

Core 301 His. Of Eng.Lit. 1832-1890

UNIT 2 Novel

'Oliver Twist'

- Charles Dickens

1. About the Author:

- Charles Dickens was a famous British author who lived from 1812–1870.
- He grew up without much money after his father was arrested for owing money and not paying his debts.
- This childhood influenced many of his books, especially Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, a coming of age, or growing up, story.
- Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English writer and social critic.
- He is regarded by many as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era.
- His works enjoyed unprecedented popularity during his lifetime and, by the 20th century, critics and scholars had recognized him as a literary genius.
- Charles Dickens is known not only for his novels, but also for his short stories, particularly *A Christmas Carol*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*“, *The Battle of Life* and *The Haunted Man.*

- His *Most Famous Works are:*

(1) The Pickwick Papers (1837)

(2) Oliver Twist (1839)

(3) Nicholas Nickleby (1839)

(4) A Christmas Carol (1843)

(5) David Copperfield (1850)

(6) A Tale Of Two Cities (1859)

(7) Great Expectations (1861)

****His Awards:****

Δ During the lifetime of Charles Dickens, *he did not win any awards for writing.* Most of the awards given to writers today were largely creations in the 20th century.

Δ He won the Audie Award for Literary Fiction & Classics in the year of 2019 for his famous work *Bleak House (1852).*

****2. About the Text****

- Oliver Twist is one of the *most famous* novels that Charles Dickens have ever wrote.

- It was Published in *installments between 1837-1839.*

- Charles Dickens is considered to be *the greatest English novelist of Victorian era.*

-Much in his work could *appeal to the simple & the sophisticated, to the poor and the queen, and technological developments* as well as the qualities of his work *enabled his fame to spread worldwide very quickly.*

- It's a *classic story about an orphan,* who has to *find his way through a city full of criminals & avoid being corrupted.*

- People read Oliver Twist in Dicken's day & are still reading it now, for *the gritty realism with which Dickens portrays working class people & the horrible living conditions of the London slums.*

- Oliver Twist is Dicken's only novel that qualifies as a *'Newgate Novel'* , though, so it seems like *he just wanted to try his hand at the popular style of writing before turning to other, loftier pursuits.*

****3. Characters:****

****(1) Oliver Twist:****

- The novel's protagonist.

- Oliver is an orphan born in a workhouse & Dickens uses his situation to criticize public policy toward the poor in 1830s England.

- His true Identity is the central mystery of the novel.

(2) Mr. Bumble:

- A beedle in the parish workhouse.
- He preaches Christian morality, Dickens mercilessly satirizes his self-righteousness, greed, hypocrisy, and folly, of which his name is an obvious symbol.

(3) Mr. Sowerberry:

- An Undertaker who took Oliver as an apprentice.
- Mr Sowerberry is a fictional character who appears as a supporting antagonist in Charles Dickens.

(4) Noah Claypole:

- Noah Claypole is a supporting antagonist in Oliver Twist.
- He is an extremely cowardly and opportunistic, skinny bully who does a job only if it's easy for him.

(5) Mr. Brownlow:

- Brownlow is a bookish and kindly middle-aged bachelor who helps Oliver escape the clutches of Fagin.
- He later adopts Oliver Twist by the end of the novel.

(6) Rose Maylie:

- She is Oliver's aunt (his mother's sister).
- A beautiful, compassionate, and forgiving young woman.
- She establishes a loving relationship with Oliver even before it is revealed that the two are related.

(7) Fagin:

- The leader of the criminal gang.
- A conniving career criminal, who doesn't do crimes himself instead he takes in homeless children and trains them to pick pockets for him.

(8) Bill Sikes:

- A brutal professional burglar brought up in Fagin's gang.
- He is Nancy (a prostitute)'s pimp & lover.

(9) The Artful Dodger:

- Fagin's main man(Tack).
- His real name is Jack Dawkins.
- The Dodger is a pickpocket, so called for his skill and cunning in that occupation.

(10) Charley Bates:

- He is a young boy and member of Fagin's gang of pickpockets, and sidekick to the Artful Dodger, whose skills he admires unreservedly.

(11) Nancy:

- Basically she's a prostitute.
- She is a member of Fagin's gang and the lover, and eventual victim, of Bill Sikes.

(12) Monks:

- Mr. Brownlow finds Monks and discovers that Monks is Oliver's half-brother because their father had an affair with Oliver's mother. – Monks' plan was to strip Oliver from their shared inheritance.

4. Setting:

- The major action of Oliver Twist moves back & forth between two worlds: *The filthy slums of London* & *the clean, comfortable house of Brownlow & the Maylies.*
- The first world is *real and frightening,* while the other is *idealized, almost dreamlike, in its safety & beauty.*

****5. Themes:****

- (1) Good vs Evil,**
- (2) Love vs Hate,**
- (3) Greed & Revenge,**
- (4) Thievery & Crime,**
- (5) Poverty, Institutions & Class,**
- (6) Individualism & Social Bonds,**
- (7) Fate & Free Will,**
- (8) Identity & Inheritance, etc.**

****6. Symbols:****

- (1) Darkness,**
- (2) Obesity,**
- (3) Countryside,**
- (4) Dirt & Dilapidation, etc.**

****7. Critical Appreciation:****

Chapters 1-7:

The story begins in the workhouse where a boy is born. His mother dies soon after the birth and the child is named Oliver Twist. The first nine years of his life are spent in the terrible conditions of cold and hunger that prevailed in the workhouse. Then one day Oliver asks for some more food at dinner time and the enraged Mr Bumble pays for Oliver to be taken away by a local undertaker, Mr Sowerberry.

Oliver suffers further mistreatment at the hands of Noah Claypole, an employee, and Mrs Sowerberry. After suffering physical and mental abuse, he decides to run away to London.

Chapters 8–14:

Oliver sets off on foot for London. On the way he meets a strange boy, Jack Dawkins, who befriends him and offers him a place to stay in London. Dawkins leads Oliver to a house of unimaginable filth, and introduces him to an ugly old man, Fagin. At first, Fagin and the boys who live with him seem very kind to Oliver. One day, Oliver asks if he can go to 'work' with the other boys and it is then that he understands they are all thieves. Jack Dawkins and Charley Bates steal a handkerchief from an old man, Mr. Brownlow. The man raises the alarm, and in the confusion Oliver is apprehended by a policeman. Mr. Brownlow takes pity on Oliver and takes him to his house. Fagin and his evil friend Bill Sikes are informed of this development and make plans to get Oliver back, with the help of Bill's girlfriend, Nancy.

Chapters 15–22:

Oliver is very content in Mr. Brownlow's house, which is very clean and comfortable. One day, Oliver offers to take some books and some money to a bookshop for Mr. Brownlow. On the way to the shop, Oliver is captured by Bill Sikes and Nancy and taken back to Fagin's house. Fagin tells Oliver that he has to work for him. Sikes and Fagin plan a robbery in a country house, and they choose Oliver as the boy they need to enter the house through a small window. Oliver enters the house, but a noise wakes up the household, and Oliver is shot. Sikes grabs him and runs away, but then drops him in a field.

Chapters 23–38:

Oliver wakes up and decides to enter the house again. A doctor is called to attend to Oliver's wound. The owners of the house, Rose Maylie and her aunt, Mrs. Maylie, nurse Oliver through a fever. He recovers and enjoys several months of happiness. Then, one night when he is half asleep, he thinks he sees Fagin and another man at his window and screams. Meanwhile, back in the workhouse, Mr. Bumble receives a visitor, Mr. Monks. Monks questions Bumble about Oliver, and wants to see a woman who knows something about Oliver's mother. Bumble arranges a meeting and an old woman gives Monks a locket that belonged to Oliver's mother. Monks then throws this into the river.

Chapters 39–47:

Nancy overhears a conversation between Fagin and Monks concerning Oliver. She decides to tell Rose Maylie, who is now in a London hotel with Oliver. She informs Rose that Monks believes Oliver to be his brother and is planning terrible things for him. Nancy arranges to meet Rose on London Bridge on Sunday night. There she tells Brownlow and Rose where they can find Monks, and what he looks like. Noah Claypole, who is hiding nearby overhears the conversation and runs to tell Fagin. Claypole then recounts his story to Bill Sikes, who in a mad rage, batters Nancy to death with a heavy stick.

Chapters 48–53(end):

Sikes decides to leave London, but returns with plans to escape to France. Meanwhile, Monks is brought to Brownlow's house. Brownlow tells Monks what he believes happened in the past. Monks's father separated from his wife, and fell in love with a beautiful young girl, Agnes. He planned to marry her, but died suddenly. Agnes died soon afterwards in the workhouse, after giving birth to Oliver, making Oliver Monks's half brother. Monks's father left a will giving half of his property to Oliver, a will that Monks's mother then destroyed. Brownlow accuses Monks of throwing away a locket, proof of Oliver's parentage, and of paying Fagin to turn Oliver

Into a thief. Monks admits to everything. Sikes later dies by accidentally hanging himself, Fagin is sentenced to death and hanged, and Oliver lives happily as Brownlow's adopted son.

08. Conclusion:

The moral values found in the novel —Oliver Twist— are a Steadfastness, sympathy to other, bravery, honesty, thankfulness, cooperativeness, and kind- hearted. By using the sociological approach, based on the perspective of as follows: symbol, functionalist, and conflict.