

Dicken's oliver twist theme analysis

[People](#), [Charles Dickens](#)



Nineteenth century England brought in its wake not only industrialization but also social degradation. Dickens attacked the social evils of his times such as poor houses, unjust courts, greedy management and the underworld. The Themes in " Oliver Twist" reflect these evils. With the rise in the level of poverty, poor houses run by parishes sprung up all over England to give relief to the poor. However, the conditions prevailing in the work houses were dismal and the management were insensitive to the feelings of the inmates. Instead of alleviating the sufferings of the paupers, they abused their rights as individuals and caused the poor further misery. The theme of the struggle of the unfortunate, in general and Oliver in particular, in a ruthless world in " Oliver Twist" is a reflection of the plight of the inmates of the workhouses. Poverty leading to crime and crime resulting in isolation are the other Themes in the novel. Dickens had the opportunity to observe the residents of the London streets from close quarters. In order to escape the pangs of hunger and shadow of insecurity, the poor children took to crime and fell into the hands of the underworld. Nancy's story relates the tale of an unfortunate woman who had fallen into the evil hands of Fagin because of her poverty and destitution. She is haunted by her guilt and regrets her presence in the criminal world. However, she feels helpless in the midst of criminals who fail to understand her feelings and offer her no sympathy. She feels isolated from the world around her. Greed corrupting the soul of the individual is another theme taken up by Dickens in Oliver Twist. Mr. Bumble marries Mrs. Corney for her little wealth and position. This decision costs him peace of mind and independence. Later, in connivance with his wife, he sells Oliver's identity to Monks for a mere twenty five pounds. In the process he

sells his soul and suffers the consequences of his act. Fagin decides to make Oliver a thief out of greed for wealth offered to him by Monks. An innocent boy becomes a puppet in the hands of ruthless people. The parochial management of the workhouse treat Olive no better. They sell him to Mr. Sowerberry for five pounds. Dickens turns his anger against these greedy managers and ruthless individuals who harm the life of a boy like Oliver to satisfy their greed, thus corrupting their own souls. Dickens convincingly mirrors the distorted society of the nineteenth century in his novels through socially relevant Themes. He is a writer who tries not only to entertain but reform the people. " Oliver Twist" is the simple story of an innocent boy's struggle for survival. Dickens transforms this simple story into a moving one through his gripping narration, convincing character delineation, masterly irony, mirthful humor, and casual style. Though the story ends in the manner of a fairy tale, it sounds believable and rings true to life. The novel deals with the life of not only Oliver but all the characters who are connected with his life. Dickens successfully paints such a large canvas with conviction. He gathers the different threads of the story and merges them into the novel with ease. The frequent shifts in the scenes do not confuse the reader but relieve the monotony of continuous narration. They also serve to lift the gloom clouding the story. The variety of characters portrayed in the novel exhibit their identities through their speech, appearance, and manner. Dickens excels in creating such distinct characters with precision and detail. Fagin, the Artful Dodger, Bumble, and Fang are a few of his characters who can be distinguished even in a crowd. " Oliver Twist" is a novel which projects the social evils prevalent during the nineteenth century. Dickens

paints the criminal world with all its gory detail and exhibits its inhabitants with their deformity and wretchedness. He focuses his attention on the greedy and corrupt officials of the Parish and reveals the crudity and cruelty of the officers of the law. However, he does not express his bitterness towards them. He laughs at them and their eccentricities through humor and irony. Some critics have taken objection to the frequent rhetorical moralizing and philosophical outpouring in the novel. Dickens used such devices neither to enhance the beauty of the novel nor to reform the people. His involvement in the novel made him express his views on certain issues without inhibition. These expressions are conventional for Victorian novels. Dickens talks his way into the heart of his readers. Not merely does he tell a tale but he comments on it too. As Kenneth Hayens writes, " his attitude is that of a man talking unrestrainedly to a large audience and occasionally addressing it. His style is the natural outcome of that attitude." Dickens is a master of realism. His observations, experience and encounters have filled the pages of the novel with incidents and characters that are true to life. To sum up the achievement of Dickens it would be apt to quote the words of John Forster: " The art of copying from nature as it really exists in the common walks had not been carried out by anyone to greater perfection, or to better results in the way of combination. Such was his handling of the piece of solid, existing, everyday life, which he made here the ground work of his wit and tenderness, that the book which did much to help out of the world the social evils it portrayed, will probably preserve longest the picture of them as they then were."