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«Through the Eyes of Time»: Analyzing Life’s Cyclical Passage in Charles Dickens’ “The Child’s Story”

Time... is such a simple and at the same time broad concept that every person perceives differently. The theme of time in art has always been central to many artists, writers and musicians. Time is often perceived as elusive and irreversible, and art allows you to stop it at least for a moment, recording important moments or experiences. The same can be said about human life. It is as momentary and fleeting as time. In literature, authors often explore the theme of time through memories, nostalgia, or cyclicity, as Charles Dickens does in “The Child’s Story”.

“The Child’s Story” is one of Charles Dickens short stories which published in the mid-1800s as one of his annually Christmas short stories. It reflects Victorian concerns about time and mortality, common themes in Dickens’s works. The story’s focus on family, responsibility, and the passage of time resonates with the social values of the 19th century. These universal themes still connect with contemporary readers facing similar questions about life’s meaning and purpose. Compared to other Dickens works, such as “A Christmas Carol”, “The Child’s Story” shares similar themes of personal reflection and the passage of time. Both stories use allegory to teach moral lessons. However, “The Child’s Story” is more abstract and symbolic, whereas “A Christmas Carol” is grounded in more specific, personal experiences and characters.

“The Child’s Story” by Charles Dickens is an allegorical tale that follows a journey through life. The protagonist starts as a child, setting out on a path and meeting various figures symbolizing different stages of life. As the traveler progresses, he encounters a boy, a young man, a middle-aged man, and an older

figure, each representing distinct phases of human experience. The journey encapsulates the passage of time and life's transitions, ending with the recognition that the journey, like life, comes full circle from childhood to old age. The story is told from a third-person perspective. This allows the reader to follow the traveler's journey through the stages of life, gaining insight into each phase. The perspective helps the reader to get a better feel for the events described by the author. The reader, in a way, tries on the roles of the characters, lives the corresponding life stages with them. The rapid living of human life in the process of reading makes it possible to understand the topic of the life's transience more deeply. The tone of the story is nostalgic and reflective. Dickens evokes emotions by portraying the inevitability of life's stages. The author insistently draws the reader's attention to the transience of life. This causes different feelings, such as anxiety about the future or a feeling of nostalgia for childhood. In general, the story makes you think about a lot of things and its tone creates a favorable mood for this.

The story takes place in an unnamed, metaphorical world that mirrors the journey of life itself. The shifting scenery corresponds to the traveler's progress through life stages. For example, the lush landscapes of youth gradually give way to the more subdued settings of adulthood and old age. The timeless and symbolic nature of the setting reinforces the universality of the story. The central theme of "The Child's Story" is the passage of time and life's cyclical nature. Other themes include innocence, growth, maturity, and reflection. These themes are interconnected. They are developed as the traveler meets characters representing different stages of life. It shows how fast time passes and how each stage leads to the next. As well as the themes change each other throughout the text, because they correspond to the age stages.

The text begins with the phrase "Once upon a time," which sets a timeless and universal backdrop, suggesting a fairy tale. Such a beginning evokes a sense of an indefinite past, giving the story a mythical or timeless quality. The narrative introduces a "traveller," implying an archetypal hero or protagonist embarking on a journey, a common theme in literature that symbolizes personal growth, exploration, or transformation. The journey described as "magic" implies that it is not an ordinary travel but one filled with extraordinary or supernatural aspects. It suggests that the traveller may encounter challenges or transformations. The author uses the word "journey" as a metaphor, which symbolizes a deeper meaning, such as the passage through different stages of life. The journey "seemed very long when he began it, and very short when he got halfway through" suggests a duality in perception. It indicates that initial phases of a significant endeavor may feel overwhelming or endless, but as progress is made, time seems to accelerate or perception shifts. This can be metaphorical for life experiences.



Thomas Cole "The Voyage of Life. Childhood", 1842

The first significant encounter is with the “beautiful child,” which represents innocence and the wonder of childhood. The child’s invitation, “I am always at play. Come and play with me!” emphasizes the carefree, exploratory nature of early life. The detailed imagery used to describe this stage—“The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling” — illustrates a world seen through the eyes of a child, where everything is imbued with magic and beauty. The phrase “they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butterflies” further underlines a utopian sense of joy and discovery. The vivid, harmonious description of nature recalls a place like Eden, untainted by difficulties or sadness. This stage of life is characterized by the ability to enjoy even rain or snow, as evidenced by phrases such as “they loved to watch the falling drops,” and “nothing so well as to look up at the white flakes falling fast and thick.” As the story progresses, the traveller meets “a handsome boy,” representing the transition stage from childhood to youth, defined by learning and a thirst for knowledge. The boy's declaration, “I am always learning. Come and learn with me,” highlights the educational and formative period of this stage. The narrative shifts from passive enjoyment to active pursuit, seen in the detailed list of learned subjects: “Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks and the Romans,” indicating the academic and cultural enrichment.

Both stages of life end with loss — the “traveller lost the child” and later “lost the boy.” These moments are symbolic of the inevitable passage of time and the ephemerality of human connections and stages in life. The repetition of the

traveller calling “over and over again” with “no answer” reflects the yearning for what is lost and the unbridgeable gap once those phases pass.



Thomas Cole “The Voyage of Life. Youth”, 1842

The next part of the narrative continues the allegorical journey of life, exploring the phase of youth. The traveller's interaction with the young man and the subsequent experiences symbolizes the joys and trials of falling in love, drawing on detailed and relatable depictions to evoke emotional resonance. The young man, who claims, “I am always in love. Come and love with me,” represents the stage of life defined by romantic passion and relationships. This stage is full of emotional highs and lows, symbolized by the young man's experiences. The traveller joining him suggests that this is a phase every person must journey through. The repetition of love, expressed through courtship and infatuation, embodies an era where emotional bonds and romantic exploration are central. The text becomes particularly vivid with the reference to “Fanny” and her likeness: “just like Fanny in the corner there... eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's.” This direct address breaks the fourth wall, making the narrative personal and relatable. The familiarity of Fanny's traits suggests that love is not only a grand universal experience but also deeply individual and specific. The text's narrator injects a playful tone, especially with the repetition of “just as Somebody I won't mention,” creating an amused familiarity. This reinforces the universality of the young man's experiences by suggesting that they are not unique but rather a common aspect of being in love. This repeated refrain adds humour. This phase of the journey embodies the

transition from youthful innocence to maturity. The experience of love—complete with its joy, conflict, and longing — acts as an allegory for an essential rite of passage into adulthood. The cycle of meeting, loving, and losing reflects not only individual romantic relationships but also life’s broader pattern of forming connections that, despite their intensity, may not last. The progression from childhood play and youthful learning to passionate love illustrates growth. Unlike the carefree play with the “beautiful child” or the energetic learning with the “handsome boy,” this phase involves deeper, more complex emotional engagement.



Thomas Cole “The Voyage of Life. Manhood”, 1842

In the course of the further narration, the traveller meets a “middle-aged gentleman” on his way. This character, described as “always busy,” embodies the phase of manhood characterized by work, responsibility, and family life. His invitation, “Come and be busy with me!” signals the expectation of this period in life to be productive, communal, and focused on sustaining those around him. The gentleman is joined by a wife and children, representing the nucleus of family life and the shared journey of managing duties and nurturing relationships. The wood's transformation — from “open and green at first, like a wood in spring” to “thick and dark, like a wood in summer” — symbolizes the passage from the bright hopefulness of youth to the dense, complicated responsibilities of middle age. The trees turning brown foreshadow aging and the inevitable decline that follows. The family’s journey through the wood, “cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves,” represents the effort

involved in forging a path through life, tackling challenges, and providing for loved ones. This active engagement highlights the middle-aged phase as one of relentless labor and sacrifice, signifying both the beauty and toil inherent in raising a family and building a life. The recurring motif of children joining and leaving them — accompanied by the poignant, “Father, father, I am another child! Stop for me!” — symbolizes the natural cycle of births and departures within a family. Each child's eventual choice to leave and seek their own path (e.g., “I am going to sea,” “I am going to India,” “I am going to Heaven!”) symbolizes the individual journeys that children must take as they mature and venture into the world, some ending in death, as seen with the child who “rose into the golden air and vanished.”



Thomas Cole “The Voyage of Life. Old Age”, 1842

The traveller, now having passed through various stages of companionship, comes upon the old man, who states, “I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!” This invitation marks the final stage of life, characterized by reflection and reminiscence. The act of remembering is depicted not as sorrowful but serene, with the “calm smile” of the old man symbolizing peace and fulfillment. The scene of the traveller sitting with the old man “face to face with the serene sunset” represents the approach of death and the end of life’s journey. The sunset itself, “shining red” on “a wide purple prospect,” symbolizes both the closure of life and the beauty found in retrospection. The sunset’s peacefulness juxtaposes with the struggles and loss experienced earlier, suggesting that life’s culmination brings with it a sense of harmony and

understanding. The last passages' climax — the reunion with all the figures from earlier stages: “the beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the father, mother, and children” — illustrates a profound theme of eternal connection. This moment implies that despite physical absence, the relationships and moments shared are never truly lost. They “came softly back and stood around him,” suggesting that memories and the impact of loved ones are enduring and continue to surround and define a person. The line “he had lost nothing” reinforces the idea that what one holds in memory and love is never truly gone. The traveller's newfound contentment, where “he loved them all, and was kind and forbearing with them all,” reflects the wisdom that comes with age: the appreciation of life's fleeting moments and relationships. The final lines address the traveller directly as “Grandfather,” creating an intimate and personal connection to the story. This framing device reveals that the tale is not just an abstract allegory but a reflection on the life and virtues of the grandfather himself. The statement, “this is what you do to us, and what we do to you,” underscores themes of familial love, legacy, and the respect and admiration that younger generations feel for their elders.

While the characters themselves do not develop, the story reflects the traveler's inner growth as he moves through each life stage. The traveler accepts the passage of time and the changes it brings. The shifts from curiosity in youth to responsibility in adulthood, and then to reflection in old age show a natural progression of maturity. The primary conflict is internal — the traveler's confrontation with the passage of time and life's nature. This conflict is resolved as the traveler comes to terms with the inevitability of aging and death, accepting that life's journey must come to an end. The entire story is rich with symbolism. The Traveler symbolizes every human being on the journey of life. The Different characters represent life stages — childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. The Road represents the path of life, with its twists, turns, and eventual conclusion. These symbols deepen the narrative's meaning by transforming a simple journey into an exploration of human existence. Dickens uses vivid imagery to depict the various stages of life. For example, the lush, colorful descriptions of the boy's world evoke the vibrancy of youth, while the more subdued and gray descriptions of later stages mirror the weight of adulthood. His use of descriptive language makes the allegory more impactful, such as the “golden sun” for youth and the “fading light” for old age. In general, the language is simple, but filled with means of expression and deep meaning.

The ending of the story evokes a bittersweet feeling. It met expectations as it closed the circle, returning the traveler to a state of peace and acceptance. For me, it was a pretty logical ending to the story, which once again emphasizes the theme of the human life cycle. The ending can be interpreted in multiple ways. Some may view it as a comforting message about the natural order of things, while others may find it a sobering reflection on the brevity of life. For me personally it was a notification about the value of lifetime and the importance of pleasure from

every single day. The story emphasizes the important moral lessons of appreciating each stage of life, recognizing that time is fleeting, and accepting life's inevitable end. These lessons remain relevant today and will be relevant forever for all generations.

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Life is a Journey: The Child's Story by Charles Dickens

Introduction

Throughout history, many literary works have been written. Some of them describe magical worlds and adventures, while others show life as it is with all the trials and difficulties. And there are stories through which we learn to appreciate what is around us and enjoy what we have.

Charles Dickens is an English novelist, journalist and social critic, who is also known as a short story writer. One of his famous works published in the mid-1800s is *The Child's Story*. This story is a representation of life – a long but at the same time a short journey during which the author shows us all the stages man goes through.

Theme and plot

The Child's story is a short story that can be considered a parable. This is proved directly by the very beginning of the story. The author uses a well-known phrase that usually occurs in parables, tales and sometimes fables:

“Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller...”

The main theme of this story is the idea that life is a journey. During the whole narration, the author shows each stage of a person's life with the help of a certain character, describes its stages and presents lessons in metaphorical way:

“I am always at play. Come and play with me!”

“I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!”

All these characters share their stories with the traveler. First, there is a beautiful child who invites the traveler to play with them. Then there appears a handsome boy, followed by a young man, who invites the traveler to the next stage of life – love. Closer to the end, we meet a middle-aged gentleman who is very busy, and then the traveler encounters an old man, who is always remembering and the memories of whose past life traveler has seen.

Setting and Tone

It is difficult to determine the exact time frame. Since we have mentioned that *The Child's Story* can be interpreted as a parable about life, the lack of specific time markers is intentional, enhancing the focus on reflection and emotional impact. The location where the characters find themselves is also unknown:

"Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey."

Speaking about the tone of the narrative, it is worth noting that the author uses symbolism to convey the main idea of his story:

"...dear Grandfather, because this is what you do to us, and what we do to you."

The mood of the story changes though the whole narration. In the beginning the atmosphere is cheerful as the traveler observes the early stages of life filled with simple joys and discoveries. But it is soon replaced by grief following the meeting with a middle-aged gentleman and culminating with the heartbreaking farewell between him and his family, which causes a deep sensation of loss and desperation:

"I pray not yet!" But, the voice cried, "Mother, mother!" without minding him, though his hair was now quite white, and tears were on his face."

All these events and fleeting conversations combined create both a poignant and stirring emotional atmosphere that sweeps through the entire work.

Contents and conflict

In the story, we may see different characters, but the most important among them is the traveler himself. As the story progresses, the character doesn't change a lot, he doesn't even do anything to describe him as the antagonist or the protagonist of the story: during his journey he wanders, as it were, aimlessly around, goes wherever fate would take him and does not interfere with the succession of events.

It is common knowledge that action in a work of fiction normally centers around the protagonist, however, the traveler mostly just observes the events, taking part in them when asked. As each stage ends, he accepts it and moves on:

"Still, one day, in the midst of all these pleasures, the traveller lost the boy as he had lost the child, and, after calling to him in vain, went on upon his journey."

The other characters play a crucial role during the narration, because with their help the author shows the antagonist – which is none other than Time. The first character is a beautiful child who represents the careless childhood full of joy and playfulness:

"So, he played with that child, the whole day long, and they were very merry."

Then, there appears a handsome boy who represents the fascinating time of adolescence. This period is full of different knowledge that the traveler learns while they go along this new path as teenagers usually do:

“So he learned with that boy about Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks and the Romans, and I don't know what, ...”

“They had holidays too, and Twelfth cakes, and parties where they danced till midnight, and real Theatres ...”

More characters follow: a young man who represents the glorious time of falling in love and a middle-aged man with his lady and children whose story shows us the wonderful time of parenting. It also passes really quickly leaving all the happiness of being a parent behind. But at the last stage, a nostalgic and melancholic one, there is an old man. This is the end of the road, where we are presented with a short summary of the whole path the traveler has walked along:

“...and all his friends came softly back and stood around him. The beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the father, mother, and children: every one of them was there, and he had lost nothing.”

Judging by all these factors we may say that Time in this story is the hidden antagonist and the protagonist. The conflict that Charles Dickens tries to show us is that time passes by very quickly and that in life you need to be grateful for every lesson fate gives you. We may characterize it as external conflict because everything is represented through the events and characters.

Characterization

As has been mentioned, there are many characters that appear as the plot of the story unfolds, and they present their own stories as lessons. The main character, the traveler, is not clearly described, as the author depicts him indirectly through the events and characters. This character is a helper that the author introduces to make his story easier to understand and perceive. He is a static and a flat character who undergoes no psychological, physical or mental changes as the story is told – his attitude to others remains the same:

“So, he loved them all, and was kind and forbearing with them all, and was always pleased to watch them all, and they all honoured and loved him.”

“So, he went upon his road, and went on for a little while without meeting anything, until ...!”

Unlike the traveler, the other characters come second; they are neither heroes nor villains, but they appear as guides for the traveler to show him the right path and teach him valuable lessons. The purpose they serve can be summed up by the small passages the author gives each time the traveler meets a new character:

“And his answer was, "I am always busy. Come and be busy with me!”

“And the boy said, "I am always learning. Come and learn with me.”

“... and they made it up, and sat in the dark, and wrote letters every day, and never were happy asunder, and were always looking out for one another and pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time...”

If viewed and analyzed separately, all these characters appear flat and static. But if interpret them as different stages of the life of one person – the author's grandfather, we realize that they represent a collective image of a

character that can be characterized as round and dynamic because during the story he develops and changes both mentally and physically:

“And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather, because this is what you do to us, and what we do to you.”

It is my firm conviction that all the characters in this the story are major ones. No matter what kind of events they encounter on their way, no matter what atmosphere – cheerful or melancholic – surrounds them, their status remains unchanged.

Point of View

The narration in the story is conducted on behalf of an omniscient narrator, however, one way or another, the author himself intervenes in the narration process expressing his own opinion of the events or as if addressing an interlocutor we cannot see but for whom the story is supposed to have been originally created:

“...there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey.”

“He travelled along a rather dark path for some little time...”

“And I think the traveller must be yourself, ...”

“...-just as Somebody I won't mention, ...”

Image and Imagery

The tone is closely connected to the imagery in this story. While reading we come across various stylistic devices (e.g., enumeration, detached constructions, parallel constructions, metaphors, personifications, etc.) which make it easier to understand the message of the story. The most important ones are presented below.

First off, to describe different stages of life Charles Dickens often uses such a stylistic device as parallel constructions. These constructions serve as the backbone of the story as they present the succession of the important events that serve as lessons for the traveler:

“When it rained, they loved to watch the falling drops, and to smell the fresh scents. When it blew, it was delightful to listen to the wind, ...”

The most important parallel constructions, however, introduce the beginning of a new stage:

“I am always at play. Come and play with me!”

“I am always busy. Come and be busy with me!”

The next stylistic device which quietly often appears in the story is enumeration combined with polysyndeton, used to create a certain rhythm in the narration and to emphasize both the quantity and quality of the objects mentioned:

“...all about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and genii and fairies, and blue-beards and bean-stalks and riches ...”

To describe the surroundings the author also uses several personifications. They show us the different peculiarities of the atmosphere, making a vivid image of the lovely time the traveler spends with other characters around him:

“When it blew, it was delightful to listen to the wind, and fancy what it said, as it came rushing from its home-”

I take the view that the most important passage in the story is the description of the love stage in life. The author uses extended comparison which contains an allusion to his own sister so as to emphasize the whole atmosphere and peculiarities of it:

“... the prettiest girls that ever was seen--just like Fanny in the corner there--and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's...”

As we already know, that closer to the end of the story the author makes an allusion to his own grandfather, so it is only logical to assume that the girl described in this passage is the author's grandmother – hence the parallels between her appearance and that of Fanny.

We may also see some detached constructions in the passage:

“... --just like Fanny in the corner there-- ...”

“...--all exactly like Somebody I won't mention, and Fanny! ...”

These constructions, combined with the hidden allusion to Somebody, are used to create a humorous effect as well as to convey the flirtatious mood of the very stage of life inherent in love:

“So, the young man fell in love directly--just as Somebody I won't mention, the first time he came here, did with Fanny. Well! he was teased sometimes--just as Somebody used to be by Fanny; ...”

We may also consider one of the passages to be an extended metaphor containing antithesis. The purpose of these devices is to describe the image of the beginning and the ending of life, comparing it to the woods in different times of the year:

“The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown. The gentleman was not alone, ... So, they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard.”

This shows the connection between childhood and adulthood through parenting and hardships, which are closely connected to the feeling of loss and culmination in the old age.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a literary device that uses objects, places, people, or ideas to represent something beyond their literal meaning to create connections between the characters and the events of the plot.

In *The Child's Story* the author uses two main symbolic images. The first of them is a wood, which at first is presented in all its beautiful blooming glory, and then fades after a while, marking the end of the summer and the setting of early autumn:

“The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown.”

The juxtaposition of spring and autumn in this story symbolizes the beginning and sunset of a human life, since spring is the time when everything alive gains strength while autumn marks the arrival of the end accompanied by melancholic and pensive notes.

The second striking image in this work is the characters themselves, who are a representation of the life cycle. The author shows them as ordinary travelers, but each of them contains different features that eventually come together to create, as the pieces of a puzzle, an old man who always remembers:

“And the old man said with a calm smile, “I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!”

“I am always in love. Come and love with me.”

“...he began to be very busy with that gentleman, and they went on through the wood together.”

Conclusion

The Child’s Story is both a marvelous and melancholic metaphorical story, filled with hidden images and contrasts. This story teaches us that it is important to value the time we have, that despite the long start life is fleeting, but it is always filled with different memories, both sad and funny. The use of the symbolic imagery, the techniques employed to portray the characters and the conflict prompt the reader to reflect on the choices we make and the actions we undertake concerning our loved ones. Life is a series of events, a beautiful journey, and it is we who decide what the destination is.

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История Человека

What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening? The one whose mind is a gift. And it continues to flourish. It differs from common mammals. If only I were that one who was walking on three legs, approaching sunset, I would engrave on the rock wall of a cave my path as I remembered it. But It appears I am the one. I am a human who remembers. What role does memory serve in being Human? Why is it so powerful? Memory is closely related to such phenomena as time, space, emotions, feelings, and contemplation. It's like a stone that rolls so lightly, as if it were polished on a deliberate mission. For some it rolls in a more complicated way getting stuck in

the branches of the forest. Is it held by humans? Or, perhaps, the humans themselves keep stumbling over it. I closed my eyes and recalled the life I wanted to hold in my hands, not to let it go. Just for a moment longer. But now, it will be us together looking at present that we call future.

To begin with, it is worth saying that many journeys and discoveries slow down time as one learns and contemplates. It is presented to us in the short, brief and delicate story by Charles Dickens. But how deeply it penetrates us that we hear its echoes. This work is a pattern in terms of superficiality. It's a model for projecting one's life onto it. That's the thing that makes it essential. It's an iconic piece – and for good reason. Ch. Dickens writes it in such a way as to give us the impression of observing how a person's daily little stories are written down in a diary. The protagonist of the story is a traveler. He is a dynamic character, fumbling and searching for his people, at least one. We are going to watch him and try to look at this world through his eyes, feel his emotions, study the depths of his soul. The locations of the actions change one by one.

At first, he is going to get acquainted with the beautiful child playing. “The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely...” sounds like a song where everything is beautiful. They were that merry, even the rain was blessed. This image with the falling drops smelt freshly. The snow was like an attempt to slow down time. When they raised their heads and froze along with the snowflakes that were falling, they slowed down. That's why winter was especially loved by them. Charles Dickens uses metaphors to describe nature. For instance, “White flakes falling fast and thick, like down from the breasts of millions of white birds.” The wind whistled and howled as a person. It's true that it's not without personification. The wind is a phenomenon that makes the sea roar in a fury. The usage of these literary devices shows us that nature and we ourselves are a single entity. *We are Nature*, which develops in space and time. And when it reaches the appropriate point, it begins its journey anew. Going back to the traveler and the child, they had plenty of the finest toys in the world. Magic was real, mythical creatures were real. Time rushed by as they had so much joy. It was in the game. But in stark contrast, in the memory, time slowed down. For example, “It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through.” The traveller just wanted to squeeze that moment with his hand, but there was nothing left but echoes of the child, involved in an action and having fun. It was all happening in his head, but it was fading away just smoothly, softly and slowly. The reason was cheerfulness. The memory was affected by the quality of time. It made the quantity of it miserably small. And this is the best way to be. Thus, time will be cherished and will remain in the memory permanently.

The action is starting to rise. Everything is in a chronological and dynamic way. As dynamic as a stone or a wheel that has been pushed down the slope. And now it rolls by inertia itself at high speed. Next he met a boy who was always

learning. In the same vein, they were absorbed in it. Both the boy and the traveller learned about Jupiter and Juno, the Greeks and the Romans. They played in winter and summer, danced till midnight. They had plenty of friends, such dear friends that he wanted the time to reckon them up. Come to think of it, the author writes in quite a serene and descriptive tone. It's done to make us feel peaceful and visualize it as our place of strength. As a consequence of this meeting, we are to conclude with the statement that we're all here to learn. Time is again the villain in this story. On balance, the traveller just wants to squeeze. And everything that was, is gone.

Then, in front of him was a young man with an internal warmth. Environment is immediately magical due to love, and it's even enchanted since the beginning of the hormones swinging. Romantic, adorable and a little bit childish warmth is felt. Indeed, we can characterise the people around the traveller, because we are presented with their lives, emotions and feelings. But he himself remains flat and faces only external conflicts. What was it? The man said, "I'm in love." And the wanderer stepped into the wheel of life to keep up with it. They began to love together. As for the young man and his love, "He was teased sometimes – just as Somebody used to be by Fanny; and they quarrelled sometimes – just as Somebody and Fanny used to quarrel; and they made it up, and sat in the dark, and wrote letters every day, and never were happy asunder, and were always looking out for one another and pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time, and sat close to one another by the fire, and were going to be married very soon – all exactly like Somebody I won't mention, and Fanny!"

After that the traveller saw a middle-aged gentleman. He was busy doing something. The adventurer let himself get used to it and went with him. As if in order not to stumble in his feet, he was running. They were both busy now. The great stone rolled into the wilds and the conflict in the characters began to intensify. The man, his wife, their children and the traveller walked through the wood. It started to change, to get darker. "It began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown." This symbolism makes us foresee a sense of the tension before the climax. As if somewhere out there, it is waiting for us with a denouement. But they were breaking through the branches, trying to find the light. And then he saw rays of light seeping through small holes in the leaves of the dense trees. It was as if these little spotlights were talking, calling out. Furthermore, the characters started to hear the voices: "Father, father, I am another child! Stop for me!" It was the children. They were like a deduction, scattering. These little creatures were as if particles of that stone, as if broken into small pieces, were scattered all over the forest. "Father, I am going to sea," and another said, "Father, I am going to India," and another, "Father, I am going to seek my fortune where I can," and another, "Father, I am going to Heaven!" These are disturbances beyond one's control on the other side of the wheel, to which one is tied. These are things that cannot be

seen because the future does not exist. This is something that one cannot influence, but can bear with dignity and allow to be accepted. The man's hair turned grey. The circle continued to roll, unwinding. The man's wife got a cry from a child in the sky. He thought as: "No, don't go. See, I've got my hands on it! For a moment, and you're still here! Well, don't go away, I've got you!" His wife with all of her kindly glance showed the words: "Darling, you're lucky you managed to hold on. It means you're living in the present and you know the value of it. Be proud of it and be happy. They're waiting for me. Go on, your circle's still rolling, I'll see you again." The traveller's thoughts of hope screamed: "We're almost through the trees, do you hear that? M...man? Eh, I'm alone again." A chipped piece of rock rolled behind a tree, trampling the traveller's path. The climax is reached, the way leads to an open space in another part of the wood. It's as if there's a new world there.

In the final stage, the one whose eyes we are looking through, the wanderer, came to an old man sitting on a fallen tree. Answering the same question that the traveller asked all his friends, the old man replied with a calm smile, "I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!" A circle appeared in the elder's vision. Around them, there was everyone he loved. And no one left him. Over the memory bridge they came to him. The traveller also remained on the winning side. As a result, each person he met taught him a lesson. It is one of the main values of their meeting. The grandfather truly is a traveller, surrounded by memories, lessons, guidance and love.

Taking everything into consideration, Human Beings are creatures with a lot of nerve endings. The ability to let go and go with the pace of life is a blessing. One of the main traits of being a Human Being is memory. It can be a specific trigger. Whether it is a good one or not is up to us. Memory is the bridge that connects me to my loved one. It is powerful like a ring, which is no longer visible, because the finger has become fatter over the years. And it is not visible under the skin. A ring that is the memory of the beloved. Everything is mortal and tangible. Know, accept and appreciate. It's only with the realisation that all has its date we find meaning. And how it really is, you don't need to know. If a man has contacted you, he will forever be yours, and you – his. And at the end of the circle it can be translucent, or it can be vivid. It's all decided by the time spent with him, the quality, external and internal factors. Time was the antagonist of this story, it was the villain. But time is also the most real hero. The result is memory. To be human is to flounder, to seek one's own. But what happened to you will always be yours. What once found you only after making a circle, big or small, will manifest itself either in a thought or in a pile of stones. Don't be afraid, but play, learn, love, be busy. There is no future. For when it comes it is the present. Memories can be good and not so good. Am I optimistic? This is also one of the traits of human nature: to reproduce the good. And if you want to forget what is ruinous, I'll make it easy for you. The very fact of this confession is letting go. I opened my eyes, in

front of me there are engraved drawings of human evolution, a path. And its members are on the opposite side of the drawing. Next to me. In my memory.

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Features of the Author's Individual Style in "The Child's Story"
by Charles Dickens

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812–1870) is renowned in the history of the world classics as one of the greatest novelists of the nineteenth century and one of the greatest English writers of all time. Dickens' rich literary legacy includes both realistic works on socially significant themes and more sentimental pieces. To this day, his major novels and short stories remain relevant and are widely read around the world by a diverse range of readers.

The work of Dickens is a subject of great interest for researchers in the field of philology and linguistics. His unique style is characterized by vivid detailed descriptions, the use of symbolic images, allegories, numerous literary devices and figures of speech, as well as irony, humor, and satire. In his novels, Dickens introduces carefully elaborated characters and multiple intertwining plot lines.

In this essay, I am analyzing "The Child's Story" by Charles Dickens and identifying typical features of his individual style within it.

"The Child's Story" is a short prose tale published in 1852, so it belongs to the later period of Dickens' career. While many of his works from that time address social injustices in a realistic manner, this story stands out due to its unique plot and the theme it is devoted to — the journey of life.

The narrative follows the protagonist, a traveller, who sets off on a journey and meets various minor characters along the way: a beautiful child, a handsome boy, a young man, a middle-aged gentleman, and an old man. The traveller engages in some kind of activity with each of them until his companion suddenly disappears.

Compositionally, the story can be divided into five parts, each focusing on the traveller's encounter with one of the minor characters. These parts have similar syntactic organization (parallel constructions, anaphoric repetitions), lexical content (some phrases are repeated, for example: "*What do you do here?*"),

“*went on for a little while*”, “*without seeing anything*”), and a common thematic structure. This structure can be represented as a cyclic sequence *path* → *meeting* → *path* → *parting* → *path*. Therefore, the path serves as the central image of the work, holding symbolic meaning. The path represents life itself, with the traveller’s companions standing for different stages of life.

Now, let us examine each of these episodes in detail.

The first compositional part of the story includes an exposition and the episode of the traveller’s acquaintance with the beautiful child. The story begins with the introductory phrase “*Once upon a time, a good many years ago, ...*”. This is an example of a classic exposition in fairy tales, which causes the reader to expect magical events in the story. Then, the author introduces the main character of the work, the traveller, but does not give any details about him either directly or indirectly. At the end of the first paragraph, we come across the following sentence: “*It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through*”. By using such an enigmatic statement at the very beginning of the work, the author creates the effect of suspense. The meaning of the sentence will become clear to the reader only when they read the story to the end.

The first episode depicts the meeting between the traveller and the child, who is a symbol of the beginning of life. This scene focuses on the bright impressions of childhood; the reader immediately notices the atmosphere of joy, beauty and abundance created in Paragraphs 3 and 4. This effect is achieved through the use of a large number of words with positive connotation: *merry, beautiful, fresh, delightful, fancy, best of all, plenty of the finest toys*. At the same time, there are not any negatively colored vocabulary in this episode even when the bad weather is being described (for instance, “*When it rained, they loved to...*”, “*When it blew, it was delightful to...*”). All the vivid images of this scene and the details of the landscape, which quickly change each other (“*the falling drops*”, “*the wind ... driving the clouds..., rumbling in the chimneys...*”, “*the white flakes falling*”), we see through the eyes of the child and, as if for the first time, learn the beauty of the world around us, *and all new and all true*. The overall narrative tone is very emotional — the author repeatedly uses the intensifying word *so* in descriptions of the surrounding nature (“*The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butterflies, ...*”), as well as a naive simile “*the white flakes falling fast and thick, like down from the breasts of millions of white birds...*”. After some time, the traveller suddenly loses the child. Just as suddenly, a person realizes that time has gone irrevocably.

The next episode delineates how the traveller gets acquainted with the handsome boy; it is devoted to childhood and probably early adolescence. This part of the text contains many examples of the words associated with the feeling of happiness and pleasure: *the merriest games, holidays, cakes, parties, Theatres...* So, the mood created by the author is joyful and excited. Similar to his predecessor, the boy is optimistic, has “*such dear friends and so many of them...*” (“*They were all young ... and were never to be strange to one another all their lives through*”), enjoys various activities (“*They rowed upon the river in summer, and skated on the ice in winter; they were active afoot, and active on horseback...*”), and has a curiosity to explore everything and see “*all the wonders of the world*”. However, this stage of life is characterized by the first responsibilities — studying. Despite this, studying brings the boy pleasure, broadens his horizons, and life is still filled with only happy moments.

The first sorrows and disappointments that a person may experience in the process of growing up are often connected with first love and first betrayal. These emotions are depicted in the third part of the composition, where the traveller comes across the young man. The text implicates that the young man was once in love with a girl named Fanny, but she chose another man over him; probably, he was a friend of the young man. In this scene, the narrator is being particularly intrusive; he sympathizes with the young man, shares his pain, and shows his disapproval towards the person Fanny chose, not mentioning him by name (*Somebody / Somebody I won't mention*). The tone of the narrative in this episode is highly emotional. Initially, the narrator speaks of Fanny with admiration and affection (“*one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen — just like Fanny ... — and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's...*”), but then his tone abruptly shifts to irritated and disparaging, especially in the expressions after the dash, for example: “*— just as Somebody I won't mention, the first time he came here, did with Fanny*”. Additionally, this part of the text contains exclamatory sentences: “*Well!*”, “*... — all exactly like Somebody I won't mention, and Fanny!*”

After the turbulent youth, life enters a period of maturity, perhaps the longest and most significant stage, when everyone is “*always busy*”. This is shown in the episode of the traveller's meeting with the middle-aged gentleman and his family. This passage once again highlights the symbolic importance of the journey of life — during it, we encounter new people, bring up children, they grow up and forge their own destinies. Some remain close to us, some choose different paths (*each child upon its way*: “*I am going to sea*”, “*I am going to India*”, “*I am going to seek my fortune where I can*”), and some continue their journey in Heaven (“*I am going to Heaven!*”). The path to Heaven is used as an extended metaphor for death; the reader encounters it twice in the text — first

when the gentleman's child passes away, and then when his wife follows them (*"I am summoned, and I go!"*).

It is important to note that in this scene the author gives setting details and writes about the place where the path of the traveller and his companions lies — *"the whole journey was through a wood"*; the author did not choose the image of trees by chance. Firstly, by the changing foliage that is mentioned in the story (*"only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown", "And now the wood was yellow; and now brown; and the leaves, even of the forest trees, began to fall."*), the reader can trace the passage of time. Secondly, the trees growing close to each other and making the travellers' way difficult is a symbol of the problems and challenges that we face throughout life, but it is family that helps us to cope with them — *"... they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard"*.

Another important symbol in the story is the time of day: moving towards dusk signifies getting older. This symbol is represented through the parallels: *"the day was beginning to decline"* and *"his [the gentleman's] hair was turning grey"*. Sunset is depicted as the final, yet most vibrant and beautiful part of the day. It holds significant meaning in the last scene of the story, where the traveller emerges from the forest, with no more trees obstructing his path and all challenges left behind, and meets the old man. The latter peacefully feasts his eyes on the landscape in front of him and reflects on his life, which now, from the perspective of his advanced years, appears as beautiful as the serene sunset. His memories bring back images of the beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man, and the middle-aged gentleman, and he realizes that he has lost nothing and that his heart will always be filled with love.

Now let us go back to the statement that seemed so mysterious to us at first: *"It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through"*. Now we understand its meaning: life is a journey, but with each passing year, it seems to speed up. When we are young, time seems endless to us, but we often fail to notice how quickly it slips away until it's too late. However, the author's message is clear: life is a magic journey, with each stage offering happy moments, unique experiences and valuable lessons that we should appreciate equally.

Having analyzed the different fragments of the story individually and delved into its main theme, it is important to discuss its formal characteristics.

The story has a slow narrative rhythm, and the general narrative tone of the work resembles one of a fairy tale or a legend. This effect is achieved through the special syntactic organization of the text — the use of long extended sentences, anaphoric repetitions and parallel constructions, as well as polysyndeton to link clauses (for instance, “*and were always looking out for one another and pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time, and sat close to one another by the fire, and were going to be married very soon...*”). The vocabulary of the story is plain, which is also one of the typical features of fairy tales.

The narration is conducted from the viewpoint of the first person limited subjective narrator, who is not involved into the action as the character, but acts as an eyewitness to the events and follows the perspective of the protagonist — the traveller.

The type of narrative is linear, with episodes described in chronological order, so the plot and the fabula coincide. To establish the sequence of events, the author uses the past simple tense. The plot primarily unfolds through the narrator’s speech, with few short dialogues between characters.

All the characters of “The Child’s Story” are flat and static; the reader knows little about them and does not witness any significant development or changes within them. To portray the traveller and the people he meets, the author uses techniques of direct and indirect characterization. Examples of direct characterization include the author’s use of epithets to describe the characters, so we know that the child is *beautiful*, the boy is *handsome*, one of the men is *young* and the other is *old*, and the gentleman and his wife are *middle-aged* (the woman is “*a lady of about the same age with him*”). Indirect characterization is evident through the characters’ speech and behaviour — the child is joyful and cheerful (“*I am always at play*”), the boy is curious, friendly, and active (“*I am always learning*”), the young man is romantic and sensitive (“*I am always in love*”), the gentleman is serious and responsible (“*I am always busy*”), the old man is sentimental and thoughtful (“*I am always remembering*”), and the traveller, who gladly joins all his companions in various activities, is sociable and ready to discover something new. The author intentionally creates such generalized images to allow readers to see themselves reflected in the characters of his story.

In conclusion, while “The Child’s Story” may not be Dickens’ most famous work, it serves as a fine example of imaginative prose. Even in such a short story, the reader can recognize the master’s hand and features of his individual style: symbolism, emotional appeal, and life-affirming themes.

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*The Peculiarities of the chronotope of the road in the short story
«The Child's Story» by Charles Dickens*

I. Introduction

The ancient Greeks state art reflects life, so space and time are the main fundamental categories of not only a real life, but also of any fictional work. The essence of these two categories' relationships – space and time – lays in such notion as a chronotope, that is a universal term used in different scientific fields. In the sphere of literature this notion was introduced by the famous Russian scholar Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin whose impact onto the literary theory, ethics, and the philosophy of language cannot be overestimated. According to his point of view, the chronotope is “a formal and substantive category of literature” [1].

This research paper deals with the chronotope of the road. M. M. Bakhtin defines this type of the chronotope as meaningful one, that forms a plot of the story in such a way that its characters' life path merges with their real spatial way [1]. Therefore, the metaphor “life as a road” is implemented. One of the striking examples demonstrating the realization of the given metaphor is the story under the title “The Child's Story” written by the great British author, Charles Dickens.

II. Material of the research paper

The short story published in 1852 is represented in the form of a parable with fairytale elements. The readers can see the beginning which is typical of a fairy tale – “Once upon a time” that immediately immerses them in the atmosphere of a miracle. The epithet “magic” used in the next sentence increases this effect.

The narrator does not mention the name of the main character; he is just called “a traveller” who “set out upon a journey”. Moreover, the narrator describes this journey as “*very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through.*” In this paradox the reader sees a reference to such notion as “life” so all these facts highlight the importance of the chronotope of the road for the short story's plot.

It is interesting to note that although the narration in the short story is done in the third person singular, the author adds some insertions of the first-person narrator. It creates a dual effect. On the one hand, usage of the personal pronoun “I” brings the author-narrator and the reader closer together allowing the author to give several references to his personal life. For example, in the eighth paragraph

there are the following sentences: “*So, he went away with that young man, and presently they came to one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen – just like Fanny in the corner there – and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny’s, and she laughed and coloured just as Fanny does while I am talking about her. So, the young man fell in love directly – just as Somebody I won’t mention, the first time he came here, did with Fanny.*” The reader can observe that the author draws parallels between the girl with which the young man has fallen in love and a certain Fanny with the help of a simile. It should be noted that Fanny is a short name of Dickens’ elder sister, Frances Elizabeth Dickens. Consequently, the indefinite pronoun “somebody” that is written with a capital letter implying that it is not any person, but a concrete one hides her husband, Henry Burnett. On the other hand, the third-person narration creates the effect of the omniscient author’s presence. The reader is told the chain of events consistently giving an illusion that the narrator knows everything and builds intrigue for the reader.

III. Chronotope of the road in the short story “The Child’s Story”

M. M. Bakhtin notices that the chronotope of the road is closely connected with the motive of meeting, for the road crosses ways of different people that vary in social classes, their religious belief and size of their fortune [1]. During his “magic journey”, the traveller meets several people of different ages. It should be noted each of them is a reflection of the traveller in certain periods of his life that intensifies the symbolism of the metaphor “life as a road”.

Firstly the traveller meets a child so the first meeting coincides with the period of childhood.

Describing the beginning of the traveller’s journey, the narrator notices that “*he travelled along a rather path for some little time...*”. It should be underscored that in different mythologies the world began with Chaos and Darkness so we can suppose that this sentence corresponds with the birth of a person. Then the traveller meets a child so the first meeting coincides with the period of childhood. According to Romantic poets and novelists, childhood is the lost Paradise. So despite the fact that Charles Dickens was a representative of Realism, in his works the readers can find elements of Romanticism. In this way, the author describes the child he has met by means of the epithet “beautiful”, and when the traveller asks the child, “*What do you do here?*”, the answer is “*I am always at play. Come and play with me!*” that refers to the carefree nature of childhood. Moreover, it is important to pay attention to the following parallel construction: “*The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butterflies, that everything was beautiful.*” The hyperbole with the help of which the author depicts the weather makes it clear that such weather can be only in Paradise. However, the traveller loses the child as mankind lost its Paradise.

The main character of the short story continues his way. And then he meets a handsome boy. The reader can observe the repetition of the same question which

the traveller has asked the child, *“What do you do?”*. But at this time the answer is different, *“I am always learning. Come and learn with me”*. This part of the road is collated with adolescence when a person learns about the world, when a lot of friends appear and it seems that they never go away: *“They were all young, like the handsome boy, and were never to be strange to one another all their lives through.”*

Nonetheless, the author does not stop at this period, and the traveller loses the boy. One can compare the fact of losing a companion with the process of the traveller’s growing up. Hence, the next person he meets is a young man who associates with youth characterised by the feeling of being in love (*“I am always in love. Come and love with me.”*).

The next counterpart of the traveller is a middle-aged gentleman who represents adulthood during which people are always busy (*“I am always busy. Come and be busy with me!”*). The narrator notes that the whole way goes through a wood. The given fact allows the author to introduce new symbols into the narrative – the wood as the embodiment of life and seasons as periods of life: *“The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown.”* Childhood, adolescence and youth are connected with the spring wood but starting with adulthood, the wood becomes thick and dark that signals the onset of summer and autumn.

The traveller spends most of his time with the middle-aged gentleman. It is interesting to note that they are not alone on their journey; they travel with the wife and children of the middle-aged gentleman. The narrator describes their road in the following way: *“So, they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard.”* The path description helps the reader realise that the family’s life is not easy but they overcome all difficulties together. Using the road as the image of life the author also depicts the birth of children when the path goes through long green avenues: *“Sometimes, they came to a long green avenue that opened into deeper woods. Then they would hear a very little, distant voice crying, “Father, father, I am another child! Stop for me!””*

However, the chronotope of the road deals not only with the motive of meeting, but also with the motive of parting. The time comes, and the middle-aged gentleman breaks up with his children first because they start going their own way. After the moment when his hair turns grey and the wood becomes brown showing the coming of autumn, the wife of the gentleman leaves him too. Hence, the chronotope of the road can have two perspectives, namely horizontal and vertical ones. In the first case this is a path on Earth but in the second case it is a way to Heaven or Hell [2]. This peculiarity of the road chronotope can be observed in the short story under consideration. One of the children and the wife of the gentleman go to Heaven. But the reader understands that this euphemism indicates their death.

At last the traveller meets his last companion in the person of an old man. This meeting is associated with old age. The traveller asks the question with which he always starts a new friendship off and gets the answer, “*I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!*” It turns out that all the traveller’s friends he met – the beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the middle-aged gentleman, his wife and children – have never left him because they always remain in his heart. The end of the road is symbolised by the light of the sunset.

IV. Conclusion

The theme of “The Child’s Story” lays in the description of the person’s life as the road people walk. The author encourages readers to catch the moment and live with this story. The chronotope of the road in the given fictional work by Charles Dickens includes meeting and partings of the main character, the traveller, who then turns out to be the author’s own grandfather. So the peculiarity of the road chronotope is that the path fully depicts the character’s life with the help of symbols filigreeing the metaphor “life as a road”.

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Творческая номинация

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What does it mean to journey through life, meeting each phase with joy, loss, and discovery? How do we hold on to fleeting moments, knowing they will pass, yet hoping they will linger?

Charles Dickens, one of the greatest English writers, masterfully explores these questions in his work *The Child’s Story*. Renowned for his understanding of human nature and social commentary, he wrote the work during the mid-19th century, a period marked by industrial and social upheaval. Known for novels like

Great Expectations, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Oliver Twist*, Dickens was an advocate for social justice and reform, often weaving into his works a compassionate yet critical portrayal of Victorian society. *The Child's Story*, however, departs from his typically social themes and ventures into the allegorical and introspective.

The literary work opens with a timeless, almost fairytale invitation: “*Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey*”. In these simple words, the author prepares us for a path through life itself. By blending allegory and delicate imagery, Dickens explores the impermanence of human experience, drawing readers into a narrative that is as contemplative as it is captivating.

Our work explores how the themes of growing up, love, and memory bring depth to Dickens' simple yet timeless tale.

The theme of *The Child's Story* revolves around the inevitable progression of life and the bittersweet nature of parting and remembrance. The plot is episodic, with each character he meets symbolizing a distinct period of human life, offering both companionship and a particular experience before inevitably parting ways. This structuring reinforces the theme of transient relationships and the stages of human development.

It is crucial to establish the setting of the story, which is a mystical forest representing the journey of life. Initially, the path is bright and inspiring, mirroring the vitality of youth: “*the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling*”. As the traveller moves through different stages, it grows darker, symbolizing the complexities and responsibilities that accompany adulthood: “*began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer*”. In the latter part, as the main character nears the end of his route, the wood turns autumnal and sombre, reflecting the twilight years of life: “*now the wood was yellow; and now brown; and the leaves, even of the forest trees, began to fall*”.

The primary conflict in *The Child's Story* is an internal one: the main character's struggle with the inevitable loss of the companions he meets along the way. This inner turmoil symbolizes the universal human experience of cherishing moments and relationships, only to face their eventual fading. Although no explicit antagonist exists, the passage of time itself serves as a force that separates the traveller from his companions. This temporal conflict enriches the narrative's emotional tone, which is gentle and nostalgic. It reinforces the bittersweet inevitability of growth and separation.

We are in favour of the idea that the point of view is first-person, but the author keeps it hidden until the very end. Actually, it is quite confusing to determine the point of view until we reach to the last part, when the narrator says: “*And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear grandfather, because this is what you do to us, and what we do to you*”. Initially, it seems like the story is told in the third person singular. However, in the last lines the narrator addresses a “*dear grandfather*” and suggests that the traveller is, in fact, his own grandfather. This

twist reveals that the work is a frame narrative – *a story within a story* – where a child is telling a tale to his grandfather.

The ending also suggests that the grandfather might actually be the one narrating the story as a life lesson for his grandchildren. This makes sense because a kid would not usually have the knowledge to describe each stage with such detail and wisdom. Moreover, the plot is further enriched by small references to Dickens' biography, such as the mention of *Fanny*, a name shared with his own sister. Altogether, this point of view adds depth to the plot, making it not just an imaginary journey, but also a personal reflection on family, memory, and the passage of time.

The author employs allegorical characterization, using archetypal figures to embody the various stages. The child, boy, young man, middle-aged gentleman and elder represent a different phase of human experience. For example, the kid, who "*is always at play*," embodies the innocence and carefree nature of early life, while the elderly man, who "*is always remembering*," embodies the quiet acceptance and wisdom of old age. These characters are not explored in depth but rather serve as symbols, allowing readers to project their own experiences onto them.

Charles Dickens crafts a deeply symbolic journey, using vivid imagery and a range of lexico-stylistic devices to create a fable that captures the stages of life. His choices in description depict the themes of growth, loss, and nostalgia, while the use of symbolism underscores the transient beauty of each period.

From the outset, the author employs nature to reflect the different stages, using the setting of a forest that changes with the traveller's path. At the beginning it is depicted with fresh, vibrant imagery, representing the innocence and wonder of childhood. To give an illustration of what we mean, let's look at the episode, when the main character meets the child. The world around them is filled with epithets: "*the sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely*".

This repetition of vivid colour words and adverb "*so*" evokes the purity and joy of early life, where everything is new and full of wonder.

As the story progresses, the imagery shifts to reflect the darker, more complex aspects of existence. By the time the traveller reaches middle age, the forest grows "*thick and dark, like a wood in summer*", and some trees begin "*turning brown*". Dickens uses such lexico-stylistic devices as simile and metaphor for aging, signalling the changes from youth's vitality to the responsibilities of adulthood. Epithets "*thick*" and "*dark*" contrast sharply with the brightness of earlier scenes – "*sparkling*", "*bright*", subtly suggesting the challenges and burdens that accompany maturity.

Apart from that, simile creates vivid sensory images that bring abstract ideas to life. When the child and traveller watch the snowfall, the author describes the flakes "*like down from the breasts of millions of white birds*". This comparison conjures an image of soft, pure snow and suggests the innocence.

When the traveller reaches old age, the forest is depicted in autumnal hues: *“the wood was yellow; and now brown; and the leaves, even of the forest trees, began to fall”*. Autumn, a season often associated with maturity and harvest but also with decline, serves as a fitting metaphor for the latter stages of life, where one begins to look back with nostalgia and prepares for the end.

In the closing scenes, as he meets the old man, the forest path opens to a view of the epithets *“serene sunset”* across a *“purple prospect”*. The sunset symbolizes the end of journey, but the choice of calm, serene colours also suggests peace and acceptance.

Therefore, we can consider the transformation of the forest as the most powerful symbol of the short story.

It should be noted that the author uses the stylistic device of personification to enliven the environment, making it feel almost like a character of the literary work. The wind, for instance, *“came rushing from its home”* and *“whistling and howling”*, which gives it a mischievous, playful quality that fits well with the child’s perspective. This device helps to create an immersive and magical atmosphere, making the natural world feel like an active participant.

Another point that each character of the journey symbolizes a life stage. For instance, when the traveller meets each new character, he asks, *“What do you do here?”* and receives a response that captures the essence of each period: *“I am always at play”* (the child), *“I am always learning”* (the boy), *“I am always in love”* (the young man), and *“I am always busy”* (the middle-aged gentleman). This repetition highlights the simplicity and clarity of each phase and underscores the cyclical nature of life.

Besides, there is an understated irony in the cycle presented in the story. The characters claim to be *“always”* engaged in one activity – playing, learning, loving, or working – as though each stage will last indefinitely. However, the traveller inevitably loses each companion as he moves forward. This irony emphasizes the fleeting nature of time and serves as a gentle reminder that each phase, no matter how consuming, will one day pass.

Allusions enrich the text and connect the story to broader cultural contexts. The child has *“astonishing picture-books...about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and genii and fairies”*. This list of fantastical items also serves as a metaphor for the imagination and endless possibilities of childhood, where stories are vibrant and magical. The young man’s love experience, filled with *“quarrels”* and engagements by *“the fire”*, symbolizes the intensity and idealism of young love, portraying it as both passionate and sometimes turbulent.

Finally, throughout the narrative, Dickens uses contrast to emphasize the distinct qualities of each period. The traveller’s time with the child is filled with joy, laughter, and wonder, while his time with the gentleman involves work, burdens, and partings with loved ones. This contrast underscores the inevitability of change and the way each stage brings unique experiences.

To draw the conclusion, one can say that *The Child's* is a profound meditation on life's beauty and impermanence, where each stage is both unique and fleeting. Charles Dickens uses rich imagery, symbolism, and poetic language to capture the beauty and transience of each phase. Beneath the simplicity of the allegory lies a profound meditation on the human experience that beckons each of us to consider the layers of meaning in our lives and the significance of the journeys we undertake.

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Жизнь – бесконечные метаморфозы

I. Introduction

Life. Oh, life. How much is in this word? What is it to live a life?

Have you ever thought that our life never stays in the same position? From personal growth and relationships to changes in circumstances and the environment, everything is in a state of flux. This dynamic nature of life can bring both challenges and opportunities, encouraging us to adapt, learn and evolve. Embracing changes one can reach new personal experiences and perspectives, which ultimately contribute to universal development and understanding of the world. And Charles Dickens perfectly showed it in his story which I am about to analyse.

II. Main part

Theme and plot: The main idea is that the people of all ages go through different stages of life and they all shape diverse personalities, according to their basic interests and needs right at the moment. What I want to say is that a person of today and a person of yesterday do differ greatly because a human is a dynamic variable that never stays the same. Confirmation to my words can be found in the very text: *'The beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the father, mother and children: every one of them was there, and he had lost nothing.'* By giving us that passage, the author literally states that one person contains a large number of the other ones. We start a life as a child, for whom a life is a fairy tale. Then we grow up and become a pupil – *'I am always learning. Come and learn with me.'* Having finished our studies, we go further and find ourselves in love with a woman of our heart! The author uses short phrases but they fulfil their function greatly and we easily understand that one simple thing:

our requirements, obligations and necessities are not always the same like we are. And that is great because exactly these metamorphoses make a real difference.

Setting: It is difficult to say for sure when this story takes place because there are no concrete dates or any historical figures mentioned. Nevertheless, we can easily stumble upon details that could help us to suppose the time. For instance, the twelfth cakes are only served during at Christmas, which gained its popularity in the 19th century and being widely celebrated from this date. What is more, the game named 'Cricket' was invented in the late 16th century. And, according to the Internet sources, - 'throughout the 18th century, the popularity of cricket exploded in England, with many organized matches being played.' Also, we shouldn't forget to mention the game called 'Hare & Hounds', which was mentioned in the story. The game seems to have originated in 19th century France, and became popular with French military officers during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. Finally, we have a great hint mentioned in the text '*Father, I am going to India.*' India was a pearl of the British Empire, one of the wealthiest colonies that England had. India was rich with gold and silver, coloured gemstones, copper and bronze. That was why many traders were so eager to move there and open their businesses in that region. The rise of trade with India came to the 18th century and it was a perspective and popular idea among many young people to travel to it and to settle there down. Based on this data, we might say that the story took place in England around 17th-19th centuries. As for the social environment, it can be said for sure that the author wasn't from the poor family. The 17th-19th centuries are the time of industrial revolutions and the time of urbanisation and factories building. Many Englishmen worked at factories where they had poor working conditions and low salaries, their income couldn't simply allow them to visit '*real Theatres where they saw palaces of real gold and silver rise out of the real earth, and saw all the wonders of the world at once.*' What is more, the education wasn't public but it was only for noble people. Not every single Englishman could learn about '*Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks and the Romans...*', because it was unaffordable luxury for ordinary people. So, the author had a great and rather simple and carefree childhood. The atmosphere of his life is positive because he had no need to overwork at manufactures for a pair of coins, he had '*plenty of finest toys in the world*' and '*the most astonishing picture-books.*' Books were incredibly expensive back in that time, especially the ones that had pictures!

Conflict: It seems as if the conflict is both internal and external. On the one hand, the time affect the author's personality because throughout the whole life we gain different experiences which shape us as personalities. On the other hand, the times affects not only our minds but also our physical conditions. People literally dissolve in time; we get older and then we are no more. The time is extremely difficult to understand but it is one of the most important factors in our life. Time gives people many opportunities and the same it takes lots from us. The time is the measure of all things. I think that the author wants to tell us that everything is understood from the time's point of view. Judge for yourself, to

estimate the friendship or the love we should wait. To understand whether you have taken a right decision or not, again, you should wait. To obtain all the things in this life or at least something you want, again, you must wait! The time is like a teacher who grades you for your achievements and misfortunes at the same time. The time is also a great judge between the life and the death. It creates the balance between these two major conditions of the matter or substance. The whole life is in the authority of the life and the death. Something is born, something dies – this creates the circle of the life and the death. But the time controls the flow of these states. When the time comes, the person comes into this world, and, vice versa, when the times runs out, the person leaves this world. Therefore, the whole existence lies in the field of the time. Nothing is possible without the time. The time is everything.

Point of view: The story begins with this phrase – ‘A good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey.’ Then we see different characters, which are met during the specific age. Sadly, these characters leave us suddenly without saying anything to us, they disappear without bidding farewell. What is interesting is that they leave us in the most interesting moments. But when they leave us, we go to a next level of development, our interests change and we get older. However, when the story comes to its end, we see the scene where the traveller and the old man are sitting together and remembering the life. And, out of a sudden, all the characters that got lost one day came back together to pay a visit to the traveller and the old man. Having met all these people, we plainly understand that the old man and the traveller are the same person and these people are their memories and past personalities they gathered together! ‘*And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather...*’ – which directly proves my idea. Thus, the narrator, the traveller and the author are the same human! ‘*So, he loved them all, was kind and forbearing with them all, and was always pleased to watch them all, and they all honoured and loved him*’ – this passage is vital because it tells us that the author had a great life and he had nothing to regret of.

Tone: Speaking of irony and sarcasm in this story, there you can find some jokes. To begin with, ‘*The boy learned more than I could tell – or he either, for he soon forgot a great deal of it*’ – which is irony, because the boy was expected to learn a lot of new facts but it turned out to be vice versa. Also, ‘*It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through*’ – which is irony as well, because the way looked as if it was lengthy but it happened to be different again. Speaking of sarcasm, I haven’t seen any. I think it’s not used here because there is no suitable moment to mock someone because there are no characters that are having dialogues with each other.

Characterization: There are some people who are mentioned. However, they are nameless, which is done intentionally for several reasons: to show the rapid pace of life, you forget all the people’s names because you have met a lot of people; to refer this story to every man and woman; and, certainly, to speak about all people in general;

For example, the author's wife – *'They came to one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen – just like Fanny in the corner there – and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and simples like Fanny's, and she laughed and coloured just as Fanny does while I am talking about her'*. We can say for sure that these people were in love, they sincerely adored each other and couldn't do without one another. The narrator had a great wife who was his closest person and the shoulder to cry on – *'They were always looking out for one another and pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time, and sat close to one another by the fire, and were going to be married very soon.'* They were thick as thieves!

Another fact is that they had children. There were 4 children and they were different. The first one wanted to go to sea, the second one wanted to go to India, the third one wanted to seek his fortune where he could and the last one went to Heaven. So, the fourth son passed away – *'So, with many tears at parting, they went, solitary, down those avenues, each child upon its way; and the child who went to Heaven, rose into the golden air and vanished.'*

Tropes: This story is rich in tropes. It is done to improve the immersion into the story and enhance the strength of words to convey the idea easier.

For instance, *'The wind was whistling and howling'* impersonation, that is usually used to animate objects and to give increased importance to the world around us, which improves the storytelling and make our comprehension easier. Also, *'The sky was so blue, the leaves were so green'* is syntactic parallelism, that is used to put some emphasis on the beauty of the surrounding world. To give one more example, *'When it rained, they loved to watch the falling drops, and to smell the fresh scents'* is assonance, that is used to enhance the writing with rhythm and mood. Exactly in this case, the assonance helps us to feel better the nature.

The author uses repetition quite often to enhance the value and make something look more marvellous or magic – *'The sun was so bright; the water was so sparkling.'* When writers describe nature, they often use impersonation and the same is found here – *'The wind blew'* when in reality the wind is not a living being with such an ability but a word which is created to describe the movement of air.

'White flakes falling fast' – alliteration, which is used here to make the sound effect of whistling and falling down snowflakes. *'...was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through'* – which is the antonymy of words, that is used here to show that the life flew by extremely quickly.

'The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butterflies, that everything was beautiful' - a syntactic parallelism, which is used here to draw a certain picture of nature seen by a kid in his youth. *'When it rained, they loved to watch the falling drops, and to smell the fresh scents. When it blew, it was delightful to listen...'* - is also a syntactic parallelism used for the same reason.

. ‘...wondered! --whistling and howling, driving the clouds before it, bending the trees, rumbling in the chimneys, shaking the house, and making the sea roar in fury» - which is a gradation, that is used here to show the big scale and size of the world, the hectic pace of life, the rapid speed of things that take place in our lives.

Symbolism: As for symbolism, ‘*The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown*’ – the most striking moment here, personally for me, is the transition from vibrant and miraculous nature to dull and inhospitable environment. It feels like old good days are over and from this moment everything is never going to be the same it has used to be. However, such moments bring authenticity to this writing because our life is literally the same. We have positive and negative moments and our life is not either white or black – it is grey, a mixed colour. However, I don’t think that comparison to a wood is just a coincidence here. I must say that a wood is considered to be an important part of human’s life. In many cultures the wood is associated with difficulties, problems and trials. A forest is not just a gathering of trees but a long way through unknown lands that are harsh and ruthless to anyone who are going through them being inattentive enough.

Another moment that I consider to be of great importance is this one – ‘*The traveller looked at the gentleman, and saw him glance up at the sky above the trees, where the day was beginning to decline, and the sunset to come on. He saw, too, that his hair was turning grey.*’ The light is the one of the most important things for the emergence of life. And when there’s no light, darkness comes and everything fades away or just simply put – dying. In many books darkness is associated with bad things, like: emptiness, hollowness, loneliness, horrible dark infinity. Sunset is a sign that the life is slowly going out and in the very next moment there is a possibility that that’s it. The life is gone. The life is about to end up as any good book does. I think here we can see a symbolism of the time because the life and the time are closely associated with each other in this story. They are both indicators of each other and when the light fades, the time does the same.

III. Conclusion

The story highlights the beauty and wonder of being a man, encouraging readers to appreciate the simplicity and joy found in youthful experiences. It is written to show how our life flows, its insane speed and its non-stopping pace. It is vital not to forget the value of simple things because your life’s memory contains of these small parts that are put into something meaningful to you. And, in the end, your remembrance is the only thing that stays always with you.

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*Творческая интерпретация художественного текста
«The Child's Story» и поэтапный разбор символики текста*

*The journey starts, the path is clear and light.
Its prize beams somewhere deep inside.
The more you go, the more you lose.
Once reached the end - you start to muse...*

Everyone at least once pondered on the meaning of life and death and on the issue how to make life better. That is an eternal question that cannot be answered unequivocally. The important thing is just to live and enjoy every moment with a childish delight because *life* is a miracle bestowed by God.

Published by Charles Dickens in 1852, “The Child’s Story” depicts the life’s journey of one traveller from his childhood until his old age. In this parable the fairy-tale writing style is used. It is getting clear from the very beginning, that the stock phrases such as “*Once upon a time*” and “*A good many years ago*” characterize a fairytale. During the journey full of adventures and adversities, the traveller has amassed a lot of experience meeting people of different age. With every stage of his growing up, the people fade away. When he comes across a lovely child, he learns how to be “*always at play*” according to the text. As soon as the child disappears, he meets a boy to study and take up something new with. After the boy vanishes, the traveller meets a young man looking for true love. Then the traveller encounters a married gentleman with children. The traveller realizes how it is “*to work*” and “*to be busy*”. As the traveller reaches the end of the forest, his comrade vanishes, and he sees an elderly person sitting on the fallen tree and recalling his past. At this moment all of his dearest friends appeared around him. This is the embodiment of the nostalgic feeling evoked in the character. Taking into the consideration all mentioned above, the story describes the main age periods of human development. *The key message* of the story is to live in the present moment and appreciate the things you do at every age.

The setting contributes mostly towards creating the mood and the atmosphere of the story. It takes place on the forest path. The time is measured in the story in comparison to the distance the traveller has gone. The gradation is used to show all the transformations of the main character. For example, the phrase “*The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright*” personifies the very beginning of the adventure and the childhood of the main character which is full of ease and happiness. Moreover, the following descriptions: “*The whole journey*

was through a wood ... now it began to be thick and dark” show his maturity and his rich life experience. At the end of the journey the sentence *“when he passed out of wood, and saw the peaceful sun going down”* shows the process of his senescence.

In my opinion, the plot is rather riveting, as it touches upon a very significant issue. At first glance, one may think that it is just a fairy tale but, in fact, the story contains in-depth conception in every written word. It is possible to consider the correlation between the story and reality. Referring to the psychological point of view, the following periods are distinguished: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. That is why the arrangement of the story is chronological. With every meeting with these people, the character moves on to a new stage of his life. On the one hand, these people bear the image of guides through the traveller’s life. On the other hand, they are part of him. It can be concluded that the conflict is rather internal – a man against himself. The disappearance of his “friends” means the difficulty to accept the changes and to start his new life period. It is also confirmed in the text: *“He called to him over and over again”, “after calling to him in vain”*.

The exposition of the story takes place in the beginning, when Charles Dickens describes the traveller’s long way as *“magical”*.

The development of the story starts when he meets *“a beautiful child”* who shows to him all the sports of childhood. Then a young boy continues his journey doing his part to the traveller’s outlook. And, finally, the coincidental encounter with the young man shows the holistic picture of a typical adolescent.

The climax of the parable begins when the middle-aged person, with whom he is winding through the forest path, leaves his grown children. Each child has chosen their life path except the fourth one. This child wants to *“rise into the golden air”* to reach the Heaven. Here the metaphor as a stylistic device is used, somewhere along the line, to disguise the death of this child who enters Eden as if through the translucent golden gate.

The denouement comes when the traveller meets an old man who suggests him reminiscing about the happy times. Out of the blue, all the characters get together around them. That is unimaginably touching when the narrator reveals who the traveller actually is. I deign to say that any reader would feel the same whirl of genuine emotions as I sensed. The tone of the story is rather sentimental.

Charles Dickens utilizes the third person omniscient point of view. Such type of narration is thought to be his distinctive feature of literary writings. At the end of the story the narrator gives vent to his character’s feelings: *“So he loved them all, and was kind and forbearing with them all, and was always pleased to watch them all”*. Using such a rhetorical device as polysyndeton, the narrator wants to emphasize a strong affection to a family that engenders warm memories in any person, even in this traveller from the story. In addition, the narrator prepares the reader to his intrusion into the story, as he himself cannot resist his own flood of memories: *“And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather...”*

There are six characters in this story. As a rule, sometimes characters become real for an avid reader due to a proficient use of characterization techniques. Undoubtedly, Charles Dickens underlines his characters' preferences and feelings in the moment, for instance: "...*they loved to watch the falling drops*" or "...*they wondered! – whistling*". The indirect characterization is used to depict the characters. It is clear through the descriptions of their actions and several dialogues: – "*What do you do here? – I am always remembering*" - which Charles Dickens shows to the reader. The traveller is the protagonist of the story. We can follow his holistic development and, overall, all his life, so the main character is round and dynamic. The other characters are antagonists. The reader knows about them only from one angle according to their actions, so they are flat and static.

To make any book a page turner, writers use lots of writing techniques. The parable by Charles Dickens is full of stylistic devices which are rather interesting to consider a bit closer.

First and foremost, the Child's Story, inherently, is the allegory which represents life and age.

The following stylistic devices are found in the story: metaphors such as "*the golden air*" or "*palaces of real gold and silver*" (denoting the grandeur of big dreams and aspirations); epithets "*the flowers were so lovely*", "*the sun was so bright*"; simile "*it had been open and green ... like a wood in spring*". Each of these forms of figurative language creates a visual imagery of the story. The range of epithets in some passages bears a metaphorical significance. For instance, "*peaceful sun*" and "*serene sunset*" represent a tranquil life in old age.

At the same time, personification "*making the sea roar in far*" and onomatopoeia "*whistling and howling*", "*rumbling in the chimneys*" let the reader perceive what the characters are hearing.

Charles Dickens saturates the story with hyperboles. This is the stylistic device which is normally used for emphasis in fairy tales. To denote all the conviviality of childhood and boyhood Charles Dickens emblazons the text using mostly the superlative degree of adjectives: "*the finest toys in the world*", "*the most astonishing picture-books*", "*the merriest games ever*". Sometimes the narrator himself intrudes into the story for the purpose of exaggeration: "*I want the time to reckon them up*".

There are some repetitions of the words and phrases such as "*it*", "*another*", "*what do you do here?*" in the text. Actually, the use of repetitions is typical of the writer. Analyzing Charles Dickens's narrative style, one can find a strong correlation between his literary writings. The phrase "it was" is frequently used, especially in the very beginning, which performs the function of the emphasis or the generalization. For example, "*It was in vain to represent*" (David Copperfield), "*it was the best of times*" (A Tale of Two Cities) and, finally, "*It was a magical journey*" (The Child's Story).

Another distinctive feature of Charles Dickens is the use of allusions in his writings which helps to describe the characters more thoroughly. Speaking of "*picture-books*" Charles Dickens alludes to the widely-known folktales about

“*blue-beards*”, the version of which was written by Charles Perrault, “giants and fairies” and etc. The allusion “*Valentines and Orsons*” reminds the reader of the legend about sundered twins. Another allusion “*Twelfth cakes*”, which represents the celebration of Epiphany, is known as a Christmas cake nowadays.

It is also important to pay attention to the use of euphemisms in the story. The writer says nothing directly about death, thus he uses the euphemism “*going to Heaven*”.

Charles Dickens attaches salient importance to symbolism. Despite being attributed to literary realism, the writer adds sentimentality and a subtle fabulousness into his writings. According to Friedrich Engels, every realist is a symbolist in their own way. As a rule, Charles Dickens pays attention to descriptions of images and characters. To begin with, the “*wood*”, where the traveller was ambling with the other characters, can be characterized as a life path with lots of choices people make. No one will ever know when the wood end. It always represents something unknown but rather compelling.

As for the characters, there is a noteworthy character called Fanny in the story. Actually, Charles Dickens tells the reader about his elder sister Frances Elizabeth Dickens, died in 1848, and her husband Henry Burnett. According to the information from the Dickens Museum in London, Charles Dickens reckoned Fanny’s husband an ideal man. He was good to Fanny, and they never quarreled. That is why the writer mentions him too, ironically calling him “*Somebody*” in the story.

Moreover, the meeting with a middle-aged man with his family may also be autobiographical in some way. Charles Dickens describes the family of ordinary middle-class people who need *to make their path through the branches and carry their burdens*. Describing the actions of the children of that man, the writer demonstrates the evasive image of birth and death. The moment, when a child joins their journey, symbolizes birth. While the wish of another child to go to Heaven means death. Charles Dickens knew exactly what the death was, speaking of his seven-month-old daughter who died in 1851. The descriptions of the children’s desire “*to go to sea*” somehow make the reader think that it may be connected to the family history of the writer himself. According to the data, the writer’s grandfather and his dad were related to the Navy Pay Office. Another thing is that the second child of this middle-aged man claims to go to India. Surprisingly, the second son of Charles Dickens actually becomes an officer cadet in the East India Company later. Eventually, readers realize that the story is allegedly told by a grandson. Thus, the story may have similarities with his grandfather’s life in many respects.

In conclusion, “The Child’s Story” by Charles Dickens has a more profound meaning than it seems at first. It contains the precious biographical references which show the true nature of a writer, his attitude towards people, the society and the entire world. As any story is a writer’s reflection which reveals their secrets, hidden in the innermost part of their soul. Moreover, Charles Dickens,

having a philosophical mindset, considered a lot about such burning issues as life, age and death. But, besides, he knew the value of time. The world continues to alter at a rapid pace, and people are often in chase not to fling any opportunity, forgetting about happiness. So, the story teaches us to appreciate the moments, our loved ones and every single day spent with them.

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*A Magical Journey: Exploring the Depth of Dickens' Style
in "The Child's Story"*

Literature has always played an important role in people's lives. Literature is a valuable source of knowledge, which explores significant social, historical or psychological issues through the writer's outstanding style. Such a unique literary phenomenon is the works of Charles Dickens. A great English writer with a difficult fate, whose books amazed not only Great Britain, but the whole world. Over time his fame only increases, even now we read his famous novels, worry about our favorite characters. The name of the writer is immortalized not only in literature, but also in history. But what attracts the works of Dickens? What is so special about his books, unlike the others? His works astonish not only with the depth of meaning, but also with the unique style. Dickens' characters are round and realistic, the texts themselves are imbued with hope and faith in the best, touch the depths of our souls.

One of such impressive works is "The Child's Story". The plot of the story follows a traveller who meets a boy as he grows up, so its theme is life, illustrated by the fate of the child.

The narration is quite unusual, but this is how the writer reveals the main idea of the story—life is a journey, so we move from innocence to wisdom.

It is worth examining the plot in more detail. As already mentioned, it is built around a traveller's story about how he encountered a boy, but at different periods of his life, without realizing that this is one person. Each phase of his growing up is associated with a dominant activity: A child—play. A boy—learning. A young man—love. A gentleman—work. An old man—remembering. As he grows up, he learns the difficulties of life, gains and losses. Despite the fact that the fate of a certain character lies at the center of the plot, his image embodies a typical

life for the epoch, and formation of personality through becoming adult is a natural process for each of us. The atmosphere of the story is quite similar to a fairy tale, which is a peculiar feature of Dickens's works: "*Once upon a time, a good many years ago*".

To realize the idea, the author chose a composition consisting of five parts, each of them corresponds to the "people" whom the narrator meets. Little is known about the setting, since the traveller accidentally came across a child in the forest, the time frame is unknown, but the artistic time it is quite extensive, it takes a person's whole life, from childhood to old age, ably shortened by Dickens into a story. If we talk about the compositional elements, the complication is a meeting of a traveller with a child, which marks their acquaintance and further development of the plot. The boy is curious and imaginative. As he becomes older, he faces life situations, difficulties, which are what the climax is marked by - the passing away of the child, and then his beloved wife, at this moment the intensity of feelings reaches a peak. The denouement corresponds to a stunningly beautiful sunset and turning into an elderly man. He has no choice but to remember. Exploring such a complex issue as the transience of life and time, the author reveals such a complex inner conflict as the acceptance of all the difficulties and changes, as well as the process of growing up itself based on the life of protagonist, the boy. "*It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got halfway through.*" – we can see the development of the idea that life is a journey and realize that in childhood time passes slowly and you do not think about the future, you think it is not close yet. But the older you get, the more you fear and it becomes difficult to accept that your journey is coming to an end.

The author reveals this conflict through the main events of the boy's life and his other stages. Charles Dickens is distinguished by his special ability to embody the images of characters in texts. So the characters of "The Child's Story" should be considered.

The main characters are a beautiful child and a traveller.

The image of the boy is dynamic, since both his age and his actions change throughout the narrative. The child goes through four stages: a beautiful child, a handsome boy, a young man, a middle-aged gentleman and an old man. As he matures, his activities also transform. As a child, he "*always at play*", it emphasizes carelessness of this period of life. Then the traveller encounters a handsome boy, who is "*always learning*". The next stage is youth which is embodied by a young man. He dreams of love. Then the traveller meets a middle-aged man who is always busy. The last embodiment is an old man who represents old age and has only his memories. The main character, an image that realizes the cyclical nature of life, represents our journey from childhood, when nothing worries us and we enjoy everything until we gain wisdom in the stage of an elderly person, remembering the past. The boy, like his stages of growing up, do not have

distinctive portrait characteristics; we can judge the character only by his behavior. While he is young, he is curious and joyful, the older he gets, the more conscious and calm he is, accepting life and its transience.

The traveller is also the main character who does not have portrait characteristics. He does not perform any actions, he is static, but he meets a child at different ages and follows his life path, presenting an outside view. He is not endowed with any obvious character qualities or appearance.

The minor characters are wife and four children, they present minimally in the text.

But the wife has some portrait characteristics: she was one of the “*prettiest girls*” when she was younger, and “*she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's*”. This sentence shows that she looks like Fanny Dickens, the writer's sister. Her image thus contains an autobiographical element. Their children also grow up and make their own lives: “*they went, solitary, down those avenues, each child upon its way*”. One child goes to heaven, after a while the main character's wife also leaves.

It is worth noting that the features of autobiography are also contained in the images of the main characters. At the end of the work, we understand that the traveller is the grandfather of Charles Dickens: “*I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather...*” And the image of the boy in his subsequent stages of growing up is also him. The traveller makes it possible to follow the path and choices made by him from the outside.

The point of view of the story is the third person, thus representing an independent view of what is happening, but in the final paragraph it changes to the first person, expressing Dickens's opinion, relating the text to the life of his grandfather.

There are quite a few dialogues in the story; they express important changes in the plot and give insight into the main events. “*What do you do here?*” And the child said, “*I am always at play*”. Repetition of the question “*What do you do here?*” several times emphasizing the importance of detail and cyclicity of the events.

One cannot but notice the author's skilful juggling with full descriptions written in simple words. The sentences are big and imaginative with a large number of homogeneous members. All three types of sentences are introduced in the text: interrogative (“*What do you do here?*”), exclamatory (“*Come and play with me!*”) and affirmative (“*But, one day, of a sudden, the traveller lost the child.*”). Their variety is also great: simple, compound, complex. They are important in realization of the plot and descriptions. An outstanding feature of the text's language is the use of a variety of adjectives. For example, when describing childhood, Dickens creates vivid pictures, demonstrating carelessness and emphasizing the ease and happiness of this period with adjectives: “*lovely, merry,*

delightful". Drawing an image of childhood, Dickens touches all the senses: we see the falling drops, hear birds singing, smell fresh scents. Dickens captures the innocence, curiosity of that time and evokes memories in every person.

What strikes the readers most about the story is the amount of lexical stylistic devices. There is imagery in the text: "*The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butterflies, that everything was beautiful*". It makes an idyllic picture of childhood. Dickens also appeals to personification: "*It was delightful to listen to the wind, and fancy what it said...*" The writer increases emotional link and influences the reader's attitude, makes them remember their own childhood experience. Metaphor is an important element of the story: "*rose into the golden air and vanished*" is used to show that the child died, the whole text reflects the metaphor that life is a journey. Similes are also represented in the text. For example: "*...the white flakes falling fast and thick, like down from the breasts of millions of white birds*". It also makes the joyful picture of the childhood. Different epithets (*the peaceful sun; a magic journey*) describe the author's perception, make the fairy atmosphere.

The tone of "The Child's Story" is serene and measured. The author draws attention to every detail, figuratively revealing aspects of human life, allegorically depicting important events and philosophical reflections. Ironically, the author displays a typical adult life: it consists only of work, devoid of other activities.

One cannot deny the importance of symbolism in the story, filling it with various new meanings and interpretations. The text itself is an allegory of life, displaying it as a "*magical journey*". This is true, because it is full of different events. The path that the characters make is their choices: "*So, they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard*". Avenues are the lives of the children, they start their own way: "*So, with many tears at parting, they went, solitary, down those avenues, each child upon its way*". There is symbolism in the seasons. For example, approaching old age is autumn, when nature fades: "*And now the wood was yellow; and now brown*". In the denouement the old man contemplates the sunset alone, sunset indicates his complete acceptance of all the events and the irrevocability of time and loved ones.

In conclusion, "The Child's Story" is not just a narration about the fate of the boy, but also a deeply philosophical and magical work. Written in the best traditions of Dickens, the text is riddled with profound considerations and a masterful reflection of human existence. The author not only depicts the cyclical nature of life, but also endues the work with some autobiographical motives, making the message even deeper and more personal. Therefore, "The Child's Story" is a manifesto of Dickens's creative thought, brimming with the spirit of nostalgia and symbolism.