“OLIVER WANTS SOME MORE” by Charles Dickens

In the present text I am going to analyse an extract from “Oliver wants some more” written by Charles Dickens. To tell the truth, “Oliver wants some more” is not the title given by the writer, but it is an extract which belongs to the novel “Oliver Twist”. The novelist uses a third person omniscient narration mostly given by the narrative strategy of telling even if there is a part of showing. Right from the beginning, it emerges that the novelist’s intention is to bring up to surface the poor condition of children who had to live in a workhouse. In order to do it, he gives a portrait of the Victorian Age by highlighting the role children, men and women played into the society.

In particular, I will focus my attention on the last sequence taken from the extract. The first thing that the intelligent reader can notice is that it opens up with the narrative technique of showing, indeed the narrator reports in a direct speech Oliver Twist’s request for more food. The master is characterized as a “fat and healty” man, which creates a clear contrast and contrapposition between him and the “starving children”. Another time the language used underlines aspects typical of the Victorian Age: men were the masters and children, who were inferior, had to respect their decisions without complaining. As soon as Oliver asks for more food, the master turns pale while the other kids and the women who were serving him paralyse. The idea of the society given by the narrator is based on irony because the excess of the language creates a comic effect. Furthermore, the description of the man’s authority and the children’s collaboration reminds to the them of struggle for democracy. Oliver Twist is a symobol of change, indeed he is trying to turn upside down the traditional rules of the workhouse and he is seen as a threat. The master’s astonishment is due to the mentality wich could be found among the people who worked into the workhouse. Indeed, Oliver Twist is seen as a criminal because he fought the authority, which was represented by the master. His petition for food is seen as a desire of uprising and he was ordered to be sold for five pounds. In the Victorian society who wanted to destroy the social order was seen as a villan, and so it was Oliver Twist.

In conclusion, Charles Dickens uses the narrative techniques of grotesque and irony in order to convey the image of a cultural background surrounded by corruption and controversy such as the Victorian Age. Indeed the exaggeration of the laguage makes the situation ridiculous to the reader’s eyes and it creates a comic effect which is followed by a sort of hidden criciticsm of the Victorian society.