The Child Chimney Sweep in English Children's Literature

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TEMA DIPLOMSKOG RADA: THE CHILD CHIMNEY SWEEP IN ENGLISH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Zagreb, lipanj 2018.

Zahvaljujem mentorici doc. dr. sc. Smiljani Narančić Kovač i sumentorici Nadi Kujundžić. Hvala im na podršci i pomoći oko pronalaženja literature, ostvarivanja kontakta s vanjskim institucijama te svim savjetima i komentarima koji su bili od velike koristi za pisanje ovog rada, ali i daljnji znanstveni rad.

Zahvaljujem dr. sc. Štefki Batinić na izdvojenom vremenu, savjetima te prilici za istraživanje arhivske građe Hrvatskog školskog muzeja.

Također, zahvaljujem Tomislavu koji me je podupirao od samog početka pa sve do konačnog cilja te prijateljici Moniki koja je uvijek bila uz mene.

Od srca se zahvaljujem mojim strpljivim roditeljima, Blaženki i Stanislavu te bratu Luki, koji su me pratili cijelo moje školovanje, do današnjeg dana, kada ponosno stojim s ovim postignućem u rukama.

Ovaj diplomski rad posvećujem svojim roditeljima.

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SAŽETAK

Iako može zvučati nevjerojatno, djeca su do kraja 19. stoljeća imala obvezu financijski pridonositi svojoj obitelji jednako kao i odrasli članovi. Prilično je bizarno da nije postojala svijest o zaštiti djece i mladih kao neiskusnijih i osjetljivijih članova društva. Svijet se na začetku industrijske revolucije u drugoj polovici 18. stoljeća nemilosrdno odupirao zakonodavnim promjenama i zaštiti dječjih prava jer su radnici bili prijeko potrebni, bez obzira na dob. Osim rada u industriji, postojali su i poslovi koji su bili namijenjeni djeci zbog prirode samoga posla, na primjer uskih prostora u rudnicima ili krhkih grana voćki koje je trebalo obrati. Poseban interes pobuđuju djeca dimnjačari koji su se morali zavlačiti u dimnjake i ručno ih čistiti kako bi se očuvala sigurnost od požara u prenapučenim gradovima. Djeca dimnjačari su istovremeno zanimljiv, ali i potresan fenomen karakterističan za Veliku Britaniju i još nekoliko europskih država poput Italije ili Belgije. Najčešće su bili siročad ili djeca (gotovo isključivo dječaci) koje bi roditelji prodali majstoru dimnjačaru u slučaju teške obiteljske situacije, na primjer, smrti jednoga od supružnika.

Ovaj rad istražuje i kontekstualizira život djece dimnjačara, to jest, dimnjačarskih šegrta kroz 18. i 19. stoljeće na području Velike Britanije. Osim toga, u radu se pobliže razlaže i uspoređuje prikaz dimnjačarskih šegrta u djelima pjesnika Williama Blakea (dvije pjesme naslovljene “The Chimney Sweeper”; 1789 i 1794) i romanopisca Charlesa Kingsleya (roman *The Water Babies,* 1863). Posebna pozornost posvećena je pitanju njihova utjecaja na društvenu i svijest ondašnjih zakonodavaca te mogućeg doprinosa zakonskom ukidanju zanimanja djece dimnjačara.

Ključne riječi: Charles Kingsley, djeca dimnjačari, društvene promjene, književnost, William Blake

SUMMARY

Although we now consider child labour to be inhuman and cruel, it was standard practice during the 18th century, especially when the Industrial Revolution (approximately 1760–1840) on the British island created an increased need for workers. Among numerous occupations for children, probably the most interesting and intriguing was chimney sweeping, which required children to enter chimneys and manually clean them. The need for protecting children's rights was quickly recognized, but social and legislative changes were slowly introduced.

This thesis examines the contribution of British engraver and poet William Blake (1757–1827) and British novelist Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) to the campaign against the exploitation of children in 18th and 19th-century Britain. It analyses and compares literary representations of the chimney sweeper in Blake's two "Chimney Sweeper" poems (1789, 1794) and Kingsley's novel *The Water Babies* (1863), and gives an overview of the status of chimney sweepers in Croatia.

Key words: Charles Kingsley, child chimney sweepers, literature, social reform, William Blake

1. INTRODUCTION

Until the end of the 19th century, children, regardless of age, were expected to financially contribute to their families, just like any other adult member. Although we now consider child labour to be inhuman and cruel, it was standard practice during the 18th century, especially when the Industrial Revolution (approximately 1760–1840) created an increased need for workers.

Even before the Revolution, certain occupations such as coal mining or fruit picking relied on children because of their size or abilities. Another, equally or more dangerous profession that relied on child labour was chimney sweeping, which forced children from an early age to climb and clean chimneys on behalf of their masters. Although there is little information about this type of employment, Niels Van Manen (2010) finds traces of professional chimney sweepers in literature of the late 15th and 16th century: specifically, the poem *Cocke Lorelle's Bote* (1500), William Shakespeare's play *Love's Labour's Lost* (1588), and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* (1593). This seems quite early considering the fact that public awareness of clean chimneys and fire prevention was raised only after the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Since England was the centre of the Industrial Revolution, the greatest problems regarding child employment and, consequently, the majority of social and legislative modifications and changes in public attitudes towards the issue of child labour, occurred there. Literature played an extensive role in these social adjustments. This is especially true of the works of two distinguished English writers and artists: the poet William Blake (1757–1827) and the novelist Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). This thesis explores how these two artists present the figure of the chimney sweeper in their works, whom they blame for the sufferings of real children, and how their efforts helped raise social awareness and encourage lawmakers to abolish the occupation of the child chimney sweeper.

To answer these important questions, this thesis analyses literary representations of the chimney sweeper in Blake's two "Chimney Sweeper" poems (1789, 1794) and Kingsley's novel *The Water Babies* (1863). The thesis first discusses the position of

child chimney sweepers in British society of the 18th and 19th centuries, and legislative changes introduced in order to improve their rights. The main part of the thesis provides a textual analysis of Blake's poems and Kingsley's novel, which are compared in the Discussion. The Discussion also provides an overview of child labour and the status of chimney sweepers in Croatia, as well as existing literature on the topic. The conclusion summarizes the main findings of the research. Most importantly, it highlights what we can learn from the history of child labour so that we, as a society, never repeat the same mistakes again.

2. CHILD LABOR IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES

From the standpoint of the 21st-century reader, child labour is perceived as a major problem and abnormality typical for developing or countries faced with overpopulation, such as China or India. However, during the early modern period (approximately 16th–19th century) and especially the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, child labour was accepted as a standard practice. Katrina Honeyman (2007) explains that, until the late 18th century, children were obligated to contribute to their family and community by working for economic and moral reasons. Moreover, work was distributed equally among family members, regardless of gender or age; however, as Jane Humphries (2010) confirms, unlike men who were considered independent and unrestricted, women and children were seen as needing some protection.

As a result of the progress made during the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of machines, work productivity became much higher than before. The result of the lower input of manpower and higher output of finished goods gave many families which were already producing textile or similar commodities an opportunity to expand their production, which resulted in the opening of small factories, which then increased the need for workers. This shortage of labour force was a great problem for the British people in that period because they participated in numerous wars in Europe and the colonies. Considering the enormous war casualties and higher demand for workers, child employment was, perhaps, inevitable.

In her *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*, Humphries (2010) explored more than 600 workers' autobiographies and found that children became useful the moment they were able to work, i.e. talk, walk, and maintain balance – some of them as young as four. Given their large number in families (despite the high mortality rate, families in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries had an average of six children), children were expected to support their households, whether by working at home and helping with domestic tasks, or assisting a third party in exchange for money. This led to the lowering of employment age for children which, as Humphries (2010) finds, was ten for rural child workers and eight for children in industrial, city regions. Children outside cities worked less, mostly in agriculture and farming (Humphries mentions a boy who "scared crows for the local farmers part-time from age nine but

work began for him 'in earnest' two years later"; 2010, p. 174). However, Griffin (2014) states that children living in cities began their employment earlier because of the constant economic growth, first as errand boys and sweepers, and later as factory workers. The worst employment positions, such as the cleaning of running machines, were intended for the youngest and smallest children, who were often injured or even died trapped between two engines. Price (2013) lists a number of jobs reserved for children during the Victorian Era, such as coal mine workers, textile factory workers, laundry cleaners, pottery makers, rat catchers, prostitutes, street sellers, servants, pickpockets, farm workers, hat makers, and many more. Coal mine workers, for example, were usually the smallest children (both boys and girls) who could easily move through tight tunnels; they worked 12 to 18 hours per day. The results of such employment were sight problems (because of the dark environment), spinal deformities, and respiratory diseases. Besides the inhuman treatment of young workers, the second greatest problem was the issue of work injuries and health consequences related to unregulated safety at work. This was addressed by "the factory reform lobby of the 1830s and 40s," which, according to Peter Kirby, "placed great emphasis upon the health problems that were supposed to have arisen from industrial production" (2003, p. 15).

As we can see, child workers were very useful: they could crawl under and behind big machines in factories, fit in tight tunnels of the coal mines or narrow chimneys, and, since they were mostly uneducated[1], their masters or employers could easily manipulate them. Furthermore, they did not have any rights or health care (especially if they were orphans); most importantly, children were the cheapest, sometimes even free, workforce a producer or service provider could get.

Moved by these harrowing conditions and the voices of advocates for social justice such as (among others) Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, and Lord Shaftesbury, the Parliament passed many acts regulating the problem of child labour, which are discussed in detail by Harrison and Hutchins (1911). One of the first laws on the topic was the 1833 Factory Act which prohibited children under the

[1] It was not until the 1770s and the Sunday School Movement that poor and orphaned children finally got the opportunity to learn how to read and write, and receive moral and religious education (Larsen, 2008).

age of nine from working in textile mills, with time restrictions up to nine hours per day and a maximum of 48 hours per week. Unfortunately, this Act was not properly enforced; however, many others followed, such as the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 which proscribed the rules for social security, or the 1843 Mines Act which prevented the employment of women and boys under the age of ten below the surface in coal mines. The Factory Act of 1844 prohibited all women and children under the age of 18 from working with heavy machinery in factories, and reduced working hours for all to 12 hours per day and nine on Saturdays. The Ten Hours Act, which restricted working hours for women and young adults (under 18) to 10 hours a day followed in 1847. Numerous laws on the topic appeared after the 1859 accident of a young textile worker, Martha Appleton, who lost her job because of the injuries she sustained. One of the last regulations was the 1861 Factory Act which determined health, safety, and welfare regulations in detail, even in factories not related to textile; this Act (with some slight modifications) is still in power. The biggest supporter of the Act regulating all fields of employment was Lord Shaftesbury, who "on August 15th 1861, in the House of Lords, moved for a fresh inquiry to be made into the conditions of employment of children and young persons in trades not already regulated by law" (Harrison & Hutchins, 1911, p. 150).

Among all the inappropriate occupations intended for children, one category attracts special attention because of the dangerous working environment it creates. Members of this category – child chimney sweepers – and their challenging position in British society of the 18th and 19th century will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. CHILD CHIMNEY SWEEPS

There is generally little information about child workers because "it was not until 1841 that census enumerators were required to record the occupations of individuals" (Kirby, 2003, p. 11), and even less about chimney sweepers because "major government reports into child labour were [...] focusing predominantly upon children in industrial occupations" (ibid., p. 9). One of the few original sources of information about sweepers' lives and circumstances was collected and written by James Montgomery (1824), who discusses how they worked, the accidents that often occurred, and social campaigns against these "British Slaves" (as they were often called), especially petitions and letters. He begins with the following sentence which expresses his firm opinion on the topic: "the very nature of their employment is such as to be totally unfit for human beings" (Montgomery, 1824, p. 14). In the book *Climbing Boys: A Study of Sweeps' Apprentices 1772–1875*, K.H. Strange (1982) explores the lives and destinies of child chimney sweeps. He notes that they were often orphans or children (mostly boys), aged nine to ten and sold by parents to masters who sent them up the chimneys to clean them for little or no pay. They were also called climbing boys because (being small in size) they had to crawl up the chimneys and be extremely strong not to get stuck or fall. Their employers, called masters, did not take good care of them. Montgomery (1824) states that they did not provide suitable working clothes which resulted in the skin on sweepers' elbows and knees getting severely damaged; alternatively, as Strange (1982) explains, masters would rub the sweeps' skin with salty water which would later harden up and become more durable. Although sweepers had to take off excess clothes so as to not to get stuck inside chimneys, the most important part of their equipment was a hat they would pull over their face to cover their eyes, nose, and mouth, because otherwise, the soot would immediately suffocate them. Furthermore, masters did not take care of the boys' nutrition and even deliberately starved them to keep them skinny and small, so they would fit the chimneys, which, as Strange (1982) claims, were sometimes only 23 centimetres wide. The chimneys were usually still hot from the fire, or the masters intentionally fired up a handful of straw to make the sweepers clean faster, which aggravated their injuries even more. What is more, the masters did not insist on hygiene: sweepers were washed only before important holidays, because, as Montgomery

explains, “if chimney-sweepers’ boys were to wash every day, their skins would be kept so tender, that they would be unable to perform their hard work, for they would be sore all over” (1824, p. 140).

There is a long list of diseases sweepers could die from, such as lung or skin infections, but the most severe one was scrotal cancer. It was described in 1775 by Percivall Pott and is often cited as “the first malignant disease to be connected with a specific occupation” (Waldron, 1983, p. 390). In his medical notes, Pott writes about and express concern for the destinies of chimney sweepers (1775, p. 177):

> The fate of these people seems singularly hard; in their early infancy they are most frequently treated with great brutality, and almost starved with cold and hunger; they are thrust up narrow, and sometimes hot chimneys, where they are buried, burned and almost suffocated; and when they get to puberty, become liable to a most noisome, painful, and fatal disease.

Cullingford (2000) notes that, although the carpenter and inventor George Smart made a machine with a brush in 1803, it took more than seventy years to completely ban climbing. The machine, called the Scandiscope, was intended for cleaning and sweeping chimneys. Made of good quality wood and other materials, it was very durable. Although Smart was not the only inventor (many others before and after him made similar inventions and dedicated their lives to helping little boys forced to climb chimneys), he became the most popular one. There was even a rhyme to popularize the folding brush, a kind of modern commercial (Cullingford, 2000, p. 163):

Some wooden tubes, a brush, and robes,
Are all you need employ,
Pray order, maids, the Scandiscope,
And not the climbing boy.

Members of different social strata and experts in different fields expressed their concern over the treatment of young climbers. In their fight for the wellbeing of child workers, and especially chimney sweepers, ordinary people and representatives of higher social classes were joined by many 19th-century novelist, who were “deeply influenced by the sentiments of the anti-child-labour campaigns,” and whose “works of

fiction were bought and read chiefly as a means of affirming middle-class concerns about social problems" (Kirby, 2003, p. 19).

3.1.Legislation

Chimney sweepers attracted more attention in England than in other parts of Europe because of one important and crucial detail – English masters were almost the only ones in Europe to send children inside chimneys to manually clean them (elsewhere, sweeps cleaned chimneys from top to bottom with brushes and balls) (Van Manen, 2010). What is more, English masters and sweepers did more dangerous work than their continental counterparts; because of the nature of their work, they needed legal protection but "were traditionally not organized in guilds or associations and their assistants' work [was] not regulated in formal apprenticeships" (Van Manen, 2010, p. 38). Social concern about children working as chimney sweepers began with the philanthropist Jonas Hanway and his 1773 campaign against sweepers' brutal working conditions. Van Manen (2010) discusses in detail Hanway's *A Sentimental History of Chimney-sweepers, in London & Westminster: Shewing the Necessity of Putting Them Under Regulations to Prevent the Grossest Inhumanity to the Climbing Boys: With a Letter to a London Clergyman, on Sunday Schools Calculated for the Preservation of the Children of the Poor* (1785), which proposed and defined legislative regulations concerning the mistreatment of children.

Hanway's activism led to the passing of the Chimney Sweepers Act 1788, the first act regulating the issue, which even contains a great part of his proposal. Van Manen (2010) enumerates the following key points of the Act: the minimal age of eight; the masters' obligation to provide clothes and especially caps for their chimney sweepers, as well as food, drink (except beer), and religious instruction; humane treatment; allowing chimney sweepers enough time to attend church on Sunday in clothes different from their climbing outfits; forbidding chimney sweepers to drink ale and visit gaming houses; and ensuring that chimney sweepers learn the trading business and obey their masters. However, the Act was not followed because "amendments put forward by the Lords ensured that the law remained inoperable" (Kirby, 2003, p.104).

The new Act from 1818 prescribed almost the same rights and duties for sweepers and their masters, except the minimum age for apprentices was now fourteen and fines for the violation of the law were raised by 100%.

In addition to Jonas Hanway and his contemporaries, there were many other advocates of better lives for chimney sweepers. One important figure among them was the previously mentioned James Montgomery, who collected poems, text, speeches, and pamphlets into *The Chimney-Sweeper's Friend* (1824) in order to put an end to the practice of climbing.

Van Manen (2010) points out that the 1834 Act brought new and important directions in the architectural design of chimneys by proscribing that new and rebuilt chimneys must be suitable for mechanical sweeping. Otherwise, master builders had to pay high fines. Additionally, nobody was allowed to climb hot chimneys and there were serious penalties for masters forcing their sweepers to do so.

Under the 1840 Chimney Sweeper Regulation Act, the minimum age for apprentices was 16 and for climbing 21, with even higher fines for masters and household owners who forced or caused children to break the law. Kirby (2005) adds that the Act was effective only in London and not in other parts of the country, but this information could also be the result of data deficiency for the rest of England.

The 1864 Chimney Sweepers Regulation Act was the Parliament's reaction to Charles Kingsley's 1863 novel *The Water Babies*, which raised a lot of concern; however, the law remained ineffective, despite the high penalties (Children and Chimneys, n.d.).

Finally, the 1875 Chimney Sweepers' Act prohibited climbing, required certificates for mechanical sweeping that were valid for only a year, and enabled the police to implement all previous acts on this topic (Chimney Sweepers' Act, 1875).

As we can see from the example of the 1875 Act, literature played a great part in forming the Parliament's opinion on child labour. Before Kingsley, there was another open-minded author who influenced 18th-century society named William Blake. The next chapter will present Blake's social background and public activism, and provide a detailed analysis of two of his poems in the context of child labour, especially chimney sweepers.

4. WILLIAM BLAKE

William Blake was born on 28 November 1757 in a family of hardworking parents, as the third of six children. He was an engraver, painter, visionary, and underrated poet. From an early age, he was interested in visual art and demonstrated a talent for drawing. In his twenties, he attended the Royal Academy of Arts in London where he had the opportunity to get formal training and put on annual exhibitions (Krueger, 2003). As a professional engraver, Blake (together with his wife Catherine) opened a print shop and introduced a revolutionary engraving technique called relief etching. He first used it in his collections *Songs of Innocence* in 1789 and the expanded collection *Songs of Innocence and Experience* five years later. In these compilations, Blake's lyrical poems in which he expresses deep reflections and exposes his soul are accompanied by his own illustrations. The poems are unconventional and bizarre, not purely instructional and educational, as the literature of that time was. Although undervalued[2], neglected as a poet, even regarded insane by his contemporaries, Blake is now considered to be one of the most distinguished and unique poets of early Romanticism in England (*Romanticism*, n.d.).

One of the most interesting biographical facts about Blake is his attitude towards religion and the visions he experienced from an early age which encouraged him to think and act in unexplained ways. Some say he was ahead of his time, while others question his sanity, wondering if he "was a madman or a prophet" (McQuail, 2000, p. 121). Either way, his singularities turned him into an often misunderstood and fairly unpopular person.

Even though he was raised as a Baptist, Blake later denied any religious denomination; he thought that "organized churches were […] the greatest curse of the age" (Clarke, 1929, p. 221). He persistently defended the belief that a human soul can have two contrasting moods and that people are born innocent – contrary to the Christian idea of Original Sin. Blake was a highly spiritual person; however, he did not take the Bible and prayers as final and strict guidebooks, but as a source of inspiring examples

[2] William Guthrie (1897) gathered extensive data on Blake's publishing and provided a possible answer to the ongoing question of his unpopularity. Namely, with the exception of the prints produced on his own printing press, Blake's literary works were, surprisingly, published very late, in the last decade of the 19th century, which might be the reason for the public's indifference towards his poetry.

for an empathetic life in which the most important thing is to respect and help others, especially the deprived (*Biography of William Blake*, n.d.). Altizer confirms Blake's metaphysical reflections and changing attitudes towards religion by saying that "Blake's prophetic poetry […] contributes to the renewal of Christian ethics by a process of subversion and negation of Christian moral, ecclesiastical, and theological traditions" (2009, p. 33).

Under the influence of the French Revolution (1789), social activists in England's capital established various radical groups which argued for legal improvement of the rights of marginalized children and adults, because "politics had become a selfish gamble for power in which the interests and lives of the people were ruthlessly sacrificed" (Clarke, 1929, p. 221). William Blake used his literary power to indirectly persuade political authorities to change the laws and increase social sensitivity towards child workers.

Songs of Innocence and *Songs of Innocence and Experience* are two collections of poems and accompanying illustrations[3] which present two opposing views on the same social issues. *Songs of Innocence* seems to be intended for young child readers who can understand simple words and sentences. The meaning of the poems can be recognized without decoding secret meanings and undertones hidden in the poems. *Songs of Experience* are more appropriate for adults because one has to read between the lines to grasp the complexity of the poems. Brian John nicely sums up some of the reasons why many readers avoided Blake's poetry: "his poetry operates upon multiple levels of meaning. Poems [...] are to varying degrees political and social, moral and psychological, aesthetic and epistemological, and finally cosmological in reference" (1974, p. 32). In other words, his poetry was so enlightened and transcendent it was too difficult to comprehend.

Both collections contain many duplicate themes, expressed in so-called counterpart poems (e.g. "The Lamb" in *Songs of Innocence* and "The Tiger" in *Songs of Experience*). Some of them are written under identical titles in order to emphasize their

[3] Although Blake's illustrations are important for understanding his poetry, visual materials are not within the scope of this thesis.

contrasting values (Gleckner, 1961). One such pair includes the two "The Chimney Sweeper" poems.

4.1."The Chimney Sweeper" (*Songs of Innocence*)

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark

And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.
(Blake, 1992, pp. 13–14)

The first stanza opens with the speaker remarking on the death of his mother when he was "very young," and the fact that his father "sold" him. The reader should bear in mind the social circumstances of the late 18th century and the difficult position of a widower who suddenly has the obligation to raise a child, or possibly a few of them, which was not common in that period (Humphries points out numerous problems a widower would encounter after the wife's death; 2010). In order to ease his own life, the father sells the poor child to the chimney sweep master, maybe naively thinking that the master would give him a better life, or more possibly, to earn some money. The unpleasant event probably occurred when the child was a toddler because he "could scarcely cry," which means he could not talk or did not have the right to say anything against the father's decision. The child addresses the reader and informs him/her about his difficult working and living conditions, which now include cleaning chimneys and sleeping on piles of soot, covered with soot or a dirty cloth.

In the following stanza, the speaker introduces a boy called Tom Dacre whose blond hair has to be cut so it does not become spoiled or dirty from the soot. Blake uses the simile "curled like a lamb's back" to describe the beauty of Tom's hair and show compassion for the little crying boy. The speaker tries to comfort Tom and diminish the awful fact of the bare head by saying that now dirt cannot smear his delicate curly hair. The appearance of the "white hair" and curly lamb's fleece can be seen as a comparison of the poor boy forced to clean chimneys and get dirty with an innocent lamb, seen as a symbol of sacrifice. The lamb is also used as a symbol of Jesus, so Blake probably wanted to emphasize Tom's sacrifice, pain, and future redemption.

In the third stanza, the reader is informed about Tom's dream, or probably, a nightmare, although it could also be a vision, similar to those Blake himself experienced from an early age. He talks about the thousands of chimney sweep children exploited for cleaning flues by using common, traditional names (Dick, Joe, Ned, Jack) to emphasize

the number of poor young people who were enslaved in the late 18th century. “Coffins of black” might be a metaphor for the rough working conditions for climbers and the narrow chimneys themselves, or the real coffins which could get dirty from sooty bodies and the clothes of the dead chimney sweepers (Dike, 1961).

The fourth stanza changes the setting of the poem: from the dark, filthy, and grimy atmosphere of a nightmare we are transported into the brightness and hope of a beautiful dream. An Angel appears promising to set them free, end their misery in this world, and let them have the life they deserve closer to God, who is represented by the Sun. They will have an opportunity to wash their sooty bodies in a river and shine in the Sun, which was unimaginable in London during the Industrial Revolution. This could mean that the unfortunate sweepers are already dead, and the Angel will bring them to the face of God, or, more likely, that their life is so miserable and unhappy it would be better if they died and found peace and consolation in death, and later paradise. Readers can only imagine the seriousness of the conditions in which these children live if they can only find salvation in death.

The chimney sweepers are now free from their awful life, their filthy bags for cleaning equipment, and their clothes; most importantly, they are finally clean. The Angel addresses Tom and promises him God’s grace, but only if he stays a good boy. This could mean that the Angel is trying to convince Tom that God is kind and giving only to chosen people who behave in a certain way and according to certain standards. If he achieves this standard, he will be rewarded with a pleasant afterlife. Blake probably tried to insert this religious and didactic moment in his poem to educate the ignorant reader, as was usual for that period when literature was typically instructional and educational. However, given his personal religious views, he may ironically be pointing out that children have to be obedient and God-fearing to be rewarded in the future. In this way, he is trying to emphasize the paradox of the unfair and inflexible religious system which promotes the image of a loving and forgiving God whose love and reward is reserved only for those who act in a certain way.

In the last stanza, Tom unfortunately awakes, gets up, grabs his equipment, and goes to work with the speaker. Even though he knows that everything was just a dream, he gladly accepts the burden of a new working day, because now he knows that if

everyone obediently fulfils their tasks, they will inevitably find themselves in God's mercy afterwards. Considering the horrible working conditions of climbing boys, Blake might be speaking ironically about the final salvation, because those children lived unimaginably horrible lives, and nothing could ease their pain and suffering in this life.

Blake was certainly trying to influence 18th-century society and initiate legislative changes that would ease the position of child workers. He did this in his own prophetic way by presenting real-life situations and wide-spread attitudes towards child workers.

4.2."The Chimney Sweeper" (*Songs of Experience*)

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father & mother? say?"
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery."
(Blake, 1992, pp. 34–35)

In the first line, the reader is introduced not to a human being but to an object, a dehumanized thing which represents a boy crying in the snow. The image reflects the point of view of late-18th-century society which undervalued children, saw them as possessions, and disrespected them. Like in the poem from *Songs of Innocence*, the

reader is again affected by “weep! weep!” which at first sounds like crying, but might represent the mispronounced onomatopoeic words imitating the sound of brushes and brooms (sweep, sweep). Readers can immediately deduce that the speaker is talking about a poor child chimney sweep, all dirty and weeping alone in the cold. He is not with his parents at church praying because they left him outside to work, or he was too filthy to go inside the church. Blake places a huge amount of responsibility and fault for the harshness of the situation in which the boy lives on the parents, and it seems like he wants to punish them. They are supposed to be experienced, wise and rational, but instead, they are selfish and hypocritical. Moreover, Blake offers readers a very powerful image to think about: the white, pure snow is contrasted with a sooty young boy, which is similar to the comparison between the curly lamb’s fleece and the sooty young chimney sweeper in the first poem. Maybe he wanted to underline the contrast between right and wrong, good and bad, the unfortunate child chimney sweepers and insensitive adults who caused all their sufferings.

The little boy was enjoying his happy life until his parents dressed him in “the clothes of death,” which could be a metaphor for the terrible working environment of the climbing boys. The result of this horrible act is an unfortunate life filled with tears and misery.

Furthermore, the speaker once again reminds the reader that his parents are at church praising the Lord, who will eventually reward all his suffering and pain. The last two verses could be considered ironic because of the anti-radical mood of the late 18th century and the “Church and King” movement against everyone who was campaigning for changes of laws and regulations in any field. William Blake was probably provoked by various decrees, such as the Royal Proclamation Against Seditious Writings (1792), which encouraged him to write even more. As a result of this revolt, he may have included a reference to God, Priest, and King to mock this regime against public disposition of opinions which were not in accordance with law or moral (Lincoln, 2014).

This poem is relatively short, but the strength of the message and the meaning it carries is much more consequential. It depends on the reader whether s/he will understand the complex meaning of the carefully selected words. It is necessary for the present-day reader to understand historical turmoil of the late 18th century to grasp

Blake's implications in many of his poems, but especially in these two about chimney sweepers.

4.3.Comparison

Blake's two poems present two diametrically opposed views on the same thing: the sorrowful life of a marginalized chimney sweep child. The first poem presents the speaker as a young, immature, innocent boy, who does not understand his own existence and is completely unaware of the seriousness of his situation. The speaker and Tom Dacre are not happy with their position, but their ignorance and lack of experience do not allow them to think beyond anything they were told to. They are taught to be God-fearing and obedient workers because in the end they will receive endless glory and consolation in God's kingdom. Taking into account William Blake's religious views and attitudes towards orthodox clerical beliefs, he was most probably trying to be sarcastic, and emphasize the Church's hypocrisy in ignoring the boys' suffering. At the end of the poem, Blake highlights the religious belief that everyone is, or must be, satisfied with what they get by pointing to the fact that the chimney sweepers devotedly clean chimneys because that is their role in society and they will be rewarded in the afterlife if they stay obedient.

In the second poem, the speaker is wiser, perfectly aware of his situation; he is now experienced and despises the society in which he lives. He understands that his dreadful position is bad and that the surrounding society and his parents forced him to be sad, cry and sweep, despite his prior happiness and positive experience in life. Taking into account Blake's attitude towards religion, society, and child labour, he perhaps wanted to indicate the hypocritical character of Christianity by juxtaposing its imperative of praying, going to church, and worshiping God on the one hand, and insensitivity towards real child martyrs who are obliged to put their lives at risk every day, on the other. Readers may conclude that Blake secretly wants to punish the speaker's parents and Church because they are not able to recognize the boy's misery since they blindly believe in their prayers while remaining blind to the suffering around them.

Both poems reflect typical features of the collections they belong to: the earlier poem (*Songs of Innocenc*e) is more energetic, and reflects the voice of a higher instance filled with wisdom and irony, while the later (*Songs of Experience*) is deeper, displays the speaker's well-developed thoughts, and loses the dynamic conversations (Simpson, 1992).

The next chapter is dedicated to another writer concerned with the rights of child workers, Charles Kingsley. It will provide information on Kingsley's life as a priest, writer, and social activist, the historical and cultural context of the period he lived in, and a thorough analysis of his novel *The Water Babies*, which deals with the problem of children working as chimney sweepers.

5. CHARLES KINGSLEY

Born in 1819 in a clerical family, Charles Kingsley was one of the central figures of 19th-century Britain. From an early age, Kingsley started expressing a talent for writing in his short poems and sermons. He was influenced by art and many contemporary events, but it was the Bristol Riots of 1831 that inspired his future social activism and engagement. Kingsley was one of ninety men who had the opportunity to read an advance copy of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and respond to it. As a confirmed naturalist, Kingsley was amazed by the theory of evolution by natural selection and wrote an affirmative review letter to Darwin, which suggests that he was willing to modify his religious beliefs to adapt to evolutionary theory. He wrote (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 2534):

> I am so poorly (in brain) that I fear I cannot read your book just now as I ought. All I have seen of it awes me; both with the heap of facts, & the prestige of your name, & also with the clear intuition, that if you be right, I must give up much that I have believed & written. In that I care little. 'Let God be true, & every man a liar.'

In addition to his successful writing career, Kingsley was a Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, tutor to the Prince of Wales, Chaplain to the royal family, and eventually the Canon of Westminster (Krueger, 2003). It seems he was a very influential public figure, an authority, and a man with a lot of credibility. Then again, Kingsley was a bit insincere because he publicly supported workers' rights and social reforms, but privately held racist prejudice towards the Irish, whom he saw as people of lower value. This is, for example, expressed in the novel *The Water Babies* (Kingsley, 2012, p. 125):

> For the wild Irish would not listen to them, or come to confession and to mass, but liked better to brew potheen, and dance the pater o'pee, and knock each other over the head with shillelaghs, and shoot each other from behind turf-dykes, and steal each other's cattle, and burn each other's homes.

Also, in a letter to his wife, Kingsley wrote: "I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw [in Ireland]... I don't believe they are our fault… But to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black, one would not feel it so much" (quoted in: Curtis, 1968, p. 84). However, his sensitivity towards the working class and their problems inspired him and a few of his colleagues to form the Christian Socialist

movement with the aim of creating or supporting social reforms rooted in religion (Krueger, 2003).

During the first half of the 18th century, Britain was faced with several severe outbreaks of contagious diseases, particularly cholera: during a period of three months in 1849, in London alone, more than 10,000 people died because of unimaginably awful hygienic circumstances (Public Health Timeline, n.d.). Kingsley was one of the supporters of sanitation reforms, which led to his obsession with water and its purifying effect on internal and external cleansing. He wrote an interesting statement on general health in his book *Health and Education* (Kingsley, 1874, p. 11):

> The value of healthy habitations, of personal cleanliness, of pure air and pure water, of various kinds of food… I say, to eliminate the germs of hereditary disease, and to actually regenerate the human system—all this is known; known as fully and clearly as any human knowledge need be known; it is written in dozens of popular books and pamphlets.

Everything stated above might explain Kingsley's strong fixation on water and dedication to writing a whole novel (*The Water Babies*) about the power of cleanliness. Moreover, Rapple comments on this obsession and the way Kingsley stresses the importance of the "virtuous properties of cold water" (1989, p. 43) at the end of his novel: "Meanwhile, do you learn your lessons, and thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true Englishman […] as long as you stick to hard work and cold water" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 228). Besides sanitation and public health, *The Water Babies* contains a mixture of Kingsley's favourite topics such as the working conditions of the poor, especially chimney sweepers, primary and obligatory education for children, religion, love towards nature, concern over the pollution of rivers and streams, and the previously mentioned theory of evolution (Cumming, 2004).

5.1.The Water Babies

Charles Kingsley created the novel *The Water Babies* under the influence of social disturbance in Victorian Britain. Although intended for children, the novel was published periodically in *Macmillan's Magazine* for adults, whose owner, Alexander

Macmillan, accepted it hoping it would "form a new and interesting feature" (quoted in: Uffelman & Scott, 1986, p. 122). The book, which deeply affected many public matters, left readers contemplative, and became the basis for social change (Uffelman & Scott, 1986).

The Water Babies is an evolutionary fantasy novel and a tale about fairies in one. It expresses Kingsley's restless spirit and interest in different topics such as history, nature, education, and contemporary affairs, which he successfully combines with imaginative elements into one homogeneous unity. The novel addressed some of the leading issues of the time, such as science, education, working conditions, and general attitude towards (lower-class) children, camouflaged as a story about fairies and so-called water babies. The importance of the book is reflected in the Chimney Sweepers Regulation Act which was passed a year after the book was published, as well as the 1875 Act which protected young children from terrible working conditions, and slavery relationships between master and his apprentices. It also prescribed an obligatory certificate issued by the police and gave greater power to police officers in the field (Chimney Sweepers Act, 1875).

The novel focuses on an orphan chimney sweep named Tom, whose master does not provide him with basic living conditions. After he drowns, Tom becomes an amphibian, has various underwater adventures, is eventually reborn, and becomes "a great man of science" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 226). Despite the fact that *The Water Babies* is a fantasy novel, it begins like a classic fairy tale: "Once upon a time, there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom" (ibid., p. 1). This creates an impression of something already familiar. Kingsley immediately forms a close relationship with his readers by saying that they should not have trouble remembering the protagonist's name because it is short and very popular. The familiarity of the name could point to the fact that child chimney sweepers were common at the time.

All essential information about Tom is presented in the first paragraph in which the narrator describes his poor life, relationship with his master, and aspirations for the future. Kingsley might have wanted to face the readers, both child and adult, with the horrible destinies of chimney sweepers and influence their attitudes on the topic from the very beginning. We further learn that the boy does not wash after cleaning sooty flues,

eats poorly, cries when he has to enter chimneys (otherwise, his master will beat him), and smiles when he plays with the other boys or when his master allows him to have a sip of beer. Despite his terrible fate, readers do not get the impression that Tom is dissatisfied with his life; on the contrary, he seems to enjoy his sporadic workless moments very much. As stated at the beginning of the novel, Tom only knows ecstatic and bitter occasions in life, nothing in between: "Tom is defined as a child on a cusp, forever oscillating between one (emotional and/or circumstantial) extreme and another" (Padley, 2009, p. 54).

By the end of the paragraph readers find out about Tom's modest dreams of becoming a master sweep who owns a few climbers and a donkey for riding from work, all of whom he plans to beat just as he was beaten. Readers can conclude that Tom is largely influenced by his environment and has inherited this violent behavioural pattern. Tom is inexperienced and ignorant because he lacks formal and religious education. Additionally, he is not even familiar with prayers or the character of Jesus Christ, which will be important later in the book. This ignorance might be understood as criticism of Victorian society, which "failed to educate Tom" (Straley, 2016, p. 67), and its educational norms which Kingsley is trying to influence by stressing the importance of learning through experience, not only pure instruction.

One day, a groom comes to invite Tom and his dirty master, Mr. Grimes, to clean chimneys at the "grand place" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 4) in Harthover Place. Initially, Tom wants to tease the groom's horse for his own amusement, but finally decides against it because he was taught to be polite to customers, especially if they look smart. On their way to Harthover they meet an Irishwoman without shoes, limping and very poor, but tall and pretty. Because she is beautiful, Mr. Grimes offers her to ride with him, but she politely refuses. When they arrive at a spring, Grimes takes a moment to wash his head, not because he needs cleaning, but to freshen up. When Tom tries to do the same, Grimes gets mad and beats him up. Luckily, the Irishwoman protects Tom and distracts Grimes by mentioning some embarrassing details from his earlier life. She also warns them that this is not the last time they will meet and says that "those that wish to be clean, clean they will be" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 10), meaning it is entirely up to them if they will behave politely and find the right way in life.

At the Place, the gatekeeper warns them not to steal rabbits or hares because chimney sweepers are generally considered to be thieves and fraudsters. Eventually, Tom fancies becoming a keeper because of the pretty clothes and a dog-whistle, which indicates that he can be good and polite, interested in what others have to say, eager for knowledge, and not completely corrupted.

While sweeping, Tom comes down the wrong chimney and ends up in a young lady's room. He is impressed because this is the first time he sees a room that has not been prepared for chimney sweeping, where the curtains are up, the carpets are down, and the furniture is not covered by a cloth. He is amazed by the room and the number of white surfaces, beautiful details, cleanliness, and the great number of pictures of people and animals. The two pictures of Jesus Christ catch his attention. He likes the first one, which shows Christ in the company of children; however, the picture of the crucified Jesus puzzles him because he does not know who the man is although he remembers seeing him in a shop window. Tom reveals his soft and kind heart by showing remorse and compassion: "Poor man [...] he looks so kind and quiet" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 16).

When he notices a young lady named Ellie in the bed, with her white and delicate skin, he wonders if "all people [look] like that when they are washed?" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 17). He then "looked at his own wrist, and tried to rub the soot off, and wondered whether it ever would come off" (ibid.). Tom realizes the deception in which he has been living and immediately starts feeling sad, disappointed, and above all, ashamed for being dirty. When he sees his reflection in the mirror for the first time, he does not recognize himself and thinks: "what did such a little black ape want in that sweet young lady's room" (ibid.). Realizing the "ape" is really him, he feels so angry and humiliated that he instantly tries to run away up the chimney. At this point he becomes aware of his existence outside the sweeping world and, as Klaver points out, "it is because of Ellie that Tom wishes to be clean again and starts on his pilgrimage to true holiness" (2006, p. 541). This contrast between black (Tom) and white (Ellie) might represent the distinction between the two characters' worlds, their completely opposite roles in the book and in society, and the struggle between good and evil.

While trying to escape, Tom creates a tremendous noise which makes him even more agitated and eventually scares Ellie who alarms the old nurse. She tries to catch

him, but “Tom had been in a policeman’s hands many a time, and out of them too, what is more; and he would have been ashamed to face his friends forever if he had been stupid enough to be caught by an old woman” (Kingsley, 2012, p. 18). Although he did not do anything illegal, Tom starts running because he knows the homeowners will find something to accuse him of and Mr. Grimes will most certainly beat him. The only thing he is familiar with is running away from potential problems because he faced punishment many times. Additionally, Tom even looks like a thief, all dirty and covered in soot. It is true he has learned mischievous behaviour under the bad influence of his master, but in this case, he did not actually steal anything. This does not stop “Grimes, the gardener, the groom, the dairymaid, Sir John, the steward, the ploughman, the keeper, and the Irishwoman,” who all run after the boy “shouting, ‘Stop thief,’ in the belief that Tom had at least a thousand pounds’ worth of jewels in his empty pockets” (Kingsley, 2012, p. 20). The people running after Tom subconsciously know he could not have stolen anything but are nevertheless after him just because he seems to be guilty.

Tom runs as fast as he can through the unknown terrain, when he suddenly hears the sound of church bells, catches a glimpse of a clear stream and a small cottage that leads him down the deep valley. He bravely jumps down the cliffs and runs barefoot across sharp rocks “instead of sitting down and crying for his baba (though he never had had any baba to cry for)” (Kingsley, 2012, p. 31). When he finally makes it to the cottage and realizes it is actually a school, the old teacher helps him by giving him some milk and a place to rest. Although she is not sure if he is telling the truth or not, the teacher feels sorry and nurses the poor boy with much love and compassion, as if he was her own son.

Half asleep, Tom deliriously dreams of a clear stream, washing his sooty body, the church bells, and the Irishwoman who said: “those that wish to be clean, clean they will be” (Kingsley, 2012, p. 36). This makes him take off his clothes and step into the water where the church bells are even louder, inviting him to enter an imaginary church. The poor boy falls asleep in the water and when he wakes up, finds “himself swimming about in the stream, being about four inches, or – that I may be accurate – 3.87902 inches long and having round the parotid region of his fauces a set of external gills”

(Kingsley, 2012, p. 44). Tom actually drowns but is brought back to life as an amphibian, the titular water baby. More importantly, "he was clean. For the first time in his life, he felt how comfortable it was to have nothing on him but himself" (ibid., p. 55). The church bells and stream could be understood as a very important moment of Tom's "baptism and regeneration" (Klaver, 2006, p. 535), a new opportunity for a fresh start and forgiveness of the past sins he committed as an ignorant boy. Rapple (1989) states that we have to carefully look at baptism which does clean the human soul, but people's free will and immoral choices can make it dirty again. Cleaning his sooty body alone does not suggest a complete change of Tom's position in the underwater environment because he is still marginalized and trying to find his place; however, he now has the possibility to develop and improve both his knowledge and skills (Padley, 2009).

Fortunately, Tom forgets everything about his prior life, especially "all the bad words which he had learned from Grimes and the rude boys with whom he used to play" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 56). In his underwater adventures he is often naughty, tormenting animals such as caddis, sea-anemones, and trout, but he has to go through this experience to learn about life and understand when he is doing harm. After Mr. Grimes drowns, Tom is afraid he will also become a water baby and come after him to punish him, because he only knows fear and abuse.

One day he stumbles upon Ellie and her Professor discussing science, when suddenly the Professor catches Tom but refuses to admit that water babies exist. Ellie tries to convince him, but he is not willing to admit what he saw because he knows the other scientists would mock him. Tom manages to escape from the Professor by biting his finger. At the same time, Ellie tries to reach after him, but slips and dies after hurting her head on a sharp rock.

A little while later, Tom helps his friend the lobster, who is caught in a trap. Having performed this good deed he immediately comes across another water baby, which is something he wanted for a long time. This encounter appears as a reward and proof of the golden rule that you should treat others as you would like them to treat you. However, before long, Tom forgets this reward and although he has plenty of playfellows, he still torments the creatures in the water, just for fun. The other water

babies often warn him that Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid would come one day and see how naughty he is. Of course, she eventually appears and punishes him in her own way. She does not beat Tom the way he is used to but puts a cold pebble into his mouth instead of sweets, just as he did to the sea-anemones. As her name suggests, she punishes him the same way he tormented other creatures. In contrast, her sister Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby hugs Tom, tells him stories and kisses him, which makes him feel like he had a mother for the first time. However, "being quite comfortable is a very good thing; but it does not make people good" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 143); Tom cannot refrain from eating Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby's candies and she has to punish him. She makes him eat so much candy it makes him sick and then stops cuddling him because his body is covered in prickles.

After a few more lessons, it is time for Tom to go to school and the fairies arrange for Ellie (now also a water baby) to be his schoolmistress. She has to teach him many things, especially prayers. Even though they become good friends, Tom has to go on a search to find Mr. Grimes in the Other-End-of-Nowhere. When Tom finds him stuck in a chimney he wants to rescue him, but Grimes has to repent for his sins first, which he does in the end, after he learns that his mother, the teacher who helped Tom, died. Rapple (1989) points out that the reader can follow Tom's moral ups and downs, and the eventual rehabilitation and compensation of his naughtiness by helping the lobster or Mr. Grimes, which makes him a good Christian man.

In the end, Tom meets Ellie again: now they are both regenerated into humans, grown-up, smart, and fond of each other. Tom starts out as an immature, naughty boy who "pecked and howked the poor water-things about sadly, till they were all afraid of him, and got out of his way, or crept into their shells; so he had no one to speak to or play with" (Kingsley, 2012, p. 60), but he later evolves, modifies his bad behaviour, and learns his lesson through "sound and sharp experience" (ibid., p. 61).

Charles Kingsley tells a story about the dreadful lives of chimney sweepers by using Tom as a representative of his kind, a model of all child chimney sweepers. By presenting his appearance and one typical cleaning appointment Kingsley perhaps wanted to highlight the circumstances in which young workers, especially climbing boys, worked and lived. Readers can even follow Tom's aspirations for the future, but it

is obvious that this future might not come, or it would not be bright for his own sweeper apprentices. At first, he does not learn anything form his own experience because he is not aware of it. Fairies have to intervene to stop this practice and teach Tom that violence does not lead anywhere, help him get educated, and finally become a decent Victorian man of science. Fairies take him on an underwater journey where he has to learn many things by himself, as a reasonable man should. They direct him without painful punishments by doing to him the things he did to others. When he finally realizes the seriousness of his deeds and sees Mr. Grimes repent for his sins, Tom becomes a wise man.

In 1864, one year after *The Water Babies* was published, the British Parliament passed the new Chimney Sweepers Regulation Act and decided to put more effort into repealing this kind of occupation. It seems that Charles Kingsley borrowed a character from real life, incorporated him into a tale about fairies and made an enormous impression on society by leading those responsible through their own regeneration from unaware and unconcerned individuals to reasonable lawmakers who cannot allow such cruelty towards anyone, especially children.

The following chapter will provide a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between Blake's poetry and Kingsley's novel within the context of child labour and chimney sweepers.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Chimney sweepers

Although Blake and Kingsley had the same literary/social motive for writing, the characters of chimney sweepers they created in their works differ in almost every feature, except in the fact that they are unfortunate, work very hard, and their sufferings are caused by adults. Not only do both authors portray contrasting protagonists, but Blake varies his two chimney sweepers: the first one is innocent and naive, while the second one is experienced and aware of his miserable position. Initially, Kingsley's Tom is more similar to Blake's innocent sweeper (also named Tom) because they are both orphans, uneducated, and encounter the fantastic when they fall asleep. While sleeping, the innocent sweeper has a religious vision and Kingsley's Tom experiences baptism and eventual rebirth as an amphibian. Blake's sweepers seem to be in a hopeless situation because nobody is willing to help them and it seems they will only find relief in death (or the afterlife). On the other hand, Kingsley's Tom is not in such a difficult situation because he has the opportunity to succeed in life (although it is up to him if he will use this opportunity). After a long journey, Tom changes his naughty behaviour and regenerates into a man capable of great scientific achievements.

6.2. Personal names

The names of the protagonists play an important role in the literary works discussed above. The authors might have decided to use well-known and fairly popular names to impress their readers. Thomas was one of the top five names in 18th- and 19th-century London, especially when abbreviated to Tom, which was more typical for lower class workers (Galbi, 2002). The name is of Biblical origin (Thomas was one of Jesus' disciples), but originally comes from the Aramaic word for "twin" (Behind the Name, n.d.). The choice of such a common and wide-spread name could suggest that both Blake and Kingsley wanted to draw attention to the excessive and wide-spread problem of dangerous child labour. Blake lists some other common names such as Dick or Jack to emphasize the number of enslaved chimney sweepers and the seriousness of their position in the hands of their masters.

Furthermore, there are many important names in *The Water Babies* such as the master, Mr. Grimes (grime means dirt or soot), the fairies Bedonebyasyoudid (she behaves towards water babies as they behave towards others, in strict and often harsh manner) and Doasyouwouldbedoneby (she treats water babies as they wish to be treated, with love), and many scientists, but since Blake did not use more names in his poems it is impossible to compare them.

6.3. Colour

While reading Blake's poems or Kingsley's novel it is almost impossible not to notice the importance of the colours connected with the protagonists. The two most significant colours are actually not colours, but achromatic tones with the strongest possible contrast. Black is a tone of the dark chimneys which sweepers were forced to enter every day, it is the tone of the soot they inhaled, and the dirt that covered their bodies after they finished cleaning. Moreover, black could also represent uncertain destinies leading to death in Blake's poems, although Kingsley's Tom has slightly better chances for success since he imagines becoming a master himself. But generally, black is associated with death, evil, and mourning, which could be the primary reasons why both Blake and Kingsley use it.

White, on the other hand, represents innocence, faith, and salvation. Readers can remember Tom's white curly hair from the first poem, a white Angel with a bright key who ends the sweepers' misery, clean sweepers entering Heaven, or the innocent Ellie lying in a sparklingly white room. White gives hope for the future and softens the negativity the chimney sweepers are confronted with. The authors might have used this contrast to emphasize the difference between the sorrowful lives of the climbing boys, their inevitable death, and the final salvation in paradise or underwater adventures.

6.4. Religion

Religion was a very important component of the private lives of the two authors, since Blake experienced visions and was in constant search of spirituality, while Kingsley was a priest with some slightly unorthodox views on religion, science, and the theory of evolution. The sweepers in the two poems are familiar with religion, they

know about God and Christian moral values, but Tom from *The Water Babies* does not even know who Jesus Christ is (he later learns this from Ellie). Blake's poems are filled with irony towards final salvation and faith in God's mercy because of the inhumane treatment of real chimney sweepers. On the other hand, Kingsley is not so critical towards religion but uses it to underline Tom's transformation from a mischievous little boy only familiar with violence, into an intelligent scientist, capable of cherishing positive emotions for others.

6.5. Water

Although the boys are sooty and desperately in need of cleaning, Blake and Kingsley do not use water for washing, but for baptism, the process of cleansing oneself from sin and acquiring a new opportunity for a decent life. Both of them use flowing water – a river or a stream – as a reference to Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. Although Blake did not emphasize the importance of baptism as Kingsley did, the sweepers in the first poem are rescued from their sins and cheerfully dance on clouds in Heaven after being washed in a river. Perhaps Kingsley placed his Tom under water because of the general idea of water as a source of life and its connection with Darwin's "warm little pond" (Darwin Correspondence Project, Letter no. 7471) as the origin of life on Earth. Tom has the opportunity to evolve, to transit from water to land, and change the world with his accomplishments.

6.6. Death

Blake uses the image of a poor chimney sweeper to show that both the innocent and experienced one are hopeless, and the only solution to their problems is death. Kingsley was not so pessimistic: even though his Tom also dies, his death becomes a springboard for his growth and improvement. Both authors present death as a process divided into two stages: first, the disappearance of the body, and second, the journey of the soul. Blake's sweepers end up in Heaven because they are not guilty for their sins and it would not be fair to punish them even more. On the contrary, Kingsley decided that Tom has to get a second chance because death and heaven would also be a type of a punishment if he would not have the opportunity to enjoy his childhood and learn

interesting things. Tom realizes it is not easy to choose the right path, but eventually learns about right and wrong, and rescues himself.

6.7. The role of adults

In all three examples, adults are insensitive and cruel towards children. Not only do the masters not pay attention to their sweepers, which may be expected since their only concern is money, but also the parents in Blake's poems fail to show emotions and protect their children. Blake emphasizes the parent's hypocrisy when they worship God and fearfully pray for final salvation, while simultaneously neglecting their son who will inevitably die if he continues cleaning chimneys. Kingsley blames everyone who accused Tom for a felony he did not commit, but especially Grimes who must clean volcanoes for the rest of his life to repent his sins. Readers can conclude that in these cases, adults are responsible for children's misery. It is therefore their obligation to change the laws and social codes to help vulnerable children forced into labour. The authors, especially Blake, encourage the Church to stand up for those who are inexperienced and ease their position in society.

6.8. Chimney sweepers in Croatia

When thinking about a topic for this thesis, my initial intention was to compare social circumstances in 18th- and 19th-century Britain and Croatia, the treatment of chimney sweepers, and art connected to the topic. The research I conducted in the Archives of the Croatian School Museum in Zagreb and extensive conversations I had with the Museum's Director Štefka Batinić, led me to conclude that this type of child labour was unknown in the area of today's Croatia. Of course, chimney sweeper apprentices existed but they started working in their teenage years, not as early as in Britain; their masters did not own them and eventually, after completing their education, they would return to their parents and start their own businesses.

Chimney sweepers were not such a popular subject of literature published in Croatian newspapers and magazines as some other occupations, such as shoe makers and tailors. However, there are a few poems, such as "Dimnjačar" (Chimney sweeper, 1905) by Count Rudolf Maldini, and stories about the lives of chimney sweepers which are

predominately positive, celebrate the joy of working, and encourage young adult boys to enter the business. Clean chimneys represent the possibility of communication with higher powers (i.e. God) and chimney sweepers are the ones who make this connection possible (Lukačević Dominko, 2017). Chimney sweepers were, and still are, considered to bring good luck, so many 20th-century Christmas and New Year's cards have pictures of children chimney sweepers, although, as previously mentioned, children were not employed as sweepers in this area.

Moreover, the lawyer and senior adviser for economy Željka Lukačević Dominko from Varaždin, who did extensive research on chimney sweepers in Croatia (particularly in the northern regions), also concluded that there is no indication that climbing existed in this country. She found some data about climbing in today's Italy, France, Belgium, and Switzerland, but nothing in Germany or Austria, and consequently none in Croatia (Lukačević Dominko, 2017). While collecting the data, I met with a real chimney sweeper[4] who said that until the 20th century, every sweeper had to enter a chimney only once, just after finishing school as part of an initiation ritual, which was regarded as tradition and good luck.

[4] An interview conducted at the book launch *Dimnjačarstvo i dimnjačari s posebnim osvrtom na grad Varaždin*, Varaždin, 21 March 2018.

7. CONCLUSION

William Blake and Charles Kingsley were ahead of their time in their attitudes towards life, religion, and labour, which motivated their writing and social activism. They were both aware of the unacceptable treatment of children and raised their voices in the fight for the rights of child chimney sweepers. While Blake did not save his literary chimney sweepers, instead sacrificing them to make a greater impression on the reader, Kingsley used another strategy: he created many possibilities for his Tom and forced him to find his way. Although neither Blake nor Kingsley were legislators, they found a way to use their art as a means of influencing public opinion: they created real-life situations and added a little bit of fantasy to produce stories which would open people's eyes, perhaps even create a sense of guilt, and encourage the modification of attitudes towards employing child chimney sweepers. Their efforts, combined with those of many other artists and social activists, resulted in the adoption of the 1875 Chimney Sweepers Act, which finally led to the abolition of the practice of child chimney sweeping.

Taking everything into consideration, I believe we can now thank William Blake, Charles Kingsley, and many others for their contribution to the legislative and practical improvement of the lives and destinies of poor British climbing boys. Unfortunately, in today's world, thousands of boys and girls are enslaved and in need of help from contemporary Blakes and Kingsleys, who will not be afraid to raise their voices for the benefit and protection of others.

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Helena Horžić rođena je 16. ožujka 1991. godine u Varaždinu. Nakon završenog srednjoškolskog obrazovanja u Prvoj gimnaziji Varaždin u Varaždinu, upisala je učiteljski studij s engleskim jezikom 2013. godine na Učiteljskom fakultetu u Zagrebu. Tijekom studija, a vezano uz studentske poslove, stekla je trogodišnje iskustvo u poučavanju engleskog jezika djece predškolskog uzrasta, kao i iskustvo rada na časopisu *Libri&Liberi* kao pomoćnica tajništva uredništva te pišući prikaze. Na završnoj godini studija počela se baviti znanstvenim radom te je sudjelovala na međunarodnoj konferenciji o književnosti (ICLOS 2018). U budućnosti se nada zaposlenju u struci, ali i nastavku istraživanja područja dječje književnosti, posebno u sklopu *Hrvatske udruge istraživača dječje književnosti* čiji je i član.

IZJAVA O SAMOSTALNOJ IZRADI RADA

Izjavljujem da sam ja, Helena Horžić, rođena 16. ožujka 1991. godine u Varaždinu, studentica integriranoga preddiplomskoga i diplomskoga sveučilišnoga studija primarnoga obrazovanja s engleskim jezikom Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu (matični broj: 34–2013–109), samostalno provela aktivnost istraživanja literature i napisala diplomski rad *The Child Chimney Sweep in English Children's Literature*.

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Zagreb, 20. lipnja 2018.

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