

PREFACE

The main topic of my thesis is the theme of nature Vs. nurture in the personality development of the child characters in the selected novels of Charles Dickens *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard times*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Each of the novels has one main child protagonist and many other child characters that play subordinate roles in the plot and in the construction of the whole novel. The novels were selected because of the fact that the theme of childhood is crucial to them and as is believed by eminent psychologists, childhood is the most crucial period in which the seeds of a person's personality development are sown, and ultimately the way, one's personality shapes up, depends to a great extent upon his/her childhood experiences. Let me now briefly introduce and describe the structure of the thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to use psychoanalytic literary criticism to see how the childhood experiences and events play a vital role and have a defining feature and role in a personality development of a child. How Dickens portrays the characters in their childhood and at the beginning of the stories can tell us quite a lot about the personality development of their characters. In the pages that follow it will be shown how childhood experiences which are often present

in the subconscious of an individual unknowingly guides him to become a kind of individual, as he matures and becomes an adult. How certain latent feelings of the characters can be discerned by delving deep into his childhood to have a better understanding of his present attitude and views towards life. It will also be shown how a person's nature as well as nurture (the kind of environment which he gets in childhood to develop himself) will determine the type of individual he will blossom into.

Children after all are the future pillars of the society, and a proper care of these children is indeed a duty of parents, society and educationalists collectively. This duty can be smoothly executed if we have an insight into the role of Nature Vs Nurture. So, the present study will be of much use for all.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first of all like to express my thanks and gratitude to my supervisor **Dr. (Mrs.) Philomina Zacharia**, who inspired me to work on this topic considering my interest in both Psychology and English Literature. I am grateful to her for her guidance, support constant encouragement and patience,