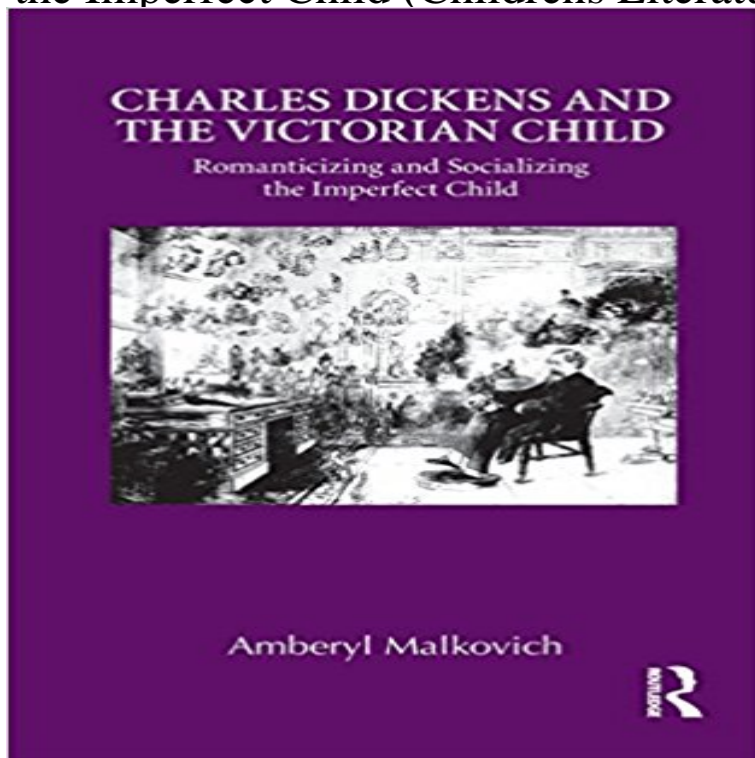


Charles Dickens and the Victorian Child: Romanticizing and Socializing the Imperfect Child (Childrens Literature and Culture)



This book explores the ideas of children and childhood, and the construct of the ideal Victorian child, that developed rapidly over the Victorian era along with literacy and reading material for the emerging mass reading public. Childrens Literature was one of the developing areas for publishers and readers alike, yet this did not stop the reading public from bringing home works not expressly intended for children and reading to their family. Within the idealized middle class family circle, authors such as Charles Dickens were read and appreciated by members of all ages. By examining some of Dickenss works that contain the imperfect child, and placing them alongside works by Kingsley, MacDonald, Stretton, Rossetti, and Nesbit, Malkovich considers the construction, romanticization, and socialization of the Victorian child within work read by and for children during the Victorian Era and early Edwardian period. These authors use elements of religion, death, irony, fairy worlds, gender, and class to illustrate the need for the ideal child and yet the impossibility of such a construct. Malkovich contends that the imperfect child more readily reflects reality, whereas the ideal child reflects an unattainable fantasy and while debates rage over how to define childrens literature, such children, though somewhat changed, can still be found in the most popular of literatures read by children contemporarily.

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