



OLIVER'S SEARCH FOR FAMILY AND BELONGING

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Annotation: *This thesis examines a story of a young orphan, Oliver's journey through the hardships of Victorian England. At its heart, it is an exploration of identity, family, and the quest for belonging in a society structured around rigid social classes. Oliver's search for family and a place where he truly belongs becomes the central narrative thread of the novel, revealing profound truths about human connection, the power of kinship, and the moral complexities of class.*

В этой диссертации рассматривается история молодого сироты, путешествие Оливера через трудности викторианской Англии. По сути, это исследование идентичности, семьи и поиск принадлежности к обществу, структурированному вокруг жестких социальных классов. Поиск Оливером семьи и места, где он действительно принадлежит, становится центральной повествовательной нитью романа, раскрывая глубокие истины о человеческих связях, силе родства и моральных сложностях класса.

Bu tezis yosh etimning hikoyasi, Oliverning Viktoriya davridagi Angliya qiyinchiliklari orqali qilgan sayohatini ko'rib chiqadi. Uning mohiyatida bu o'ziga xoslik, oila va qat'iy ijtimoiy sinflar atrofida tuzilgan jamiyatga tegishli bo'lishga intilishdir. Oliverning oila va u haqiqatan ham tegishli bo'lgan joyni izlashi romanning markaziy hikoya chizig'iga aylanib, insoniy munosabatlar, qarindoshlik kuchi va sinflarning axloqiy murakkabliklari haqidagi chuqur haqiqatlarni ochib beradi.

Key words: *family, belonging, identity, orphan, society.*

In literature, the theme of a search for family and belonging is central to many coming-of-age stories, with one of the most iconic being Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. In this novel, the protagonist, Oliver, embarks on a tumultuous journey to discover not only his origins but also a sense of belonging in a society that has cast him aside. Oliver's life begins in the workhouse, a symbol of Victorian society's cold indifference to the suffering of the poor. He is born into the lowest rung of the social ladder, an orphan without family or home, left to the mercy of a system that sees him only as a burden. The workhouse, designed to control and manage the poor, strips Oliver of any familial identity. His first words, famously asking for more food, are met with cruelty and disdain. In these early chapters, Dickens critiques a society that removes any sense of family from its most vulnerable, reducing individuals to mere commodities. Oliver's search for family and belonging is an exploration of identity, community, and the



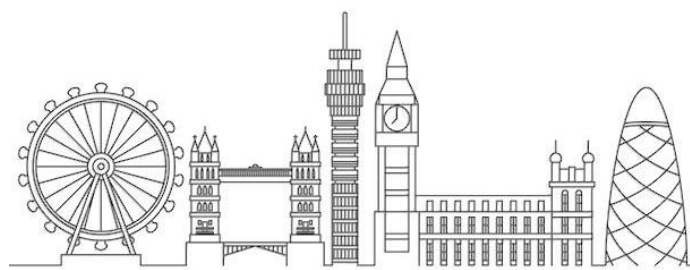


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inherent human need to connect with others.¹ Oliver's journey begins in a workhouse, where he is born into poverty, and his early experiences reflect the harsh realities faced by the orphaned and abandoned children of Victorian England. The workhouse symbolizes the brutal, dehumanizing force of an industrial society that treats its most vulnerable members as expendable. Despite this oppressive environment, Oliver displays an innate sense of goodness and hope, qualities that distinguish him from the other children around him. It is this hope that drives his desire for a better life, one where he is not merely a number on a register but a loved and valued individual.² Throughout the novel, Oliver is subjected to various forms of mistreatment and exploitation. After running away from the workhouse, he encounters the criminal Fagin and his gang, who force him into a life of thievery. However, even amidst this dark world, Oliver continues to yearn for a family. He is unable to find a sense of home with Fagin or the other members of the gang, illustrating the difference between biological connections and emotional belonging. Although Fagin's group forms a surrogate family of sorts, it is clear that Oliver's moral compass and innate sense of right and wrong do not align with their criminal lifestyle.³ The turning point in Oliver's search for belonging occurs when he is taken in by Mr. Brownlow, a kindly gentleman who offers him shelter and care. Mr. Brownlow becomes a fatherly figure to Oliver, showing him the warmth and security he has longed for. This relationship is pivotal because it marks the moment when Oliver begins to understand what it means to be part of a family—a place where care, kindness, and mutual respect are paramount.⁴

Oliver's search for family is also intrinsically tied to his identity. As the novel progresses, Oliver learns of his true parentage, discovering that he is the child of a deceased noblewoman. This revelation brings a sense of closure to his search for belonging, but it is not just the discovery of his biological family that fulfills him. Rather, it is the unconditional love and support he receives from Mr. Brownlow and other compassionate figures in the story that truly provides Oliver with the sense of belonging he had longed for. This suggests that family is not solely about blood relations but about the emotional and moral bonds that connect people.⁵

Conclusion. Oliver's journey in *Oliver Twist* is one of personal growth and self-discovery. Through his experiences of hardship, exploitation, and eventual acceptance into a loving family, Oliver embodies the universal human search for belonging and identity. Dickens uses Oliver's narrative to comment on the importance of compassion and familial connections in shaping an individual's sense of self and place in the world.⁶





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