



Exploring Social Realism in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*: A Study of Victorian London's Underclass

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Abstract— This paper explores into Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* to examine its portrayal of social realism amidst the backdrop of Victorian London's underclass. Through a multidimensional analysis, it scrutinizes Dickens' depiction of poverty, exploitation, and societal injustices faced by the marginalized segments of society. By exploring the lives of characters like Oliver, Fagin, and Nancy, the paper elucidates the intricate web of economic disparity, moral decay, and systemic oppression prevalent in the era. Drawing on historical context and literary analysis, it highlights Dickens' adeptness in capturing the harsh realities of urban poverty and the resilience of individuals navigating through adversity. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Dickens' socio-political commentary and the enduring relevance of *Oliver Twist* in critiquing societal inequities.



Keywords— Class, Exploration, Poverty, Realism, Victorian.

I. INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* stands as a quintessential work of Victorian literature, renowned for its vivid portrayal of the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged in 19th Century London. Through the lens of social realism, Dickens masterfully exposes the injustices and inequities rampant in a society starkly divided along class lines. Set against the backdrop of poverty, crime, and exploitation, the novel follows the orphaned protagonist, Oliver Twist, as he navigates the perilous streets of London in search of identity and belonging. This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of Dickens' masterpiece, exploring into its themes of poverty, morality, and the struggle for social justice. By dissecting the intricate layers of *Oliver Twist*, this paper seeks to uncover the enduring relevance of Dickens' critique of societal injustices and his timeless portrayal of human resilience amidst adversity.

II. METHOD OF STUDY

This research paper employs a multidimensional approach to analyze Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* within the framework of social realism and Victorian socio-political

context. Utilizing a combination of literary analysis and historical research, the study examines primary texts, secondary sources, and critical scholarship to unravel the complexities of Dickens' narrative. Textual analysis involves close reading of key passages to discern themes, character development, and narrative techniques employed by Dickens. Additionally, the study contextualizes the novel within the broader historical and socio-economic milieu of Victorian London, drawing on scholarly works, historical documents, and contemporary accounts. By triangulating these diverse sources of evidence, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political commentary of the novel and its significance in shedding light on the realities of life for the underclass in 19th Century England.

III. RESULT OF THE STUDY

Through this in-depth analysis of the novel, this research elucidates the profound exploration of social realism of the novel and its portrayal of the underclass of Victorian London. The study reveals Dickens' adeptness in capturing the grim realities of poverty, exploitation, and societal injustices prevalent in the era. By dissecting the lives of characters like Oliver, Fagin, and Nancy, the

research highlights the intricate web of economic disparity, moral decay, and systemic oppression depicted in the novel. Moreover, the study underscores the enduring relevance of *Oliver Twist* in critiquing societal inequities and advocating for social reform. Dickens' poignant portrayal of human resilience amidst adversity resonates across time, offering valuable insights into the complexities of class struggle and the enduring quest for social justice.

IV. DISCUSSION

In exploring social realism in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, it becomes evident that the novel serves as a powerful lens into the harsh realities of Victorian London's underclass. Through vivid depictions of poverty, exploitation, and societal injustice, Dickens sheds light on the plight of the marginalized during this era. The characters, settings, and plot intricacies intricately reflect the social conditions and moral dilemmas prevalent in Dickens' contemporary society. By immersing readers in the gritty world of workhouses, crime, and destitution, Dickens prompts critical reflection on the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and inequality. *Oliver Twist* thus stands as a seminal work of social commentary, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about the human condition and advocate for social change.

V. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that *Oliver Twist* stands as a quintessential example of Charles Dickens' mastery in portraying social realism and advocating for societal reform. Through its poignant narrative and vivid characters, the novel offers a stark portrayal of Victorian London's underclass, highlighting the injustices and hardships faced by the marginalized. Dickens' critique of the prevailing social structures, coupled with his call for compassion and empathy towards the poor, resonates as strongly today as it did in the 19th century. By immersing readers in the grim realities of poverty, exploitation, and moral corruption, *Oliver Twist* challenges us to confront the systemic issues that perpetuate inequality and marginalization. Ultimately, the enduring relevance of Dickens' work underscores the importance of literature as a tool for understanding, empathy, and advocacy in addressing the complex social challenges of our time.

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