The present dissertation is an attempt to study the childhood motif in the major novels of Dickens in relation to the thematic structure of those novels as well as to the narrative techniques employed in them. The thesis does not undertake an exhaustive study of all the novels of Dickens or even of all the aspects of the novels taken up for consideration. I chose to work on this topic because it engaged my interest and attention for a long period and also because, as I found, it held potential as a relatively unexplored territory in the field of Dickensian criticism. Except for Frank Donovan's *The Children of Charles Dickens* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1968), there is no full length study on the subject though there are innumerable articles and discussions on the subject. I have endeavoured to consult all the available material on this and related subjects. I must say, however, that, living and working in this part of the world, I have been somewhat handicapped by the non-availability of some recent studies.
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