an end soon after the family moved to London in 1822. Dickens' family had always been poor and got into debt. Charles was taken out of school when he was twelve years old to save money. Accordingly, he was sent to work in Warren's boot-blackening factory. There he pasted labels on jars of blacking (shoe polish). At the factory, the boy was shocked by the miserable conditions. The atmosphere, in general, was rotten and hard to stand. Soon after, John Dickens was imprisoned for debt in Marshalsea Prison in Southwark. His family lost their home and, as was common at the time, went to live with him at the prison. In 1824 Dickens left the factory and joined school again. That early experience of being a young boy trying to make his way alone in London, his experience with poverty, and his hatred of a system that kept the poor in poverty inspired many of Dickens's novels, including *Oliver Twist*.

4.3.2 *Oliver Twist*: The Context

The first installment of *Oliver Twist* was published in February 1837. Four months later 18-year-old Princess Victoria was crowned the throne of England. It was a time of change in Britain. The Industrial Revolution was at its peak, and despite the loss of the North American colonies in what had become the United States, the British Empire was expanding. Both these events provoked fundamental changes in British society.

The Industrial Revolution

In the early eighteenth century, Britain's economy relied heavily on domestic and agricultural activities. However, towards the middle of the century, many changes took place. In addition, a series of inventions led to the mechanization of processes previously done by hand. Entrepreneurs started building factories in different places near the rail and canal transport for bringing in the needed resources and shipping out the manufactured goods. Accordingly, people moved from the countryside and went to the cities, searching for work.

4.3.3 *Oliver Twist* | Analysis

Oliver Twist points out the experience of the poor in 1830s England. Beneath the novel's humor and the dramatic plot, there is hidden undertone of bitter criticism of the Victorian middle class's attitudes toward the poor. Dickens's *Oliver Twist* very vividly criticizes the legal system, workhouses, and middle-class moral values and marriage practices of 1830s England.

Oliver Twist narrates the story of a little boy who was born in a workhouse. After giving birth to him, his mother kisses his forehead and dies. The doctor observes that the woman is not wearing a wedding ring. Oliver is accordingly placed into a miserable status as a poor, homeless, helpless, motherless orphan. Oliver faces the reality that he has to live a harsh life that does not offer him the basic requirement of decent life. The whole novel is centered around the life of Oliver Twist and his mysterious identity.

The complication in Oliver's life is derived from the fact his identity is unknown and that he has no place in his surrounding community. Since he was born, Oliver faces many hard situations. In the workhouse, he lives in a miserable situation where he is barely fed

and treated. After working there for a short time, Oliver starts his new work with an undertaker who also treats him badly and beats him often. When Oliver escapes from the undertaker, he falls into the hands of some low life thieves, who attempt to bring him to the life of criminals.

Dickens makes use of irony in *Oliver Twist* to criticize the various institutions (the parish workhouse system, the justice system, the poor laws, etc.) that he thought were inhumane and injustice. Dickens uses irony in order to direct sharp criticism towards the poor conditions of poor children as well as orphans. Through his literary works, Dickens provides accounts of the lower classes living conditions and ironically refers to Oliver and his fellow orphans to be “without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing,” when truthfully the young children are starving and wearing rags. This is what leads to Oliver being forced to ask for more gruel and his eventual removal from the workhouse.

Dickens’ satire and use of irony and humor throughout the novel describe the charitable institutions as they are places that considered as the source of corruption, inhumanity, and alienation. The treatment Oliver received is a prime example of this. In Dickens’ time, society’s failure to recognize that these problems destroyed the lives of many innocent children. However, Dickens highlights these problems effectively throughout his novel using various literary techniques such as irony, satire and humor and also he uses his characters to expose such corrupt institutions. By exploring the problems of the past, perhaps we will be more capable of identifying the downfalls that may arise in the institutions of our time.

The Importance of *Oliver Twist*

Oliver Twist is important as a literary work of art, although it did not result in the dramatic changes in the English workhouse system that Dickens may have hoped. Nevertheless, Dickens observed this system extensively before writing the novel and his views undoubtedly had a considerable effect. Two English reform acts addressing the system actually preceded the publication of *Oliver Twist*, but several more followed, including the influential reforms of 1870. *Oliver Twist* remains a powerful indictment of English society in the early 19th Century.

Victorian Childhood in *Oliver Twist*

Children of the Victorian period were treated as adults. Especially for children of lower classes, children were small adults who needed to pull their own weight so their family could avoid the curse of a workhouse or debtors' prison. Because there were no laws that protected children at that time from dangers they might face on streets such as criminals, evil adults as well as theft.

In Dickensian England, in rich homes children were raised by nannies or nurses and expected to follow a strict standard of behavior. For lower class families, children were breadwinners that brought home meager wages from factories, coal mines, or other people's pockets. Kids went to work just like everyone else in the same conditions that are enough to turn our contemporary stomachs. There were few laws protecting them from working alongside their parents in the mills. Before the Factory Acts of 1847, which stipulated that children under the age of nine could not work in the textile mills, children as young as four were employed to perform a simple task, and often, spent most of their

unemployed infancies in the deafening, dirty factories.

Children like The Artful Dodger and Charley Bates in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* took to the streets to avoid the torture of "respectable" employment. In his book, *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire*, Hugh Cunningham notes, "indeed, an estimated 60% of the criminal population were orphans, at one point or another. They indulged in thievery or became prostitutes to survive. The more honest orphans who lived on the streets often banded together for survival, doing menial tasks for the upper class, or begging for money.

In *Twist* we get a peek into the inner workings of a band of child thieves and pickpockets who are led and cared for by Fagin. When Oliver meets The Artful Dodger, the contrast between the two boys is very stark. Although Oliver has been walking for seven days from the countryside to London and is, "very tired and hungry," he still has a glow radiating from the inside of him. An innocence and a dare I say it, childlike quality that beams against the soot of London and the dankness of Fagin's lair. Oliver is an innocent, a beacon, a true child, who draws attention from those who would seek to corrupt him

The Images in *Oliver Twist*

On the strength of this novel, the author would try to address the significance of the child's psychological, physical and emotional needs and the different ways of compaining them in the course of child growth. Most of Charles Dickens' novels contain a child's picture – Pip, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*; Dickens claims that children and adults

explain and depict the world differently. Despite their lack of awareness and experience, children are open-minded observers.

In his books, Dickens portrays children who are facing with the challenges of adult life, children who have no childhood and must live against the hostile world of Victorian England besieged in the corruption resulted from the Industrial Revolution. The author is also affected by his own past, his youth disrupted by the tragedy of his own family; therefore, gives his novels a sense of reality. Dickens is a specialist in children's thoughts and attitudes and through his work, he encourages adults to accept their sensitive personalities. His books and children's protagonists experienced the exploitation of children in the Victorian era. His work empowers children who need support and who barely able to express their needs.

Children's needs and violence against children based on Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*

Oliver Twist is the first novel in which Dickens deals with issues such as social injustice and the bad economic system. The novel does not portray the story of a wealthy home, but a highly indebted and broken family in which young people are viewed as a social and economic burden unless they work for Britain's worst workshops. In classrooms where poor people were pushed, the author tries to portray the inhuman conditions in these workplaces. The author tries to depict the horrible circumstances in workshops where the poor were obliged to live and work if they failed to pay back their debts. Dickens directs sharp criticism towards humanitarian foundations and their insufficient role regarding children's orphanages in his novel *Oliver Twist*.

Oliver appears in the novel as a young boy who is neglected and illegitimate. He was brought up as an orphan in inhumane conditions in an orphanage in the Victorian

Age. This young, lonely child was born into a world of cruelty and abuse. The fact that he did not have parents caused him a great amount of depression because he was deprived of their care, which is really necessary, particularly at the beginning of everyone's life. It is rather significant for a child to enjoy a normal life. However, for Oliver that proved to be an unachievable dream. Oliver spent the first nine years of his life in a poorly managed home for young orphans. After that, he moved to an adult workshop that lacks the basic requirements for decent life such as enough food, space to sleep, or clean clothing. Therefore, the idea of being an orphan affected Oliver:

Once, he asks an adult what it means to be an orphan:

-Boy, said the gentleman in the high chair, listen to me. You know you are an orphan, I suppose?

-What's that sir? Inquired poor Oliver.

-The boy is a fool-I thought he was, said the gentleman in a white Dickens, 2012, P. 16.

Oliver feels afraid of adults; he does not understand why his life are controlled by adults, and why he sometimes shakes and cries in their presence. One of the most significant incidents in the novel is that when Oliver feels hungry and asks for something more to eat: 'Please sir. I want some more.' [18] This iconic scene is symbolic in that it reflects Oliver's rebellion against his condition. He does not recognize that such behavior is inappropriate in the office, and as a result, he is severely beaten and then put up for sale, as an item, not a human being. Thus, Oliver unconsciously rebels against the rules in the orphanage as he senses that they are unfair.

The novel tells us much about the conditions of poor children in the Victorian age. The living conditions in the 19th-century British workshops were very harsh and were similar to jails. The abuse of children was horrible, some of them died as a result of

starvation. The misery of children in the Victorian era reflects that their fundamental and very simple needs have not been met. The fundamental needs that are important to our survival, such as enough food, a place to sleep, and being comfortable, were not met at that time.

This child believes that he is entitled to have certain rights as a human being, and he is looking for love. It is only normal for a boy like Oliver to search for love and a sense of identity and security. While Oliver leaves the workshop, his luck never changes; he follows in with Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker. However, Oliver continues to feel lonely, cold and abandoned since he is subjected to moral and physical oppression, and in his new home he has no place to sleep:

Then come with me. Said Mrs. Sowerberry, taking up a dim dirty lamp, and leading the way upstairs; 'Your bed's under the counter. You don't mind sleeping among the coffins, I suppose? But it doesn't much matter whether you do or don't for you can't sleep anywhere else.

Another child, called Noah Claypole, who is also a worker at Sowerberry's workshop, is continually attacking Oliver. Nevertheless, Oliver ignores such abusing attacks and never responds. One day, Oliver decides to defend himself against these harsh treatments, but, unfortunately, Oliver is severely punished. This scenario reflects Maslow's notion of aggression as a product of disappointing growth – in an atmosphere where the fundamental needs of the child remain unfulfilled; violence and other types of anti-social activity are a consequence. In other words, a child who is robbed of the ability to fulfill his needs becomes violent and this will affect his/her function as a 'natural

person'. This moment in the novel marks another important transition. This is when Oliver demands to be respected – as he reacts with violence against the insults used concerning his mother – an action that points to the fourth level of the Maslowian pyramid, the need for esteem.

Oliver decides to leave the place when he is left alone. He chooses London, aiming to change his life for the better. Despite being tired and hungry, he does not give up and he adheres to his hope. He encounters Dodger, who gives him a helping hand. Oliver, unexpectedly, meets a group of juvenile pickpockets led by a Jewish emigrant named Fagin. Dodger and other young people, and now Oliver, are in the streets of London robbing while they were hanging out. Fagin's gang establishes an authentic society and offers protection and a sense of identity to these unwanted boys. Oliver has never known this kind of life; he's attracted to follow it to win recognition from peers, and also to have the sense of being welcome and wanted as a recognized member of his society.

At the outset, Oliver did not know that he had entered a crime gang. He doesn't grasp the entire thing, but he's trying to be a fast learner and to develop new abilities, i.e. pickpocketing. Unfortunately, he gets captured and arrested due to the lack of training, or just because he's only a naive little kid. Luckily for Oliver, Mr. Brownlow, one of the victims of the gang, admits the boy's innocence during the investigation and takes him to be under guardianship.

Oliver lives now a better life, at last, but he is not sure if his benefactor will not send him back into the streets of London again. He asks Mr. Brownlow:

-Oh, don't tell me you are going to send me away, Sir. Pray!

Don't turn me out of doors to wander in the streets again.

Let me stay here and be a servant.

Don't send me back to the wretched place I came from.

Have a mercy upon a poor boy, Sir! Dickens, 2012, P. 373.

Mr. Brownlow, however, reassures the boy of his true devotion to his upbringing

-My dear child, 'said the old gentleman , moved by the warmth of Oliver's sudden appeal, ' you need not be afraid of my deserting.

The Theme of Childhood in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*

Throughout the novel, Dickens provides insights on childcare and parenting, both by society and by natural or adoptive parents. He examines child abuse and institutional violence. In the first scene, Oliver's mother died while giving birth because of a drunken "midwife" and an uncaring doctor who attended his birth. The child is given to the baby farm, and later to the workhouse itself. In such a place, the infants are abused, rarely fed or dressed. In *Oliver Twist's* ninth birthday, he found himself "a pale thin child, somewhat diminutive in stature, and decidedly small in circumference" (chapter 2).

Children were also emotionally abused, being deprived of all human adult love or affection and regularly they are criticized. Up to his ninth birthday, Oliver was said to have come "from the wretched home where one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years" (chapter 2), "a naughty orphan which nobody can't love" (chapter 2). He could hear the other boys being instructed to be "guarded from the sins and vices of *Oliver Twist* who was led by wickedness of the Devil" (chapter 3)

***Oliver Twist* - Charles Dickens. *Alice in Wonderland* - Lewis Carroll Comparison**

Both *Oliver Twist* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* present Victorian counter-worlds: a world of a criminal underground run by schemers, pickpockets,

prostitutes, and murderers, and another world of a fiction run by a Mad-Hatter, Cheshire Cat, and an angry Queen. When the two works are compared, they look different in terms of the setting as well as the social class they represent. Nevertheless, both works are similar in terms of representing the loss of childhood in the Victorian age.

Alice and Oliver are both stuck in a sequence of situations where everyone around them is arbitrary and the incidents are irrational and at worst dangerously insane. Alice is a stronger and more positive character than Oliver. Her self confidence and strength come from being a member of the higher social class as well as from being recognized in the world that she lives in. Both children act contrudically to the anarchy that surrounds them.

Ironically, it is Oliver's experiences in the real world that seem more irrational than those of Alice in Wonderland. Oliver has to join a gang of pickpockets (even if he does not realize this) to find the warmth and community denied him by respectable society. Fagin is not an attractive character, but he provides a better home for Oliver than Mr. Bumble or Mr. Sowerberry. Oliver is treated like a criminal until he actually becomes one. So, this ia a greater paradox than any that Alice encounters.

Although Oliver does not have Alice's self-confidence, he does stand up for himself and says what he thinks when confronted with the tyranny of the adult world. Even the violant reception of his famous request for more gruel does not stop him from protesting against being slave to Mr. Gamfield or taking revenge due to the crewlty of Noah Claypole. On the other hand, Alice is even more arugant in her attitude towards the characters she meets in Wonderland, whom she never seems to regard as adults at all and never has to take them seriously, even when they threaten to cut her head.

The protagonist Alice represents the upper-class children of the Victorian society with all of their concerns. From the restriction of the culture of being polite to the issue of identity that most girls faced. Alice shows a great curiosity during her adventure to in the wonderland. She keeps insisting on the importance of good manners when she deals with rude creatures in her adventure. The sense of an unsatisfied childhood is clearly manifested in both books. All in all, fictional characters like Oliver and Alice demonstrate to the world some of Victorians' struggles and direct public attention towards the illness of the age.

Chapter Five

5.1 Conclusion

As this thesis has shown, children literature manifests some of the problems that children face in any society and at any time. As it has been demonstrated in this study, an important issue among such issues is the loss of childhood. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* as two Victorian works that belong to Children's literature present two different children who belong to different social and economic classes. Yet, they suffer from the loss of childhood in variable ways. Alice as an upper-class lady who lives in a Victorian society has to abide by the social ethics and rules that are set by adults; she is not supposed to behave spontaneously as a child. Rather she is obliged to follow the manners that are imposed on her. Therefore, Alice is represented as a child who loses her right of living a normal childhood. In this novel, Alice's character is meant to show an issue that children suffered from in the Victorian age. Unlike Alice, Oliver is depicted in the novel as poor orphan who lacks care and love. Oliver is born to face hard conditions and to a miserable life. He is neglected by his community and treated harshly. Hence, he is deprived from living a decent childhood. He is neglected by his society and feel the lack of love and care. Oliver in *Oliver Twist* represents the hardship that poor children had to experience in the Victorian age. This study has shown that suffering is not only restricted to children who belong to lower social classes; it demonstrated how Alice loses her childhood, although she is from the upper class, as she is forced to follow the rules imposed upon her by her community. Alice is unable to comprehend the complexities of the adult's world. She unconsciously refuses to leave her childhood and to join the world of the adults, which

seems to her strange and painful. By bringing the two works together, the thesis has concluded that Children's literature can be a means through which social and economic ills can be presented and highlighted.

5.2 Recommendation

After conducting this study on the Loss of Childhood in Children's Literature of the Victorian Era as Portrayed in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, the researcher recommends the following:

1. More comparative studies on this important field of literature should be conducted especially studies that deal with the Victorian Age as it is very rich in topics that could help researchers can shed light on the problems that children around the globe face and suggest solutions for such issues.
2. More literary studies that deal with the psychological issues of children should be conducted as an attempt to draw public awareness towards children's psychological health.

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