REPRESENTATION OF ORPHANS IN 19TH CENTURY
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This piece of research looks at the representation of orphans in 19th century children's literature. The literature used for this research looks at the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Victorian family life and how that led to the scapegoating of the orphan both inside and outside of the book; how changes in social policy have affected children and families, with a specific focus on orphans and how this led to the philanthropic work of Thomas Barnardo; the portrayal of the orphan in children's literature and how that compared to the real life of the orphan. The aims of the research were to establish whether the sociological impact of the orphan figure in children's literature was formative in shaping ideas about orphans or reflective of the time in which the book was written. It uses discourse analysis to analyse selected chapters from 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens (1838) and 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911). The findings were that the sociological impact of the orphan figure in children's literature was both formative in shaping ideas about orphans in how the orphan was represented and also reflective of the point in history when the book was written as social policy affected the way in which the character was represented. Further research is required to determine the point at which the sociological impact of the 19th century stopped influencing the way orphan characters are portrayed in children's literature.

KEY WORDS:

Orphan, Discourse Analysis, Victorian, British Empire, Children's Literature, Social Policy

Contents

Introduction

This research will look at the sociological representation of the orphan figure in the 19th century through an analysis of children's orphan literature. In this chapter I will set out my rationale for this research, including the personal interests which have brought me to this research topic. I will first of all outline the research questions which this dissertation aims to answer.

1. What was the sociological impact of the orphan figure in children's literature – was it formative in shaping ideas about orphans or reflective of the time in which the book was written?

2. How did social policy affect these representations?

3. What do these representations tell us about the sociological status of orphans in the 19th century?

The research questions above will guide the course of my literature review in which I will highlight the reading that I have done to look into the broader areas of: the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Victorian family life and how that led to the scapegoating of the orphan both inside and outside of the book; how changes in social policy have affected children and families, with a specific focus on orphans and how this led to the philanthropic work of Thomas Barnardo; the portrayal of the orphan in children's literature and how that compared to the real life of the orphan.

In the Methodology chapter I will set out which research methods have been used to gather my information and the reasons why I chose those methods

before discussing the books selected to provide the findings for my research, including a short summary of what the books are about. In the Findings and Analysis chapter I will set out the findings from the text books followed by an analysis of this information. The analysis will require the use of an Analytical Framework which I will explain and also attach a copy of in the Appendices. My final chapter will be the Conclusion where I will summarise what the outcomes of my research are and what future recommendations could be made for further research.

My reasons for choosing this topic

I have always been an avid reader from a young age and have read many books, with many of my childhood favourites still in my personal collection. I still read daily and I particularly like to read books on the subject of social history, either fiction or non-fiction. Some of my favourite books include 'The Secret Garden', 'Anne of Green Gables', 'Little Women' and 'Heidi' and more recently books about the Holocaust and London during the First and Second World Wars. My other pastime is researching family history which is where my passion for social history has been developed. Many of my family are from the East End of London and it was the knowledge that my own father was adopted that prompted me to research more in the field of orphans. A sense of belonging is something which I believe is a basic right, along with the knowledge of your heritage, but I am aware that the truth is still hidden for so many and for many reasons – war, immigration, adoption and family secrets amongst others.

I have managed to combine my love of literature, family and social history into my research topic and would like to discover whether the way in which orphan figures are written about in children's literature have an impact on how orphans are perceived. There are still many orphan stories being published, the most recent being that of Harry Potter, and there is still an air of mystery and adventure surrounding these characters. The Victorian period in history was so innovative and forward thinking in many ways, but in others very restrictive and it is this dichotomy which is both fascinating and appalling in equal measure. Throughout any period in history there are usually social policies which have an effect on how people live their lives and the Victorian era is no exception. The way in which certain things are still viewed today have their roots in Victorian history, such as the 'ideal' family although there are much more relaxed versions of this in more recent times and society is becoming more accepting of change.

To conclude, I have chosen to undertake this piece of research due to a personal interest in children's literature and an enduring fascination with the history and stories surrounding orphans. I have also selected to look specifically at the 19th and early 20th centuries as this represents a period in time when orphans were more common due to disease, high mortality rates, illegitimacy and the introduction of the Poor Law in 1834 which made the lives of those with little money even more unbearably difficult.

Literature Review

In this literature review I will start by looking at the cultural significance that the Industrial Revolution had on Victorian family life and values and how this contributed towards the scapegoating of the orphan figure both in real life and in literature.

I will then explore changes in social policy affecting children and families, with a specific focus on the lives of orphans, and how this led to the philanthropic charity work carried out by Thomas Barnardo.

I will then discuss how the orphan figure was portrayed through different types of children's literature and how the life of the fictional orphan compared to the reality of being an orphan during that period.

The creation of Victorian family values

The beginning of the Industrial Revolution heralded a time of change and upheaval for the people of Great Britain during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Advances in technology allowed huge growth in areas of industrial production, creating new manufacturing opportunities for which more workers were required to maintain an increasing demand for British goods. The subsequent increase in population and creation of new urban towns and cities to support this economic growth prompted families to move to these urban areas to seek employment and earn more money. The social changes brought about by this were evident in a distinct divide between the wealthy and prosperous industrialists and an ever increasing working class who survived

on low wages and in cramped urban environments. Later came the creation of a middle class which consisted of families who worked but were also affluent enough to allow themselves time for enjoying the fruits of their labour by going to the theatre, partaking in sporting pastimes or simply appreciating the great outdoors (Museum, 2016).

The families most affected by these changes were the working class and in order to maximise their meagre income from the factories and other manual labour they sent their children to work also. The factories were a dangerous environment not only for adults but especially for children who were often given life endangering tasks and were expected to work long hours for little reward. Some children were even sent away from home to assume a life in domestic service where they were again poorly treated and exploited. During the 19th century there was a call for social and political change in order to safeguard the rights of workers and especially children, including a change to welfare and education (Museum, 2016).

The poor and cramped living conditions of the working class families and the dangerous working conditions led to high mortality rates. Disease and common childhood illnesses were rife alongside industrial accidents which could result in life-changing injuries and also death. Families had little control over their living and working circumstances and were often at the mercy of the state. This especially came to the fore when poor families no longer able to sustain themselves were at the mercy of the workhouse. In Victorian culture an orphan could either have one or no parents or be 'bereft of protection, advantages, benefits or happiness, previously enjoyed' according

to the Old English Dictionary (2016). An orphan became a scapegoat for the failure of what the family was meant to represent, namely legitimacy, race and belonging (Peters, 2000, p1). The orphan was also used to represent otherness and difference which was Victorian society reproducing the workings of colonial discourse, in direct opposition to society's national identity based on 'the concept of caring, responsible family values' (Peters, 2000, p16). Indeed, waifs and strays were likened to 'street Arabs', a colonial stereotype of the Middle East. The term 'street Arab' implied that they were alone in the world, actively rejected English middle-class values and were therefore not responsible citizens (Reclaiming our identity, 2011).

In Victorian society, illegitimacy was feared due to the lack of information surrounding a child's origins which was required to be kept secret their whole lives to avoid risking their position in society. Peters (2000, p14) also argues that the condition of orphan hood was produced by the state as district schools would separate children from their poor parents, train them and then send them out to work in domestic service, a line of work requiring a constant supply of children aged over thirteen years. So not only was the orphan feared but it was also a product of the state to fulfil the need for domestic servants in affluent households. The 'created' orphans were well treated, educated and employed whereas the 'real' orphans were mistreated, malnourished, neglected and poorly educated and were therefore forced by the state into a self-fulfilling prophecy of crime where they 'fulfilled their perceived potential for evil' (Peters, p14). The creation of an 'orphan' category essentially separated them from their middle-class English

counterparts and thus invited intervention. This intervention would allow them to be converted into respectable English citizens unlike their parents who were deemed a lost cause.

Social Policy

Children were a vital part of the British economy and needed in the workplace as much to work as to keep them gainfully occupied. During the 19th century it was realised that the working conditions of children had to be improved, including limiting their hours of work and inspecting workplaces, and so a series of laws were passed to facilitate this. This proved to be difficult, however, as the majority believed that children working long hours was just 'common sense' and a necessary evil (Hoare & Smith, 1999). A whole series of Acts were eventually passed in quick succession during the 19th century, such as the 1802 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act (Bloy,2016) which limited working hours in a mill to twelve hour days, banned night working and provided some elementary educational provision; The Cotton Mills and Factories Acts of 1819, 1825 and 1831 (Parliament, 2016) which introduced the banning of under nine year old children from working in the cotton mills, introduced meal breaks and later restricted the number of hours worked by children under eighteen years old; the 1834 Chimney Sweeps Act (Parliament, 2016) which banned apprentices under ten years of age and eventually the employment of boys under sixteen years; the 1874 Factory Act (Bloy, 2016) which raised the minimum working age to nine and the maximum hours that could be worked daily to ten.

Despite these Acts being brought in there were still many unscrupulous employers who flouted the law and continued to exploit children. It was not until 1889 that the NSPCC evolved which raised awareness of child protection and welfare issues.

This then prompted the rise of philanthropy, such as the charitable organisation Dr Barnardo – the Barnardo journal 'Night and Day' (British Home Children in Canada, 2016) described children as dangerous and un-domesticated and without hope unless some kind of intervention took place. This deliberate use of terminology and image by Barnardo helped them gain supporters for their work. Barnardo's annual 'waifs and strays' tea meeting displayed drawings depicting boys as being racially different – physically distinct foreigners within domestic England. This allowed evangelical reformers to describe them as an alternative society that rejected Christianity. Lord Shaftesbury, another prominent philanthropist, described street children as a 'tribe' and 'a wild and lawless race of their own'. The use of racial, animalistic, biological and sub-human terms was often used in the description of orphans. By referring to children as 'Arabs' they became linked to other nomadic groups such as Bedouins, gypsies, Native Americans and the migratory Irish who existed outside the constructions of the nation-state (Reclaiming our identity, 2011).

The national census of England in 1851 brought about a change in the definition of families and described the family as an 'ideal and aspired to state' (UK Census Online, 2016) This census also described the orphan as being 'outcast in the community due to having no parents' and poor children

as being 'disadvantaged due to lack of wealth even if parents still present'. In the same year came the 'Report for the Committee on Education' written by E.C. Tufnell (ResearchGate, 2016) who was a supporter and advocate of orphans and he stated, 'poor children still disadvantaged even if they had parents'. This represents a clear shift from the Romantic to the Puritanical perspective in how children and orphans were viewed. The clear divide between the rich and the poor succeeded in keeping the classes completely separate from one another no matter how hard poor families worked as the wealthy controlled wages and working conditions and even the workhouses where the worst afflicted were admitted.

The orphan in children's literature

The socially accepted language and depictions regarding orphans used by philanthropists such as Barnardo in their publications – such as his quarterly newsletter 'Night and Day' (British Home Children in Canada, 2016) - was also used in children's literature. These descriptions were a commonly used literary device to demonstrate the character's complete transformation from a 'street Arab' to an acceptable English citizen. However, it is also worth noting that at the time these were not just thought of as literary devices but examples of real life situations. A book titled 'The Orphan: A Romance' (1850) by Mootoo (pseudonym) in Peters (2000, p35) sets about establishing gypsies as 'other' by stating that they are a threat to 'civilised' members of society and the Victorian family construct. The author contrasts the lives of gypsies with the Victorians by discussing their nomadic lifestyle, 'barbarous culture' versus civilised values and how the orphan manages to retain their 'Romantic'

qualities of purity and morality despite their association with gypsies. This retention of their original traits allows the orphan a way back into society – by being 'English' their roots are firmly in the home, Christianity and family life. The Romantic trope is also evident in other orphan stories where the innocence of the orphan figure is used to save the adult characters from themselves. Some examples of this can be seen in books such as 'The Secret Garden' written by Frances Hodgson-Burnett (1911) where Mary is saved from herself through her connection with nature and she is also key in reawakening her uncle from his grief. In 'Anne of Green Gables' (Montgomery, 1977) it is Anne that encourages Aunt Marilla to become less harsh towards her and others through her eternal optimism about life and the world around her and by the end of the story the roles are reversed when it is Anne who takes care of Marilla in her old age. The character Pollyanna (Porter, 2005) is full of gratitude towards her Aunt Polly who at the beginning is not a popular lady due to her selfishness, but even Pollyanna's good and innocent nature changes the aunt into a far more likeable character to the point where she eventually finds a man willing to become her husband.

The other way in which orphans are depicted is as a criminal with no morality or conscience, which was a common assumption amongst Victorians. Orphans were feared by the middle and upper classes as they represented a direct threat to their family units, possessions and wealth. This was the theme used in 'Oliver Twist' (Dickens, 1837) which used the stories of pickpockets and petty criminals to paint a picture of the streets of Victorian London which were known to be dirty, dangerous and inhabited by gangs. However, Oliver

Twist is set apart from them by his looks, manners and gentle nature and despite the best effort of Fagin and his gang he never succumbs to a life of crime fully and is instead rescued by a man that turns out to know of his true identity.

In a pamphlet written in response to the 1860 Committee of Inquiry on Education titled, 'The Workhouse Orphan' (The British Library, 2016), there was an unfavourable review of the new Poor Law provision stating that institutions were failing in their duty of care to orphans and children of the poor. It concluded that orphans living on the streets became criminals by both need and association and that the orphan was an outcast due to the failure of the workhouse to be a family for them. It is evident from this that the character Oliver in 'Oliver Twist' and his young associates were more than a pure fiction of Dickens' imagination and formed what became known as a 'penal narrative' about orphan criminals. The 'penal narrative' is a description of when an orphan is unruly and in constant need of Foucauldian discipline by the family – Foucauldian refers to how Michel Foucault described discipline as being, 'a mechanism of power which regulates the behaviour of individuals in the social body' (O'Farrell, 2007). It was the failure of the family to discipline their children which led to children becoming criminals, but in the case of orphans it was also the fault of the workhouse which had failed to be the family for them.

The issue of parenting or lack of parents is a common theme in orphan literature and the resilience of the child despite this is often key to the story. Alexander Thomson wrote that, 'God has established one great institution for

training children – the family' (Gillard, 2011). He explicitly identifies the role of Victorian society and its representative institutions as a parental one and the absence of family or state care would result in weak and helpless child orphans from poor backgrounds. Examples of orphan stories focusing on their plight and journey towards being part of a family again would include Mary in 'The Secret Garden' and Anne in 'Anne of Green Gables' where the orphan child is brought into a new family setting and the journey they endure along the path to full acceptance into that family. As an orphan they would have to contend with the social stigma of being alone in the world and it is how they deal with this 'burden' that creates a story which both children and adults read and enjoy. Family stories are a subject that both adults and children alike can engage with as they are a relatable subject for all ages and often highly emotive.

There were also stories based on orphans of poor backgrounds who were never re-assimilated into a family, making them marginalised and with no family ties. Such stories were 'The Pirates of Penzance' (1879) in which the orphan becomes a sailor who works for the Empire and defends it. The Empire spoken of in this story is representative of Victorian family structure – the middle classes benefitted economically from the Empire whilst the poor working class boys would police the Empire but also suffer the cruelty and brutality of work aboard ship. In the book 'The Orphan Sailor: A Tragic Tale of Love, of Pity, and of Woe' (Peters, 2000, p65), the discourse of imperialism occurs once more. In this story the orphan is used to represent otherness and difference to demonstrate Victorian society reproducing the workings of

colonial discourse. The focus was on how Algeria represented a foreign threat to the English and this therefore justified imperialism. The orphan has already been victimised by society and becomes enslaved by Algerian pirates before being sold on as a slave. Through the orphan's victimisation and enslavement, he manages to display his inherent qualities of bravery, daring and resourcefulness but is nonetheless doomed to a tragic end. His ability to be self-sufficient does not allow him to experience class mobility through his efforts at serving his country, which is a contrast to other orphan stories like 'Oliver Twist' (Peters, 2000, p61-66).

Auerbach (1975) describes orphans as a 'social penumbra', meaning a peripheral or indeterminate group – "the orphan is born to himself and establishes his own social penumbra". The orphan figure is described as dispossessed, resilient, a survivor and a product of the modern world – "composed of alternate layers of glass and steel". The orphan is also able to reincarnate itself through time periods and novels – in the 18th century the orphan was described as a "slyly potent underground figure" using terms such as rogue, picaro, manipulative and dishonest. The 19th century saw the appearance of the 'Romantic waif' who was described as a social climber, a revolutionary and 'spiritually energised' whilst in the 20th century the orphan became brutalised, estranged and a 'picaro' or rascal figure.

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I will be discussing which research methods I used to find the information for the Findings and Analysis chapter. This will start with a brief explanation of the qualitative method of research followed by the use of discourse analysis within my research. The next focus will be on how ethical practice has been considered during the research and how I will select an appropriate research sample. The final section of this chapter will focus on which analytical framework was used to analyse the texts chosen as my research sample.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approaches

The choice of which research method to use – qualitative or quantitative – is based upon the type of research undertaken and the type of data that needs to be produced. Quantitative research methods require a large enough sample to be able to generalise findings and require statistical analysis whereas qualitative research is about gathering non-numerical data from a smaller sample but in more depth.

Quantitative research according to Walliman (2010) involves the use of data which normally presents itself in a numerical form, for example from questionnaires, and is regarded as a scientific method of analysis. The methods of analysing this type of data can either be simple or complex depending upon the type of results sought from it. Walliman (2010) also states that non-typical quantitative data can be analysed using numbered

responses, for example questionnaires, thus allowing statistical analysis of the information. Selltiz et al (1965, p2) in Brett Davies (2007, p10) states that scientific research is more likely to, 'produce relevant, reliable and unbiased information' when speaking about quantitative research methods. The types of research methods used in quantitative research are interviews with pre-determined questions, questionnaires and interviews – either structured with set questions or semi-structured to allow some freedom within the interviewing process. Quantitative research is either done using quota or purposive sampling depending on the type of data needed. A quota sample is more often used to identify key variables such as age, ethnicity and social class and sometimes require a specific target number to be recorded making it problematic. However, a purposive sample targets people that typically represent an identified area of the population but this is considered to be inferior to quota sampling as it is not possible to ascertain how representative the sample chosen is of the whole.

Qualitative research methods do not involve numerical statistics and instead employs the interpretation of more naturally occurring data such as the study of literature, photographs, oral histories and other recordings. Brett Davies (2007, p25) describes the qualitative approach as, 'employing a more reflective or exploratory approach'. This type of research creates data which can then in turn produce theoretical ideas which can be applied to discourses of philosophy, psychology and sociology. The data can be gathered using unstructured interviews which allow the interviewee to explore a subject more freely than if presented with set questions. The use of strategic sampling

allows the researcher to choose a relevant target group who are more likely to provide specific data relating to the research question, for example chosen according to geographical location, beliefs or age group.

The research I am undertaking is more suited to the qualitative method as I specifically want to study whether the orphan figure in literature had a sociological impact on the formation of ideas about orphans or whether these views were a reflection of the time in which the books were written. I also want to consider how social policy affected these representations and ultimately what these representations tell us about the sociological status of orphans in the 19th century. The qualitative methods I will use are a combination of discourse, content and narrative analysis which will provide information about how the orphan figures were represented and the sociological impact this had on the readers of these stories. In the next section I will explain discourse analysis further.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is an alternative method to primary research and provides a way of analysing how the media cover a particular issue. The Foucauldian view on this is that it can help us understand how language both describes the world we live in whilst also shaping and creating it in a sociological way. Paltridge (2012, p2) states that the term discourse analysis was first introduced by Zellig Harris in 1952, 'as a way of analysing connected speech and writing' (Paltridge, 2012, p2). He was interested in, 'the examination of language beyond the level of the sentence and the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour', by which he meant that there was

more to the language chosen and used by others than is first seen at face value as there is a deeper sociological impact intended by both the writer and for the person reading. Michel Foucault states that, "discourse embodies and reinforces the power relationships amongst those it defines", (Fulcher and Scott, 2011 p196) which explains how readers of words are influenced by the ideas of the author and thus by default the author has the power over which ideas they choose to impart. Examples of this power can be witnessed daily through national newspapers, magazines and social media.

Another way of describing the specific power of language is 'dominant discourse' which is when a particular viewpoint gains prominence due to the influence of the person behind it and this causes it to be perceived as the truth. There are always different interpretations of a point of view and it is important that they are all allowed to be heard to allow democratic thinking to take place and alternative viewpoints to be heard. This thinking can be applied to works of fiction when they talk about events and characters as if they are real and the reader is influenced by different ideologies and concepts. This is even more important in books written for children by adults owing to the way in which children can be easily influenced due to their formative imaginations. When children are taught to think in a certain way these ideologies are often carried into adult life unless discussed with parents and other influential adults such as teachers in a non-biased manner.

The focus for my research is how orphans are depicted in children's literature, particularly against the backdrop of Victorian England when views and perceptions of orphans were in the context of the ideal Victorian family unit

and a growing divide between the wealthy and the poor. Orphans have been a popular subject matter for children's books for many years and none more so than in the Victorian period, which is why I have chosen to make that the starting point of my research. Many of these books are still as widely read today as many have become 'classics' in the literary realm – examples of this are 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens, 'Anne of Green Gables' by Lucy Maud Montgomery and 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Each of these stories featured an orphan character but in varying circumstances which ranged from the Victorian streets of London to mansion sized homes in Yorkshire and their stories are very different but often with a happy ending and desired outcome to leave the reader feeling relieved that they were no longer suffering. This is where the reality of the lives of many orphaned children differed from the stories and the dominant discourse was that of a child being welcomed into a loving family and being looked after. This is why I have chosen to look at some examples of children's orphan literature as I would like to examine this discourse further.

Ethics in research

In this section I would like to explain how I have paid due attention to ethical conduct within my research. Ethics are a requirement of any research in order to ensure that no-one is harmed in any way by the research gained or published. It is a process which must maintain anonymity and confidentiality for all participants which can be done by giving them clear information about the research and gaining their written or audio recorded consent before going ahead (Brett Davies, 2007).

The research I am undertaking does not have any ethical considerations due to it being carried out using a discourse analysis of children's books and related literature but I do need to be mindful of any researcher bias when recording findings to ensure that they are based upon what has been read rather than drawn on from prior knowledge.

Selecting research sample

The selection of my research sample was based on fiction books containing an orphan as the main character and therefore I used the purposive sampling method in order to select a representative sample using prior knowledge of orphan literature. A purposive sample is where a specific sample is selected due to how it identifies with the information being sought (Brett Davies, 2007). For the purposes of his research an orphan is defined as either having no parents or just one surviving parent as this was a common definition used in the Victorian period. The books I have chosen to research for this study are primarily fiction books written by adults for children that cover a time period between the 19th and 20th centuries as I want to include books written during the Victorian period. I have chosen to study two books which are – 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens (1838) and 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911). These books represent authors who were born during different periods of the Victorian era and whose lived experiences of which would have been different due to family background, geographical location and the changes that took place following the end of Queen Victoria's reign.

'Oliver Twist' was written by Charles Dickens and initially published as a serial between 1837 and 1838, the year following Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. The story's main character Oliver is born in a workhouse and becomes an orphan after his mother's death. He spends the first nine years of his life in an orphanage before being transferred to an adult workhouse which is where the story begins. After he is sold to an undertaker as an apprentice he is bullied and ends up running away to London where he meets a gang of pickpockets who take Oliver into their 'care' and teach him their method of survival on the streets. Oliver's innocence and morally correct nature set him apart from the others and he is taken into the home of a gentleman after a failed pickpocket attempt. He is recaptured and again used in a failed burglary attempt but is eventually reunited with the kind gentleman who initially gave him a home once his true identity is realised.

'The Secret Garden' was written by Frances Hodgson Burnett and also started life as a serialised story in 1910 but was published in its entirety in 1911, ten years after the death of Queen Victorian and at the beginning of the Edwardian era. Unlike the orphan character inn 'Oliver Twist' this story's main protagonist begins as a selfish and unlikeable young girl whose parents died whilst they lived in India, a part of the British Empire. She is taken to live with her reclusive uncle at his large imposing home on the Yorkshire Moors and which is occupied by various staff members. Mary is a complex character whose personal demons are dealt with through her new found admiration of nature and her friendships with a local boy and his family. This story is

interesting in that it has chosen to portray the orphan character in a different way to most other orphan stories.

Analytical Framework

In order to analyse the information gathered from the books it is necessary to develop an analytical framework and Blaxter et al (2010, p231) state that documents are, "artificial and partial accounts, which need to be critically assessed for research purposes". A range of questions relating to the original research questions need to be decided upon so that the important or relevant information can be extracted in readiness for comparison to each other and the analysis questions. Once the findings have been discovered, analysed and grouped together then further analysis can be carried out. Information will initially be grouped under three broad headings, such as the language used to describe the orphan character, the social status of the orphan within the story and the impact the orphan had on the adults surrounding them. Within these broad questions I will then create smaller and more focused questions which will help to keep my original research questions in perspective and provide more depth to the findings.

I have attached a copy of the Analytical Framework in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

After considering my source materials, I have decided to proceed with a discourse analysis approach to my research and analyse selected chapters from two books featuring an orphan character which were written for children between the 19th and 20th centuries. The books that I have selected to use are: 'Oliver Twist' and 'The Secret Garden' and the information gathered will

be analysed using an analytical framework, a copy of which is attached in Appendix 1. The analysis will primarily focus on the perceptions of orphans, language used to describe them and the effect they had on the adults they came into contact with.

Findings and Analysis

In this chapter I will present the findings from my research and the analysis of those findings. An example of the data analysis framework is featured in Appendix 1. Firstly, I will present the findings from selected chapters of each book in which I have found the portrayal of orphans before carrying out the analysis. I have chosen to use only selected chapters due to the constraints of the size of this research project. I will present my findings from each book in chronological order, starting with 'Oliver Twist'.

'Oliver Twist' – Charles Dickens (1838)

I have chosen to scrutinize particular chapters of the book which gave the most detail about Oliver as an orphan as there are chapters within the book which focus more on other characters such as Fagin and Bill Sikes. I studied an online version of the book as I did not have a hard copy available to me at the time of research. The book was written in 1838 and is very much set in that same time period of Victorian London. Dickens uses very honest and descriptive 'observations' in his writing even though it is a work of fiction and it brings a harsh sense of reality to the story. It was published as a book just a few years after the 1834 Poor Act was introduced and it is the living reality of this which Dickens focuses on and which he is critical of.

In Chapter 1, Oliver is described as "an item of mortality" (p1) and the word "it" is also used more than once to describe him. His illegitimacy is highlighted by the lack of a wedding ring on his dead mother's hand and his survival is attributed to his own strength and will to live as the Parish doctor was not worried for the mortality of yet another workhouse child who he had no doubt

would be "troublesome". However, it is also noted that had he been wrapped in a blanket no-one would have been able to make the distinction of his heritage, "he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar", (p1), "but now that he was enveloped in the old calico robes which had grown yellow in the same service, he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once — a parish child — the orphan of a workhouse — the humble, half-starved drudge — to be cuffed and buffeted through the world — despised by all, and pitied by none."

In Chapter 2, Oliver is described as being, "the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception", when referring to the workhouse system and the raising of the orphans is referred to as "farming", making them akin to the treatment of animals. He is also referred to in terms of loneliness, "a sense of his loneliness in the great wide world", and the treatment received from the workhouse, "suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months". In Appendices 2 and 3 are copies of information held at the National Archives which are from the same time period and refer to the diet on which inmates of the workhouse had to survive and an account from a young boy himself.

In Chapter 4, Oliver is described as, "a hardened young rascal", who has been, "reduced, for life, to a state of brutal stupidity and sullenness by the ill-usage he had received". The undertaker's wife, where Oliver is sold as an apprentice, comments that, "I see no saving in parish children, not I; for they always cost more to keep, than they're worth". In Chapter 7, his mother's strength in not giving up on her unborn child is portrayed as a difficult and obstinate nature and undesired.

In Chapter 5, Oliver's bed in the undertaker's resembles a grave and this impacts on his feelings of loneliness and isolation. However, as the story continues the truth regarding Oliver's heritage is finally uncovered and he receives his inheritance and lives his life with Mr. Brownlow who adopts him.

'The Secret Garden' - Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)

There is more than one orphan character in this book, namely Mary who has lost both parents and Colin who only has his father remaining. However, the focus will be on Mary as she is the central character to this story. I have again used an online version of this book to obtain my information. the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. p1

In the chapter 'There is No One Left', it immediately launches into a description of Mary as, "a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another" (p1). Mary has been 'hidden' from public gaze as much as possible - "she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible. So when she was a sickly, fretful, ugly little baby she was kept out of the way, and when she became a sickly, fretful, toddling thing she was kept out of the way also" (p1). The 'she' here referred to Mary's Ayah (or nurse maid) who had sole care of Mary in India. The results of this isolation from her immediate family meant that, "by the time she was six years old she was as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived", due to always getting her own way. Mary is described as being 'cross', and 'grinding her teeth' when she cannot get her

own way and also as being 'unwanted', 'never heard' and 'unaffectionate' which are not normally terms written about a nine-year-old girl.

In the chapter 'Mistress Mary Quite Contrary', there is more discussion about the absence of her parents and the subsequent effect this has had on Mary, "She did not miss her (her mother) at all, in fact, and as she was a self-absorbed child she gave her entire thought to herself, as she had always done. If she had been older she would no doubt have been very anxious at being left alone in the world, but she was very young, and as she had always been taken care of, she supposed she always would be". Mary's expectations were that life would go on as it had before but just in a different location.

Direct comparisons are made between Mary, who is deemed a plain child, and her mother who was very pretty and that maybe if her mother had spent more time with her daughter then some of her looks and manners may have rubbed off on Mary also. It occurs to Mary that other children have a relationship with their family so why did it elude her? This is compounded when told that her Uncle will not want anything to do with her either once she lives at his home in England.

In the chapter, 'The Robin That Showed the Way', Mary is starting to discover how different her life has been to others of her own age and the contrast is shown when she realises that, "she was not a child who had been trained to ask permission or consult her elders about things" (p1). Mary also starts to discover a new found love of the outdoors and how to play, "Nothin' will do her more good than skippin' rope. It's th' sensiblest toy a child can have. Let her play out in th' fresh air skippin' an' it'll stretch her legs an' arms an' give

her some strength in 'em". This is Mary's introduction to nature and in the next chapter, '" I won't!" said Mary', "Mary was glowing with exercise and good spirits" (p1) and the following chapter, 'Nest Building', "Mary had seen herself in the glass sometimes lately when she had realized that she looked quite a different creature from the child she had seen when she arrived from India. This child looked nicer" (p1). Mary's new life in England transforms her into a different child who is healthy, happy and sociable.

Analysis of Findings

Having completed the Findings section, I will now move on to the analysis, which will be written in sections relating to the original research questions.

(i)   What was the sociological impact of the orphan in literature?

Based upon my findings about how the orphan figure was represented in the two books I selected for this research, I have discovered that the orphan figure was written about in different ways but with similar happy endings. The orphan in Charles Dickens London is portrayed as a young male, predominantly, who either lives on the streets and makes his living from being a petty criminal or resides in a workhouse where food is scarce, work is manual labour and disease and death are commonplace. Neither offers a safe place to reside or any comfort and they are at the mercy of either nature or the parochial council. The initial serialisation of these stories would have made them widely available to the public due to affordability and a different audience again once released in book form. Dickens use of language and description transports the reader to this dark and dangerous underworld in which both legitimate and often illegitimate

children live but at the same time he shows his own sympathy for these children and his true feelings about the impact of the Poor Law introduced in 1834. Dickens used this influence and popularity to his advantage and spoke his mind through his writing, using graphic detail and harsh criticism to appeal to his audience. Even though by the end of the book Oliver has in a sense been 'rescued' from poverty there is a distinct lack of description regarding Oliver's new countenance compared to where he began his journey, although his good and innocent nature is a constant reminder of his true heritage. This may be a deliberate ploy to not take the focus away from the plight of the majority that never have such fortune.

'The Secret Garden' (Hodgson Burnett, 1911) was written at the end of the Edwardian period some ten years after Queen Victoria's reign came to an end. The orphan Mary begins her life in the India during British rule and unlike Oliver is presented as a spoilt, obnoxious and unhappy child with no empathy for anyone. Her unhealthy appearance tells the reader that disease was common, most likely due to malaria, and what should have been a childhood where she wanted for nothing was one of emotional neglect. Mary's character does not invite sympathy from the reader due to her spoilt and selfish nature although her abandonment by family and servants would never be wished on any child.

This orphan story presented a much darker interpretation of the child's eye view of the world and was informed by emerging ideas about the new science of psychology as the theme of attachment theory is explored in

this book. This was a move away from the romantic notion of the child, as in Oliver's case, and chose to show that children were real people and capable of being imperfect. Although Mary is clearly an orphan the story also chooses to focus on issues of Empire (implying that Colonial India was itself the disease and infecting the British) and how nature contains transformative qualities. This book was once serialised for an adult audience and due to the various themes running through I believe it's primary function was to impart a political message.

(ii)   How did social policy affect these representations?

The 1834 Poor Law Act was aimed at making improvements to the already existing Poor Laws and was headed up by Edwin Chadwick, one of the leading commissioners. The introduction of this in the years preceding the publication of 'Oliver Twist' had a clear influence on the book and provided Dickens with the basis for his writing. Upon Oliver's birth in the workhouse it is written, "Oliver cried lustily. If he could have known that he was an orphan, left to the tender mercies of church-wardens and overseers, perhaps he would have cried the louder" (Dickens, 1838), providing a clear indication that as an orphan Oliver's future was already in jeopardy. Dickens continues by suggesting, "But now that he was enveloped in the old calico robes which had grown yellow in the same service, he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once — a parish child — the orphan of a workhouse — the humble, half-starved drudge — to be cuffed and buffeted through the world — despised by all, and pitied by none". Dickens also makes reference to the starvation and abuse that would be

suffered at the hands of the workhouse, making the orphan's life unbearable and possibly short-lived. This would invite pity and compassion from some readers.

'The Secret Garden' (Hodgson Burnett, 1911) had a different orphan focus to that of Dickens as was written fifty years later at the start of the 20th century. Although the typical image of the orphan was still one who was pale, thin and sickly looking – "a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another" – this time it was a criticism of the Empire of Colonial India, although the constant illness could also be applied to a child being born in a workhouse. Mary's interaction with nature in England's countryside is seen as her redemption.

(iii)   What do these representations tell us about the sociological status of orphans in the 20th century?

The orphan trope has been used many times in literature and the books studied as part of this research represent just two of them. Both of these books approach the orphan figure in different ways but with very similar outcomes. Whilst Oliver was an illegitimate orphan, Mary was orphaned as a result of the death of both legally married parents. The label of illegitimacy was a particularly unwanted stigma but has always been present in England with varying levels of acceptance according to social status, circumstance and religion. Whilst attitudes have become more relaxed in recent years it is still a taboo subject for many families. The

Victorian family unit ideology was so powerful in the 19th century that it shaped the way in which many people viewed anyone who did not fit into it, especially illegitimate children. If you were an illegitimate orphan then you were not even deemed worthy of a place in society, as in Oliver's case, "'item of mortality' whose name and date of birth was of little consequence", (Dickens, 1838). They were a burden on society and especially the workhouse, at least until they were old enough to be apprenticed out or put to work.

Dickens described the workhouse as a corrupt system that the parish were duped into believing was caring for children appropriately and through his books he was able to express his concerns about the widespread corruption. Even into the beginning of the 20th century, as seen in the case of Mary, the Victorian values of children being 'seen and not heard' were still popular in families, "I heard there was a child, though no one ever saw her", (Hodgson Burnett, 1911). It is the longevity of these attitudes which have led to families being able to keep secrets hidden for years, whether that be true parentage or historical crimes against children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, at the start of this research I wanted to address the following research questions:

1. What was the sociological impact of the orphan figure in children's literature – was it formative in shaping ideas about orphans or reflective of the time in which the book was written?

2. How did social policy affect these presentations?

3. What do these representations tell us about the sociological status of orphans in the 20th century?

Prior to beginning my research into the above questions I carried out a literature review into: the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Victorian family life and how that led to the scapegoating of the orphan both inside and outside of the book; how changes in social policy have affected children and families, with a specific focus on orphans and how this led to the philanthropic work of Thomas Barnardo; the portrayal of the orphan in children's literature and how that compared to the real life of the orphan. The Methodology chapter guided my research towards the Purposive Sampling method of discourse analysis as my sample was based on selective chapters of children's literature featuring an orphan character. A purposive sample is where a specific sample is selected due to how it identifies with the information being sought (Brett Davies, 2007). I was able to select particular chapters based upon the descriptions of orphans contained within them and which assisted me in answering the research questions. The sample was

based on two books as the amount of data generated by these provided sufficient evidence for my research. The two books I chose to research chapters from were:

'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens (1838)

'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)

These two books were selected based on the date they were published and also the content within them – with the focus being on orphans in the 19th and 20th centuries these books sat either side of that time period. 'Oliver Twist' provided an insight into the orphans living on the streets of London and how they possibly made their living among other more dangerous criminals. It also gave a scenario in which a child could be born into the workhouse and what their life may have been like. 'The Secret Garden' was written slightly later at the start of the 20th century and told of a girl orphaned in India during the reign of the British Empire and then shipped to England to live with her uncle whom she had never met. This child has never known the affection or attention of her parents and has developed into a selfish and angry young girl who finds herself being cared for in remote Yorkshire in unfamiliar surroundings.

These books are set against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution, the Poor Law of 1834 and the British Empire during which time attitudes did not change a great deal towards orphans and illegitimacy continued to be a taboo subject. Orphans, especially if illegitimate, were not deemed to have any particular rights and were seen as a burden on the parish and to the state. The 1834 Poor Laws were introduced to prevent poor people from being such

a drain on society and the workhouse became the place to which they were sent if they had no means of supporting themselves financially. The stigma and fear attached to being sent to the workhouse was almost as great as that of being illegitimate or an orphan. The people assigned to running the workhouse were cruel and took money from the upkeep of the inmates for themselves and Dickens took great pleasure in exposing these misdemeanours through his writing. In a similar way, Hodgson Burnett highlighted how she felt the British Empire was a disease and used this metaphorically in her story about the orphan Mary. In many ways these books had political and moral messages entwined within them which would have directly appealed to the adult readers whilst the child readers would have enjoyed the adventure contained within them.

Returning to my original question of whether the sociological representation of the orphan figure was formative in shaping ideas about orphans or reflective of the time in which the book was written, I can conclude that in this case both are equally valid. The time in which the books were written undoubtedly has a part to play as the books are representative of that point in English history when illegitimacy was unacceptable and orphans were all too common due to sanitation, tropical disease and high mortality rates. The social legislation of that time also played a part in shaping the lives of orphans, whether that be empirical rule and English status or the creation of the workhouse. As for shaping ideas, characters that are so well known and loved by many tend to live on in our imaginations and are often 'reproduced' as they are a good selling point and popular reading matter. These stories are

important in helping us to remember our relatively recent social history and also put into perspective any attitudes we maintain which are a result of past attitudes and prejudices. We all have a right to know who we are and where we came from and these books teach us a great deal about how our present ideas are shaped by the past.

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Appendix 1

Example Analytical Framework

Analytical Framework	Oliver Twist	The Secret Garden
Use of language/discourse Examples of positive language Examples of negative language Key words used What words are the characters using, positive or negative? Overall impact of language is there a dominant discourse?		
Social Policy What social policies were present in time period that story was set? How had those changed at time that book was written? Did this affect how the story was told?		
Content Analysis Date book was published Date/era in context of storyline Central or marginal? Sympathetic or negative? Overall impressions: are these content issues adding to the dominant discourse?		
Final thoughts?		

HALIFAX UNION HOUSE.

No. 64. *William Hollingsworth*, aged 13. June 9 :

I have no father or mother ; my father was a shoemaker and has been dead five years, and my mother eleven ; I lived with my sister at Crossfield six months after and rather better, and then went to the old workhouse ; I was then apprenticed by the overseers of the parish of Halifax to Joseph Morton, the brickmaker, in the township of Southowram, where I remained two years, when he died, and I came here for a little while. Jonathan Oldfield, a collier, living at Bradshaw-lane, made application to the Board of Guardians for an apprentice ; I was willing to work for him or anybody else, and went with him by consent of the Board on trial for a month ; if I had remained with him I should have been bound until I was 21 ; I stayed with him five days ; he gave me porridge for breakfast at half-past five, and then I went with his other *two* apprentices, with whom I slept, to the pit ; each of us took a cake and a half for our dinners ; we had no time to stop to eat it, but took it as we hurried ; the first night I worked in the pit, which was last Thursday [the 3rd inst.], we remained until ten o'clock at night, and then all three came away together ; the second night [Friday] we stopped until nine, third night until half-past eight, and on the Monday until a quarter to eight ; we had nothing during the whole of those days but the cake and half each, and nothing to drink ; there was no water that we could get in the pit's bottom, and they would not allow us to go up to drink ; I was very thirsty at times ; my master never beat me, but he cursed enough at me because I was not sharp enough with the corves. I hurried without shoes one day, but was obliged to put them on again because the ground hurt my feet ; the other apprentices told me that they worked until 10 and 11 o'clock at night regular. It was Mr. Joseph Stocks's Royd Pit that I worked in ; I ran away from him Tuesday [yesterday] morning because he worked me so late ; I was so tired when I got home to his house that I did not think I could stand it ; after I left him I made application to come into the workhouse again ; I would rather work if I had a good master ; I have been to day-school and Sunday-school, and can read and write very well ; I heard my master say last Sunday to another man who looks after his cow, that the four getters and three hurriers that he employs earns every day 14*s.* ; one of his apprentices is a getter, the other is a hurrier ; besides them he has three other getters.

(Signed)   WILLIAM HOLLINGSWORTH.

I have heard the foregoing evidence of William Hollingsworth read over, and from my knowledge of the lad believe it to be strictly true.

(Signed)   W. DYER,
Master of Union House.

Appendix 3

This is the dietary for the Reigate Workhouse in Surrey.
(Catalogue ref: MH 12/15070)

Dietary for able-bodied Men and Women

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper					
	Bread	Gruel	Meat	Potatoes	Soup	Sweet Pudding	Cheese	Broth
	oz.	pints	oz.	Ib	pints	oz.	oz.	pints
Sunday - Men	16	1 ½	6	1				1 ½
Women	14	1 ½	5	1				1 ½
Monday - Men	16	1 ½			1 ½		2	
Women	14	1 ½			1 ½		1 ½	
Tuesday - Men	16	1 ½	6	1				1 ½
Women	14	1 ½	5	1				1 ½
Wednesday - Men	16	1 ½			1 ½		2	
Women	14	1 ½			1 ½		1 ½	
Thursday - Men	16	1 ½	6	1				1 ½
Women	14	1 ½	5	1				1 ½
Friday - Men	16	1 ½				14	2	
Women	14	1 ½				12	1 ½	
Saturday- Men	16	1 ½			1 ½		2	
Women	14	1 ½			1 ½		1 ½	

Dietary for able-bodied Men and Women

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper		
	Tea or Coffee	Meat with Vegetables	Pudding	Rice Milk or Soup	Tea or Coffee
	pints	oz.	oz.	pints	pints
Sunday	1	4			1
Monday	1			1	1
Tuesday	1	4			1
Wednesday	1			1	1
Thursday	1	4			1
Friday	1			1	1
Saturday	1		12		1

Bread Men 14oz per day
Bread Women 12 oz. per day
Butter Men 7 oz. per week
Butter Women 7oz per week
Sugar Men 8 oz. per week
Sugar Women 8 oz. per week

Children under 9 years of age to be dieted at discretion; above to be allowed the same quantities as Women. Sick to be dieted by the Medical Officer