بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

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19th century novel

الرواية في القرن التاسع عشر

Level 10

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1. What is the English novel?

ž **The English novel** is an important part of English literature. This lecture focuses on novels, written in English, by novelists who were born or have spent a significant part of their lives in England, or Scotland, or Wales, or Northern Ireland (or Ireland before 1922). However, given the nature of the subject, this guideline has been applied with common sense, and reference is made to novels in other languages or novelists who are not primarily British where appropriate.

ž **Romantic period**

ž The phrase Romantic novel has several possible meanings. Here it refers to novels written during the Romantic era in literary history, which runs from the late 18th century until the beginning of the Victorian era in 1837. But to complicate matters there are novels written in the romance tradition by novelists like Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, George Meredith.

ž It was in the Victorian era (1837–1901) that the novel became the leading literary genre in English. Another important fact is the number of women novelists who were successful in the 19th century, even though they often had to use a masculine pseudonym. The majority of readers were of course women. At the beginning of the 19th century most novels were published in three volumes. However, monthly serialization was revived with the publication of Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* in twenty parts between April 1836 and November 1837. Demand was high for each episode to introduce some new element, whether it was a plot twist or a new character, so as to maintain the readers' interest. Both Dickens and Thackeray frequently published this way.

ž The 1830s and 1840s saw the rise of social novel, also known as social problem novel, that "arose out of the social and political upheavals which followed the Reform Act of 1832". This was in many ways a reaction to rapid industrialization, and the social, political and economic issues associated with it, and was a means of commenting on abuses of government and industry and the suffering of the poor, who were not profiting from England's economic prosperity. Stories of the working class poor were directed toward middle class to help create sympathy and promote change. An early example is Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1837-8).

- Charles Dickens emerged on the literary scene in the 1830s
- with the two novels already mentioned. Dickens wrote vividly about London life and struggles of the poor, but in a good-humored fashion, accessible to readers of all classes. One of his most popular works to this day is *A Christmas Carol*
- (1843). In more recent years Dickens has been most admired for his later novels, such as *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), *Great Expectations* (1860-1), *Bleak House* (1852-3) and *Little Dorrit* (1855-7) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5). An early rival to Dickens was William Makepeace Thackeray, who during the Victorian period ranked second only to him, but he is now much less read and is known almost exclusively for *Vanity Fair* (1847).
- In that novel he satirizes whole swaths of humanity while retaining a light touch. It features his most memorable character, the engagingly roguish Becky Sharp. The Brontë sisters were other significant novelists in the 1840s and 1850s. Their novels caused a sensation when they were first published but were subsequently accepted as classics. They had written compulsively from early childhood and were first published, at their own expense in 1846 as poets under the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. The sisters returned to prose, producing a novel each the following year: Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey*.
- In addition the phrase today is mostly used to refer to the popular pulp-fiction genre that focusses on romantic love. The Romantic period is especially associated with the poets William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Byron, Percy Shelley and John Keats, though two major novelists, Jane Austen and Walter Scott, also published in the early 19th century.
- Thomas Hardy stopped writing fiction after *Jude the Obscure* (1895) was severely criticized, so that the major novelists writing in Britain at the start of the 20th century were an Irishman James Joyce (1882-1941) and two immigrants, American Henry James (1843-1916) and Pole Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). The modernist tradition in the novel, with its emphasis "towards the ever more minute and analytic exposition of mental life", begins with James and Conrad, in novels such as *The Ambassadors* (1903), *The Golden Bowl* (1907) and

Lord Jim (1900). Other important early modernists were Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957), whose novel *Pointed Roof* (1915), is one of the earliest example of the stream of consciousness technique and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), who wrote with understanding about the social life of the lower and middle classes, and the personal life of those who could not adapt to the social norms of his time. *Sons and Lovers* (1913), is widely regarded as his earliest masterpiece. There followed *The Rainbow* (1915), though it was immediately seized by the police, and its sequel *Women in Love* published in 1920

The Victorian period: 1837-1901

In the 19th century the relationship between authors, publishers, and readers, changed. Most of the early 18th century fiction had published anonymously. Authors had offered their manuscripts and received all the payment to be expected for the manuscript. The new copyright laws introduced in the 18th and 19th centuries promised royalties on all future editions

Another change in the 19th century was that novelists began to read their works in theatres, halls, and book shops.

Fiction was altered by these changes, including the creation of more difficult works. New novels also openly addressed current political and social issues, which were being discussed in newspapers and magazines. The idea of responsibility became a key issue, whether of the citizen, or of the artist. The theoretical debate concentrated on questions around the moral soundness of the modern novel, on the integrity of individual artists, as well as the claims of aesthetes like as Oscar Wilde and Algernon Charles Swinburne, who proposed the idea of "art for art's sake"

In this period the market for popular fiction grew, and competed with works of literature. Also in the 19th-century new institutions like the circulating library create a new market, and a new mass reading public developed.

Also during the 19th century major British writers such as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy were influenced by the romance genre tradition of the nove The Brontë sisters were notable mid-19th-century creators in this tradition, with Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Publishing at the very end of the 19th century, Joseph Conrad has been called, "a supreme 'romancer'". In America "the romance ... proved to be a serious, flexible, and successful medium for the exploration of philosophical ideas and attitudes", and

notable examples include Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

A number of European novelists were influenced, during this period, by the earlier Romantic Movement, including Victor Hugo, with novels like *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) and *Les Misérables* (1862), and Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov's, *A Hero of Our Time* (1840).

Many 19th century authors dealt with significant social matters. Émile Zola's novels depicted the world of the working classes, which Marx and Engels's non-fictional explores. In the United States slavery and racism became topics of far broader public debate thanks to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which dramatizes topics that had previously been discussed mainly in the abstract. Charles Dickens' novels led his readers into contemporary workhouses, and provided first hand accounts of child labour. The treatment of the subject of war changed with Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1868/69), where he questions the facts provided by historians. Similarly the treatment of crime is very different in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866), where the point of view is that of a criminal. Women authors had dominated fiction from the 1640s into the early 18th century, but few before George Eliot so openly questioned the role, education, and status of women in society, as she did.

As the novel became a platform of modern debate, national literatures were developed, that link the present with the past in the form of the historical novel. Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (1827) did this for Italy, while novelists in Russia and the surrounding Slavonic countries, as well as Scandinavia, did likewise.

Along with this new appreciation of history, the future also became a topic for fiction. This had been done earlier in works like Samuel Madden's *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century* (1733) and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), a work whose plot culminated in the catastrophic last days of a mankind extinguished by the plague. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1887) and H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) were concerned with technological and biological developments. Industrialization, Darwin's theory of evolution and Marx's theory of class divisions shaped these works and turned historical processes into a subject matter of wide debate. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* became the second best-selling book of the 19th century after Harriet Beecher-Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Such works led to the development of a whole genre of popular science fiction as the 20th century approached.

Charles John Huffam Dickens (/ˈtʃɑːrlz ˈdɪkɪnz/; 7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870) was an English writer and social critic. He created some of the world's best-known fictional characters and is regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His works enjoyed unprecedented popularity during his lifetime, and by the twentieth century critics and scholars had recognized him as a literary genius. His novels and short stories enjoy lasting popularity.

Born in Portsmouth, Dickens left school to work in a factory when his father was incarcerated in a debtors' prison. Despite his lack of formal education, he edited a weekly journal for 20 years, wrote 15 novels, five novellas, hundreds of short stories and non-fiction articles, lectured and performed extensively, was an indefatigable letter writer, and campaigned vigorously for children's rights, education, and other social reforms.

Dickens's literary success began with the 1836 serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers*. Within a few years he had become an international literary celebrity, famous for his humour, satire, and keen observation of character and society. His novels, most published in monthly or weekly installments, pioneered the serial publication of narrative fiction, which became the dominant Victorian mode for novel publication. The installment format allowed Dickens to evaluate his audience's reaction, and he often modified his plot and character development based on such feedback. For example, when his wife's chiropodist expressed distress at the way Miss Mowcher in *David Copperfield* seemed to reflect her disabilities, Dickens improved the character with positive features.His plots were carefully constructed, and he often wove elements from topical events into his narratives. Masses of the illiterate poor chipped in ha'pennies to have each new monthly episode read to them, opening up and inspiring a new class of readers.

Dickens was regarded as the literary colossus of his age. His 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol*, remains popular and continues to inspire adaptations in every artistic genre. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* are also frequently adapted, and, like many of his novels, evoke images of early Victorian London. His 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, set in London and Paris, is his best-known work of historical fiction. Dickens's creative genius has been praised by fellow writers—from Leo Tolstoy to George Orwell and G. K. Chesterton—for its realism, comedy, prose style, unique characterizations, and social criticism. On the other hand, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf complained of a lack of psychological depth, loose writing, and a vein of saccharine sentimentalism. The term *Dickensian* is used to describe something that is reminiscent(memorial)

of Dickens and his writings, such as poor social conditions or comically repulsive(bad) characters.

Oliver Twist, or ***The Parish Boy's Progress***, is the second novel by Charles Dickens, and was first published as a serial 1837–9. The story is of the orphan Oliver Twist, who starts his life in a workhouse and is then sold into an apprenticeship with an undertaker. He escapes from there and travels to London where he meets the Artful Dodger, a member of a gang of juvenile pickpockets, which is led by the elderly criminal Fagin.

Oliver Twist is notable for Dickens's unromantic portrayal of criminals and their sordid lives, as well as exposing the cruel treatment of the many orphans in London in the mid–nineteenth century. The alternate title, *The Parish Boy's Progress*, alludes to Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as the 18th-century caricature series by William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress* and *A Harlot's Progress*.

An early example of the social novel, Dickens satirizes the hypocrisies of his time, including child labour, the recruitment of children as criminals, and the presence of street children. The novel may have been inspired by the story of Robert Blincoe, an orphan whose account of working as a child labourer in a cotton mill was widely read in the 1830s. It is likely that Dickens's own youthful experiences contributed as well.

Oliver Twist has been the subject of numerous adaptations, for various media, including a highly successful musical play, *Oliver!*, and the multiple Academy Award-winning 1968 motion picture.

Publications

The novel was originally published in monthly installments in the Magazine *Bentley's Miscellany* from February 1837 to April 1839. It was originally intended to form part of Dickens's serial, *The Mudfog Papers*. It did not appear again as a monthly serial until 1847. George Cruikshank provided one steel etching per month to illustrate each installment. The first novelization appeared six months before the initial serialization was completed. It was published in three volumes by Richard Bentley, the owner of *Bentley's Miscellany*, under the author's pseudonym, "Boz", and included 24 steel-engraved plates by Cruikshank.

The first edition was titled: *Oliver Twist, or, The Parish Boy's Progress*.

Oliver Twist - The novel's protagonist. Oliver is an orphan born in a workhouse, and Dickens uses his situation to criticize public policy toward the poor in 1830s England. Oliver is between nine and twelve years old when the main action of the novel occurs t or f . Though treated with cruelty and surrounded by coarseness for most of his life, he is a pious, innocent child, and his charms draw the attention of several wealthy benefactors. His true identity is the central mystery of the novel.

Fagin - A conniving career criminal. Fagin takes in homeless children and trains them to pick pockets for him. He is also a buyer of other people's stolen goods. He rarely commits crimes himself, preferring to employ others to commit them—and often suffer legal retribution—in his place. Dickens's portrait of Fagin displays the influence of anti-Semitic stereotypes.

Nancy - A young prostitute and one of Fagin's former child pickpockets . Nancy is also Bill Sikes's lover. Her love for Sikes and her sense of moral decency come into conflict when Sikes abuses Oliver. Despite her criminal lifestyle, she is among the noblest characters in the novel. In effect, she gives her life for Oliver when Sikes murders her for revealing Monks's plots.

Rose Maylie - Agnes Fleming's sister, raised by Mrs. Maylie after the death of Rose's father. A beautiful, compassionate, and forgiving young woman, Rose is the novel's model of female virtue. She establishes a loving relationship with Oliver even before it is revealed that the two are related.

Mr. Brownlow - A well-off, erudite (competent)gentleman who serves as Oliver's first benefactor. Mr. Brownlow owns a portrait of Agnes Fleming and was engaged to Mr. Leeford's sister when she died. Throughout the novel, he behaves with compassion and common sense and emerges as a natural leader. T or f

Monks - A sickly, vicious(evil) young man, prone to violent fits and teeming with inexplicable hatred. With Fagin, he schemes to give Oliver a bad reputation.

Bill Sikes - A brutal professional burglar (thief)brought up in Fagin's gang. Sikes is Nancy's pimp and lover, and he treats both her and his dog Bull's-eye with an odd combination of cruelty and grudging(jealous) affection. His murder of Nancy is the most heinous (outrageous)of the many crimes that occur in the novel.

Mr. Bumble - The pompous, self-important beadle—a minor church official—for the workhouse where Oliver is born. Though Mr. Bumble preaches(lecture) Christian morality, he behaves without compassion toward the paupers(poor) under his care. Dickens mercilessly satirizes his self-righteousness, greed, hypocrisy, and folly, of which his name is an obvious symbol.

Agnes Fleming - Oliver's mother. After falling in love with and becoming pregnant by Mr. Leeford, she to die anonymously in a workhouse rather than stain her family's reputation. A retired naval(marine) officer's daughter, she was a beautiful, loving woman. Oliver's face closely resembles hers.

Mr. Leeford - Oliver and Monks's father, who dies long before the events of the novel. He was an intelligent, high-minded man whose family forced him into an unhappy marriage with a wealthy woman. He eventually separated from his wife and had an illicit (unlawful)love affair with Agnes Fleming. He intended to flee the country with Agnes but died before he could do so.

Mr. Losberne - Mrs. Maylie's family physician. A hot-tempered but good-hearted old bachelor, Mr. Losberne is fiercely loyal to the Maylies and, eventually, to Oliver.

Mrs. Maylie - A kind, wealthy older woman, the mother of Harry Maylie and adoptive "aunt" of Rose.

Harry Maylie - Mrs. Maylie's son. Harry is a dashing young man with grand political ambitions and career prospects, which he eventually gives up to marry Rose.

The Artful Dodger - The cleverest of Fagin's pickpockets. The Dodger's real name is Jack Dawkins . Though no older than Oliver, the Dodger talks and dresses like a grown man. He introduces Oliver to Fagin.

Charley Bates - One of Fagin's pickpockets. Charley is ready to laugh at anything.

Old Sally - An elderly pauper who serves as the nurse at Oliver's birth. Old Sally steals Agnes's gold locket, the only clue to Oliver's identity.

Mrs. Corney - The matron(director) of the workhouse where Oliver is born. Mrs. Corney is hypocritical, callous(hard), and materialistic(temporal). After she marries Mr. Bumble, she hounds him mercilessly.

Noah Claypole - A charity boy and Mr. Sowerberry's apprentice. Noah is an overgrown, cowardly bully who mistreats Oliver and eventually joins Fagin's gang.

Charlotte - The Sowerberrys' maid. Charlotte becomes romantically involved with Noah Claypole and follows him about slavishly.

Toby Crackit - One of Fagin and Sikes's associates, crass and not too bright. Toby participates in the attempted burglary of Mrs. Maylie's home.

Mrs. Bedwin - Mr. Brownlow's kindhearted housekeeper. Mrs. Bedwin is unwilling to believe Mr. Bumble's negative report of Oliver's character.

Bull's-eye - Bill Sikes's dog. As vicious as his master, Bull's-eye functions as Sikes's alter ego.

Monks's mother - An heiress who lived a decadent(low) life and alienated her husband, Mr. Leeford. Monks's mother destroyed Mr. Leeford's will, which left part of his property to Oliver. Much of Monks's nastiness is presumably inherited from her.

Mr. Sowerberry - The undertaker to whom Oliver is apprenticed. Though Mr. Sowerberry makes a grotesque(odd) living arranging cut-rate burials for paupers, he is a decent(kind) man who is kind to Oliver.

Mrs. Sowerberry - Sowerberry's wife. Mrs. Sowerberry is a mean, judgmental woman who henpecks her husband.

Mr. Grimwig - Brownlow's pessimistic, curmudgeonly friend. Mr. Grimwig is essentially good-hearted, and his pessimism is mostly just a provocative character quirk.

Mr. Giles - Mrs. Maylie's loyal, though somewhat pompous, butler.(head of servents)

Mr. Brittles - A sort of handyman(craftman) for Mrs. Maylie's estate. It is implied that Mr. Brittles is slightly mentally handicapped.

Mrs. Mann - The superintendent(watcher) of the juvenile workhouse where Oliver is raised. Mrs. Mann physically abuses and half-starves the children in her care.

Mr. Gamfield - A brutal chimney sweep. Oliver almost becomes Mr. Gamfield's apprentice.

Bet - One of Fagin's former child pickpockets, now a prostitute.

Mr. Fang - The harsh, irrational, power-hungry magistrate(judge) who presides over Oliver's trial for pick pocketing.

Barney - One of Fagin's criminal associates. Like Fagin, Barney is Jewish.

Duff and Blathers - Two bumbling police officers who investigate the attempted burglary of Mrs. Maylie's home.

Tom Chitling - A rather dim member of Fagin's gang. Tom has served time in jail for doing Fagin's bidding.

Plot summary

Workhouse years

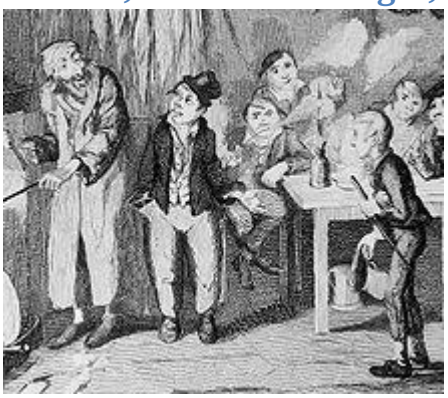
Mr. Bumble

Oliver Twist was born into a life of poverty and misfortune in a workhouse in an unnamed town (although when originally published in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1837, the town was called Mudfog and said to be within 70 miles north of London – in reality this is the location of the town of Northampton). Orphaned by his mother's death in childbirth and his father's unexplained absence, Oliver is meagrely provided for under the terms of the Poor Law and spends the first nine years of his life living at a baby farm in the 'care' of a woman named Mrs. Mann. Oliver is brought up with little food and few comforts. Around the time of Oliver's ninth birthday, Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle, removes Oliver from the baby farm and puts him to work picking and weaving oakum at the main workhouse. Oliver, who toils with very little food, remains in the workhouse for six months. One day, the desperately hungry boys decide to draw lots; the loser must ask for another portion of gruel. The task falls to Oliver, who at the next meal tremblingly comes up forward, bowl in hand, and begs Mr. Bumble for gruel with his famous request: "Please, sir, I want some more".

A great uproar ensues. The board of well-fed gentlemen who administer the workhouse hypocritically offer £5 to any person wishing to take on the boy as an apprentice. Mr. Gamfield, a brutal chimney sweep, almost claims Oliver. However, when he begs despairingly not to be sent away with "that dreadful man", a kindly old magistrate refuses to sign the indentures. Later, Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker employed by the parish, takes Oliver into his service. He treats Oliver better and, because of the boy's sorrowful countenance, uses him as a mourner at children's funerals. However, Mr. Sowerberry is in an unhappy marriage, and his wife takes an immediate dislike to Oliver – primarily because her husband seems to like him – and loses few opportunities to underfeed and mistreat him. He also suffers torment at the hands of Noah Claypole, an oafish but bullying fellow apprentice and "charity boy" who is jealous of Oliver's promotion to mute, and Charlotte, the Sowerberrys' maidservant, who is in love with Noah.

While trying to bait Oliver, Noah insults Oliver's biological mother, in which he called her "a regular right-down bad 'un". Oliver flies into a rage, attacking and even beating the much bigger boy. Mrs. Sowerberry takes Noah's side, helps him to subdue, punch, and beat Oliver, and later compels her husband and Mr. Bumble, who has been sent for in the aftermath of the fight, to beat Oliver once again. Once Oliver is sent to his room for the night, he breaks down and weeps, upset at the events which he had faced. The next day, Oliver escapes from the Sowerberrys' house and decides to run away to London instead.

London, the Artful Dodger, and Fagin



George Cruikshank original engraving of the Artful Dodger (centre), here introducing Oliver (right) to Fagin (left)

During his journey to London, Oliver encounters Jack Dawkins, a pickpocket more commonly known by the nickname the "Artful Dodger", and his sidekick, a boy of a humorous nature, named Charley Bates, but

Oliver's innocent nature prevents him from recognizing any hint that the boys may be dishonest. Dodger provides Oliver with a free meal and tells him of a gentleman in London who will "give him lodgings for nothing, and never ask for change". Grateful for the unexpected assistance, Oliver follows Dodger to the "old gentleman's" residence. In this way, Oliver unwittingly falls in with an infamous Jewish criminal known as Fagin, the so-called gentleman of whom the Artful Dodger spoke. Ensnared, Oliver lives with Fagin and his gang of juvenile pickpockets in their lair at Saffron Hill for some time, unaware of their criminal occupations. He believes they make wallets and handkerchiefs.

Later, Oliver naïvely goes out to "make handkerchiefs" (because there is no income) with the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates. Oliver realises too late that their real mission is to pick pockets. Dodger and Charley steal the handkerchief of an old gentleman named Mr. Brownlow, and promptly flee. When he finds his handkerchief missing, Mr. Brownlow turns round, sees Oliver running away in fright, and pursues him. Others join the chase and Oliver is caught and taken before the magistrate. Curiously, Mr. Brownlow has second thoughts about the boy – he seems reluctant to believe he is a pickpocket. To the judge's evident disappointment, a bookstall holder who saw Dodger commit the crime clears Oliver, who, by now actually ill, faints in the courtroom. Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver home and, along with his housekeeper Mrs. Bedwin, cares for him. Read and answer

Bill Sikes

Oliver stays with Mr. Brownlow, recovers rapidly, and blossoms from the unaccustomed kindness. His bliss, however, is interrupted when Fagin, fearing Oliver might "peach" on his criminal gang, decides that Oliver must be brought back to his hideout. When Mr. Brownlow sends Oliver out to pay for some books, one of the gang, a young girl named Nancy, whom Oliver had previously met at Fagin's, accosts him with help from

her abusive lover, a brutal robber named Bill Sikes, and Oliver is quickly bundled back to Fagin's lair. The thieves take the five-pound note Mr. Brownlow had entrusted to him, and strip him of his fine new clothes. Oliver, dismayed, flees and attempts to call for police assistance, but is ruthlessly dragged back by the Artful Dodger, Charley and Fagin. Nancy, however, is sympathetic towards Oliver and saves him from beatings by Fagin and Sikes.

In a renewed attempt to draw Oliver into a life of crime, Fagin forces him to participate in a burglary. Nancy reluctantly assists in recruiting him, all the while assuring the boy that she will help him if she can. Sikes, after threatening to kill him if he does not co-operate, sends Oliver through a small window and orders him to unlock the front door. The robbery goes wrong, however, and Oliver is shot and wounded in his left arm at the targeted house. After being abandoned by Sikes, the wounded Oliver makes it back to the house and ends up under the care of the people he was supposed to rob: Miss Rose and her guardian Mrs. Maylie.

Mystery

Fagin

A mysterious man named Monks has found Fagin and is plotting with him to destroy Oliver's reputation . Monks denounces Fagin's failure to turn Oliver into a criminal, and the two of them agree on a plan to make sure he does not find out about his past. Monks is apparently related to Oliver in some way, although it's not mentioned until later. Back in Oliver's home town, Mr. Bumble has married Mrs Corney, the wealthy matron of the workhouse where the story first began, only to find himself in an unhappy marriage, constantly arguing with his domineering wife. After one such argument, Mr. Bumble walks over to a pub, where he meets Monks, who questions him about Oliver. Bumble informs Monks that he knows someone who can give Monks more information for a

price, and later Monks meets secretly with the Bumbles. After Mrs. Bumble has told Monks all she knows, the three arrange to take a locket and ring which had once belonged to Oliver's mother and toss them into a nearby river. Monks relates this to Fagin as part of the plot to destroy Oliver, unaware that Nancy has eavesdropped on their conversation and gone ahead to inform Oliver's benefactors.

Now ashamed of her role in Oliver's kidnapping and fearful for the boy's safety, Nancy goes to Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow to warn them. She knows that Monks and Fagin are plotting to get their hands on the boy again and holds some secret meetings on the subject with Oliver's benefactors. One night, Nancy tries to leave for one of the meetings, but Sikes refuses permission when she doesn't state exactly where she's going. Fagin realises that Nancy is up to something and resolves to find out what her secret is. Meanwhile, Noah has fallen out with the undertaker Mr. Sowerberry, stolen money from him, and fled to London. Charlotte has accompanied him — they are now in a relationship. Using the name "Morris Bolter", he joins Fagin's gang for protection and becomes a practicer of "the kinchin lay" (robbing children), and Charlotte (it is implied) becomes a prostitute. During Noah's stay with Fagin, the Artful Dodger is caught with a stolen silver snuff box, convicted (in a very humorous courtroom scene), and transported to Australia. Later, Noah is sent by Fagin to "dodge" (spy on) Nancy, and discovers her secret: she has been meeting secretly with Rose and Mr. Brownlow to discuss how to save Oliver from Fagin and Monks.

Fagin angrily passes the information on to Sikes, twisting the story just enough to make it sound as if Nancy had informed on him. Believing Nancy to be a traitor, Sikes beats her to death in a fit of rage and flees to the countryside to escape from the police. There, Sikes is haunted by visions of Nancy's ghost and increasingly alarmed by news of her murder spreading across the countryside. He returns to London to find a hiding place, only to die by accidentally hanging himself while attempting to flee across a rooftop from an angry mob.

Resolution

Fagin in his cell.

Monks is forced by Mr. Brownlow to divulge his secrets: his real name is Edward Leeford, and he is Oliver's paternal half-brother and, although he is legitimate, he was born of a loveless marriage. Oliver's mother, Agnes, was their father's true love. Mr. Brownlow has a picture of her, and began making inquiries when he noticed a marked resemblance between her face and the face of Oliver. Monks has spent many years searching for his father's child – not to befriend him, but to destroy him (see Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* for similar circumstances). Brownlow asks Oliver to give half his inheritance (which proves to be meagre) to Monks because he wants to give him a second chance; and Oliver, being prone to giving second chances, is more than happy to comply. Monks later moves to America, where he squanders his money, reverts to crime, and ultimately dies in prison. Fagin is arrested and condemned to the gallows. On the eve of his hanging, in an emotional scene, Oliver, accompanied by Mr. Brownlow, goes to visit the old reprobate in Newgate Gaol, where Fagin's terror at being hanged has caused him to lose himself in daydreams and come down with fever. As Mr. Brownlow and Oliver leave the prison, Fagin screams in terror and despair as a crowd gathers to see his hanging.

On a happier note, Rose Maylie turns out to be the long-lost sister of Agnes, and therefore Oliver's aunt. She marries her long-time sweetheart Harry, and Oliver lives happily with his saviour, Mr. Brownlow. Noah becomes a paid, semi-professional police informer. The Bumbles lose their jobs and are reduced to great poverty, eventually ending up in the same workhouse where they originally lorded it over Oliver and the other orphan boys. Charley Bates, horrified by Sikes's murder of Nancy, becomes an honest citizen, moves to the country, and works his way up to prosperity. Write

Major themes and symbols

Bill Sikes

The Artful Dodger

In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens mixes grim(sad)` realism with merciless satire to describe the effects of industrialism on 19th-century England and to criticize the harsh new Poor Laws. Oliver, an innocent child, is trapped in a world where his only options seem to be the workhouse, Fagin's gang, a prison, or an early grave. From this unpromising industrial/institutional setting, however, a fairy tale also emerges. In the midst of corruption and degradation, the essentially passive Oliver remains pure-hearted; he steers away from evil when those around him give in to it, and in proper fairy-tale fashion, he eventually receives his reward – leaving for a peaceful life in the country, surrounded by kind friends.On the way to this happy ending, Dickens explores the kind of life an outcast, orphan boy could expect to lead in 1830s London.

Poverty and social class

Poverty is a prominent concern in *Oliver Twist*.(Throughout the novel, Dickens enlarged on this theme, describing slums(poor streets) so decrepit (fallen)that whole rows of houses are on the point of ruin. In an early chapter, Oliver attends a pauper's funeral with Mr. Sowerberry and sees a whole family crowded together in one miserable room.

This ubiquitous(whole) misery makes Oliver's few encounters with charity and love more poignant.(sensitive) Oliver owes his life several times over to kindness both large and small. The apparent plague of poverty that Dickens describes also conveyed to his middle-class readers how much of the London population was stricken with poverty and disease. Nonetheless, in *Oliver Twist* he delivers a somewhat mixed message about social caste(group) and social injustice. Oliver's illegitimate workhouse origins place him at the nadir(bad) of society; as an orphan without friends, he is routinely despised. His "sturdy spirit" keeps him alive despite the torment he must endure . Most of his associates, however, deserve their place among society's dregs and seem very much at home in the depths. Noah Claypole, a charity boy like Oliver, is idle, stupid, and cowardly; Sikes is a thug(killer); Fagin lives by corrupting children; and the Artful Dodger seems born for a life of crime. Many of the middle-class people Oliver encounters—Mrs. Sowerberry, Mr. Bumble, and the savagely hypocritical "gentlemen" of the workhouse board, for example—are, if anything, worse.

On the other hand, Oliver—who has an air of refinement(politeness) remarkable for a workhouse boy—proves to be of gentle birth. Although he has been abused and neglected all his life, he recoils, aghast(afraid), at the idea of victimizing anyone else. This apparently hereditary(inherited) gentlemanliness makes *Oliver Twist* something of a changeling tale, not just an indictment(accusation) of social injustice. Oliver, born for better things, struggles to survive in the savage world of the underclass before finally being rescued by his family and returned to his proper place—a commodious country house.

One early 21st century film adaptation of the novel dispenses with the paradox of Oliver's genteel origins by eliminating his origin story completely, making him just another anonymous orphan like the rest of Fagin's gang.

Symbolism

Dickens makes considerable use of symbolism. The many symbols Oliver faces are primarily good versus evil, with evil continually trying to corrupt and exploit good, but good winning out in the end. The "merry old gentleman" Fagin, for example, has satanic characteristics: he is a veteran corrupter of young boys who presides over his own corner of the criminal world; he makes his first appearance standing over a fire holding a toasting-fork; and he refuses to pray on the night before his execution. The London slums, too, have a suffocating(stuffy), infernal(satanic) aspect; the dark deeds and dark passions are concretely characterized by dim (faint)rooms and pitch-black nights, while the governing mood of terror and brutality may be identified with uncommonly cold weather. In contrast, the countryside where the Maylies take Oliver is a bucolic (rural) heaven.

The novel is also shot through with a related motif, social class, which calls attention to the stark injustice of Oliver's world. When the half-starved child dares to ask for more, the men who punish him are fat. A remarkable number of the novel's characters are overweight.

Toward the end of the novel, the gaze of knowing eyes becomes a potent symbol. For years, Fagin avoids daylight, crowds, and open spaces, concealing himself most of the time in a dark lair. When his luck runs out at last, he squirms(tensed) in the "living light" of too many eyes as he stands in the dock, awaiting sentence. Similarly, after Sikes kills Nancy, he flees into the countryside but is unable to escape the memory of her dead eyes. In addition, Charley Bates turns his back on crime when he sees the murderous cruelty of the man who has been held up to him as a model.

The Last Chance

In the tradition of Restoration Comedy and Henry Fielding, Dickens fits his characters with appropriate names. Oliver himself, though "badge and ticketed" as a lowly orphan and named according to an alphabetical system, is, in fact, "all of a twist". However, Oliver and his name may have been based on a young workhouse boy named Peter Tolliver whom Dickens knew while growing up. Mr. Grimwig is so called because his seemingly "grim"(angry), pessimistic outlook is actually a protective cover for his kind, sentimental soul. Other character names mark their bearers as semi-monstrous caricatures. Mrs. Mann, who has charge of the infant Oliver, is not the most motherly of women; Mr. Bumble, despite his impressive sense of his own dignity, continually mangles the king's English he tries to use; and the Sowerberries are, of course, "sour berries", a reference to Mrs. Sowerberry's perpetual scowl(frown), to Mr. Sowerberry's profession as an undertaker, and to the poor provender Oliver receives from them. Rose Maylie's name echoes her association with flowers and springtime, youth and beauty, while Toby Crackit's is a reference to his chosen profession of housebreaking.

Bill Sikes's dog, Bull's-eye, has "faults of temper in common with his owner" and is an emblem of his owner's character. The dog's viciousness represents Sikes's animal-like brutality, while Sikes's self-destructiveness is evident in the dog's many scars. The dog, with its willingness to harm anyone on Sikes's whim, shows the mindless brutality of the master. Sikes himself senses that the dog is a reflection of himself and that is why he tries to drown the dog. He is really trying to run away from who he is. This is also illustrated when Sikes dies and the dog does immediately also. After Sikes murders Nancy, Bull's-eye also comes to represent Sikes's guilt. The dog leaves bloody footprints on the floor of the room where the murder is committed. Not long after, Sikes becomes desperate

"Please, sir, may I have more."

to get rid of the dog, convinced that the dog's presence will give him away. Yet, just as Sikes cannot shake off his guilt, he cannot shake off Bull's-eye, who arrives at the house of Sikes's demise before Sikes himself does. Bull's-eye's name also conjures up the image of Nancy's eyes, which haunts Sikes until the bitter end and eventually causes him to hang himself accidentally.

Dickens employs polarized sets of characters to explore various dual themes throughout the novel; Mr. Brownlow and Fagin, for example, personify "good vs. evil". Dickens also juxtaposes honest, law-abiding characters such as Oliver himself with those who, like the Artful Dodger, seem more comfortable on the wrong side of the law. Crime and punishment is another important pair of themes, as is sin and redemption: Dickens describes criminal acts ranging from picking pockets to murder, and the characters are punished severely in the end. Most obviously, he shows Bill Sikes hounded to death by a mob for his brutal acts, and sends Fagin to cower in the condemned cell, sentenced to death by due process. Neither character achieves redemption(rescue); Sikes dies trying to run away from his guilt, and on his last night alive, the terrified Fagin refuses to see a rabbi or to pray, instead asking Oliver to help him escape. Nancy, by contrast, redeems herself at the cost of her own life, and dies in a prayerful pose.

Nancy is also one of the few characters in *Oliver Twist* to display much ambivalence(duality). Although she is a full-fledged criminal, indoctrinated and trained by Fagin since childhood, she retains enough empathy to repent her role in Oliver's kidnapping, and to take steps to try to atone. As one of Fagin's victims, corrupted but not yet morally dead, she gives eloquent voice to the horrors of the old man's little criminal empire. She wants to save Oliver from a similar fate; at the same time, she recoils from the idea of turning traitor, especially to Bill Sikes, whom she loves. When he was later criticized for giving a "thieving, whoring slut of the streets" such an unaccountable reversal of character, Dickens ascribed her change of heart to "the last fair drop of water at the bottom of a dried-up, weed-choked well"

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ž **Oliver Twist a Thief or a Victim Discussion**

Oliver Twist is the title character and protagonist of the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. He was the first child protagonist in an English novel.

Background

In the novel, young Oliver is born in a parish workhouse in an unnamed town, but his mother dies during labour. Old Sally, who was at the birth and death, takes from the dying woman a locket and ring. Bumble, the Beadle, names the boy Oliver Twist. Oliver is sent to an infant farm, run by Mrs. Mann, until he is nine years old, when he is returned to the work house.

The orphans at the workhouse are starving because of their cruel treatment. They cast lots to decide who will ask for more gruel for them all, and Oliver is chosen. At evening supper, once the gruel is dished out and eaten, Oliver goes to the master and makes his famous request, *"Please Sir. I want some more."* He is then branded a troublemaker and offered as an apprentice to anyone willing to take him, and he is eventually apprenticed to Sowerberry, the undertaker. Oliver fights with Noah Claypole, an older boy at the undertakers, because Noah mocked Oliver's dead mother. Oliver is then beaten for the offence, but he manages to escape and runs away to London.

In London Oliver meets Jack Dawkins, the Artful Dodger, who offers him a place to stay, where he meets up with Fagin and his band of young thieves. Oliver innocently goes "to work" with Dawkins and Charley Bates, but sees the real nature of their "work" when Dawkins picks the pocket of a gentleman. When the gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, realises he is being robbed, Oliver is mistaken for the pickpocket. And he is then chased, captured, and taken to the police. Oliver, who was injured in the chase, is cleared by a witness to the crime and is taken in by Brownlow to his home where he is well treated. After recovering from his injuries, Oliver is sent on an errand by Brownlow to pay a local merchant £5 and to return some books. However, Oliver is caught by Nancy and Bill Sikes, who pretend to be his siblings, and is returned to Fagin's den. However, Nancy

later betrays Fagin and Sikes, as well as herself, for doing so since they've stolen Oliver's chance to have a better life.

Mr. Brownlow, who mistakenly thinks that Oliver has run away with the money, assumes that Oliver was a thief all along. This belief is further strengthened when Bumble, in response to Brownlow's newspaper advertisement for information about Oliver, gives a disparaging opinion of the boy. Nevertheless, Brownlow still holds onto a little bit of hope that this might not be true.

Meanwhile, Oliver is forced by Fagin to join Sikes in an attempted robbery at a rural house, as they need a small boy to enter a window and open the front door for Sikes to get in. However, the robbery fails and, in the ensuing chase, Oliver is shot. He is then nursed back to health at the home of the Maylies, the house Sikes was attempting to burgle. Oliver gives his story to the Maylies (more exactly, the widow Mrs. Maylie, her son Harry and her adoptive daughter Rose) and Doctor Losberne. He also helps out when Rose falls ill, casually meeting a mysterious man along the way...

The mysterious man is Mr. Monks, who is revealed to be Oliver's half brother (his true name being Edward Leeford). He joins Fagin in an attempt to recapture Oliver and lead him into a life of crime, so that Oliver's rightful inheritance, of which Oliver knows nothing, would then go to Monks. Nancy, who still feels compassion for Oliver, overhears Fagin's and Monk's plans and tells Rose Maylie, hoping to thwart them. Rose then contacts Brownlow (clearing Oliver's name in the process, much to Brownlow's relief), Dr. Losberne and other people, to help her protect Oliver.

Meanwhile, Bumble has married the matron of the workhouse, Mrs. Corney. The former Mrs. Corney had been in attendance at Old Sally's death, and purloined the locket and ring Old Sally had taken from Oliver's mother Agnes on her deathbed. Monks buys these items from the Bumbles and throws them into the river Thames, hoping that, by destroying them, Oliver's true identity will remain hidden.

Brownlow and Rose Maylie meet Nancy on London Bridge and she tells them how to find Monks. However, Fagin has had Nancy followed and, believing Nancy has revealed his secrets, Fagin tells Sikes that Nancy has betrayed them. Sikes brutally murders Nancy, then flees London to the country. However, their neighbors and some of Fagin's own band members soon find out about Nancy's death and, enraged, they tell the

police; Sikes falls to his death when he's about to be captured and taken away.

Oliver is revealed to be the illegitimate son of a rich man named Edwin Leeford and his young mistress , a girl named Agnes Fleming. Leeford had also fathered another son, Edward ("Monks"), through a failed former marriage. After seducing Agnes, Leeford died, leaving a will which stated that the unborn child would inherit his estate if "in his minority he should never have stained his name with any public act of dishonor, meanness, cowardice, or wrong" in the event of which all would go to Monks. Monks is given half of Oliver's inheritance by Brownlow - who had been Edwin Leeford's best friend and the keeper of his secrets - in the hope that he would start a new life. Monks flees to the United States, where he quickly squanders the money and dies in prison.

Rose Maylie is revealed to be Agnes Fleming's younger sister, who was adopted by the Maylies after her parents died. Therefore, Rose is Oliver's aunt and is able to marry Harry Maylie. Oliver collects his inheritance and is adopted by Brownlow, for the conventional happy ending to the novel.

Oliver as evidence of circumstantial influence

Very common of Dickens' writings is his commentary on the social status of 19th century England. Oliver is an example of a character that represents a social group at large: the poor. At the time, it was assumed that the poor were born corrupt, deviant, and as a result unable to move out of the low social stratum they occupied. However, people are typically not innately deviant, nor are the poor necessarily incapable of pulling themselves out of impoverishment. There are often external factors that contribute to the rigidity of the social structure, especially in 19th century England, given the nature of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which in part placed impoverished people in even worse living arrangements–workhouses–presumably to urge them to climb the ladder to higher social standings where the conditions were not so dismal. Oliver's symbolic portrayal of poverty demonstrates how circumstance, rather than in-born impurity or corruption, strongly impacts a person's situation.

Oliver was born in a workhouse, and orphaned almost immediately. He is effectively the lowest form of life in England, living in a dirty house, eating meager portions of gruel, and working long days. His fate throughout the novel is largely decided by outside forces: his birthplace was chosen for him; his caretakers fed him meager portions, raised him

harshly and coldly, and forced him to work from a young age; and Sowerberry, the undertaker, apprenticed him. On the way to this new position, Oliver cries, seemingly realizing that he lacks control over his life. These actions are done unto him, while he only bears the effects of them. Outside forces have shaped the path of his life to that point. If one looks at Oliver's behavior and mannerisms, it can be seen that he is the epitome of innocence and purity. Whereas the other poor characters speak rough, common English, Oliver delivers his dialogue with speech fit for the King. This can be seen when Oliver first meets the Artful dodger:

Dodger: "Hullo my covey, what's the row?"

Oliver: "I am very hungry and tired. I have walked a long way. I have been walking these seven days."

Dodger: "Walking for seven days! Oh I see. Beak's order, eh? I suppose you don't know what a beak is, my flash com-pan-i-on."

Furthermore, Oliver's moral compass seems to steer him away from immorality without fail. It is not until he meets the Artful Dodger and Fagin that Oliver is able to take the reins, but even then he experiences negatively guiding influence from the band of thieves.

When Oliver joins up as a thief, he becomes textual evidence of the argument that the poor are not all bad, but have been forced into questionable means of living. Oliver is not a thief, but is frequently framed as one, which suggests that he, being poor, is also innately deviant. Such framing comes from his environment. Fagin and his underlings want to keep Oliver in the business in London, so Nancy and Sikes take him back to Fagin after Oliver was living with Mr. Brownlow. This leads Brownlow to believe that Oliver was a thief all along. Bumble sheds more negative light on Oliver in response to Brownlow's newspaper advertisement. Monks tries to force Oliver into thievery so he can inherit all of his father's estate instead of Oliver. We know, however, that this framing information is untrue. Presumably, readers at the time would also have picked up on the fundamental differences between Oliver and his companions. Oliver is not like the others, and thus represents the argument that the poor are normal people sometimes pushed to unsavory means of survival.

The trajectory of Oliver's story follows the expectation of middle and upper class folks, that 'inherently bad people', such as the poor, do not have the moral strength to overcome starvation themselves. (A similar

Malthusian connection has been made regarding Ebenezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol.) Oliver is placed under this lens, and is constantly written off as a bad child, when in truth he has done nothing wrong. In fact, Oliver stands as the antithesis of this expectation, as he is the embodiment of resolute morality. His extra moral fiber, as it were, keeps Oliver pure–even after being exposed to hardship and thievery throughout his young life. All these influences working against Oliver, while he remains resolutely moral and innocent, suggest the impact of outside forces, rather than any sort of predetermined traits, on his life. Had Oliver been born in a different situation, for example to a wealthy family, he could have just as well been born corrupt or deviant. However, the circumstances of that birth would have provided a far different trajectory than birth in the workhouse.

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), subtitled "The Life and Death of a Man of Character", is a novel by British author Thomas Hardy. It is set in the fictional town of Casterbridge (based on the town of Dorchester in Dorset). The book is one of Hardy's Wessex novels, all set in a fictional rural England.

Hardy began writing the book in 1884 and wrote the last page on 17 April 1885. Within the book, he writes that the events took place "before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span". Literary critic Dale Kramer sees it as being set somewhat later—in the late 1840s, corresponding to Hardy's youth in Dorchester.

Plot summary

At a country fair near Casterbridge, Wessex, a young hay-trusser named Michael Henchard overindulges in rum-laced furmity and quarrels with his wife, Susan. He decides to auction off his wife and baby daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, to a sailor, Mr. Newson, for five guineas. Once sober the next day, he is too late to recover his family. When he realises that his wife and daughter are gone, probably for good, he swears not to touch liquor again for as many years as he has lived so far (21).

Locations in Wessex, from *The Wessex of Thomas Hardy* by Bertram Windle, 1902, based on correspondence with Hardy.

Eighteen years later, Henchard, now a successful grain merchant, is the eponymous(known) Mayor of Casterbridge, known for his staunch sobriety(strong).

All these years, Henchard has kept the details surrounding the "loss" of his wife a secret. The people in Casterbridge believe he is a widower, although he never explicitly says that his first wife died. He lies by omission instead, allowing other people to believe something false. Over time he finds it convenient to believe Susan probably is dead. While travelling to the island of Jersey on business, Henchard falls in love with a young woman named Lucette Le Sueur, who nurses him back to health after an illness. The book implies that Lucette (Lucetta, in English) and Henchard have a sexual relationship, and Lucetta's reputation is ruined by her association with Henchard. The latter returns to Casterbridge, leaving Lucetta to face the social consequences of their fling.(rush)

To rejoin polite society Lucetta would have to marry him, but there is an obvious problem: Henchard is already technically married. Although Henchard never told Lucetta exactly how he "lost" his wife to begin with, he does tell her he has a wife who "is dead probably dead, but who may return". Besotted, Lucetta develops a relationship with him despite the risk. Yet just as Henchard is about to send for Lucetta, Susan unexpectedly appears in Casterbridge with her daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, who is now fully grown. The pair are very poor. Newson appears to have been lost at sea, and without means to earn an income Susan is looking to Henchard again. Susan, who is not a very intelligent or sophisticated woman, believed for a long time that her "marriage" to Newson was

perfectly legitimate. Only recently, just before Newson's disappearance, had Susan begun to question whether or not she was still legally married to Henchard.

Just as Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive in town, a tidy(elegant) Scotsman, Donald Farfrae, is passing through on his way to America. The energetic, amiable Farfrae happens to be in Henchard's line of work. He has experience as a grain and corn merchant, and is on the cutting edge of agricultural science. He befriends Henchard and helps him out of a bad financial situation by giving him some timely advice. Henchard persuades him to stay and offers him a job as his corn factor, rudely dismissing a man named Jopp to whom he had already offered the job. Hiring Farfrae is a stroke of business genius for Henchard, who although hardworking is not well educated. Henchard also makes Farfrae a close friend and confides in him about his history and personal life.

Henchard is also reunited with Susan and the fully grown Elizabeth-Jane. To preserve appearances, Henchard sets Susan and Elizabeth-Jane up in a nearby house. He pretends to court Susan, and marries her. Both Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane's mother keep their history from their daughter. Henchard also keeps Lucetta a secret. He writes to her, informing her that their marriage is off. Lucetta is devastated and asks for the return of her letters. Henchard attempts to return them, but Lucetta misses the appointment owing to a family emergency that is not explained until later in the book.

The return of his wife and daughter sets in motion a decline in Henchard's fortunes. Yet Susan and Elizabeth-Jane are not the root cause of Henchard's fall. His relationship with Farfrae deteriorates gradually as Farfrae becomes more popular than Henchard. Henchard feels threatened by Farfrae, particularly when Elizabeth-Jane starts to fall in love with him.

The competition between Donald Farfrae and Henchard grows. Eventually they part company and Farfrae sets himself up as an independent hay and corn merchant. The rivalry and resentment for the most part is one-sided, and Farfrae conducts himself with scrupulous honesty and fair dealing. Henchard meanwhile makes increasingly aggressive, risky business decisions that put him in financial danger. The business rivalry leads to Henchard's standing in the way of a marriage between Donald and Elizabeth-Jane, until after Susan's death, at which point Henchard learns he is not Elizabeth-Jane's father, and he realises that if she marries Farfrae, he will be rid of her. The Elizabeth-Jane he

auctioned off died in infancy; this second Elizabeth-Jane is Newson's daughter. He learns this secret, however, after Susan's death when he reads a letter which Susan, on her deathbed, marked to be opened only after Elizabeth-Jane's marriage. Henchard conceals the secret from Elizabeth-Jane, but grows cold and cruel towards her.

In the meantime, Henchard's former mistress, Lucetta, arrives from Jersey and purchases a house in Casterbridge. She has inherited money from a wealthy relative who died; in fact, it was this relative's death that had kept her from picking up her letters from Henchard. Initially she wants to pick up her relationship with him where it left off, but propriety requires that they wait a while. She takes Elizabeth-Jane into her household as a companion, thinking it will give Henchard an excuse to come to visit, but the plan backfires because of Henchard's hatred of Elizabeth-Jane. She also learns a little bit more about Henchard, specifically, the details of how he sold his first wife become public knowledge when the furmity vendor who witnessed the sale makes the story public. Henchard does not deny the story, but when Lucetta hears a little bit more about what kind of man Henchard really is, she stops rationalising his conduct in terms of what she wants to believe. For the first time, she starts to see him more clearly, and she no longer particularly likes what she sees.

Donald Farfrae, who visits Lucetta's house to see Elizabeth-Jane and who becomes completely distracted by Lucetta, has no idea that Lucetta is the mysterious woman who was informally engaged to Henchard. Since Henchard is such a reluctant and secretive suitor who in no way reveals his attachment to Lucetta to anybody, Lucetta starts to question whether her engagement to Henchard is valid. She, too, is lying about her past: she claims to be from Bath, not Jersey, and she has taken the surname of her wealthy relative. Yet she came to Casterbridge seeking Henchard, and sent him letters after Susan's death indicating that she wanted to resume and legitimise the relationship. Although initially reluctant, Henchard gradually realises that he wants to marry Lucetta, particularly since he is having financial trouble due to some speculations having gone bad. Lenders are unwilling to extend credit to him, and he believes that they would extend credit if they at least believed he was about to be married to a wealthy woman. Frustrated by her stalling, Henchard bullies Lucetta into agreeing to marry him. But by this point she is in love with Farfrae. Lucetta and Farfrae run away one weekend and get married, but she does not have the nerve to tell Henchard until well after the fact. Henchard's credit collapses, he becomes bankrupt, and he sells all his personal possessions to pay creditors.

Here As Henchard's fortunes decline, Farfrae's rise. He buys Henchard's old business and employs Henchard as a journeyman. Farfrae is always trying to help the man who helped him get started, whom he still regards as a friend and a former mentor. He does not realise Henchard is his enemy, even though the town council and Elizabeth-Jane both warn him.

Lucetta, feeling safe and comfortable in her marriage with Farfrae, keeps her former relationship with Henchard a secret. This secret is revealed when Henchard foolishly lets his enemy Jopp deliver Lucetta's old love letters. Jopp makes the secret public and the townspeople publicly shame Henchard and Lucetta in a skimmington ride. Lucetta, who by this point is pregnant, dies of an epileptic seizure.

When Newson, Elizabeth-Jane's biological father, returns, Henchard is afraid of losing her companionship and tells Newson she is dead. Henchard is once again impoverished, and, as soon as the twenty-first year of his oath is up, he starts drinking again. By the time Elizabeth-Jane, who months later is married to Donald Farfrae and reunited with Newson, goes looking for Henchard to forgive him, he has died and left a will requesting no funeral.

"That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me. "& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground. "& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell. "& that nobody is wished to see my dead body. "& that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral. "& that no flowers be planted on my grave, "& that no man remember me. "To this I put my name.

Characters

Michael Henchard

The first of the two Mayors of Casterbridge presented, Michael Henchard starts his life as a poor journeyman hay-trusser . He rises above his humble beginnings to become a successful businessman, until his secrets catch up with him and combine with his inherent character flaws to bring him down. Henchard belongs to what at the time was the working class, but aspires to genteel status[1]. Although literate, he is poorly educated, and not good at arithmetic or the record-keeping aspect of his business.

Henchard is physically strong and stands more than six feet tall. He is twenty-one years old at the start of the story, forty-two to forty-three at its end, and is described as having dark hair and eyes.

Henchard has a very impulsive temperament, although he also has a tendency to depression]. He tends to take a sudden liking, or a sudden dislike, to other people and can be verbally aggressive even when sober. Henchard is respected in Casterbridge, having built up a strong business almost from nothing, but he is not well liked, and when he drinks, he can be abusive. Indeed, one of the reasons he does so well in business is because, after he sells his wife and child, he swears an oath not to touch alcohol for twenty-one years. When he decides Farfrae is his enemy, he wages an economic war that, at first, is extremely one-sided. A risk-taker, Henchard eventually lets his personal grudge against Farfrae get in the way of his reasoning abilities. He takes too many risks, gambles too aggressively, and loses his credit, his business, and most of his fortune.

Henchard has a softer, emotional side. This is shown through the genuine love he has for Elizabeth-Jane; how he cannot bring himself to reveal to Farfrae the fact that it was Lucetta who wrote the love letters he is reading out; as well as the fact that he gives food to the poor and provides for Abel Whittle's mother. Furthermore his guilt about his past also leads him to reunite with Susan even though he does not love her.

Donald Farfrae

A Scotsman named Donald Farfrae is the second character in the novel who becomes the Mayor of Casterbridge. He is Michael Henchard's opposite in nearly every way. They are physical opposites. Whereas Henchard is tall, strong, and somewhat clumsy Farfrae is short, lithe, and well coordinated. Whereas Henchard is not well educated, Farfrae is intelligent and very well informed about the scientific and business aspects of the grain and corn industry. Henchard is aggressive and abrasive, but Farfrae is gentle and likeable. Henchard is a labourer, but Farfrae is a well educated member of the merchant class. In short, Farfrae is everything Henchard would love to be, and loves to pretend that he is. This initially causes Henchard to admire and like Farfrae, but it eventually leads to jealousy and resentment

Donald Farfrae arrives in town by chance and passes along a valuable technique for improving wheat, which saves Henchard a great deal of money and embarrassment. Henchard prevails upon him to stay in town, hiring him as his manager over the head of another man named Jopp to whom he had already made a job offer. He immediately brings Henchard's business up to date in terms of technology and business discipline, and he is charismatic enough to be a far better manager and leader than Henchard himself.

Farfrae takes an interest in Elizabeth-Jane Newson, who at the time is living as Henchard's stepdaughter. Both Mr. and Mrs. Henchard approve of the, until Henchard's growing jealousy and resentment of Farfrae cause him to feel threatened. Yet Farfrae is too naïve to realise Henchard is competing with him. He shows Henchard up quite unintentionally by throwing a better party than Henchard himself, and Henchard fires him. Afterwards, Farfrae considers leaving town but stays for Elizabeth-Jane's sake until Henchard tells him to keep away from her. Henchard revokes that order later, after he reads Susan's deathbed confession and realises Elizabeth-Jane is not really his daughter, at which point Farfrae attempts to start courting Elizabeth-Jane again and is distracted by Lucetta.

Farfrae does not realise he is competing with Henchard for Lucetta's attention, or that Lucetta is the woman his former boss wooed, abandoned, and is trying to reclaim. Farfrae marries her and does not learn of her association with Henchard until after Lucetta's first seizure. After Lucetta's death and Henchard's return to the bottle, followed by the return of Captain Newson, Farfrae marries Elizabeth-Jane.

Susan Henchard (Newson)

Susan is an honest but simple-minded woman who, as a young woman, is married to Michael Henchard but sold (along with her baby girl Elizabeth-Jane) at a drunken auction to a sailor by the name of Newson. She believes there is something legally binding about the sale, and goes to live with Newson as his wife. The baby Elizabeth-Jane dies three months later, and Susan has a daughter with Newson whom she names Elizabeth-Jane. It is this second Elizabeth-Jane whom she later passes off as Henchard's daughter.

After living for years with Newson in Canada, the family of three returns to England. One spring, Newson (who believes his wife is having second thoughts about the validity of their marriage) is lost at sea. The impoverished "Widow Newson" returns with Elizabeth-Jane, who is now about eighteen years old. A reader who cares to do the maths will realise immediately that there's something fishy about Elizabeth-Jane's age. In any case, Susan has never told Elizabeth-Jane about Henchard or her first marriage, and certainly never told her about the auction incident.

Because she has no way to earn a living, Susan approaches Henchard for help. She does not correct his assumption that he is Elizabeth-Jane's father, nor does she tell anyone about the auction incident. Henchard sends her a gift of five guineas (the amount for which he sold her to

Newson) and sets her up as a genteel new arrival to town. He courts her and remarries her. She does not tell him the truth about Elizabeth-Jane until her death a year or two later, when she writes a deathbed confession and seals it in an envelope to be opened only on Elizabeth-Jane's wedding day.

Elizabeth-Jane Newson

About eighteen years old when she and her mother arrive in Casterbridge, Elizabeth-Jane is the daughter of Newson. She is a sweet, innocent young woman who is ignorant of the social graces required of a mayor's stepdaughter. She strives to improve herself, reading constantly and studying Latin and geography. Gradually she transforms herself into the kind of sophisticated young lady Henchard believes he ought to have as a daughter. When Henchard alternates between doting on her and verbally abusing her, she never understands why, especially when Henchard (mistakenly) reveals the "truth" about who her father was.

After her mother's death she accepts Lucetta's invitation to live with her as a companion or chaperone. She develops feelings for Donald Farfrae until Lucetta attracts him away from her, and is disappointed for a while but is ultimately happy when she is reunited with her father Newson (who turns out not to be lost after all) and marries Farfrae.

Lucetta Templeman (Lucette Le Sueur)

A native of the island of Jersey, the Francophone Lucette Le Sueur is the daughter of a military officer. She lives a nomadic life, and after the death of her parents takes lodging in a boarding-house in Jersey. There she meets Michael Henchard, who is travelling on business and who is taken sick with a bout of severe depression. She becomes infatuated with him, and he indulges her affection for him without too much regard for appearances.

Lucetta is a few years older than Elizabeth-Jane and far more refined. She speaks fluent French as well as English, but conceals her knowledge of the language because she does not want her history in Jersey to become well known. She's impulsive, like Henchard, but not spiteful or mean although she lets money and status go to her head. After she marries, she slights Henchard and puts on airs, alienating Henchard and refusing to help Jopp (an old acquaintance of hers) obtain employment.

Exactly how far the affair between Lucetta and Henchard went is unclear. The book strongly suggests that the two of them have had sexual relations, but is ambiguous enough to not offend the sensibilities of 19th century readers. Whatever happened was enough for Lucetta's reputation to be so irreparably tarnished that the only solution for her is to leave Jersey and change her name. She takes the last name of her deceased relative, Templeman, and alters her first name to make it sound more English.

It is important to notice that scandal would not have broken out if all Lucetta and Henchard did was walk, talk, or dine together in a boarding house. They would have had to spend a considerable amount of time alone together, or they would have had to be caught in a very compromising situation. In any case Henchard does propose marriage, stating that there was a risk his first wife would return. Lucetta accepts the proposal, so the two are engaged. Henchard returns to Casterbridge leaving Lucetta to bear the full brunt of the scandal until he is ready to bring her to town, and she writes him passionate letters on a daily basis. Of course, it is at this inopportune time that Susan arrives. Henchard cancels the engagement and sends Lucetta a substantial gift of money.

Lucetta is scheduled to stop and pick up her love letters to Henchard, but a family emergency (specifically, the death of her only living relative who was quite wealthy) intervenes. Lucetta is left with substantial means. When she learns of Susan's death, she moves to Casterbridge to determine whether she should pick up her association with Henchard where she left off. She's agreeable to the at first, but as she learns more about Henchard she likes him less and her rosy outlook and tendency to rationalise away his cruel treatment of others decreases over time. Besides, she's attracted to Donald Farfrae instead.

Given that Henchard married somebody else, their original engagement to each other is null and void. Yet Henchard, who finds himself very interested in Lucetta particularly since she has come into money, bullies Lucetta into accepting his proposal again. Lucetta elopes with Farfrae, and incurs Henchard's wrath. He retrieves her love letters, toys with the idea of exposing her secret to her new husband, and eventually sends her love letters by way of Jopp, who has reason to hate both Henchard and Lucetta. The love affair becomes public, and the scandal eventually contributes to Lucetta's death.

Joshua Jopp

A relatively minor character, Jopp lived in Jersey until Henchard invited him to Casterbridge to work as his new manager and corn-factor. He was effectively hired by Henchard, subject to an interview that never happened because Henchard impulsively hired Farfrae instead, leaving Jopp without employment.

After being brushed off by Henchard, Jopp is unable to find regular employment and gradually sinks into poverty. Henchard hires him after he dismisses Farfrae, thinking to bring Farfrae down but only through lawful means. But Jopp is not the manager Farfrae was and the business collapses, leaving Jopp out of work and Henchard bankrupt.

When Lucetta marries Donald Farfrae, Jopp (who knew her in Jersey) asks her, as an old acquaintance, to put in a good word for him with Farfrae so as to help him find work. Lucetta refuses for reasons that are not clear, but that could be read as reluctance to keep a potential blackmailer close by or a high-and-mighty refusal to help anybody. Henchard by this time is using Jopp to run errands, and charges him with the important task of returning Lucetta's love letters, which Jopp decides to publicly read first. He is instrumental in putting together the skimmington ride, which is a public procession designed to mock and humiliate people, to publicise the affair between Henchard and Lucetta so as to hurt both. It is during the skimmington ride that the pregnant Lucetta suffers her first seizure and becomes fatally ill.

Richard Newson

Newson starts out as a sailor of indeterminate rank. He does have ready money, which he uses to buy Susan and Elizabeth-Jane at the beginning of the book, and is described in the latter stages of the book as a captain.

Newson has light-coloured hair, a trait that Elizabeth-Jane shares and that initially causes some confusion for Henchard, since his infant daughter had dark hair like Henchard's own. He appears to have been kind to Elizabeth-Jane, who loves him dearly. He also seems to be somewhat gullible, believing at first that his marriage to Susan is legally binding. When he returns after Susan's death looking for Elizabeth-Jane, he believes Henchard who tells him that Elizabeth-Jane died too. He doesn't even look for his daughter's grave, but leaves town quickly only to return, hopefully, once more. He is eventually reunited with Elizabeth-Jane.

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Importance of Character

As a "Story of a Man of Character," *The Mayor of Casterbridge* focuses on how its protagonist's qualities enable him to endure . One tends to think of character, especially in terms of a "Man of Character," as the product of such values as honor and moral righteousness. Certainly Michael Henchard does not fit neatly into such categories. Throughout the novel, his volatile(flown) temper forces him into ruthless (hard)competition with Farfrae that strips him of his pride and property, while his insecurities lead him to deceive the one person he learns to truly care about, Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard dies an unremarkable death, slinking off to a humble cottage in the woods, and he stipulates in his will that no one mourn or remember him. There will be no statues in the Casterbridge square, as one might imagine, to mark his life and work. Yet Hardy insists that his hero is a worthy man. Henchard's worth, then—that which makes him a "Man of Character"—lies in his determination to suffer and in his ability to endure great pain. He shoulders the burden of his own mistakes as he sells his family, mismanages his business, and bears the storm of an unlucky fate, especially when the furmity-woman confesses and Newson reappears. In a world that seems guided by the "scheme[s] of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing" human beings, there can be no more honorable and more righteous characteristic than Henchard's brand of "defiant(courageous) endurance."

The Value of a Good Name

The value of a good name is abundantly clear within the first few chapters of the novel: as Henchard wakes to find that the sale of his wife was not a dream or a drunken hallucination, his first concern is to remember whether he divulged his name to anyone during the course of the previous evening. All the while, Susan warns Elizabeth-Jane of the need for discretion at the Three Mariners Inn—their respectability (and, more important, that of the mayor) could be jeopardized(dangerous) if anyone discovered that Henchard's family performed chores as payment for lodging.

The importance of a solid reputation and character is rather obvious given Henchard's situation, for Henchard has little else besides his name. He arrives in Casterbridge with nothing more than the implements of the

hay-trusser's trade, and though we never learn the circumstances of his ascent(raise) to civic leader, such a climb presumably depends upon the worth of one's name. Throughout the course of the novel, Henchard attempts to earn, or to believe that he has earned, his position. He is, however, plagued by a conviction of his own worthlessness, and he places himself in situations that can only result in failure. For instance, he indulges in petty jealousy of Farfrae, which leads to a drawn-out competition in which Henchard loses his position as mayor, his business, and the women he loves. More crucial, Henchard's actions result in the loss of his name and his reputation as a worthy and honorable citizen. Once he has lost these essentials, he follows the same course toward death as Lucetta, whose demise(vanish) is seemingly precipitated by the irretrievable(unfixed) loss of respectability brought about by the "skimmity-ride."

The Indelibility(unvarnished) of the Past

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel haunted by the past. Henchard's fateful decision to sell his wife and child at Weydon-Priors continues to shape his life eighteen years later, while the town itself rests upon its former incarnation: every farmer who tills a field turns up the remains of long-dead Roman soldiers. The Ring, the ancient Roman amphitheater that dominates Casterbridge and provides a forum for the secret meetings of its citizens, stands as a potent symbol of the indelibility of a past that cannot be escaped. The terrible events that once occurred here as entertainment for the citizens of Casterbridge have, in a certain sense, determined the town's present state. The brutality of public executions has given way to the miseries of thwarted(disappointed) lovers.

Henchard's past proves no less indomitable(not beaten). Indeed, he spends the entirety of the novel attempting to right the wrongs of long ago. He succeeds only in making more grievous mistakes, but he never fails to acknowledge that the past cannot be buried or denied. Only Lucetta is guilty of such folly. She dismisses her history with Henchard and the promises that she made to him in order to pursue (follows)Farfrae, a decision for which she pays with her reputation and, eventually, her life.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

Coincidence(chance) : Even the most cursory reading of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* reveals a structural pattern that relies heavily on coincidence. Indeed, the story would hardly progress were it not for the chance occurrences that push Henchard closer and closer to failure . For example, the reappearance of just one long-lost character would test our willingness to believe, but here we witness the return of Susan, the furmity-woman, and Newson, each of whom brings a dark secret that contributes to Henchard's doom. Although we, as modern readers, are unlikely to excuse such overdetermined plotting, we should attempt to understand it. Hardy's reliance on coincidence relates directly to his philosophy of the world. As a determinist, Hardy believed that human life was shaped not by free will but by such powerful, uncontrollable forces as heredity and God. Henchard rails against such forces throughout the novel, lamenting that the world seems designed to bring about his demise. In such an environment, coincidence seems less like a product of poor plot structure than an inevitable consequence of malicious bad)universal forces.

The Tension between Tradition and Innovation: Casterbridge is, at first, a town untouched by modernism. Henchard's government runs the town according to quaintly traditional customs: business is conducted by word of mouth and weather-prophets are consulted regarding crop yields. When Farfrae arrives, he brings with him new and efficient systems for managing the town's grain markets and increasing agricultural production. In this way, Henchard and Farfrae come to represent tradition and innovation, respectively. As such, their struggle can be seen not merely as a competition between a grain merchant and his former protégé but rather as the tension between the desire for and the reluctance to change as one age replaces another.

Hardy reports this succession as though it were inevitable(bad), and the novel, for all its sympathies toward Henchard, is never hostile toward progress. Indeed, we witness and even enjoy the efficacy of Farfrae's accomplishments. Undoubtedly, his day of celebration, his new method for organizing the granary's business, and his determination to introduce modern technologies to Casterbridge are good things. Nevertheless, Hardy reports the passing from one era to the next with a quiet kind of nostalgia(bad). Throughout the novel are traces of a world that once was and will never be again. In the opening pages, as Henchard seeks shelter

for his tired family, a peasant laments the loss of the quaint cottages that once characterized the English countryside.

The Tension between Public Life and Private Life : Henchard's fall can be understood in terms of a movement from the public arena into the private one. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane discover Henchard at the Three Mariners Inn, he is the mayor of Casterbridge and its most successful grain merchant, two positions that place him in the center of public life and civic duty. As his good fortune shifts when his reputation and finances fail, he is forced to relinquish these posts. He becomes increasingly less involved with public life—his ridiculous greeting of the visiting Royal Personage demonstrates how completely he has abandoned this realm—and lives wholly with his private thoughts and obsessions. He moves from "the commercial [to] the romantic," concentrating his energies on his personal and domestic relationships with Farfrae, Lucetta, and Elizabeth-Jane.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concept.

The Caged Goldfinch : In an act of contrition, Henchard visits Elizabeth-Jane on her wedding day, carrying the gift of a caged goldfinch. He leaves the bird in a corner while he speaks to his stepdaughter and forgets it when she coolly dismisses him. Days later, a maid discovers the starved bird, which prompts Elizabeth-Jane to search for Henchard, whom she finds dead in Abel Whittle's cottage. When Whittle reports that Henchard "didn't gain strength, for you see, ma'am, he couldn't eat," he unwittingly ties Henchard's fate to the bird's: both lived and died in a prison. The finch's prison was literal, while Henchard's was the inescapable prison of his personality and his past.

The Bull :The bull that chases down Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane stands as a symbol of the brute forces that threaten human life. Malignant, deadly, and bent on destruction, it seems to incarnate the unnamed forces that Henchard often bemoans. The bull's rampage provides Henchard with an opportunity to display his strength and courage, thus making him more sympathetic in our eyes.

The Collision of the Wagons :When a wagon owned by Henchard collides with a wagon owned by Farfrae on the street outside of High-Place Hall, the interaction bears more significance than a simple traffic accident. The violent collision dramatically symbolizes the tension in the relationship between the two men. It also symbolizes the clash between tradition, which Henchard embodies, and the new modern era, which Farfrae personifies.